THE LEIDEN DECLARATION ON HUMAN ANATOMY/ANATOMICAL COLLECTIONS
CONCERNING THE CONSERVATION & PRESERVATION OF ANATOMICAL & PATHOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS

THIS DECLARATION

IS ADDRESSED TO THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR

ANATOMICAL & PATHOLOGICAL MUSEUMS & COLLECTIONS WORLDWIDE

From: Participants, delegates and supporters of the
International Conference on 'Cultures of Anatomical Collections',
held at Leiden University, 15-18 February 2012
(http://hum.leiden.edu/icd/news-events/cultures-of-anatomical-collections.html)

We are scholars, curators and creative artists from across the world with professional involvements in human anatomy and pathology. We are writing to express our very great concern about the storage and preservation of collections of human anatomy and pathology in some parts of the world.

Almost every medical faculty possesses anatomical and/or pathological collections: human and animal preparations, wax- and other models, as well as drawings, photographs and documents and archives relating to them.

We salute and wholeheartedly commend and admire those institutions in which anatomical and pathological museum materials are celebrated and well-cared for.

However, we are also aware that in some other institutions, such collections are neglected: badly stored, poorly maintained, and rendered inaccessible to medical and other audiences.

Newer teaching methods and preoccupations have sometimes caused these collections to become under-appreciated. Financial constraints and crises can often mean that funding for the conservation, storage, and sometimes even the preservation, of anatomical collections can become de-prioritized. As a result, collections can be in great danger of becoming undervalued and neglected, which may eventually result in permanent damage.

We are aware of more than one recent instance in which curators have been marginalized or lost, and collections placed in inappropriate ‘storage’ conditions, rendering them liable to serious deterioration. Separated from their archives, these collections can lose identity, sometimes irrevocably.

We greatly fear that some uniquely important anatomical collections are currently in danger of being irretrievably damaged and perhaps lost to medical and cultural heritage.

We, the undersigned, wish to raise international awareness concerning the current critical situation for these collections.

Anatomical and pathological collections are medically relevant not only for future generations of medical students and faculty, and for future medical research. They are also important in the history of medicine generally, for the history of the institutions to which they belong, and also for a wider understanding of the cultural history of the body.

These collections sometimes document diseases and medical conditions that are now rare or simply no longer exist, teaching methods and preoccupations currently unfashionable or apparently superseded, and techniques of manufacture and display no longer practised. Collections often hold rare and extraordinary materials that are records of unique scientific investigations, medical conditions, and skills. In some cases these materials are
the only documents that allow us to understand key changes and developments in Western medicine, and their dissemination.

Moreover, anatomical collections are crucial to new scholarly inter-disciplinary studies that investigate the interaction between arts and sciences, especially but not exclusively medicine. Such collections allow the study of interactions between anatomists, scientists and anatomical artists, and other occupational groups involved in anatomical and pathological displays. They embody the rich histories related to the display of natural history and medical cabinets; they reveal how new artistic and documentary techniques and materials were adopted by physicians and scientists in other historical periods; they demonstrate how new knowledge about the body and the natural world was presented by and for the medical, scientific and sometimes lay audiences.

Ultimately anatomical collections are important in knowing ourselves and the bodies we are. In this sense they are no less important than world famous artworks like the “Mona Lisa”, the “Venus de Milo” or Michelangelo’s ‘David’.

We urge medical faculties worldwide to mobilise all possible means in order to protect and preserve the important academic, medical, institutional, scientific and cultural heritage these collections represent.

Moreover we urge funding bodies to recognise and cherish these collections.

