ARS LONGA - VITA BREVIS

DOROTHY SIMPSON KRAUSE
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DOROTHEA S. KRAUSE

Gautier Woman, Inkjet print on gold paper, 6 pieces, 20" x 16" each

Artist-in-Residence Exhibition
Harvard Medical School Countway Library
2005 - 2006
One of the joys of being an archivist is the profession’s necessary engagement in continuous learning. We assist researchers to explore collections with which we are familiar. We understand these materials, this object, rare book or manuscript; after all, we know something of its origin and history, its meaning and value. And then the researcher brings her own perspective and knowledge to the study of the document, discovering new connections, new meaning. This re-interpretation makes the old new, again and again, deepening our appreciation of the collections we curate … the limits we imagined are gone.

This experience may occur more frequently in settings like Countway’s Center for the History of Medicine, a home for a diverse collection of enormous depth in health and the medical arts and sciences. Researchers are able to draw on a variety of holdings, bringing together specimens and incunabula, engravings and instruments, letters and diaries, photographs and rare books in unprecedented new ways. The collection’s depth is due in part to its origin as a partnership between the Harvard Medical Library and the Boston Medical Library, each an outstanding collection in its own right.

Virtually all of the great works in the history of medicine find a home in the Center. There are particular strengths in medical incunabula—over 800 books printed before 1501—European books printed from the sixteenth through the nineteenth century, and English publications before 1800. The Center also holds a comprehensive collection of American, particularly New England, medical imprints of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A number of significant special collections have been acquired, notably the libraries of physicians Oliver Wendell Holmes and John Collins Warren and his family, the anatomical library of Friedrich Tiedemann, the Hyams Collection of Hebraic Medical Literature, and the William Norton Bullard Collection of medical incunabula. The Center’s collections are particularly rich in

Target, Inkjet print on clear film, recycled dartboard, acrylic paint, 8" x 7" x 3"
the diverse subject areas of anatomy, gynecology and obstetrics, radiology, medical jurisprudence, surgery, psychology, phrenology, medical botany, pharmacy and pharmacology, and internal medicine.

The Center holds a substantial collection of manuscripts and personal papers of physicians from the medieval and Renaissance periods through the twentieth century, including the professional papers of many renowned Harvard faculty members as well as physicians and scientists from New England and around the country. It plays a central role in the life of the Longwood campus by preserving the archives—the official records—of the Harvard Medical School, School of Dental Medicine, and School of Public Health. These records include historical images of the campus, affiliated hospitals, faculty, students, and staff from the past 125 years.

The Warren Museum’s holdings bring particular richness to the Center. A meticulously prepared and acquired collection of specimens, the Museum was a graphic tool for medical education when it was created in the nineteenth century. While it still has educational value, the Museum’s models, instruments, and specimens now have additional value for the study of material culture.

The Center’s focus on enabling greater and more meaningful access to collections ensures that researchers can more fully utilize the power of its resources. These integrated holdings provide the context researchers need to understand and re-create the three dimensional world our ancestors experienced, bringing new depth to the world we experience every day and helping us to recognize ourselves in our past and our future.

Dorothy Simpson Krause, like other researchers, has re-interpreted familiar Center objects, making the familiar unfamiliar, forcing us to see them, not solely as sources of medical knowledge, but as art and artifact. She brings together rare books, manuscripts, and Warren Museum objects in new ways, once again, showing us something fresh.

These objects, Krause reminds us are at once people, patients, specimens, artifacts, and art. Our efforts to capture meaning in patient and accessions records, in descriptions of conditions, cannot fully represent the complexity of the object itself. We “know again” the iconic image of the skull; the elegant strength of the phalanges, a line of soldiers ready to do our bidding; the pelvic specimen that is poised like a bird to fly against the record of its accession, a record that cannot contain its beauty…. The limits we imagined are gone … the learning continues.
As with many medical museums, the Warren Anatomical Museum began its life as a private informal collection of specimens and preparations used for teaching anatomy and enhancing medical education. The origin of the Warren Museum’s collection was the personal collection of Harvard Professor of Anatomy and Surgery Dr. John Collins Warren (1778-1856), who collected his specimens as a means to illustrate his lectures and advance the usefulness of his medical practice.

Dr. Warren was a prominent physician and social advocate in early 19th-century Boston. He is probably best known for being the first American surgeon to publicly perform a surgery on an etherized patient. In addition, he was an advocate and founding member of the Massachusetts General Hospital, the third oldest general hospital in the United States and the oldest and largest in New England.

