

The New York Times

## On Display: An Inside Look at the Body

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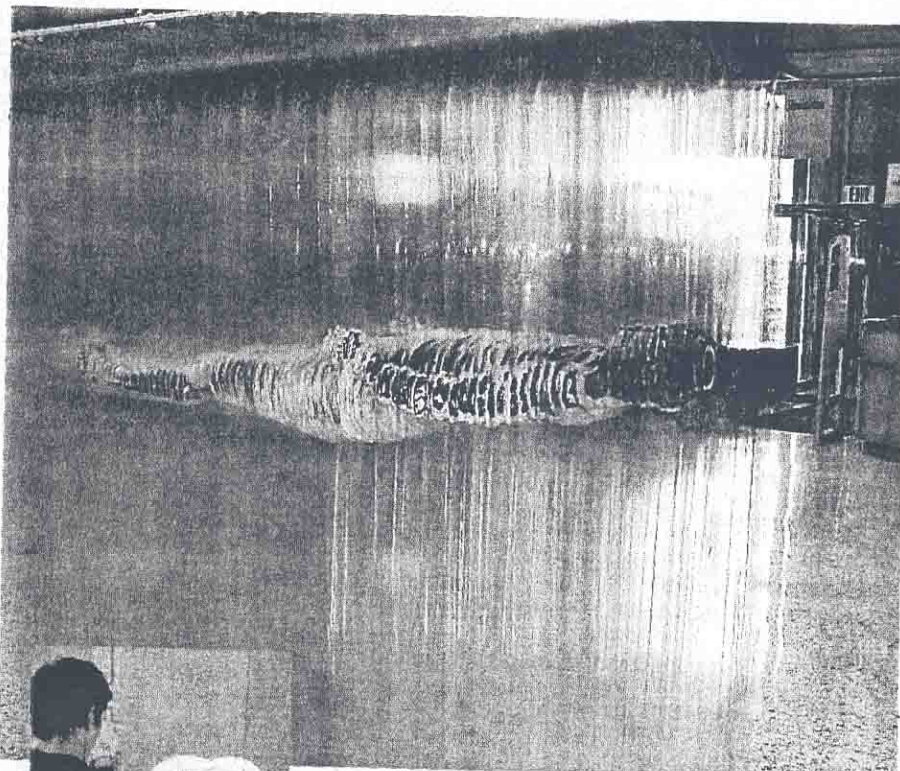
BETHESDA, Md. — High-resolution modern images of the human body and imaginative early attempts to diagram internal organs are on display in an exhibit called “Dream Anatomy” at the National Library of Medicine, on the campus of the National Institutes of Health here.

The exhibit shows for the first time rare historical anatomical works from the library’s collection, as diverse as a 1543 treatise by Andreas Vesalius, known as the father of modern anatomy, and seven-page Plexiglas books that show the internal structures of a man and a woman photographed in cross-sections from head to toe shortly after each died.

Early anatomical illustrations involved composites and imagination. Anatomists drew bodies standing upright or in other positions impossible for the cadavers they used as models, using knowledge from multiple dissections — or educated guessing — to create one drawing. The imprecise nature allowed for mistakes that competing anatomists might parody within their own books to chastise other researchers.

“The whole tradition is you criticize your predecessor,” said Dr. Michael Sappol, the curator of the exhibit and the author of a book on anatomy’s role in 19th-century medicine and culture in the United States.

The exhibit, which will run until August, is open to the public. Information about the library is available at [www.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.nlm.nih.gov).



National Library of Medicine

Left, an exhibit allows a visitor to track segments of his own body. Above, a sculpture made of nylon sheets painted with cross-sections of the body. Right, a “Visible Human Plexi-Book.”

