

# NLM Traveling Exhibitions

## PR Information



<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/frankenstein>

The National Library of Medicine produced *Frankenstein: Penetrating the Secrets of Nature/Penetrando en los secretos de la naturaleza*, guest curated by historian and educator Susan E. Lederer, PhD (University of Wisconsin-Madison).

The traveling exhibition and companion website explore the power of the novel *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* to expose hidden fears of science and technology as human efforts to penetrate the secrets of nature continue. In 1816, Mary Shelley conceived a story about a scientist who creates a creature that can think and feel but is monstrous to the eye. Spurned by all, the embittered creature turns into a savage killer. Shelley's story served as a metaphor for apprehensions about scientific advancement that continue to resonate today.

[Frankenstein: Penetrating the Secrets of Nature](#) [English only] includes an [education component](#) with two K-12 lesson plans and a university module. A [digital gallery](#) features a curated selection of fully digitized items from the historical collections of the NLM, which are also available in their entirety in [NLM Digital Collections](#).

Please include this courtesy line with all public announcements about the project:

**The National Library of Medicine produced this exhibition and companion website.**

**Esta exhibición fue producida por la Biblioteca Nacional de Medicina de los Estados Unidos.**

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Host venues for *Frankenstein: Penetrating the Secrets of Nature/Penetrando en los secretos de la naturaleza* receive the following PR images. For your reference, there are brief captions for the images. Please include their corresponding **courtesy** noted below when using them.



Inspired by a “waking dream,” in which she envisioned “the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life,” Mary began writing *Frankenstein*.

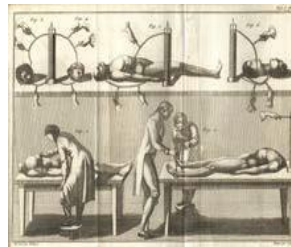
Portrait of Mary Shelley, ca. 1851-1893

**Courtesy The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford**

Inspirada por un “sueño despierto” en el que visualizó “el horrendo fantasma de un hombre acostado que luego, por el funcionamiento de un potente motor, muestra signos de vida”, Mary empezó a escribir *Frankenstein*.

Retrato de Mary Shelley, c. 1851–1893

**Cortesía de la Biblioteca Bodleiana, Universidad de Oxford**



Italian physician Giovanni Aldini (1762–1834) administered electricity to the bodies of decapitated animals and humans and produced twitching and other physical movements. Audiences believed these movements signaled the potential of this radical new technology.

Illustration from *Essai Théorique et Expérimentale sur le Galvanisme*,

*tome premier* (Theoretical and Practical Essay on Galvanism, first volume), Giovanni Aldini, 1804

**Courtesy National Library of Medicine**

El médico italiano Giovanni Aldini (1762–1834) aplicaba electricidad al cuerpo de animales y humanos decapitados, provocando en ellos contorsiones y otros efectos físicos. El público creía que esos movimientos indicaban el potencial de una radical nueva tecnología.

Ilustración de *Essai Théorique et Expérimentale sur le Galvanisme*, *tome premier* (Ensayo teórico y experimental sobre el galvanismo, primer volumen), 1804

**Cortesía de la Biblioteca Nacional de Medicina de los EE. UU**

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Illustration from *The anatomy of the arteries of the human body, with its application to pathology and operative surgery*, Richard Quain, 1844  
**Courtesy National Library of Medicine**

Ilustración de *La anatomía de las arterias del cuerpo humano, con su aplicación a la patología y cirugía operatoria*, Richard Quain, 1844  
**Cortesía de la Biblioteca Nacional de Medicina de los EE. UU**



The English actor Thomas Potter Cooke played the role of the monster in *Presumption*. During the performances, his face was painted green, his lips were stained black, and he wore blue body paint.

T. P. Cooke as the monster in *Presumption; or, The Fate of Frankenstein*, Thomas Charles Wageman (c. 1787–1863)  
**Courtesy The Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations**

El actor inglés Thomas Potter Cooke interpretó el papel del monstruo en *Pretensión*. Se pintó la cara de verde, los labios manchados de negro y se aplicó pintura azul en el cuerpo.

T. P. Cooke como el monstruo en *Pretensión o el destino de Frankenstein*, Thomas Charles Wageman (c. 1787–1863)  
**Cortesía de la Colección de Shelley de Carl H. Pforzheimer y su Círculo, Biblioteca Pública de Nueva York, Fundaciones Astor, Lenox y Tilden**



In the *Frankenstein* film, Boris Karloff's moving portrayal of the speechless creature, and the enduring image of the monster with his flattened head, surgical scars, and neck bolts, deeply affected audiences.

Boris Karloff as the Monster in *Frankenstein*, 1931  
**Courtesy Universal Studios Licensing LLC**

En la película *Frankenstein*, La conmovedora interpretación de Boris Karloff como una criatura sin habla y la perdurable imagen del monstruo con la cabeza aplanada, las cicatrices de la cirugía y los pernos en el cuello afectaron profundamente al público.

Boris Karloff como el monstruo en *Frankenstein*, 1931  
**Cortesía de Universal Studios Licensing LLC**