

This video discusses the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) in Hobart, Tasmania, which opened in 2011 and is notable for its unique architectural design and diverse collection. Owned by David Walsh, the museum houses works from various historical periods, blending ancient antiquities with modern and contemporary art without a traditional narrative structure. The underground galleries create a disorienting yet immersive experience for visitors.

The speakers, who have a scholarly interest in art history, draw parallels between MONA and historical "cabinets of curiosity" from the 18th and 19th centuries. They explore connections between MONA and other historical sites, emphasizing its aesthetic roots in earlier artistic movements and experiences. They note that, unlike conventional museums, MONA lacks explanatory signage, presenting a visceral experience of art juxtaposition.

The conversation also critiques Walsh's neo-Darwinian interpretation of art, arguing that while it provides a unique perspective, it overlooks the museum's cultural connections. They highlight the museum's links to British colonialism and Tasmania's gothic literary tradition, suggesting that these connections enrich rather than detract from MONA's identity.

Additionally, the speakers mention their ongoing research, which encompasses a broader context exploring links between historical art practices and contemporary culture, including the influence of China on Western art movements. Their work aims to reveal the complexity and depth of MONA's artistic significance beyond its public persona.