POLARITIES OF THE BODY
Centre for Humanities and Health Annual Lecture 2018
https://www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/ahri/eventrecords/2017-2018/CHH/Polarities-of-the-Body-
CHH-Annual-Lecture-2018.aspx

Polarities of the Body in Literature, the Visual Arts, and Medicine
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Dying Gaul, 1st or 2nd century AD,
Roman marble copy of a lost Hellenistic bronze sculpture,
Musei Capitolini, Rome.

Irregularity, asymmetry, and imbalance inform our perceptions of the body. While referring to a
physical material body, corporeality also evokes what is extracorporeal, immaterial, and
intangible. Excess and defect, illness, flaws, and decay are perceived as structural as well as symbolic
deviations from a sense of archetypal proportion and beauty, health and fitness. Classical / ideal / normal
/ normative / disabled / deformed / deviant / aging / transgendered will be explored as categories of
thought and representation gaining momentum at specific times in history. The aim is not to illustrate how
the body has been perceived in various centuries. Rather, it is to identify which conceptual polarities have
triggered specific early modern to contemporary appreciations of the body in literature, the visual arts,
and medicine.
The works of Thomas More, Andreas Vesalius, Thomas Browne, Jonathan Swift, William Hogarth, William
Morris, Virginia Woolf and Antonia Byatt will be explored to illustrate how they have been able to capture
the physical and metaphysical polarities around which certain ways of thinking the body would take
shape, proliferate, and mutate in scientific and humanistic thought.

After the lecture, attendees will be invited to join us for a wine reception

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<th>Council Room (K2-29) King’s Building Strand Campus</th>
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<td>Category</td>
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| Contact                   | This event is open to all and free to attend but booking is required at: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/polarities-of-the-body-chh-annual-lecture-2018-tickets-41816471191
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