



## PRESS RELEASE

### Anatomy of Fragility – Body Images in Art and Science

02 October 2025 – 01 March 2026

Press tour: Wednesday, 01 October 2025, 11 a.m.

Opening: Wednesday, 01 October 2025, 6.30 p.m.

Agnes Questionmark; Chiara Enzo; Yein Lee; The Alternative Limb Project; Marshmallow Laser Feast; “Luigi Cattaneo” Anatomical Wax Collection and Museum of Palazzo Poggi, University of Bologna; Collection of Classical Antiquities and Sculpture Hall, Goethe University Frankfurt; Collection of Antiquities, Justus Liebig University Giessen; Department of Dermatology, Venereology and Allergology, University Hospital, Goethe University Frankfurt; Collection of Hans and Benedikt Hipp

Curated by Franziska Nori, Anita Lavorano, Pia Seifüßl and Angel Moya Garcia

From 2 October 2025 to 1 March 2026, the Frankfurter Kunstverein presents the exhibition *Anatomy of Fragility – Body Images in Art and Science*. The ways in which people look at, perceive and represent the body are in constant flux. Art and science have always used images of the body to tell stories about the human condition, and with each passing epoch new images and interpretations of the body have emerged.

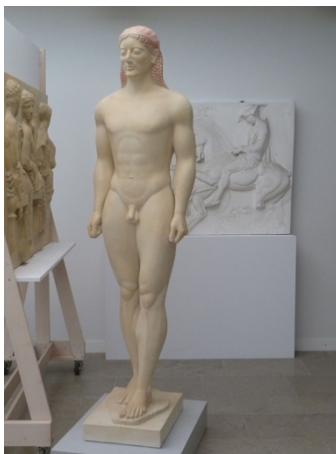
But why reflect on the body today? Do we not already know enough about it? We all *have* bodies. More than that: we *are* all bodies. The body can be observed from the outside and examined from within, measured and quantified. It can be pathologised and objectified, healed and cared for. Bodies are vulnerable entities. The vulnerability of the body is an existential condition of being human. Or is it merely a problem we seek to bring under control? Bodies are finite. And at the same time, bodies are political. The body is not solely a private matter; it is the site upon which world views, value systems and thus politics are played out. For vulnerability is unevenly distributed within society. It has always been that way: those who control bodies wield power. And so, today, ideological battles are raging over our bodies—not always visible, but all the more bitterly fought.

How we represent bodies is more important today than ever. Thus, the exhibition *Anatomy of Fragility* explores the essential questions concerning the power of body images.

Contemporary artists express a transformed sense of corporeality, its reinterpretation and the call for a new image of humanity. Their works encounter spectacular objects from different contexts and eras: from the idealised depictions of the body in Archaic Greek art, through religious votive offerings as prayers for healing, to anatomical wax figures of the 18th century presented in Germany for the first time, and on to the latest images from medical research, in which we travel virtually through a beating heart.

In this way, the exhibition creates an interwoven *parcours* in which the increasingly scientific gaze into the interior of our bodies repeatedly shifts and redefines the question of who we are.

### Exhibition course



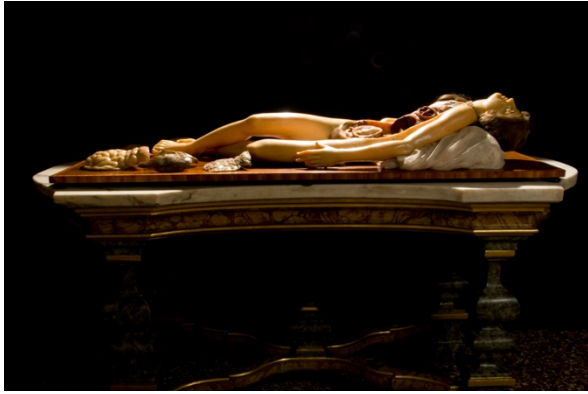
The exhibition opens with a *Kroisos Kouros* statue. The two-metre-high male figure from the Archaic Greek period (530 BC) stands upright, his gaze directed into the distance. The statue comes from the **Collection of Classical Antiquities and Sculpture Hall of the Goethe University Frankfurt** and symbolises the ideal conception of the body. It represents less an individual body than a culturally regulated and codified idea of the 'beautiful body'. In Greece at that time, the free adult man was the measure of all things and the centre of social and political life. He stood at the top of a strictly hierarchical order divided into classes and estates: women and slaves beneath him. The *Kroisos Kouros* thus marks the vanishing point of the

exhibition, in which the image of the body stands as a symbol of a world view—one that later unfolds into ever more individual interpretations.



