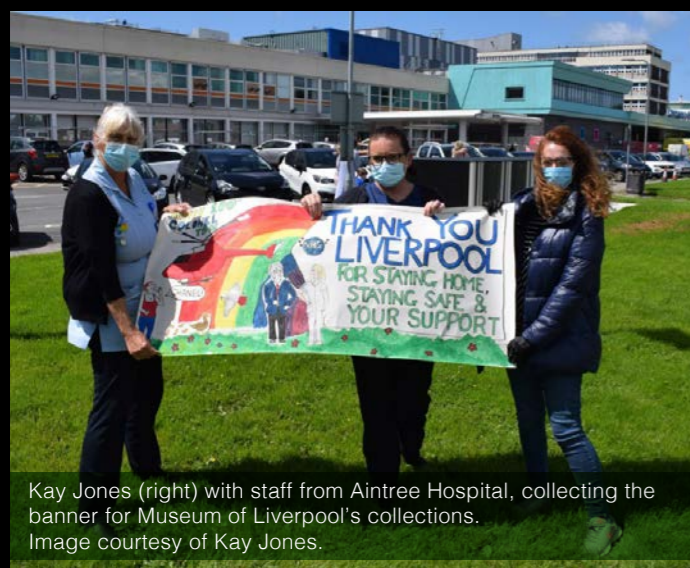


We also asked people to creatively explore and draw their personal lockdown experiences through mind maps. These 'maps' are being shown on our large digital screens in the Museum atrium as part of the Covid-19 display. They can be seen here -

<https://youtu.be/ljTg1Sf6FF8>

It was great to meet (virtually and in real life where possible) lots of different people and see the places like Merseyside PPE hub and DoES where incredible work had been done by people coming together in our community to make a real difference and hearing their incredible stories. Everyone was thankfully keen to be involved and were very proud to be featured in the Museum of Liverpool.

My favourite items



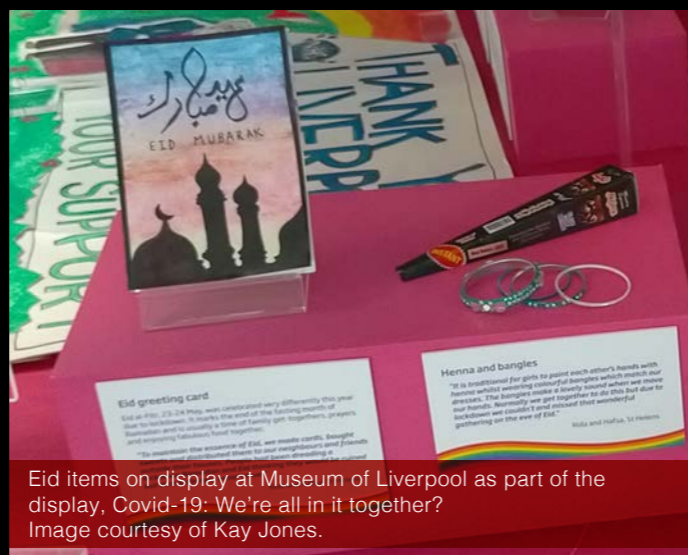
Kay Jones (right) with staff from Aintree Hospital, collecting the banner for Museum of Liverpool's collections. Image courtesy of Kay Jones.

NHS banner

This fabulous banner caught my eye straight away when it was shared on social media. It was designed by radiographers at Aintree Hospital and was proudly waved during the Thursday night Clap for Carers outside of the hospital in April. It sums up lots of aspects of life during the pandemic such as Colonel Tom's mammoth fundraising efforts for NHS Charities and also Liverpool's very own Chanel, the escaped African grey parrot and her owner Sandra who were the subject of viral internet memes and were interviewed on ITV's This Morning! (A very Liverpool story!).

"The banner shows our appreciation for all the people and businesses who have helped NHS shift workers; from schools making us visors, having protected shopping times for shift workers, free travel and even receiving free meals has raised our morale during this difficult pandemic. All help was appreciated, reminding us of why we work in healthcare; the whole nation pulled together when we needed it most. Thank you."

Tee Kaur, one of the banner's designers.



Eid items on display at Museum of Liverpool as part of the display, Covid-19: We're all in it together? Image courtesy of Kay Jones.

