

Greetings from the

ZUMPA- PUBLIC

Museum

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Collection as
Creation: An Art
Historical Journey
through the
Zymoglyphic Region

Lilly Thies

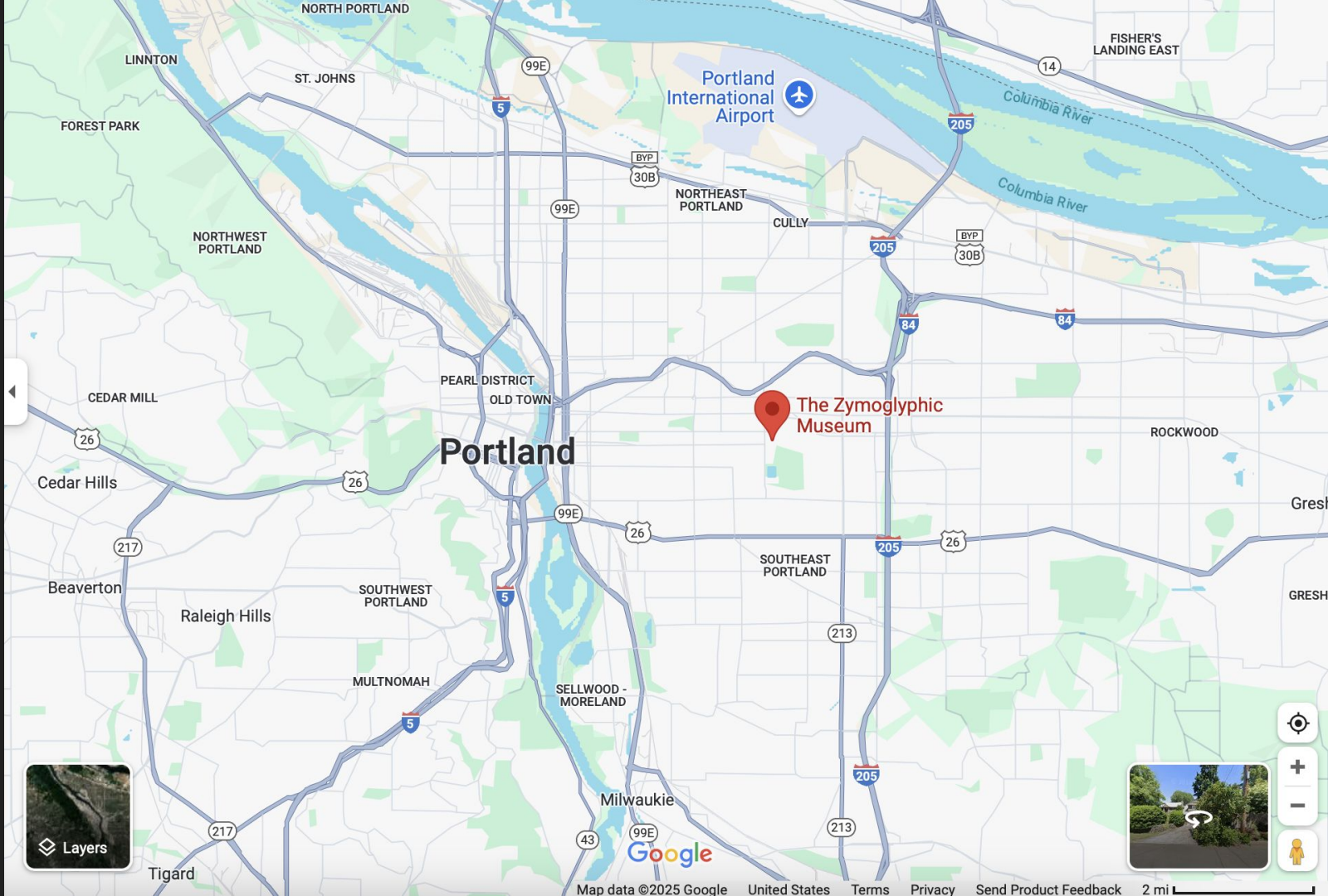
2025 Hanni Scholar

View of the Capital City of the Zymoglyphic Region

www.zymoglyphic.org

zy'-mo-glyph'-ic, adj. [Gr. *zyme* leaven + Gr. *glyphe* carving]

1. Of, or pertaining to, images of fermentation, specifically the solid residue of creative fermentation on natural objects
2. The collection and arrangement of objects, primarily either natural or weathered by natural forces, for poetic effect



Layers







What is the Zymoglyphic Region?







