

# MASS MoCA

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
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### *Artist Talk: Mark Dion*

*Equal parts science, humor, archaeology, and art*

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North Adams, Massachusetts — Known for his large-scale, intricate, mixed-media installations, Mark Dion's interdisciplinary, interactive works merge art, science, history, and archaeology. The artist discusses his career and *The Octagon Room*, his mini-retrospective that is equal parts cabinet of curiosity, Victorian sitting room,

and military bunker, on Thursday, February 19, at 5:30 pm.

*The Octagon Room* takes the appearance of an octagon-shaped, brutalist-style war bunker. Upon entering the room, however, the viewer is transported to a cozy, Victorian-era parlor space. Dion's appropriation of archaeological and scientific methods becomes immediately apparent, as the artist invites viewers to poke and prod about the room stocked full of Dion's personal effects (everything from letters and tchotchkes, to sludge from the Deerfield River and shotgun shells), which are labeled, cataloged, shelved, and filed throughout the room. The installation rewards the nosiest, most participatory viewers: the more you open drawers, rifle through desks, and sift through shelves, the more you discover.

*The Octagon Room* and the items that comprise it act as Dion's reflection on, and archive of, his life as an artist during the Bush years, a time of war when many American artists felt stifled and isolated. As Dion himself describes *The Octagon Room*, "this is how I fiddled while Rome burned."

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MASS MoCA curator Denise Markonish, who worked closely with Dion during the installation of *The Octagon Room*, says: “Mark Dion gives an incredibly engaging artist talk — one of the best I’ve ever heard — touching on subjects such as archaeology, history, museums, and natural science, all with the same irreverent humor found in his work.”

### About the Artist

Born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1961, Dion currently lives in New York City. His work has been the subject of major exhibitions worldwide including *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), *Rescue Archaeology*, a project for the Museum of Modern Art (2004), and *Tate Thames Dig* at the Tate Gallery in London (1999). In 2012, his work was included in dOCUMENTA 13, in Kassel, Germany. Dion has also been part of previous MASS MoCA projects, such as the exhibition *Becoming Animal* (2005) and the performance *Anatomy Theater* with David Lang (2006).

**Mark Dion** engages MASS MoCA audiences in conversation about his process and *The Octagon Room* on **Thursday, February 19, at 5:30 pm** in Club B-10. Tickets are free for members and \$7 for not-yet-members.

Tickets for all events are available through the MASS MoCA box office located on Marshall Street in North Adams, open 11am - 5pm Wednesdays through Mondays; closed Tuesdays through spring 2015. Tickets can also be purchased by calling 413.662.2111 during box office hours.

### About MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest (and largest) centers for making and enjoying today's most important art, music, dance, theater, film, and video. Hundreds of works of visual and performing art have been created on its 19th-century factory campus during fabrication and rehearsal residencies, making MASS MoCA among the most productive sites in the country for the creation and presentation

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of new art. More platform than box, MASS MoCA strives to bring to its audiences art experiences that are fresh, engaging, and transformative.

MASS MoCA's galleries are open 11am to 5pm every day except Tuesdays. The Hall Art Foundation's Anselm Kiefer exhibition is open seasonally beginning spring 2015. Gallery admission is \$18 for adults, \$16 for veterans and seniors, \$12 for students, \$8 for children 6 to 16, and free for children 5 and under. Members are admitted free year-round. For additional information, call 413.662.2111 x1 or visit [massmoca.org](http://massmoca.org).

### Additional

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