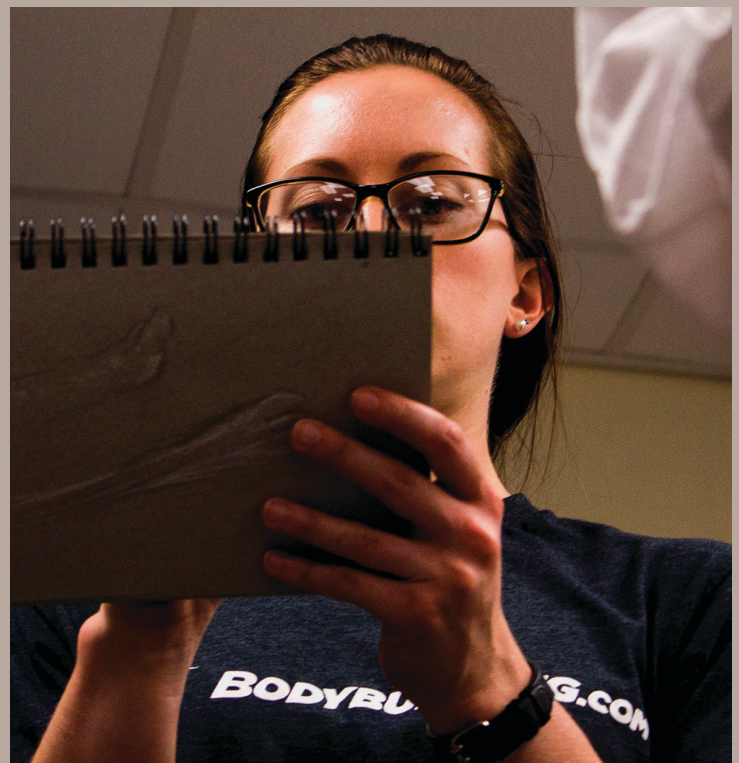

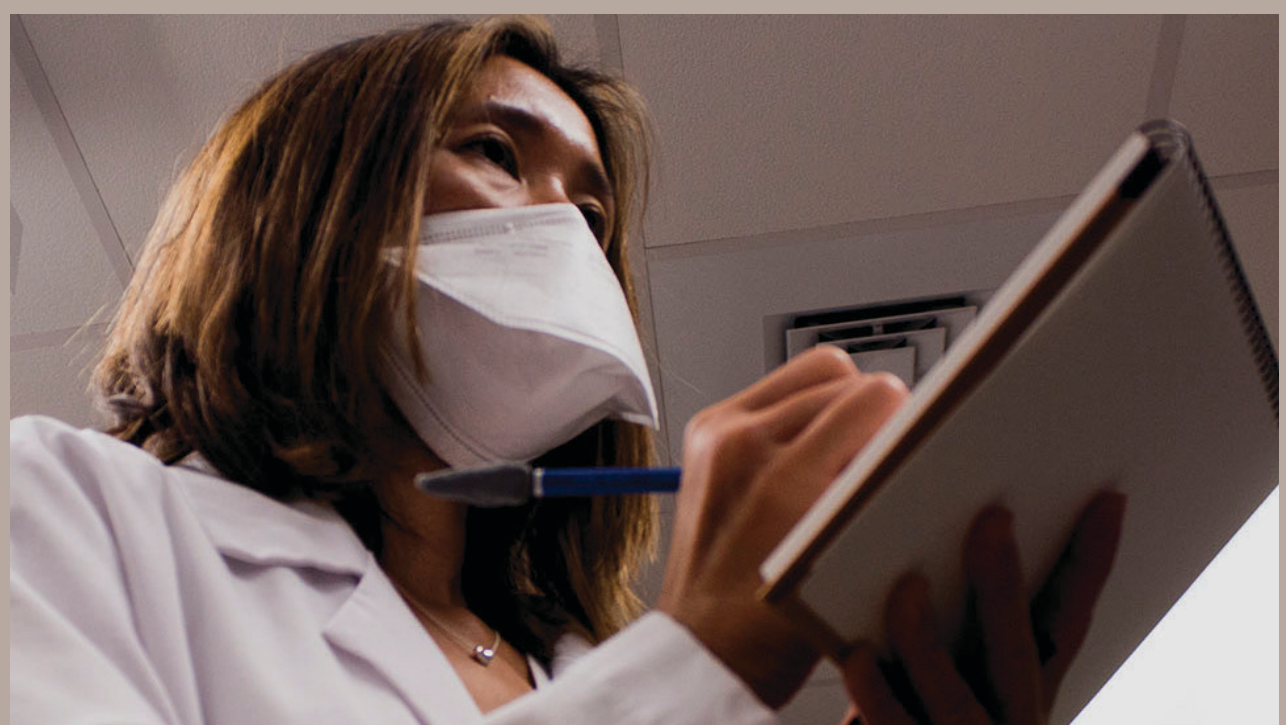

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DEATH DRAWING

Where art and science meet

Students in ART 2000: Life Drawing I, brought the dead to life in their sketchbooks during their studio Sept. 21, 2017.

Maggie Thomas, a graduate student in biological sciences, has modeled for the class for the past 3 years, and when she found out the biological sciences department would have two cadavers for students to study, she saw this as an opportunity for the life drawing class.

The idea came up during a conversation about literature on art anatomy between art professor Jenny Chi and Thomas. Thomas mentioned to that she was studying cadavers and went from there to get art students into the lab.

Chi said the class is made up of "upper level" students who meet twice a week to do figure drawings to better understand the muscles and mechanisms of the body.

She said being able to draw cadavers is an opportunity that does not come often for students.

"In the Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci had done a lot of (cadaver) studies, and in those days, it was illegal. The artists actually had to go into a graveyard late at night and pull the bodies out and do (studies) in secrecy," Chi said. "It's something that has a tradition and is part of the understanding of making a better artist if you want to work with figures."

Before the studio began, Thomas informed students of the importance of muscles and their illustrations.

Chi had her students study sections of the cadaver's muscles for the drawing.

Thomas said there is an import and significant overlap between the two disciplines, which can be seen in both biology and art classrooms.

"Life in general is an art," Thomas said. "It is an art form to live."

Thomas said while she models for life drawing students, Chi will often refer to "landmarks" or parts of her body to help with the drawings.

"She always talks about my abdominals and my upper torso and refers to my pectorals a lot," Thomas said. "I have pectoral muscles that are more visible on me than most females."

Thomas noted that the bodies used for class were not preserved in formaldehyde because the chemical was banned for defecating the respiratory tract when people inhaled the fumes.

Formalin, a non-toxic chemical, is now used to preserve cadavers.

Margaret Kilbane, a graduate student studying art, said the hardest part of drawing the cadavers was getting the right composition and deciphering the different types of tissues and textures of the body.

"I think it's really cool that someone's donating their body after (death) to help further other people's education," Kilbane said.