The son of Dr. John Warren, one of the founding faculty of what would eventually become Harvard Medical School, John Collins Warren came from a family of physicians. He was educated in medicine in Europe and, as an intern, studied at Guy’s Hospital in London. Warren also studied in Paris under French naturalist Georges Cuvier, where he learned the methods for creating anatomical preparations and realized their importance as teaching tools.

Dr. Warren’s collection came out of a tradition well-established in Europe—that of having an anatomical cabinet for teaching in medical schools. As Warren had been educated in Europe, he sought to bring the tradition back to the United States and Boston, which was one of the leading areas for medicine in the United States at the time. The beginning of Warren’s collection consisted of those specimens he had both prepared and purchased from his teachers in Europe. When he returned to Boston in 1802, he brought this collection back with him.

While at Harvard, Warren acquired his specimens in many ways. If he found specimens of particular interest to his lectures, he was usually able to convince the Medical School to purchase them. However, because the School did not sanction many of these purchases, he often bought or created
them himself. But preserving specimens, not acquiring them, was Warren’s passion. His avid interest in creating these specimens kept him from hiring assistants to do his “dirty work” and he performed many of his dissections before his classes. The creation of his teaching aids extended to his Boston townhouse, where the floors of his parlor were frequently covered with sand to allow for anatomical dissections. He often left dried specimens on the windowsills of the parlor to cure and it was here that he articulated a giant mastodon skeleton now at the New York Museum of Natural History.

Upon his retirement from Harvard in 1847, Dr. Warren donated his extensive collection of 1,116 anatomical specimens to form the Warren Anatomical Museum. Along with his collection, he donated $5000 in railroad stock to endow the collection at the Medical School and, as an ultimate expression of his beliefs in using anatomy to teach anatomy, he donated his own body to the Museum. His skeleton remains in the collection as a symbol of his dedication to his cause.

Since Warren’s original donation, the collection has evolved into one of the world’s leading medical museums, comprised of about 15,000 items, and one of the few remaining anatomical collections of this size in the United States. In addition to anatomical specimens, the collection now contains medical instruments, prints and drawings, items associated with medical breakthroughs, medical anomalies and specimens from famous medical cases such as the skull of Phineas Gage.

In 2000, the Museum, which had been in storage for many years, was resurrected at the Countway Library of Medicine, and became part of the Library’s Center for the History of Medicine. This is an excellent home for the collection, as the Center also houses a spectacular rare book and manuscripts collection, and the archives of the Harvard Medical School.
Dorothy Simpson Krause, a collector of imagery and objects, was intrigued when she was invited to create a body of work from the archives of the Countway Library for Medicine and the Warren Anatomical Museum. *Ars Longa – Vita Brevis* was conceived over just a few visits. Krause mined the collection for works that spoke themes consistent to her own artistic project: life cycles, womanhood, spirituality, psychology. The 30 pieces of work which complete this series include phrenology busts (*Assassin*), vintage x-rays (*Royal XRay*), and oddly beautiful of images of flayed flesh (*Gautier Woman*), among others re-contextualized in the artist’s process of appropriation and translation. But different from work that stems from her personal sources, one senses that Krause has kept this work at arms length.

Medicine has always had an interesting relationship to emotion. Conventional medical science is about fact, curing disease and ailments. Many doctors adopt the notion of maintaining an objective distance from their patients. It is from this more calculated perspective that Krause has approached her source material. In the resulting body of work she maintains an objective distance from her subjects, although her processes and aesthetic is the same as in other more “diaristic” and personal series.

Science, medicine and the human body are familiar gates of departure for many contemporary artists from Damien Hirst’s *This Little Piggy* to Gunther Van Hagen’s *Body Worlds*. Their subjects often rest somewhere between curiosities and repulsions. Even though Krause has started with similar cross-sections of flesh and complicated maps of veins and organs, she has tried to humanize her source material, letting the viewer glimpse their own humanity, as she literally does in the mirrored skulls of *Insurance*. Yet she perfectly walks the tightrope of emotional distance, evoking thought but not tenderness.

One exception is *Royal XRay* in which Krause has entwined the images of Russia’s Czar Nicholas and Czarina Alexandria. When the images were first captured, they depicted their tibias, fibulas and hands still wearing their jewels and cufflinks. In collaging the two x-rays into a seamless whole, she suggests the real bonds that tied their worlds together. These relics of a life lived, both the things that outlast our bodies and the frame of the bodies themselves, slows the viewer. Krause takes a document of a technological feat and adds a new dimension of humanity.
Like the rich and varied collection from which she drew her subjects, the resulting work is similarly rich and varied. The pieces range from 2-D to 3-D, prints on paper and metal, transfers to fresco and other assemblage techniques that Krause has solidified as a pioneer in the genre of digital collage. Also clear is the artist’s signature palette of ochres and umbers, burnt sienna and silver. The rich tapestry of colors she weaves enhances each image. She adds further patina to subjects that already glimmer with age.