Natural History



Zymoglyphic mermaid



House Fungus

Happy fish!



“The Happy Fish (*Piscatonius delitus*) can be found clinging to rocky bottoms in fast-moving waters. Its rough exterior camouflages it well; it might be confused with a random selection of seaweed. Its happy demeanor is thought to be due to its lack of internal organs. Its watery environment just passes right through it.”

(Zymoglyphic.org)



Detail from "The Allegory of Post-Truth" by Jen Brown (2017)

First Influences...





Judith Hoffman



Spirits Under Glass



The Fish who Swims in the Sky

Idiosyncratic Museums



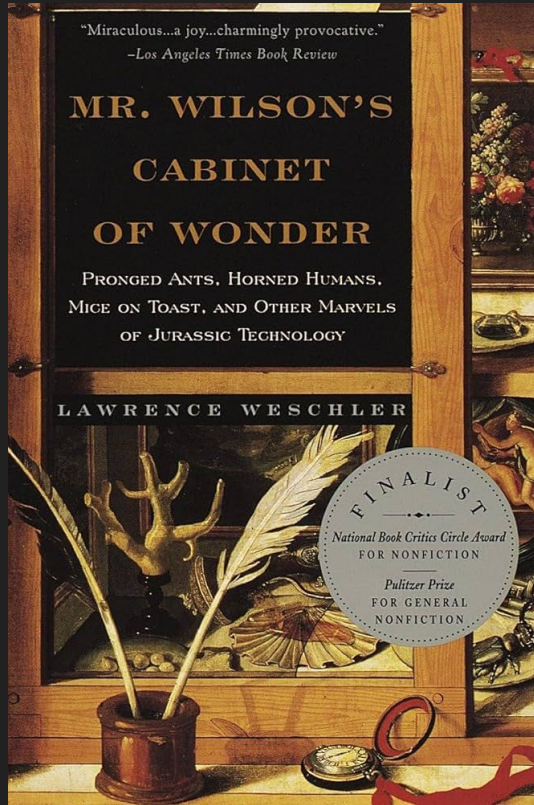
Michael McMillen's "Traveling Mystery Museum"

Idiosyncratic Museums



Clayton Bailey's "World of Wonders"

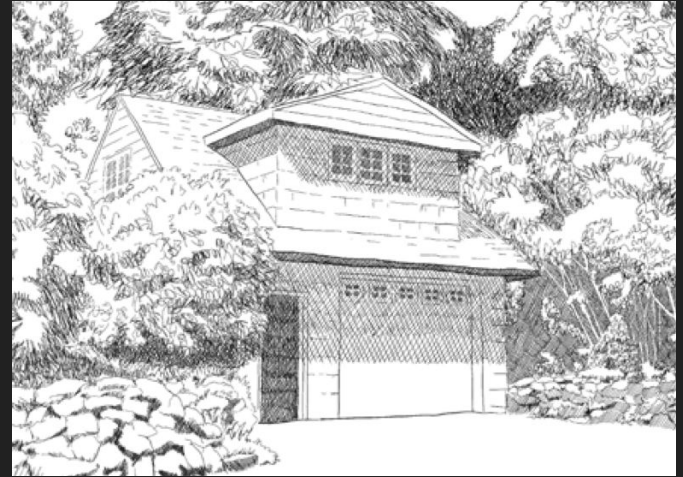
Idiosyncratic Museums



Museum of Jurassic Technology

Timeline of the Zymoglyphic Museum

- 1994- Stewart and his wife move to San Mateo, California
- 2000- Museum opens in a shed
- 2001- Zymoglyphic.org domain name created
- 2006- Museum is divided into four “ages”
- 2014- Stewart moves to Portland, OR and retires
- 2016- Stewart buys a house, opens Zymoglyphic museum in detached garage
- 2018- Publicity boom!
- 2021- Residency Program established



The 'Ages' of the Zymoglyphic Region

1. The Rust Age
2. The Age of Wonder
3. The Era of Oriental Influence
4. The Modern Age



The Rust Age

“For most of the Rust Age, visual art was deeply tied to cultural and spiritual practices and was not considered a separate discipline. However, toward the end of that era, a few "proto-modernists" were fascinated by the purely aesthetic possibilities to be found in assemblage of natural materials such as pond-moss, bones, and feathers. The more practically-minded developed early media technology, precipitating a split between art and science that continues to this day.” (Zymoglyphic.org)



