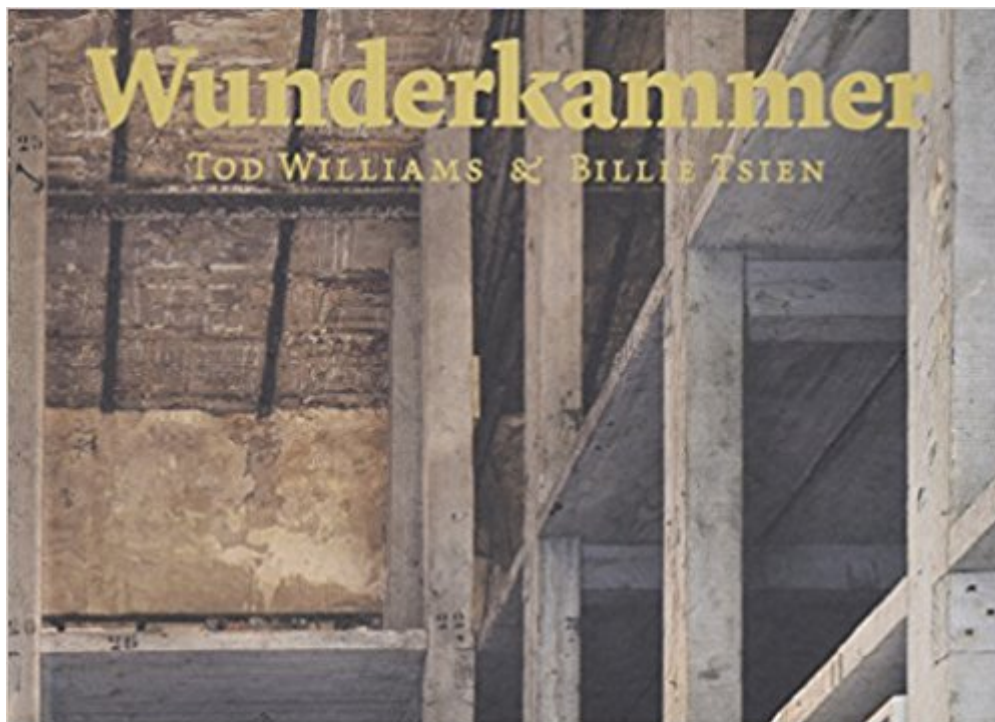


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# Wunderkammer



## Synopsis

Inspired by the idea of the wunderkammer—wonder-room or cabinet of curiosities—that originated during the Renaissance, world-renowned architects Tod Williams and Billie Tsien invited 35 celebrated architects and designers from around the world to create their own wunderkammers, filling boxes with objects that inspire them. This delightful book gathers together the varied, evocative wunderkammers along with accompanying statements by their architect-creators, including such luminaries as Shigeru Ban, Toyo Ito, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Peter Eisenman, Steven Holl, Richard Meier, Murray Moss, Diégo Francis Ker, Juhani Pallasmaa, Elias Torres, and Peter Zumthor. An introduction by Williams and Tsien explains their fascination with the wunderkammer and looks at their own history of collecting. The boxes, each spotlighted in its own section, are explored through each architect's essay; working drawings and sketchbook pages; construction and installation photos; a list of the items contained; and a photograph of the final box. Wunderkammer offers a new way to think about art and inventiveness, collection and meaning in everyday objects.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“What an odd and delightful book. Two of New York's best architects asked 35 colleagues to each fill a wooden box with personal mementos, modern-day cabinets of curiosities 'to open a door to their minds without the need for words.' Some responded with the ephemera of architecture. Others tapped more personal inspiration, such as W.G. Clark's grab-bag that included fossilized

bones, a Japanese good luck cat and Bob Dylan's 'Highway 61' Revisited." — John King, San Francisco Chronicle (John King San Francisco Chronicle)

Tod Williams and Billie Tsien are the founding members of the New York-based architecture firm in their name. Their built works include the recently relocated Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia.

Williams - Tsien generous idea of including friends, mentors and followers - most famous, some obscure - in their own project in a newly discovered building, or so they say. Architects are so pressed to produce intelligent contributions for so many different public showings, from cook books to ersatz collections that I'm amazed they can still submit something intelligent/ intelligible. I have to admit I am always curious of what these bright busy people can put together. Well, the case is that some submissions are simple and down to the point, some are far out and clueless. The book shows them in supposedly clear way which somehow got indecipherable. Some are a starchitect ego trip, some about their own heroes and mentors, like a box within a box within a box. Apart from a familiar USA lineup, there's also great guys like Bijoy Jain, Diller, Scofidio, Renfro, Juhani Pallasmaa, Murcutt, Martinez Lapeña y Torres, but who's Luce? and lino? Like the insight this filling of a box implies, the submissions are mostly very intimate, private. It's another peep show....

Very interesting and very interestingly packaged!

Open-hearted, often funny, generally playful and pursued in the spirit of curiosity, the boxes of Tsien and Williams's Wunderkammer project for the Venice Biennale are themselves collected in this book. Even the book's trim size is reminiscent of the box shape each architect/artist/collector was given to work with. It's a variation on a theme of creative minds, and each contribution is presented both as final outcome and in process shots and sketches. Memento mori, portals of identity, poetic expressions of self, the sensory, textural, imaginative, the intimate, or the made, the boxes show the artist's fixation--Luce's lifelong exploration of "beauty," Mayer's reworking of movement and schemes of previous projects, Baird's or Ito's touchstones, for example--or show the well-practiced compulsion to rework space, whether through reconstruction, control of light, or near performance. Each gives, if one sets aside presumptions and expectations, and gives, perhaps, in a more lasting way than would have been possible on site.

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