Review: Flesh and Bones: The Art of Anatomy


Reviewed May 2022
Alfonso Huerta, Circulation Coordinator, ArtCenter College of Design, alfonso.huerta@artcenter.edu
https://doi.org/10.17613/svxh-8q65

Flesh and Bones: The Art of Anatomy is a collection of essays by Monique Kornell with contributions by Thisbe Gensler, Naoko Takahatake, and Erin Travers. This catalog accompanies an exhibition on view at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles from February 22 to July 10, 2022. Gensler is a research assistant at the Getty Research Institute; Takahatake is a curator of prints and drawings at the Getty Research Institute; and Travers specializes in seventeenth-century Dutch art and visual culture. Specializing in historical anatomical book illustration, Kornell sheds light on the development of anatomical illustrations and their use by artists and states, “Flesh and Bones: The Art of Anatomy celebrates the fervid exchange between anatomist, surgeons, and artists from the sixteenth through the twenty-first century by offering a historiography of anatomical illustration that directly engages these imaginative artworks.”

Kornell is an independent scholar who has created a perfect resource on the history and evolution of anatomical drawings and anatomy books throughout Europe. From Andreas Vesalius’ De humani corporis fabrica libri septem (1543) through the use of the stereoscope and x-ray photographs, the catalog is a comprehensive look at the intersection of art and anatomy. The majority of the works reproduced in the catalog come from the collection of anatomy books at the Getty Research Institute. Flesh and Bones has a narrow focus and is best suited for art and academic libraries with some potential appeal towards public libraries serving
academics. The catalog is well written and extensively researched, but the scholarly text might be too dry for the casual reader. Corresponding endnotes accompany the chapters.

*Flesh and Bones* is well designed with a sturdy hardcover and semi-transparent dust jacket on good quality paper. It includes 163 beautifully reproduced illustrations, and each illustration supports Kornell’s overall thesis. The catalog is structured into eight chapters, a catalog of works in the exhibition with accompanying text, three appendixes, a bibliography, and an index. The illustrations listed in the catalog section of the book are primarily full size with accompanying text. The book makes a good addition to collections that include the *Atlas of Human Anatomy and Surgery* by J.M. Bourgery (Taschen, 2008) and Martin Clayton and Ron Philo’s *Leonardo da Vinci: The Mechanics of Man* (J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010).