Eid greeting card, henna and bangles

I was keen to represent Eid in lockdown. I approached a number of local groups and organisations who helped to spread the word throughout their networks. I also approached a member of a group the Museum had worked with previously, Meet Your Muslim Neighbour and was able to collect objects and stories through his family which was wonderful.

Eid al-Fitr, 23-24 May, was celebrated very differently this year due to lockdown. It marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan and is usually a time of family get-togethers, prayers and enjoying

"To maintain the essence of Eid, we made cards, bought sweets and distributed them to our neighbours and friends outside their houses. People had been dreading a lockdown Ramadan and Eid thinking they would be ruined but that definitely wasn't true!"

Rida and Hafsa, St Helens

"It is traditional for girls to paint each other's hands with henna whilst wearing colourful bangles which match our dresses. The bangles make a lovely sound when we move our hands. Normally we get together to do this but due to lockdown we couldn't and missed that wonderful gathering on the eve of Eid"

Rida and Hafsa, St Helens

These objects, along with their associated personal stories, and Many others are currently on display in the Covid-19: We're all in it together? display at the Museum of Liverpool.

SHC Kay Jones

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Transforming a physical exhibition into a digital version

An interview with 'Under the Skin' curator, Katie Birkwood

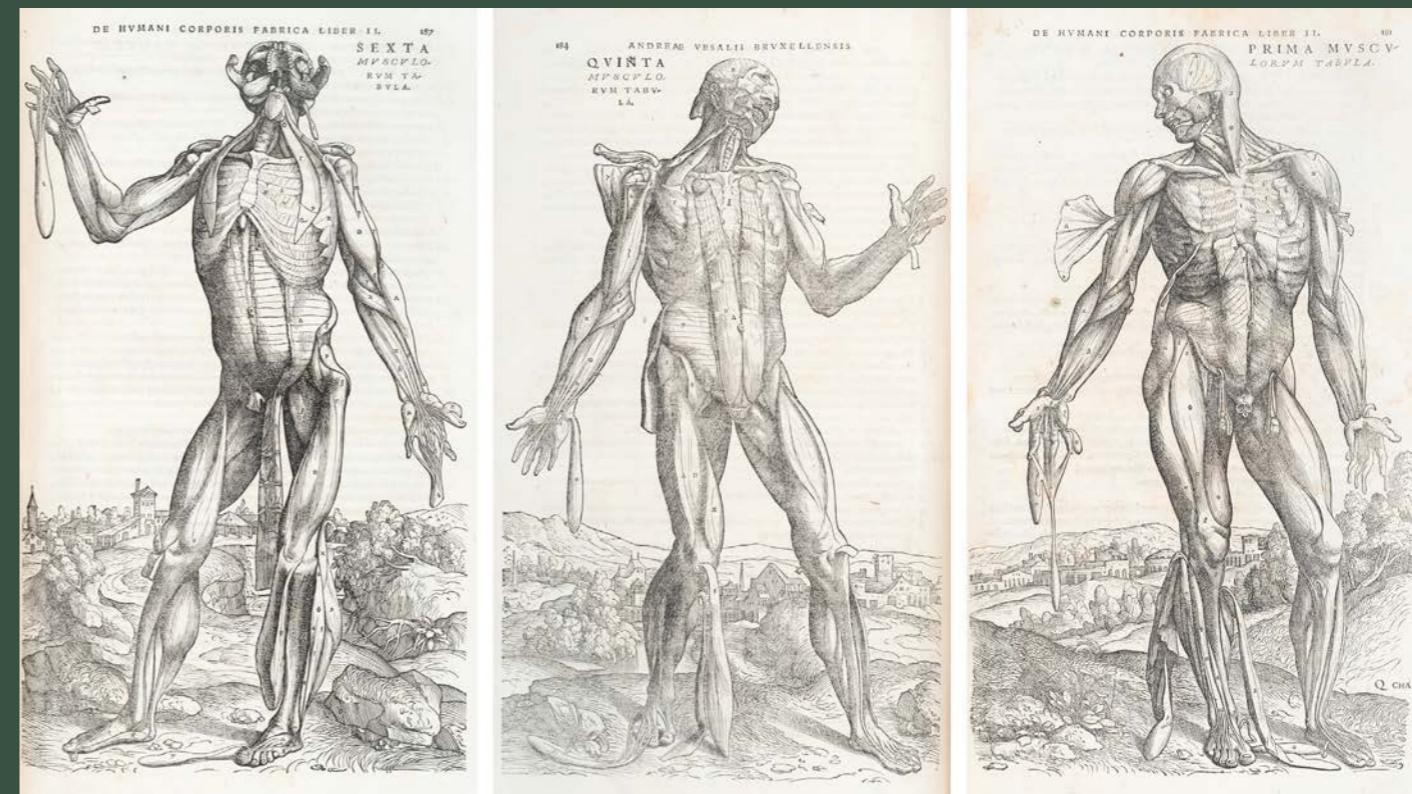


Image from Humani Corporis Fabrica by Vesalius. Image courtesy of the Royal College of Physicians.