Babke Aarts (assistant curator, Utrecht University Museum)
David Adams (on behalf of the Institute of Anatomical Sciences, UK)
Dr. Philip Addis (senior lecturer in Anatomy, St. George’s University of London)
Eva Ahlsten (Osteologist and head of the museum of medical history in Uppsala, Sweden)
Luis-Alfonso Arráez-Aybar, MD, PhD (Board Executive Officer Spanish Anatomical Society (Sociedad Anatómica Española, SAE) Professor of Human Anatomy & Embryology; School of Medicine; Complutense University, Madrid)
Gemma Angel (History of Art Department, UCL)
Prof. Rosa Ballester (historian of science, University Miguel Hernández)
Roberta Ballestriero, M.Phil. (art historian, associate lecturer for the Open University, Manchester, photographer)
Dr. A.W.H. Bates (morbid anatomist and medical historian, Royal Free Hospital and UCL)
Liang de Beer (historian, Leiden University)
Dr. Philip Beh, MBBS, DMJ, FHKAM(Path), FFFLM (Associate Professor forensic pathology, the University of Hong Kong)
Dr. Annika Berg (historian of ideas / medical historian, Stockholm University)
Dr. Leo van Bergen (medical historian, Royal Netherlands Institute for South East Asian and Caribbean Studies, Leiden)
Dr Elizabeth Benjamin MBBS; FRCPath, Senior Clinical Lecturer /Consultant Pathologist , University College London
Prof. Harm Beukers (Scaliger professor, special collections, Leiden University)
David James Blackwood (member of the Quekett Microscopy Club)
Prof. Enrique J. Blanco Barco, MD, PhD (Professor of Human Anatomy & Embryology, Spanish Society of Anatomy (Sociedad Anatómica Española, SAE), Salamanca, Spain
Timo Bolt, MA (medical historian, UMC Utrecht)
Jonathan Browns (Cultural Planner-Collections City of Ottowa, Ottowa, Canada)
Prof. Jose-Luis Bueno-Lopez (President Spanish Society of Anatomy, the University of the Basque Country, Leioa, Spain)
Owen Burke (medical physicist at Glan Clwyd Hospital, photographer)
Dr Nicholas Cambridge MD (medical historian and Hon Research Associate, Division of Biosciences, University College London)
Prof. Li Chong Chan (Chair, Professor of Pathology, the University of Hong Kong)
Dr. Tricia Close-Koenig (medical historian, Université de Strasbourg)
Dr. Christine Conley (art historian/curator, University of Ottawa)
Prof. Montserrat Cabrè (historian of science, Universidad de Cantabria)
Dr. Lucia Dacone (historian, University of Toronto)
Prof. P.H. Dangerfield (clinical anatomist, University of Liverpool)
Andries J. van Dam (conservator, Leiden University Medical Centre and directory board member Committee for Conservation, International Council of Museums, ICOM-CC)
Katharine Dowson MA (RCA) Sculptor
Prof. Dr. Sven Dupré (professor of History of Knowledge, Institute for Art History, Freie Universität Berlin)
Dr. James M. Edmonson (Chief Curator, Dittrick Museum, Case Western Reserve University, Secretary General of the European Association of Museums of the History of the Medical Sciences)
Dr. Florike Egmond (cultural and science historian, Leiden University)
Clare Fraser (MSc MCSP BBTA; Bobath Tutor & Principal Physiotherapist; TherapyMatters - NeuroPhysiotherapy and Rehabilitation Clinic)
Dennis Fullwood (secretary, Phoenix Medical Museums Club)
J. Carlos García-Reyes (historian of science, CSIC, Barcelona)
Ari Gross (Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology, University of Toronto)
Sara Doll (Ruprecht-Karls-University of Heidelberg, Institute of Anatomy and Cell Biology)
Dr. Esther van Gelder (historian of science, Museum Boerhaave/Huygens ING (KNAW))
Dr. Anita Guerrini (historian of science, Oregon State University)
Ayda Kristina Garzón Soarte (Conservator and museologist, Universidad El Bosque, Bogota, Colombia, South America)
B. Gutiérrez (Restauradora anatómica, Museo Anatómico, Universidad de Valladolid, Spain)
Dr. Alette Fleischer (historian of science)
Prof. Dr. Inge Fourment (professor in vascular surgery and anatomy, KU Leuven)
Dr. Luis Conde-Salazar Gómez, Director del Museo Olavide)
Nike Fakiner (PhD candidate, Spanish research Council and assistant curator)
Drs. Bart Grob (curator, medical history, Museum Boerhaave, Leiden)
Dr. David Hughes (Retired curator Pathology Museum, London)
