

ANATOMY ACTS

Contemporary Art

This section has been written with reference to the work created by Christine Borland for Anatomy Acts, however the methods used and the questions asked of students can be used to explore other contemporary artists and current exhibitions.

Christine Borland



fig 1

Your teacher will explain a bit about the commissioned artwork by Christine Borland. They will encourage you to make considered personal responses to the work and try to make connections with other medical exhibits you have seen in the exhibition.

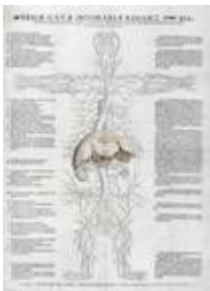


fig 2



fig 3

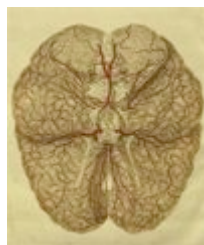


fig 4



fig 5

ANATOMY ACTS

Some visitors have observed the relationship between the branches of the tree and images of nerve networks, vein patterns and bronchial structures in the human body.

In your sketchbook jot down your thoughts and make sketches as you revisit the rest of the exhibits displayed near her work. Use the following questions to assist you in your explorations and note taking.

- Why do you think the artist has chosen to present her work in this way? What is your opinion of the presentation? (think about scale, shape, positioning etc)
- How successful do you think the artist has been in encouraging the viewer to think about certain issues?
- What connections can you make between the shape and form of the artwork and other exhibits?
- Can you suggest any theoretical similarities?

As you explore the rest of the exhibition, use a similar method to connect the work of contemporary artists to other exhibits throughout the galleries. Also, note your emotional responses to what you see. This will help you form your own ideas and provide inspiration for your own work.

Christine Borland – background information

born 1965

Christine Borland is one of Scotland's most successful and internationally recognised artists and is currently a research fellow at Glasgow School of Art. Her work is associated with the systems and processes that underpin our society, including forensic science and medicine.

Borland was born in Darvel, Ayrshire and studied at Glasgow School of Art and the University of Ulster, Belfast. Her work has often involved collaboration with non-art related institutions, exploring areas such as forensic science, the history of medicine, medical ethics and human genetics. Borland frequently asks us to consider the fragility of human life and the way in which it is valued by social systems and institutions. She works with a variety of materials, including glass, china, fabric and bronze. Borland was nominated for the Turner Prize in 1997.

Recent work has shown an interest in ethics and the consequences of medical decision making. For this work, the overriding image in reference to anatomy is of branch-like networks, in particular, bronchial structures. When resident at

ANATOMY ACTS

Glenfiddich Distillery in 2004, she became fascinated by the black discolouration of the buildings and trees around the distillery. This was caused by the fungus *aspergillus nigrum*, produced when the alcohol from the whisky is evaporating off during maturation. Borland links this to the preservation of anatomical and biological specimens in alcohol which also evaporate. The contrast between the black and white saplings registers healthy and pathological specimens, and signals the processes of decay within the body.

See **artist's details** <http://www.anatomyacts.co.uk/artists/ChristineDetails.htm>

fig 1. Anatomy Acts Object Guide No.168

Black, White and Shades of Grey, 2006

Christine Borland (b1965)

Courtesy of Lisson Gallery, London

fig 2. Anatomy Acts Object Guide No.8

Tabulae anatomicae sex, six plates, 1538

Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564)

Glasgow University Library, Special Collections, Az.1.10

fig 3. Anatomy Acts Object Guide No.16

Skeleton, brain, nerves from John Banister: Anatomical tables.

Table 5 & 6, c.1580

Anon.

Glasgow University Library, Special Collections, Ms Hunter 364 (V.1.1)

fig 4. Anatomy Acts Object Guide No.86

Engravings of the Cardiac Nerves, (Tabulae Neurologica), Edinburgh, 1832

Antonio Scarpa (1752-1832)

Special Collections, University of St Andrews, sf QM25.S3E32

fig 5. Anatomy Acts Object Guide No.143

Geburtshilflicher Röntgen Atlas, Tab. 10, pl. 9, Dresden, 1908

G. Leopold and T. Leisewitz Leopold

Courtesy of The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, RR Q7

Copyright

Images and accompanying text on www.anatomyacts.co.uk can be printed, photocopied, used in digital form for education purposes only. You are not permitted to make any money from these resources or sell any publication or product containing these resources. All copyright remains with the lender. If you require any further information on a particular image or if you would like to find out about obtaining reproduction please contact the lender (see credit accompanying each image).