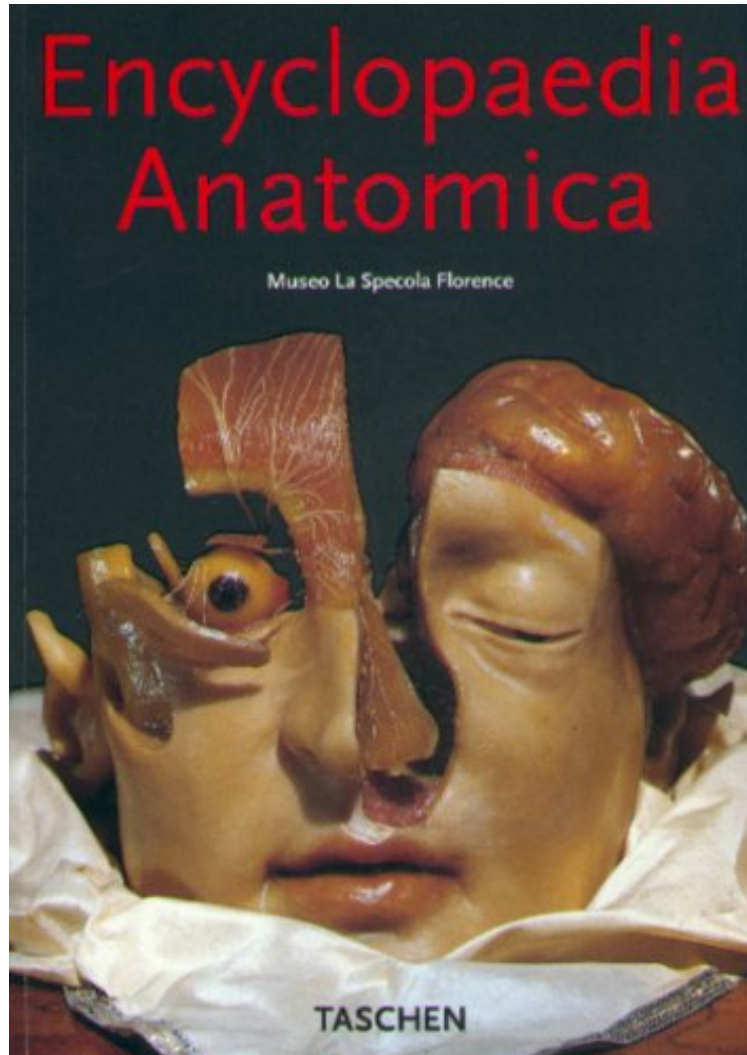


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Encyclopedia Anatomica: Museo La Specola Florence (Klotz)

Monika Von During, Marta Poggesi, Georges Didi-Huberman
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An understanding of the anatomy of the human body remains the foundation of medical science. Witness the eccentric Museo La Specola, a unique collection of anatomical wax models from the late 18th century. This book includes explanations from the perspective of modern science.

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Few catalogues of science museums have the power to mesmerize their readers. Encyclopaedia Anatomica does just this, page after page, with its high-quality color reproductions of the collection of Florence's Museo La Specola. This amazing set of anatomical models, made mostly of wax, are so brilliantly lifelike that the casual reader is sure to mistake them for extraordinarily well-preserved bodies. Organized by anatomical section, each of hundreds of models are displayed to show off their most flattering aspect; despite the respectful attitudes held by the book editors and designers, the macabre nature of the exhibits is irrepressible. Particularly eerie are the tableaux of Gaetano Giulio Zumbo, who used similar techniques to create terrifying metaphorical portraits of the harsh life of the 18th century. While the descriptions aren't specific enough to yield much insight into the anatomical detail, this would still make an excellent companion to a text or laboratory manual. The introductory essays cover the history of the museum, the artists, and their techniques thoroughly and engagingly. If the inside of the body is as beautiful to you as the outside, you should find Encyclopaedia Anatomica a charmingly powerful work. --Rob Lightner
About the Author
Monika von Düring is Professor of Neuroanatomy at the Ruhr University in Bochum, Germany. Her brief medical explanations help to guide both lay-reader and medical expert through this graphic encyclopaedia of anatomy. Marta Poggesi is a biologist, and has been curator of the Museo Zoologico La Specola since 1969. Parallel to research projects, she manages and catalogues the zoological collection, to which the anatomical wax bodies and parts belong. Georges Didi-Huberman is professor at the College of Social Sciences in Paris. His contribution underscores the tension inherent in this collection: between religious votive wax figures, mannerist art and wonder chambers and the Enlightenment.