

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Bard Graduate Center Presents “The Conservator’s Cupboard” by  
Artist-in-Residence Mark Dion**

**New York, January 12, 2017**—Bard Graduate Center is pleased to welcome Mark Dion as Artist-in-Residence in celebration of the conclusion of “Cultures of Conservation,” a five-year initiative supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation that began in 2013. Through April 2017, Bard Graduate Center will host conversations, performances and workshops that will be inaugurated on January 25 with a rare screening of Dion’s and Jason Simon’s 1986 film *Artful History: A Restoration Comedy* and a specially commissioned duet choreographed by **Annie-B Parson** of **Big Dance Theater**.

At the center of his residency, Dion will install a special commission in Bard Graduate Center’s lobby at 38 West 86th Street, New York City, titled “**The Conservator’s Cupboard**,” exploring the mental and material landscape of the conservator. Referring back to the traditions of the artist’s *studiolo* and the alchemist workshop, the work is a sculptural citation of a working cupboard filled with raw materials, apparatus, and books. Dion takes the viewer into the conversation between the historical questions that objects raise, and the desire to know. The conservator, heir to the artist and the alchemist, produces knowledge by bringing together a trained eye and hand with a scientific education. Dion will evoke three aspects of the practice of conservation—ateriality, the exploration of processes and methodologies over time, and the research-based practice of comprehending and to some degree restoring the social context for a work of art. Since Dion’s work often is located on the threshold between science and art, the field of conservation is an appropriate site for one of his investigations.

**Upcoming Events (more to be announced later)**

**January 25, 7 pm**—Bard Graduate Center will host “**An Evening with Mark Dion**,” at which the 30-minute film, *Artful History: A Restoration Comedy*, will have a rare screening. Made in 1986 with filmmaker and artist Jason Simon, it is based on Dion’s work at a commercial fine art restoration studio in the 1980s. Following the screening, curator **Ruth Erickson** of the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston will moderate a conversation between Dion and Simon.

The evening will also premiere a specially commissioned duet choreographed by **Annie-B Parson** of **Big Dance Theater**. In *Cabinet Duet*, she animates the a-symbolic, non-functional power of objects in a dance for artist Mark Dion and Big Dance Theater’s **Elizabeth Dement** in which two bodies interact with the contents of the cabinet from a pedestrian, utile perspective, and then from a methodology of kinetic abstraction. We know these objects yet they are not used as we expect, or they appear bracingly familiar. Actions, both known and strange, interrupt materiality; the visual plane is bent, the material world is nudged: a hat becomes a circle; a stick becomes a line. Parson’s work, in concert with Dion’s installation, suggests a fluid material world, one of slippage and breath. Big Dance Theater is an award winning company whose critically acclaimed works have been described by *The New York Times* as “exquisitely constructed.”

The event will begin at 7 pm at 38 West 86th Street and tickets are \$10. To register, visit [bgc.bard.edu/evening-with-dion](http://bgc.bard.edu/evening-with-dion) or email [public.programs@bgc.bard.edu](mailto:public.programs@bgc.bard.edu) .

Here’s what Annie-B has to say about Dion and the creation of this work:

“In the work of Mark Dion, dailyness and dream crisscross, as objects reference what they are and are not. Whenever I have imagined animating this slippery space of Dion’s installations, it always involves the artist. Happily Mark has agreed to be a part of this dance event.”

*more . . .*

**February 8, 7 pm**—The 21st century has seen a rapid evolution in thinking about our relationship to nature. In the face of the Anthropocene, how do we find ways of acknowledging the interconnectedness of man and nature? This panel discussion, “From the Wunderkammer to The Museum of Nature: Exhibiting the Anthropocene” featuring **Mark Dion**, **Joanna Ebenstein**, co-founder of Brooklyn's Morbid Anatomy Museum; **Earle Havens**, Nancy H. Hall Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts, John's Hopkins University; **Bill Sherman**, Head of Collections, Victoria and Albert Museum, and **David Harvey**, former Senior Vice President of Exhibition, American Museum of Natural History, engages with these ideas as they related to the conception of museum exhibitions. The event will take place at 38 West 86th Street and is free. To register, visit [bgc.bard.edu/dion-wunderkammer](http://bgc.bard.edu/dion-wunderkammer) or email [public.programs@bgc.bard.edu](mailto:public.programs@bgc.bard.edu).

### **About Mark Dion**

Since the early 1990s, Mark Dion has examined the ways in which dominant ideologies and public institutions shape our understanding of history, knowledge, and the natural world. Appropriating archaeological and other scientific methods of collecting, ordering, and exhibiting objects, the artist creates works that address distinctions between objective scientific methods and subjective influences. By locating the roots of environmental politics and public policy in the construction of knowledge about nature, Dion questions the authoritative role of the scientific voice in contemporary society.

Born in Massachusetts in 1961, Dion received a BFA and an honorary doctorate from the University of Hartford School of Art, Connecticut in 1986 and 2003, respectively. He also studied at the School of Visual Arts in New York from 1982-84, and participated in the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program from 1984-85. He has received numerous awards, including the ninth annual Larry Aldrich Foundation Award (2001) and the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Lucida Art Award (2008). Presently, he is a mentor at Columbia University in New York and co-director of Mildred's Land, an innovative visual art education and residency program in Beach Lake, Pennsylvania.

Major solo exhibitions include: *Mark Dion: The Academy of Things* at The Academy of Fine Arts Design in Dresden, Germany (2014), *The Macabre Treasury* at Museum Het Domein in Sittard, The Netherlands (2013), *Oceanomania: Souvenirs of Mysterious Seas* at Musée Océanographique de Monaco and Nouveau Musée National de Monaco / Villa Paloma in Monaco (2011), *The Marvelous Museum: A Mark Dion Project* at Oakland Museum of California (2010-11), *Systema Metropolis* at Natural History Museum, London (2007), The South Florida Wildlife Rescue Unit at Miami Art Museum (2006), *Rescue Archaeology*, a project for the Museum of Modern Art (2004), and his renowned *Tate Thames Dig* at the Tate Gallery in London (1999).

In 2012, his work was included in *DOCUMENTA 13*, curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev in Kassel, Germany, and has also been exhibited at MoMA PS1 in New York, Guggenheim Bilbao in Spain, Minneapolis Institute of Art in Minnesota, *Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck* in Remagen, Germany, and *Kunsthau Graz* in Austria.

His work can be found in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Tate Gallery, London; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg; Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA; and the Israel Museum of Art, Jerusalem; among others.

### **About Bard Graduate Center**

Bard Graduate Center is devoted to the study of decorative arts, design history, and material culture through research, advanced degrees, exhibitions, publications, and public events. Our community encourages creative investigation of objects, from the everyday to the esoteric. For more information about the Gallery, MA and PhD degrees, programs and events, publications, and more, visit [bgc.bard.edu](http://bgc.bard.edu). To learn more about the “Cultures of Conservation” initiative supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, visit [cultures-of-conservation.wikis.bgc.bard.edu](http://cultures-of-conservation.wikis.bgc.bard.edu).

###