Under the Skin: Anatomy, Art and Identity is the first digital exhibition for the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) Museum. It explores the artistry and innovation of anatomical illustration from the medieval world to the present day. *Under the Skin* opened in 2019 as a physical exhibition but Covid-19 impacted the Museum's exhibition programme. This meant that UTS was extended and transformed into a digital exhibition to reach audiences during the galleries closure.

Under the Skin curator and rare book librarian, Katie Birkwood managed this curatorial process and shares her experiences.

How did the UTS exhibition come about?

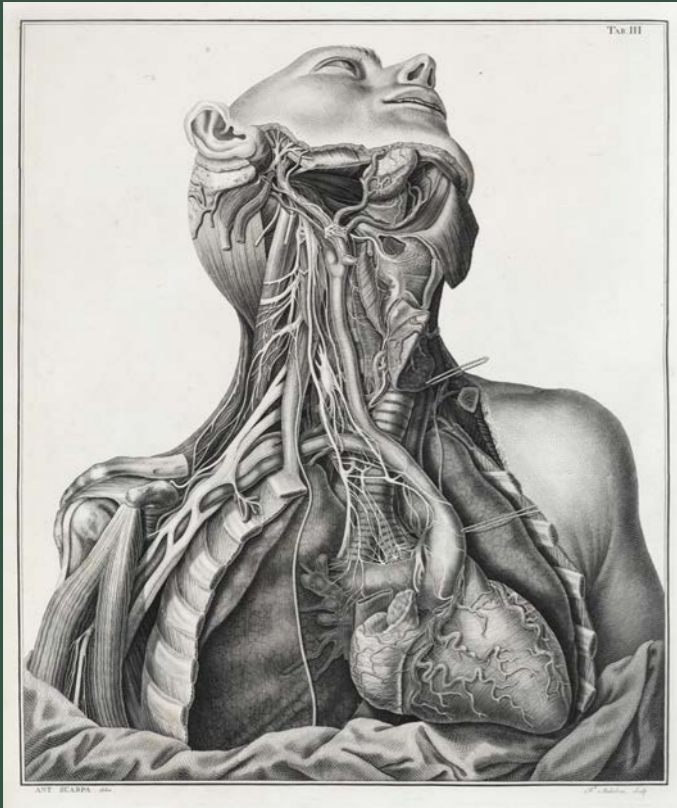
UTS began as a much smaller pop-up exhibition that featured anatomical illustrations from the RCP collections. It tied with 'Thinking 3D', a wider interdisciplinary research project between the University of St Andrews and the University of Oxford, exploring the concept of three-dimensionality and its impact on the arts and sciences.

The pop-up exhibition made me think about the social, emotional and historical contexts of the anatomical images. UTS returned as a larger exhibition at the end of 2019. It included the technical aspects of anatomical illustration and medical printing but also an exploration of the power structures that these images embodied:

Who were the people shown in the pictures? Did they consent to be dissected? Did they expect to be displayed on the walls of museums hundreds of years after their deaths? How does our understanding of the unethical use of bodies in anatomical illustration affect how we consider these images today?

As a curator, a way for me to consider these questions was by incorporating contemporary artworks that reflected on these issues. This hopefully gave our visitors the chance to explore those issues in more detail and not just have to look at medical images in an objective way.