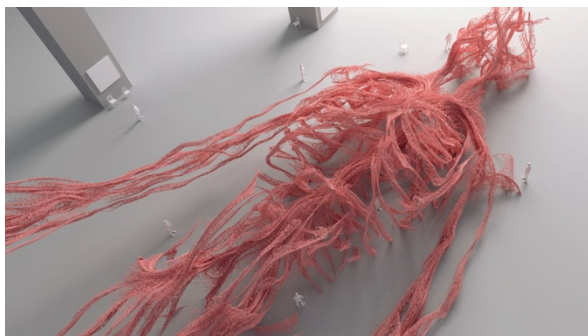
From the standardised, idealised body the path leads into the radical present: **The Alternative Limb Project** by London-based designer, artist and prosthetist Sophie de Oliveira Barata (\* 1982, London, UK). On view are two of her many prostheses—two arms. These astonishing objects do not seek to reproduce a missing body part as faithfully as possible, rather, they expand its appearance and function through artistic interpretation, transforming the alternative limb

into an empowering expression of personality. Here the body is no longer merely medically repaired or socially standardised—but becomes an opportunity for a new conception of the self.



The past and future of the anatomical gaze meet here. For the first time in Germany, the famous **anatomical Venus** (ca. 1782) by Clemente Susini (\* 1754 Florence, IT; † 1814 Florence, IT) will be on view at the Frankfurter Kunstverein. The life-sized female figure lies like a sleeping beauty, with long real hair. Her eyes are closed, her head tilted back, yet her torso is slit open, revealing the inner organs layer by layer. This anatomical wax figure stands as a symbol of the

Enlightenment, an era in which knowledge moved to the centre of human experience of the world. In the 18th century, the artist Clemente Susini developed a new form of representation between anatomical knowledge and artistic interpretation. In collaboration with the **University of Bologna** and its “**Luigi Cattaneo**” collection and the **Museum of Palazzo Poggi**, the exhibition *Anatomy of Fragility* also presents nine further spectacular anatomical wax sculptures. Additionally, Iris Fegerl’s film *The Lady Anatomist* powerfully tells the story of the anatomist and wax artist Anna Morandi Manzolini. She was the first woman to gain admission to the exclusively male domain of the university in the 18th century.



Juxtaposed with the anatomical wax figures, visitors can explore the inside of the body as a virtual experience. The London-based artist collective **Marshmallow Laser Feast** has created an intense VR experience. *Evolver* was created in collaboration with the **Fraunhofer Institute for Digital Medicine MEVIS** in Bremen. Rarely accessible to the public, medical raw data such

as full-body MRI scans, MRA examinations and blood flow data of a single person form the scientific basis of this artistic work.

*Evolver* begins with an audio meditation in English, as the voice of Cate Blanchett guides visitors into the calm of their own breathing and thus into the steadying of their own heartbeat. Afterwards, with VR headsets, they immerse themselves into the bloodstream, the chambers of the lungs and the pulsating heart. A fifteen-metre moving image projection allows viewers to immerse themselves in medical and artistic images of the body.

Additionally, participation in the interactive part of the installation can be booked in advance. Appointments are available every Thursday from 5 to 9 p.m., every Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., as well as on public holidays. Each virtual journey lasts 45 minutes. Appointments can be reserved here: [calendly.com/frankfurterkunstverein](https://calendly.com/frankfurterkunstverein).





The Frankfurter Kunstverein have sought collaboration with the University Hospital Frankfurt. From the collection of the **Department of Dermatology, Venereology and Allergology at the Goethe University Frankfurt**, lifelike wax models of skin diseases and injuries are on display. These so-called **moulages** are three-dimensional wax reproductions of body parts, created for medical training. Unlike the anatomical wax models of the Italian tradition, which depicted idealised and anonymous bodies, **moulages** preserve the exact likeness of a real, individual person. They are thus images of bodily fragments that bear the traces of a real human being and their unique history of suffering—and at the same time they form the basis for the transmission of medical knowledge.



In spatial juxtaposition, the South Korean artist **Yein Lee** (\* 1988 Incheon, KR) presents five sculptures. Now based in Vienna, the artist resists the notion of the body as flawless, intact and perpetually functioning. Her sculptures depict life-sized, humanoid figures that, freed from their outer shells, reveal their inner structures. Lee constructs her sculptures from electrical cables, steel pipes, computer parts, but also from branches, twigs and found

everyday objects. Her material is at once synthetic and natural. The result is fragile corporeal beings situated between technology and nature, whose open structures embody instability and change.



Votives are offerings that people present to higher powers in times of need. They are materialised prayers—petitions for healing and protection in times of suffering, or expressions of thanks for miraculous rescue and aid. This form of invocation of divine power and intercession has existed for thousands of years, virtually unchanged. Bound up with each votive is the life story of a person, whose plea is told through the gift in the form of the object. The exhibition *Anatomy of Fragility* presents 23 Etruscan terracotta votives from the Collection of Antiquities of the Chair of Classical Archaeology

at Justus Liebig University Giessen. They come from the collection of the anatomist Ludwig Stieda, who acquired them in 1899 in what is now Isola Farnese, built on the ruins of the ancient city of Veii. They date largely from the late 3rd to the mid-2nd century BC and are among the earliest surviving testimonies of a religious practice that has continued across cultures for millennia.



