

# CABINET OF WONDERS

f r i d a y m o r n i n g i n t h e D E S I G N L A B

Bring materials on Friday to use and to **share** with others. Materials should be intriguing, “useless” things, information, art materials, the rare and the weird. With these materials, we will construct wondrous exhibition items in the spirit of Mr Wilson’s Museum of Jurassic Technology. final piece will be due Friday of week 6

a n d s o o n 

...consider the following hypothetical creative process that David Wilson might have gone through when constructing his narrative about Madelena Delani and Geoffrey Sonnabend:

- Wilson is interested in memory...
- He sees a PBS documentary on bizarre neurological afflictions, including a woman who, as the result of a stroke, has lost her short term and intermediate memory.
- Wilson researches theories of memory and forgetting and encounters Sonnabend and his obscure, forgotten theory of obsolescence.
- Pursuing Sonnabend’s biography, Wilson learns of his father’s career as an engineer.
- Wilson loves leaps of logic, across impossible gulfs:
  - A random connection brings to mind the Iguazu falls. He imagines a bridge, which collapses into the falls before his mind’s eye: a missed connection? a misfiring neuron? a lost memory (imagine consciousness at one end of the bridge and some past experience at the other, forever separated by the falls...)?
  - He imagines an encounter... a failed encounter that might answer the question: how did Sonnabend conceive his theory of memory as forgetting?
  - Sonnabend conceived it through an encounter with someone with the aforementioned affliction (no short term memory).
  - He creates a singer, Madelena (or perhaps he reads Proust, which had been laying on his nightstand, and the small cakes sound like a woman’s name, a performer’s name...)
  - It would have been too easy, yet, for the two to meet at the falls so fatefully... instead, Sonnabend is inspired merely by Delani’s voice, laden with the sadness of her condition.

## bring THINGS TO WONDER AT:

weird old books, notes, encyclopedias, old research papers, weird websites, obscure knowledge, unusual, unfamiliar objects, weird stuff you’ve made, goofy little trinkets, scientific apparatus, small cakes....

## We will divide things into :

**STUFF TO TAKE** (junk stuff that you don’t ever need to see again; stuff with which someone else might make their actual “cabinet”)

&

**STUFF FOR EYES ONLY** (books, priceless heirlooms, personal deformities)

## THE GOALS:

To discover and create both real and metaphorical connections between real and imagined events/theories/people, and so on.

To practice the representation of a complex story or idea through relatively simple materials, including the trappings of museum exhibitions (labels, etc.)

To understand better the motivations and significance of Wilson’s work as a curator and artist.

## THE FINAL PRODUCT:

May be the result of a collaboration between students.

May be a diorama; a panel with text and images; a combination of panel, diorama, image, sound recording.

Should seamlessly combine real and fictive elements, trussed up with the appearance of institutional authority.

should address (overtly or covertly) one of the following or a comparable theme:

MUSEUMS, MYTHS, COMMUNITY, HOME, MEMORY, FRAILTY, KNOWLEDGE, HISTORY, SENSE OF PLACE, WONDER, ART, REVOLUTION, STORYTELLING