Shamanic Figure



Cosmic Listening Device



Mirror Mask

The Rust Age: Influences

- Indigenous art of Oceania, Africa, American Southwest → masks, animism, figurines, decay



Iatmul artist, *Orator's Stool*, 1900s. Denver Art Museum



Mask, 1920-1930. Chokwe. Wood, vegetable fiber, glass beads, metal



Newspaper Rock -Needles District – Canyonlands NP
Courtesy of Ted Adam



Photo courtesy of zymoglyphic.org

The Age of Wonder

“The discovery of oil in the Zymoglyphic region spelled an end to the Rust Age, freeing up the rusted wheels of progress and ushering in the Age of Wonder. This was a marvelous time of technological innovation, discovery, and exploration. The creative focus shifted from the uncertainties of the next world to the wondrousness of the world around us, making meaning from the juxtaposition of objects” (Zymoglyphic.org).



Wall-Mounted Curiosity Cabinet



Tabletop Wonder Cabinet



Curiosity

The Age of Wonder: Influences

Renaissance curiosity cabinets, 19th-century dioramas, surrealist twist!



Domenico Remps, *Cabinet of Curiosities*, 1690, Museo dell'Opificio delle Pietre Dure, Florence, Italy.



Antique 19th century bird diorama



Photo courtesy of zymoglyphic.org



The Era of Oriental Influence

“During the Era of Oriental Influence, we see an abrupt shift in Zymoglyphic art. Instead of the highly complex arrangements of the dioramas, there is a return to simple arrangements of dried fruit, rocks, and sticks. This trend reaches its extreme in the art of "viewing stones", which consists simply of selecting and positioning a small natural object which is worthy of contemplation, then putting it on a stand” (Zymoglyphic.org).



Bubble Plant Cutting



Curio collection



Main exhibit

The Era of Oriental Influence: Dialogues

Ikebana, suiseki, bonsai → Buddhist nature in all things, Shinto, size, intention



Photo by [@midsummer_k](#)



wikipedia



Rebecca Hale



The Modern Age

“In the Modern Age, Zymoglyphic art becomes more formalized and self-referential, more about art itself than serving a specific function in cultural life. We see a succession of art movements as each new trend pushes aside the old, establishing itself as the latest thing before becoming outdated itself. Artists reject the notion of well-crafted, narrative painting and sculpture (in a land of indolent dreamers, this was never very popular anyway, but it was now justified on theoretical grounds)” (Zymoglyphic.org).



Natural Modernism



Composition #1



Undersea Growth

The Modern Age: Influences

Modernist sculpture, abstract expressionism



Dame Barbara Hepworth, *Oval Sculpture (No. 2)*
(1943, cast 1958)



Jackson Pollock, *Convergence* (1952)



Photo courtesy of zymoglyphic.org

How is art portrayed in the Zymoglyphic Museum?

- Museum as art → collection as creation
- Spiritual objects reassessed / used for their aesthetic value
- Collection and rearranging as art
- Nature deemed worthy of contemplation
- Art for art's sake, or as a self-referential mode of expression



Dehydrated Scobys

“Museum of the self”



The museum's archive of materials, a worktable



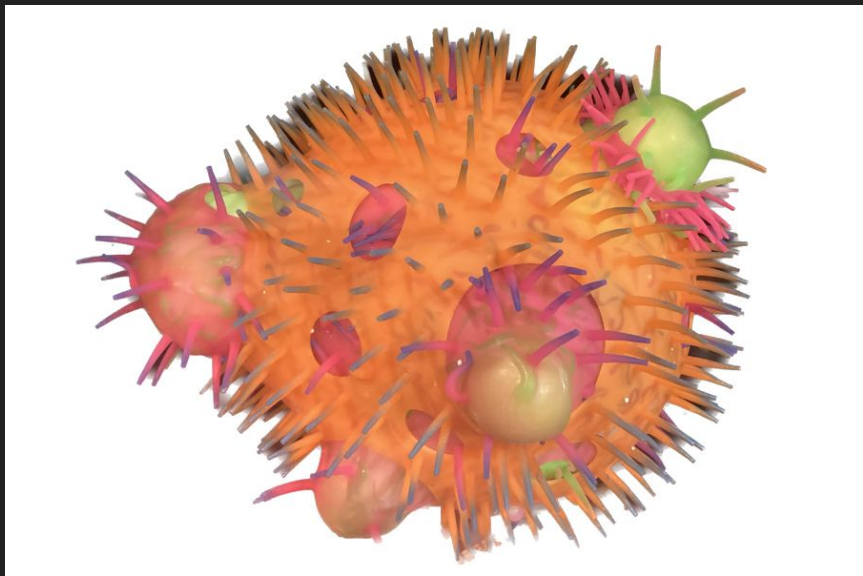
Stewart's workstation at the Zymoglyphic Museum