Prof. Hughes Dryseść (chairman UMAC-ICOM (University Museums and Academic Collections - International Council of Museums))
Flavio Häner, MA (museologist, Pharmacy Museum, University of Basel)
Dr. Glenn Harcourt (historian of art and visual culture, independent scholar, Los Angeles, CA)
Marielle Hendriksen (MA, MRes, cultural and medical historian, Leiden University)
Christopher Henry (Director of Heritage, The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh)
Dr. Robert Hicks (director Mütter Museum/Historical Library/Wood Institute for the History of Medicine William H. Maxwell Mays Chair for the History of Medicine, The College of Physicians of Philadelphia)
Dr. Kathryn A. Hoffmann (historian, University of Hawaii Manoa)
Dr. Marijn Hollestelle (historian of science, Foundation for the History of Technology, Eindhoven)
Assoc. Prof. PD MAG. Dr.phil. Dr. Med. Sonia Horn (Medical University of Vienna)
Dr. Nick Hopwood (historian of medical science, University of Cambridge)
Karen Howell (senior curator the Old Operating Theatre Museum and Herb Garret 9a St. Thomas Street, London)
Prof. Frank Huismann (medical historian, University Medical Center Utrecht)
Hieke Huisstra Msc (medical historian, Leiden University)
Prof. Brian Hurwitz (Professor of Medicine & the Arts, Kings College, London)
Dr. Karen Ingham, Reader in Art and Science, UK
Dr. Tiffany Jenkins (sociologist, & arts and society director of the Institute of Ideas)
Dr. Karin Johannisson (medical historian, Uppsala)
Dr. Stephen C. Kenny (historian, University of Liverpool)
Dr. Michael Kessler (director Pharmacy Museum, University of Basel)
Dr. Rina Knoeff (medical historian, Leiden University)
Prof. Richard L. Kremer (historian of science, curator of the King collection of Historic Scientific Instruments, Dartmouth College, USA)
Dr. K.M.N. Kunzru (MB, MS, FRCS(Eng.), DHMSA; Emeritus Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon Whipps Cross University Hospital, London;Medical Historian; Member, Faculty of History and Philosophy of Medicine and Pharmacy, Worshipful Society of Apothecaries, London; Co-Curator, Hunterian Society of London's Collection; Past President Royal Society of Medicine,London (History of Medicine Section); Past President Hunterian Society, London; Past President (current Vice-President) Medical Society of London; Surgeon Volunteer to the Hunterian Museum, Royal College of Surgeons of England, London.
Prof. Frans van Lunteren (Historian of science, Leiden University, VU University of Amsterdam)
Dr. Marta C. Lourenco (researcher / chief curator of scientific instruments, museums of the university of Lisbon)
Dr. Anna Maerker (medical historian, King’s College London)
Dr. Daniel Margoczy (assistant professor of history, Hunter College – CUNY)
Ion Meyer M.Sc. (Head of Collection/Senior Conservator, Medical Museion, University of Copenhagen)
Martin Weiss MSc (historian of science, Leiden University)
Prof. G.M. Morriss-Kay (Balliol College, Oxford)
Dr. Allister Neher (Humanities Department, Dawson College, Quebec)
Birgit Nemec (doctoral student, University of Vienna)
Dr. Ulrika Nilsson (medical historian, Stockholm University, Sweden)
Dr. Bettina Noak (historian, Freie Universität Berlin)
Prof. J.F. Pastor (Director del Museo Anatómico, Universidad de Valladolid, Spain)
David Pantalony (curator, physical sciences and medicine, Canada Science and Technology Museum)
Mag. Markus Oppenauer (medical historian, Medical University of Vienna and University of Vienna)
Dr. Malcolm Oster (formerly senior lecturer in history of science, technology and medicine, The Open University, UK)
Nerea del Moral Azanza (Faculty of Fine Arts, UCM, C/El Greco Madrid)
Dr. Lodewijk Palm (assistant professor, Institute for the History and Foundations of Science, Utrecht University)
Dr. José Pardo-Tomás (medical historian, CSIC, Spanish Council of Scientific Research)
Célia Pião (hospital manager, member of the Cultural and Medical Heritage Comission of the Centro Hospitalar de Lisboa Central, Portugal)
Katrin Pilz,MA (historian, Université Libre de Bruxelles, University of Vienna)
