Anatomy workshop

When  Tomorrow and Sunday, 8.45 am-5 pm
Where  Anatomy Department, Wallace Wurth medical building, University of NSW
How much  $220 for the two-day session
More information  www.leonardosshoes.com or phone 9385 2464

It’s not every day you get to follow in the steps of Leonardo da Vinci, who exhumed bodies to perfect his take on the human form. Under the guidance of anatomist Dr Brian Freeman and figurative artist Susan Dorothea White, participants in the UNSW course Step into Leonardo’s Shoes study specimens such as legs, arms, shoulders, torsos and heads to improve their skills in rendering the human body.

“The workshops fill a gap in art education,” says Freeman. “An understanding of what’s under the skin really assists in the interpretation of the surface and form.”

The workshops are limited to 18 people and have attracted a variety of participants. “We’ve had a plastic surgeon – he wanted to learn how to depict things to prospective patients,” says Freeman. “We also had a physicist who was interested in depicting the face in computer programs.”

The workshop involves White and Freeman presenting talks on the human figure in art history and anatomy, in addition to hour-long drawing sessions that start with the human leg and finish with the head.

The body parts are the embalmed remains of people who have given their bodies to the university for study.

“It is a bit of a shock but they [the participants] soon become used to it and enjoy learning what’s under the skin,” says Freeman.

Ben Wyld