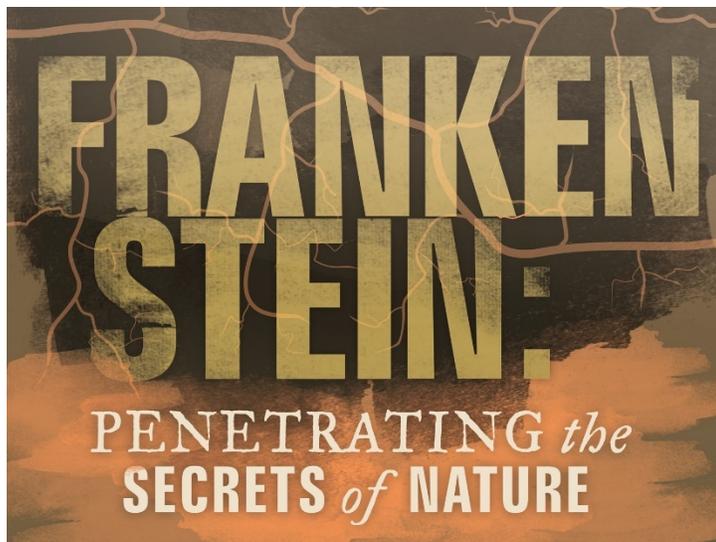


NLM Traveling Exhibitions

PR Information



www.nlm.nih.gov/frankenstein

The National Library of Medicine produced *Frankenstein: Penetrating the Secrets of Nature*, 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 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.

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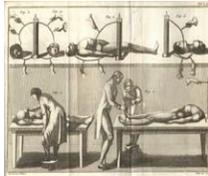
Host venues for *Frankenstein: Penetrating the Secrets of Nature* receive the following PR images. For your reference, there are brief captions for the images. Please include their corresponding **courtesy** noted below when using them.



Mary Shelley was only 18 years old when she began writing *Frankenstein*, 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.”

Portrait of Mary Shelley, ca. 1851-1893

Courtesy The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford



Luisi Galvani (1737-1798), a professor of anatomy at the University of Bologna, performed an extensive series of experiments in “animal electricity” or “galvanism” to reanimate dead tissue in the 1780s and 1790s.

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



Human dissection advanced medical knowledge in early 19th century, while it challenged traditional understanding of what it means to be human.

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



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 Shelly and His Circle, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations



In a film version of *Frankenstein*, Boris Karloff portrayed the monster. His makeup showed the creature with a surgically altered skull, scars, and bolts protruding from his neck, which deeply affected audiences.

Boris Karloff as the Monster in *Frankenstein*, 1931

Courtesy Universal Studios Licensing LLC