Opposite them are objects from the collection of **Hans and Benedikt Hipp** from Pfaffenhofen. The holdings include votives dating back to the early 17th century, and on display are blood-red wax votives and their corresponding wooden moulds. In southern Germany, from the Baroque period onwards, votive offerings were predominantly made of malleable, organic beeswax. The properties of wax are directly linked to the fleshiness and vulnerability of the human body.

The figures were cast in series from the same mould and many are visually identical, yet each individual object carries within it a personal story, a wish or an urgent hope.



In spatial dialogue with the votive offerings are five paintings by the Italian artist **Chiara Enzo** (\* 1989 Venice, IT). Her central subject is the human body as the interface of all human condition of being-in-the-world. The small-format paintings are highly detailed. They depict body surfaces that are never intact or unblemished. Traces of injuries, interventions, epidermal reactions or imprints of what is absent become the motif. Enzo poses questions about the universal

experiences of human existence: intimacy, vulnerability and illness, and how we create an idea of reality from perception.



A large-scale spatial installation by **Agnes Questionmark** (\* 1995 Rome, IT) forms the conclusion of the exhibition. It brings together three life-sized sculptures and six wall pieces created specifically for the show. The artist's point of departure is images of open-heart surgery. These are altered via digital and analogue means and overlaid with silicone or wax. As imposing wall panels, they recall the corporeality and fleshiness of the body's inner

spaces. At the centre of the room stand three life-sized sculptures: hybrid beings between an alien and a mythological water figure, half human, half animal. The foreign, the other, that society deems monstrous, is embodied in Questionmark's work as lived states of in-betweenness. Agnes Questionmark points to the power of purely medical assessment, which fixes subjects, assigns gender and pathologises deviation. She appropriates clinical visual worlds and reshapes them, transforming her art into an act of self-empowerment—beyond binary categories of male and female, healthy and sick, human and non-human, fragile and resilient.

The exhibition embodies the Frankfurter Kunstverein's programmatic approach, treating contemporary art and the sciences as parallel expressions of humanity's drive for knowledge and search for meaning.

The project was carried out under the patronage of the Italian Consulate General in Frankfurt am Main.

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The Frankfurter Kunstverein is permanently supported by



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*Kroisos-Kouros* (copy, original dated to around 530 BC), © Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, Courtesy Collection of Classical Antiquities and Sculpture Hall, Goethe University Frankfurt

The Alternative Limb Project, *Materialise* arm for Kelly Knox, 2015, Photo: Simon Clemenger, © and courtesy The Alternative Limb Project

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Clemente Susini, *Venerina*, ca. 1782, Photo: Corinna Wagner, in *Replicating Venus: Art, Anatomy, Wax Models, and Automata*, 2017, Courtesy Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna | University Museum Network | Museum of Palazzo Poggi

Marshmallow Laser Feast, *The Beauty of Bloodflow*, 2024, film still from documentary video, in cooperation with Fraunhofer-Institut für Digitale Medizin MEVIS, © and courtesy Marshmallow Laser Feast

Moulage 066b *Erythematodes c. exacerbatione acuta* (Lupus erythematosus with acute exacerbation), © Goethe University Frankfurt, Courtesy Department of Dermatology, Venereology and Allergology; University Hospital, Goethe University Frankfurt

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Yein Lee, *System of In-Between State*, 2024, Installation view 15th Gwangju Biennale 2024, Commissioned by the 15th Gwangju Biennale. Sponsored by Austria Ministry of the Arts, Culture, the Civil service and Sport, Photo: Studio Possiblezone, Courtesy Gwangju Biennale Foundation

Anatomical votives from the Ludwig Stieda Collection, held by the Collection of Antiquities at the Chair of Classical Archaeology, III.-II. Jahrhundert v. Chr., Photo: Matthias Recke, © and courtesy Collection of Antiquities of Justus Liebig University Giessen

Torso votives, Mid to late 20th century, Photo: Hans Hipp, Pfaffenhofen, © and courtesy Hans and Benedikt Hipp Collection

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Chiara Enzo, *Visceri IV (Gambe)* (Viscera IV, legs), 2023, © Chiara Enzo, Courtesy the artist and Private collection, Italy

Agnes Questionmark, *CHM13hTERT*, 2023, performance and installation, installation view 2023, curated by The Orange Garden and Spazio Serra supported by Kuboraum, Photo: Cristiano Rizzo, © and courtesy Agnes Questionmark