In titling this work *Ars Longa – Vita Brevis*, Krause focuses her lens on temporality. She hones in on the fleeting quality of life that doctors and scientists confront everyday. And in their fashion, she maintains a fascinated, but safe distance.
Artist Statement
Dorothy Simpson Krause

A painter by training and collage-maker by nature, I began my experimental printmaking with reprographic machines. Since being introduced to computers in the late 1960’s when working on my doctorate at Penn State, I have combined traditional and digital media. My work embeds archetypal symbols and fragments of image and text in multiple layers of texture and meaning. It combines the humblest of materials, plaster, tar, wax and pigment, with the latest in technology to evoke the past and herald the future. By focusing on timeless personal and universal issues; hopes and fears, wishes, lies and dreams, immortality and transience, I challenge myself and the viewer to look beyond the surface to see what depths are hidden.

From the almost endless supply of source materials that make up the Countway Library collection - anatomical specimens, medical artifacts, rare books, manuscripts and ephemera - I chose pieces with visual power. I photographed a wide range of objects then began to try and understand their significance and to determine how I might best share those insights. My wish was to “humanize” the collection and make it more accessible. For example, the skulls in Insurance are printed on clear film placed in front of small mirrors, so that you can see yourself if you look closely. They are surrounded by a hand-written record of life insurance payments from a flea market journal.

Having been the first Artist-in-Residence at Harvard Medical School Countway Library was a unique experience. I am especially grateful to the Library staff: to Kathryn Hammond Baker for conceiving of the residency and making it happen and to Virginia Hunt, Tom Horrocks, Jack Eckert and Elise Ramsey for invaluable access to the Library collections. In addition I would like to thank Abigail Ross Goodman for her ongoing support and eloquent voice; Viola Kaumlen for her photographic expertise and her suggestion of the exhibition title; Mary Taylor for sharing the creative process in more ways than can ever be innumerated, and my husband, Richard, for keeping the homefires burning. This exhibition and catalog are the result of these efforts.

Isaac, Inkjet print on gold paper, wood, gold leaf, iron, 9.75” x 8” x 2.75”
Fanatic

Inkjet print on textured pearl spunbonded polyester
28” x 28”
Physicians

Inkjet print on clear film, Stanford-Benet Scales box, hydrozone bottle
(a controversial treatment for mind and body)
15.25" x 10.25" x 3"
Austin & Stone
Inkjet print on banner fabric, copper leaf
46.75" x 32"
Casseri
Inkjet print on handmade lami li paper on board
32" x 41.5"
Hundt

Inkjet print on handmade lama li paper, encaustic
2 pieces, 21" x 30" each
8076. PELVIS. FRACTURE.

11-1. An oblique hip fracture of the left pubis and right iliac bone, with great displacement and strong union.

Warren Museum Fund. 1886.
Model
UV print on gold Dibond with wood stand
23.5" x 23.5"
Before and After
Inkjet print on Epson paper
48” x 33” diptych (48” x 16” each)
Recapitulation
Inkjet print on Arches paper, oil wash
26" x 36" x 4"
Assassin
Inkjet print on Epson paper, gold marker
27.5" x 27"
TallMan
Inkjet print on lead, silver leaf, red paint
40” x 25” diptych (40” x 12” each)
Royal XRay
UV print on crystal ice acrylic
23” x 24”
John Clark
Inkjet print on canvas, graphite, pastel, cold wax, silver leaf, drill bit
32” x 26”
Braun Box (outside, inside)
Inkjet print on paper, encaustic, wood box
7.25" x 7.25" x 2.75"

Some Mother’s Child
Inkjet print on paper, graphite, encaustic
10" x 20.5" diptych (10" x 10" each)
CastHands
Inkjet transfer to fresco with wood and paint
19” x 18.5” x 3”
Soldier

Inkjet print on clear film, vintage photograph, frame, curved glass

23.5” x 17”
Tabula
Inkjet print on paper, shaped wood box
7.25" x 13.75" x 4.25"

Gyroscope
Inkjet print on clear film and paper, gyroscope, box, wood
10" x 20" x 3" diptych (10" x 10" x 3" each)
Insurance

Inkjet prints on clear film, mirror, collaged insurance payment records, wood
4 pieces 10" x 10" each
“In that complex weave of allegory and perception that forms human consciousness, many layers merge. That complexity is echoed in Dorothy Krause’s elaborate montages.”