Why is the Zymoglyphic Museum important?

- Challenges the notions of what art is and can be
- Occupies a niche of idiosyncratic museums often overlooked by academia
- Supports local artists (residency program)



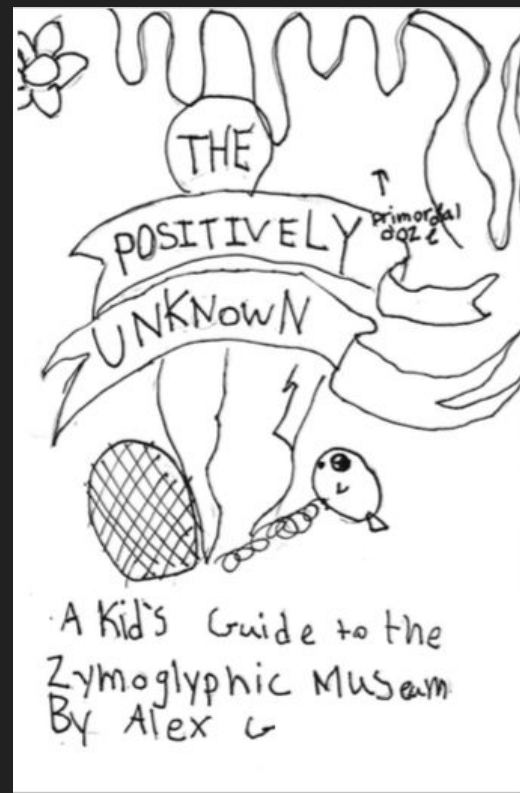
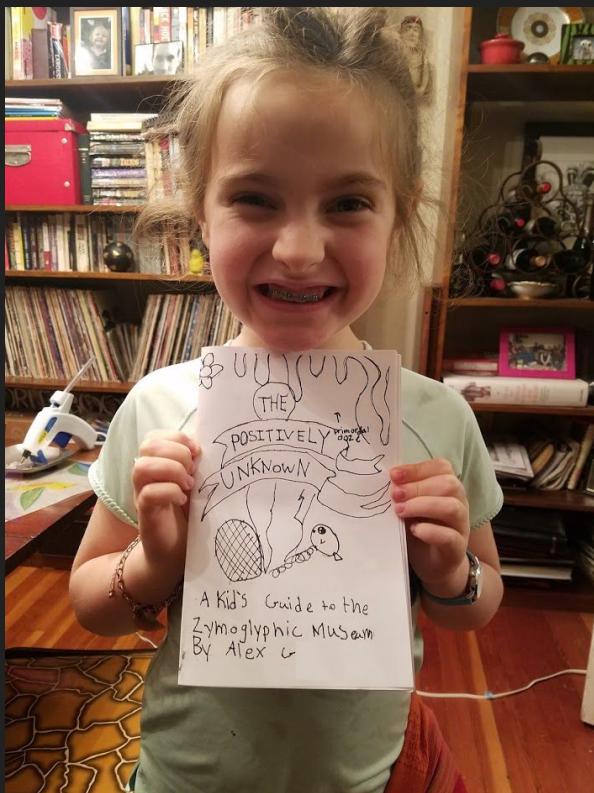
Healers from the Zymoglyphic, Erinn Kathryn



ZMOV VAINC: Museum as Muse as Museum Muse by Lyndsay Hogland



Metamorphosis: Curiosity Cabinet by Lauren Carrera



Inspiring the next generation of artists!



Thank you so
much for
listening!
Questions?

photographs by Judith Hoffman and Shad McConnell

zymoglyphic.org

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Visit the Zymoglyphic
Museum!
zymoglyphic.org

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