

The Ingenious Machine of Nature: Four Centuries of Art and Anatomy

Mimi Cazort



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The Ingenious Machine of Nature: Four Centuries of Art and Anatomy Mimi Cazort Renaissance art and the descriptive science of human anatomy were born at exactly the same moment in Italy around 1500. Anatomists needed artists to illustrate their books, and artists needed anatomists to help them understand the body's structure, movement, and function. The illustrations which they devised together mark the longest unbroken collaboration between scientists and artists in western culture. These "maps of the body" established the basis for the figurative tradition in painting and sculpture which lasts to this day. The exhibition catalogue reproduces anatomical drawings, prints, and illustrated books, and includes examples by major artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo, Durer, and Rubens but also the eloquent illustrations by lesser known artists. The text, written for the interested layman as well as the specialist, explores popular anatomical broadsheets, the teaching of anatomy to young artists, female anatomy as revealing the origins of life, the anatomical dissection theatres, and "anatomy satirized."

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