

## Mark Dion

Mark Dion was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1961. He received a BFA (1986) and an honorary doctorate (2003) from the University of Hartford, Hartford Art School, in Connecticut. Mark Dion was born in 1961 in New Bedford, Massachusetts. He initially studied in 1981-2 at the Hartford School of Art in Connecticut, which awarded him an honorary doctorate in 2002, and from 1982-4 at the School of Visual Arts in New York. He also attended the prestigious Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program (1984-1985). He is an Honorary Fellow of Falmouth University in the UK (2014), and has an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters (Ph.D.) from The Wagner Free Institute of Science in Philadelphia (2015).

Dion's work examines the ways in which dominant ideologies and public institutions shape our understanding of history, knowledge, and the natural world. The job of the artist, he says, is to go against the grain of dominant culture, to challenge perception and convention. Appropriating archaeological and other scientific methods of collecting, ordering, and exhibiting objects, Dion creates works that question the distinctions between 'objective' ('rational') scientific methods and 'subjective' ('irrational') influences. The artist's spectacular and often fantastical curiosity cabinets, modeled on Wunderkammern of the 16th Century, exalt atypical orderings of objects and specimens. By locating the roots of environmental politics and public policy in the construction of knowledge about nature, Mark Dion questions the authoritative role of the scientific voice in contemporary society.

He has received numerous awards, including the ninth annual Larry Aldrich Foundation Award (2001) The Joan Mitchell Foundation Award (2007) and the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Lucida Art Award (2008). He has had major exhibitions at the Miami Art Museum (2006); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2004); Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut (2003); Tate Gallery, London (1999), and the British Museum of Natural History in London (2007). "Neukom Vivarium" (2006), a permanent outdoor installation and learning lab for the Olympic Sculpture Park, was commissioned by the Seattle Art Museum. Dion produced a major permanent commission, 'OCEANOMANIA: Souvenirs of Mysterious Seas' for the Oceanographic Museum in Monaco. He is the co-director of Mildred's Lane an innovative visual art education and residency program in Beach Lake, Pennsylvania.

For over two decades Dion has worked in the public realm on a wide range of scales, from architecture projects to print project in newspaper. Some of his most recent large scale public project include "The Amateur Ornithologist Clubhouse" a Captain Nemo-like interior constructed in a vast gas tank in Essen, Germany, "The Hanging Garden" a collaboration with the landscape design firm Gross Max in central London, which consists of a fire escape-like vertical garden. and "Den" a large scale folly in Norway's mountainous landscape which feature a massive sculpture of a sleeping bear resting on a hill of material culture from the neolithic to the present. Dion also produce a large scale permanent commissions for Documenta 13 in Kassel, Germany as well as for the Montevideo Biennale in Uruguay, The Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle, The Rose Art Museum and the Port of Los Angeles.

Dion lives with his wife and frequent collaborator Dana Sherwood in New York City and works worldwide.