

# REMEDIATING ANATOMICAL IMAGES OF THE HUMAN BODY, EN-GENDERING ANATOMICAL ICONICITY

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## **Abstract**

*It has been noticed of late that anatomical representations in any medium have always claimed to depict the actual, living human body in realistic visual terms. Nonetheless, realism is anything but objective – itself a deeply problematic concept – or value-free. Like in the arts, realism in anatomy is a technique which disavows its epistemic condition by conventional fiat, and traditionally convincingly so. Furthermore, both “realist” anatomical sketches past and present and state-of-the-art medical simulators do not so much contribute to the advancement (and dissemination) of body knowledge as they represent, reproduce and thus tacitly reinforce societal values and understandings as framed within the anatomo-medical discipline. This paper investigates ways in which practices of anatomical representation past and present, in particular the La Specola ceroplastics (as remediated in the Encyclopedia Anatomica’s photographs) and contemporary anatomy books, can yield metacognitive insights into western epistemology via the anatomo-medical sciences. The broad feminist framework I have adopted enables a critique of scientific discursive practices, with their en-gendering of situated knowledges deemed, however, universal and thereby rendered iconic.*