Fourteen contemporary artists were invited to help interpret the material. The artworks ranged in different media from ceramics and textiles to video pieces. The contemporary art helped bring to life the historical books and works on paper.



Tabulae Nerologicae by Scarpa. Image Courtesy of the Royal College of Physicians.

How did you approach curating a digital version of a physical exhibition?

The circumstances of Covid-19 meant that there was an urgency to getting our exhibition online. It benefitted the process because there was little time to overthink things. It also focused the curation of objects, perhaps even more so than curating a physical space, as key objects that distilled the exhibition most clearly, were selected.

The physical exhibition included video, animation and oral histories and I was keen to represent them, as well as many of the contemporary artworks, to give online audiences an opportunity to see them. The physical exhibition comprised eight discrete sections and the digital exhibition reflects this layout. With more time, I'd have taken the digital exhibition apart and put it together in a new way. It could have been an opportunity to move objects around without physical restrictions such as environmental conditions or size.

What have been the benefits of UTS going online, any unexpected ones?

Although you cannot imitate the 'thrill of the real', of actually seeing Museum objects, there are other benefits for digital access. For example, with rare books, digital audiences can see more of the book as they aren't restricted to viewing the one page displayed. With an online version we can add links or embed digitised copies that audiences can flick through and find what interests them.

There were also benefits of being able to link out to more information. We provided links to catalogue records to help our academic audiences access this information for future research. Putting information like this on a label can be prohibitive and crowded but it is easily included online.

What were the curatorial restrictions or challenges of transforming UTS into a digital exhibition?

In the physical UTS exhibition, there were some hard-hitting, surprising, upsetting and grotesque images on the walls that confronted Museum visitors. Visitors could then view the smaller objects in cases. It can be impossible to achieve this sense of envelopment and being surrounded by the material in an online exhibition.

It is also hard to imitate the communal learning experience of going to a gallery. With virtual exhibition tours, online participants can interact more and ask questions at the end, but there isn't the direct feedback. When giving an actual gallery tour, you can be guided by what people react to or are interested in and adapt what you then focus upon.

We hadn't made an online exhibition before and hadn't expected to use our website or content management system for online exhibitions in this way. We had to adapt and modify to what it could do. Through a collaborative feedback process, I was guided to create something more visually oriented where text was mostly hidden behind concertinas. This provided lots of visual images, but also the choice to learn more through the text.

The contemporary artwork also presented challenges. We were mindful that we needed to keep the artists informed and seek permission for this new and extended use online.

For historical materials they can be easier to show in a digital surrogate form. We're used to seeing items like them and we can imagine what we're missing if we view a 2D online version of them. With unique artworks, it is hard to convey what it is you're seeing, as if you were seeing them in person.



Liver Models by Amanda Couch. Image courtesy of the Royal College of Physicians.

The works are all extremely 3-dimensional. With the print, Liver Models by Amanda Couch, it is quite different seeing an image of it rather than actually seeing it. You miss seeing the wrinkly texture of the paper that has absorbed the moisture and the lamb's blood. With Angela Palmer's sculpture, Heart, the real joy is to stand in front of it and wobble round. We have tried to capture this with video, but it isn't the same. Similarly, Tamsin Van Essen's sculptural apothecary jars, Medical Heirlooms, look incredibly tactile in person but it is just a shadow of the experience to view them online.

If you were to create a digital exhibition again, what would you do differently?

With more time or access to the objects I would have included more video content. I'd have included a time-lapse of the installation of the Impossible Pathologies sculpture by Lucy Lyons, to give an impression of the materiality of how it is hung; the pieces of paper are suspended and move slightly with vibration.

If I did this again, I would look to not just reproduce a physical exhibition but extend outwards. I would plan in from the beginning the extra objects that could be included online that couldn't be displayed physically. For example, books that were just too big for our display cabinets, or objects that couldn't be displayed on the walls.

I'd have liked to have given visitors more of a walk-through to help them understand the physical exhibition more. I'd also like to have provided visitors options of how they experienced the objects, rather than following a set route.

The exhibition can be viewed here:
<https://history.rcplondon.ac.uk/exhibitions/under-skin-anatomy-art-and-identity>

 Liz Douglas

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Medical Hierlooms by Tamsin van Essen. Courtesy of the Royal College of Physicians.