







CSMBR ONLINE EVENTS

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF MEDICINE AND THE BODY IN THE RENAISSANCE

VESALIUS' «FABRICA» AS A VISUAL SYSTEM

HISTORIATED INITIALS AND THE TEMPORALITY OF ANATOMICAL PRACTICE

JIEUN BANG • Myongji University, Seoul

12 JANUARY 2027

11.00 AM

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF MEDICINE AND THE BODY IN THE RENAISSANCE

In this talk, I will look at the historiated initials in Andreas Vesalius's De humani corporis fabrica libri septem (1543). I would like to show that these initials were more than decorations. They also helped readers understand the practical steps involved in dissection. I will focus on several initials showing how bodies were obtained (large I), transported (L), dissected and observed (large Q, Q), and how skeletal specimens were prepared (large O, C, P). These images show that anatomical practice involved a series of steps before, during, and after dissection. Together, they suggest that anatomical knowledge was produced through this sequence of practical activities. While the large anatomical plates mainly showed the structures of the human body, the initials showed the practical work involved in studying them. In this sense, the two types of images complemented each other. I will also discuss initials showing surgical procedures (F, H), bloodletting (V), and what appears to be an enema (L). These scenes suggest that the Fabrica was closely connected to medical practices of the time. The initials thus helped readers understand both how anatomical knowledge was produced and how it was used in medical practice.

The event is free to attend but registration is required. Info at csmbr.fondazionecomel.org