Display Cabinet

Display cabinets like this one, used to store small collections of natural and artificial wonders, were constructed from exotic and precious materials. The mythological, profane, and Christian subjects represented on this cabinet suggest that it would have functioned as an instrument of spiritual reflection, as well as a device of instruction and amusement.

The natural wonders piled on top of this cabinet were assembled by contemporary artist Sumiya Swoboda-Nichols to summarize the sort of objects that would have graced a Wunderkabinett (cabinet of wonder) in the 1600s. It also hints at the collection of rarities that might have been hidden within.

Display Cabinet
German (Augsburg), 1620–30
Three carvings by Albert Jansz. Vinckenbrinck
Dutch, about 1604–1664/65
Ebony, chestnut, walnut, pearwood, boxwood, ivory, marble, semiprecious stones, enamel, palm wood, and tortoiseshell
28 ¾ x 22 7/8 x 23 ¼ in.
The J. Paul Getty Museum
89.DA.28

Shell and Mineral Assemblage
2000
Sumiya Swoboda-Nichols
American, born 1966
Natural specimens
17 x 18 ¾ x 18 ¾ in.
Lent by the Edward Swoboda Collection, Beverly Hills, California