Bob Weibel, *Photo District News*

“The work is dominated by soft, overwhelming beauty -- young angels and goddesses surrounded in pinks and gold. But the beauty is rescued by spiritualism and the unknown. Justice has a swath of post-computer, blood-red paint applied over her eyes. It is such hand-of-artist surface markings -- painting, drawing and applied gold leaf -- that transport these images from staid elegance to urgent intensity.

Krause’s work also raises complex contemporary issues such as image/cultural possession and hybridization. .. These elements are ripped from their context and used to create another reality.”

Sharon L. Calhoon, *DIALOGUE Arts in the Midwest*

“With a wonderful sense of color which creates the atmosphere of calm and contemplation, she combines what is here and there ... transcendence - that which is indefinable, unrecognizable and does not have to be called in order to be.”

Anna Panek Kusz, Curator, Gallery Okno, Slubice, Poland

*Bat*, Inkjet print on textured non-woven fabric, metallic pigment, 12" x 36" triptych (12" x 12" each)
“Dorothy Simpson Krause has always created lush and varied surfaces for her digital prints. … Krause pares the imagery and ramps up the rich variety of surface, to wonderful effect. The images are still full of symbolic content, but here Krause offers just one potent one: the door. She travels the world photographing doors and gates. Krause prints the photos on aluminum or Plexiglas, sometimes layered over metal, sometimes coated with ink on the reverse. She’ll print over nails, grating and old metal; she adds paint, pencil marks, and scratches. Even so, my favorites are the simplest works: photos printed on brushed aluminum, with little or nothing added. The aluminum reflects light out at the viewer. Each doorway becomes a tense drama of light and dark. “Downstairs” has us looking up a flight of dingy stairs to a door; the sheen of light creates a palpable presence. In “Amber”, shot at the Amber Palace in Jaipur, India, the amber color looks like gold leaf. A window casts light onto the dark floor. Whether in a palace or a basement, Krause creates mystical rhythms of shadow and light.”

Cate McQuaid, Art Critic, The Boston Globe

“Few would associate computer graphics with opulence, but with regards to the art of Dorothy Simpson Krause, the adjective is hardly extravagant. Her richly layered works reveal not only successive strata of materials, but meaning as well.”

Mary Ann Kearns, Director, 119 Gallery, Lowell, MA

“Dorothy Simpson Krause’s work shares much with contemporary artists involved with the appropriated image such as Dottie Attie, Sherry Levine, and Richard Prince as well as Robert Rauschenberg and Kurt Schwitters. Working in these traditions she adds a poetic formal sensibility and a strongly personal approach toward the process of social inquiry.”

Michael Shaughnessy, Director, Area Gallery, University of Southern Maine

“Her imagery is derived from numerous sources, many gender-related—women, their work and endeavors, their faith and spirituality, their contemplation. … Krause’s work is baroque in its intense coloration and chiaroscuro.”

“Krause has built up her surfaces to new levels of texture and density. While this aesthetic choice makes each artwork all the more material, the use of translucent wax also allows for the permeation of the solid substance with light. This literal illumination of matter has been a profound signifier of the spiritual throughout human history, understood and utilized by the makers of Byzantine mosaics and Gothic stained glass. By melding this near-alchemical formal tradition with her subtle collaged images, Dorothy Simpson Krause unifies not only this recent set of artworks, but also portrays a world of women bound together in light, in dignity, and in sanctity.”

Nick Capasso, Associate Curator
DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park, Lincoln, MA
In 2005 Dorothy Simpson Krause was the first Artist-in-Residence at the Harvard Medical School Countway Library. This exhibition is the result of that residency.

Krause is a painter, collage artist, printmaker and pioneering digital artist whose work incorporates both traditional and digital media. She is Professor Emeritus at Massachusetts College of Art where she founded the Computer Arts Center and a founding member of Digital Atelier, artists collaborative, with Bonny Lhotka and Karin Schminke.

In July 1997, Krause organized “Digital Atelier: A printmaking studio for the 21st century” at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and was an artist-in-residence there. For that work she received a Smithsonian/Computerworld Technology in the Arts Award. That same year, she worked with a group of curators to help them envision the potential of digital printmaking in “Media for a New Millennium” a work-tank/ think-shop organized by the Vinalhaven Graphic Arts Foundation.

In 2000 Krause received a Kodak Innovator Award and in June 2001, with Digital Atelier, she demonstrated digital printmaking techniques at the opening of the Brooklyn Museum of Art 27th Print National, Digital: Printmaking Now.

Krause is co-author of Digital Art Studio published in 2004 by Watson-Guptil. Her work is exhibited regularly in galleries and museums and featured in more than a dozen current periodicals and books. She is represented in Massachusetts by Judi Rotenberg Gallery.