

We are unbowed in our roles as Jacks and Jills of all media, masters of none. We prefer variety to specialization or consistency, understanding that the whole will be greater than the sum of its parts.

The value of a created object comes from its meaning, its creativity, and its ability to inspire creativity in others; not its craft, its precision, its cleanliness, its scarcity, nor the fame of its maker.

IV.

As with the evolution of life from the primordial ooze, let complexity arise out of simplicity by its own accord; begin with nature; collaborate with nature; let nature do the detail work.

Collect and arrange, plunge in and create; if your collected objects have personalities, arrange them into mysterious narratives; explicate the narrative later if at all; step back in space or in time, observe what you have made, and tell stories about what you have made.

Be unconcerned that what you make has been made before; likewise be unconcerned that it may be made again by others; it is your own uniqueness that is the essence that cannot be duplicated. As Qoheleth said millenia ago, “There is nothing new under the sun.” If it is meaningful to you, it has value; if it inspires others, it has value.

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The Zymoglyphic Way

A Manifesto



I.

We of the Zymoglyphic region stand in awe of the vastness of the cosmos, the miracle of molecules coming to life, the strangeness of life's evolutionary byways, and the peculiarities of the quantum structure on which it all rests, all described in mathematical and taxonomic detail to us by our astronomers, our biologists, and our physicists.

Even so, we feel dissatisfied with the limitations inherent in the immutable laws of physics and we look to our artists and storytellers to imagine further an enchanted universe populated with chimeras and mythical beings, the flora and fauna of the jungles, deserts, and swamps of our internal continents.

Our principles are not always clear - we have desires for both simplicity and complexity, for lean design and for worlds within worlds, for adventure and domesticity. We value ancient artifacts and fragile ephemera.

We accept that decay is inevitable and we find poetry in it. We believe that the best we can do is slow down the decomposition and examine the process. We counteract entropy with our own acts of creation. Our Museum contains the mortal remains of many beings in a state of arrested decay. Dust and grime bedeck the exhibits and spiders are encouraged to add their embellishments. We accept that the great Museum itself will one day be a picturesque ruin, its columns askew, its engines rusted, its halls run to weeds and vines, its exhibits scattered, crushed, and forgotten.

II.

Some of us are collectors; we collect the marginalia of the world. We find miniature worlds in hidden places and try to bring them home. We see art in gnarled roots, agate slices, and rusty metal. We are fascinated by the things in the world that straddle boundaries:

hybrids and chimeras, the artist who is a scientist, the taxidermied corpse that seems to be alive.

We are also creators. Our goal is to illuminate the correspondences between the wonders of the physical world and the phantasms and spirits of our psyches. Our creations are spontaneous, adventurous, wondrous, and wildly inconsistent yet strangely coherent.

We submit our collections, our simple creations, and our artifacts, as offerings to our great Museum in the hope that the Museum will find proper places for them in the grand cosmography of its august halls, its exhibits, and its research facilities. We turn to the dusty microcosm of our great Museum to help us with understanding and connection. Like the world, our Museum has its hidden rooms and forgotten corners, and little museums within it.

III.

There is poetry in decay and an authenticity in layers of weathering that cannot be duplicated by a deliberate hand

There is meaning in a spontaneous sketch, in a quick assemblage of detritus and gnarled sticks found on the same day or found years apart, as if meeting at long last.

There is discovery to be had in creating without knowing what the final product will be or why it even exists at all.

We embrace the amateurs, the outsiders, the impatient ones, those who create just to create, with no regard for commercial viability or success

We abjure polish and shine and will merely tolerate meticulous craftsmanship; we value dust on our objects and take spiderwebs as compliments.