Pascale Pollier (medical artist, chairman of BIOMAB biological and Medical art Belgium University of Antwerp and Art Researches Science international collaborations)
Dr. Sebastian Pranghofer (historian of medicine, Helmhut-Schmidt-University, Hamburg and Durham University)
Prof. Concepcion Reblet, MD, PhD (The University of the Basque Country, Leioa, Spain)
Dr Ruth Richardson (historian, King's College, London and Hong Kong University)
Dr. Machteld Roede (Maastricht, physical anthropologist, retired coworker Maastricht University, co-founder Dutch Association Physical Anthropology)
Dr. Laurens de Rooy (medical historian and curator of Museum Vrolik, anatomical museum of the Academic Medical Centre, University of Amsterdam)
Prof. Dr. Alessandro Ruggeri (Director of Museo delle Cere Anatomiche ”Luigi Cattaneo” Alma Mater Studiorum Bologna University -Italy)
Dr. Miguel Ruiz-Rubiano (Anatomy Professor, Universidad El Bosque, Bogota, Colombia, South America)
Bari Logan (formerly Prosector, Royal College of Surgeons of England, and Cambridge University)
Professor Luise Schuerer (anatomist and forensic anthropologist, University of Dundee & University College London)
Lisa Temple-cox (independent researcher, Essex)
Professor Jose Sanudo (Department of Human Anatomy and Embryology, Universidad Complutense de Madrid)
Dr. Michael Sappol (historian, National Library of Medicine, USA)
Prof. Thomas Söderqvist (Director Medical Meseion, University of Copenhagen)
Dr. Cindy Stelmackowich (artist, art historian and medical historian, New York Academy of Medicine and Carleton University)
Prof. Dr. Thomas Schnalke (medical historian, Director of the Berlin Museum of Medical History at the Charité)
Somayyeh Shahsavari (medical student (MBBS4), St. George’s University of London)
Dr. Rajul Singh, FRC Path (Good hope hospital, Sutton Coldfield)
Dr. Stefan Sommer (Department of Biological Sciences, Northern Arizona University)
arch. Elisabetta Susani, Accademia delle Belle Arti d Brera, Milano (Italy)
Prof. Laurence Talairach-Vielmas (Professor of English, University of Toulouse (UTM))
Prof. Dr. Bert Theunissen (historian of science, Utrecht University)
Barbara Tramelli (doctoral student, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin)
Dr. Karin Tybjerg (Associate Professor, Medical Museion, University of Copenhagen)
Universeum – European Academic Heritage Network (www.universeum.it)
Prof. Dr. Geert Vanpaemel (historian of science, KU Leuven)
Teresa Vázquez (member of the Spanis Anatomical Society, Senior Lecturer Human Anatomy and Embryology, University of Madrid)
Ruben Verwaal (historian of science, Utrecht University)
Prof. Fermín Viejo (Director of the Museum of Anatomy 'Javier Puerta', Department of Human Anatomy and Embryology, School of Medicine, Universidad Complutense de Madrid)
Robert Vonk, MA (medical historian, VU university medical center, Amsterdam)
Darren Wagner (cultural and medical historian, University of York)
Siobhan Ward & Philomena Mc Ateer (Anatomy Department, Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute, Dublin)
Dr. Cornelia Weber (General Manager, Hermann von Helmholtz-Zentrum für Kulturtechnik, Humboldt University of Berlin)
Fleur White (artist, Visual Communication, Quckett. London)
S. Wielaaard, MSc (Coordinator Anatomical Museum, Leiden University Medical Centre)
Jane Wildgoose (artist/researcher, Kingston University)
Dr. Linda Wilson-Pauwels (Professor, Biomedical Communications, University of Toronto)
Prof. Joanne C. Wilton (Bsc, Ph.D., Anatomist, University of Birmingham)
Dr. Roland Witte (Lecturer in History of Science, University of Regensburg)
Dr. Elizabeth A. Williams (Ph.D., medical historian, Oklahoma State University)
Dr. Kaat Wils (cultural historian, KU Leuven)
Ieteke Witteveen (National Archaeological-Anthropological Memory Management, Curacao, Caribbean)
Dr. Alfons Zarzoso (historian and curator, Museu d’Història de la Medicina de Catalunya, Barcelona, CEHIC, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)
Prof. Sandra Zecchi (also on behalf of the Dipartiment di Anatomia, Istologia en Medicina Legale, Università degli Studi di Firenze)
Prof. Dr. Robert Zwijnenberg (Leiden chair of art in relation to the sciences, Leiden University)