

# Walter Potter's Curious World of Taxidermy

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Welcome to Victorian taxidermist Walter Potter's fantasy world of rabbit schoolchildren, cigar-smoking squirrels and exemplary feline etiquette in Walter Potter's Curious World of Taxidermy...

Walter Potter (1835-1918), a British country taxidermist of no great expertise, built anthropomorphic taxidermy tableaux that became famous icons of Victorian whimsy, including his masterpiece *The Death & Burial of Cock Robin*. His tiny museum in Bramber, Sussex, was crammed full of multi-legged kittens, two-headed lambs, and a bewildering assortment of curios. Potter's inspired and beguiling tableaux found many fans in the contemporary art world: it was reported that a £1M bid by Damien Hirst to keep the collection intact was refused when the museum finally closed. Here, perhaps for the last time, many important pieces from the collection are showcased and celebrated with new photographs of Potter's best-loved works. Darkly witty and affecting, *Walter Potter's Curious World of Taxidermy* makes a charming, whimsical (and yes, slightly morbid) gift. DR. PAT MORRIS is a biologist, and formerly a senior lecturer in zoology at Royal Holloway, University of London, specializing in mammal ecology, particularly hedgehogs and dormice. He is the author of twenty books about natural history and taxidermy and has published more than 150 scientific papers and magazine articles on natural history topics. He first visited Walter Potter's museum in Bramber in 1955 and thirty years later became a technical adviser to its owners. With their help, he gained an unrivaled knowledge of Potter's work, and first published as *Walter Potter and His Museum of Curious Taxidermy* in 2008, a record of a unique collection now dispersed by its sale in 2003.

Photographer JOANNA EBENSTEIN is an artist and producer based in New York. She runs the *Morbid Anatomy* blog and the *Morbid Anatomy Library* in Brooklyn, which makes available to the public her collection of art, ephemera, books, and curiosities. "Walter Potter's *Curious World of Taxidermy* is one of the most important books I've read on Victorian taxidermy in months. It's like Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, but with squirrels." -Gary Shteyngart, *T Magazine*, *The New York Times*  
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