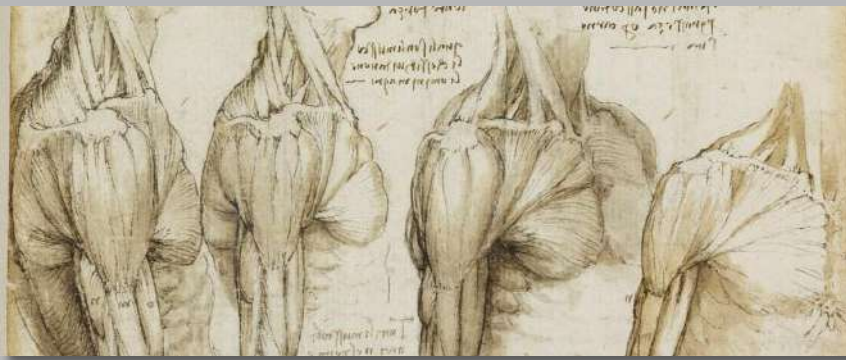




Human Anatomy for academies and vfx schools

Deep dive into anatomy





Pioneering anatomists

Artists like Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo understood that to master form, they had to study structure.

Through their drawings and notes, they laid the foundations of anatomical art—creating studies that captured not just the surface, but the inner workings of the body: bones, muscles, proportions, and harmony.

These works remain timeless because they reveal a way of seeing—a bridge between science and creativity that still inspires artists today.

This course follows that same spirit, bringing anatomical knowledge to the hands of modern creators through a visual and artistic approach that respects tradition while embracing new tools and technologies.



The significance of anatomical understanding

Whether you're creating stylized characters or pursuing anatomical realism, understanding the human body from the inside out brings depth, accuracy, and credibility to your work.

When an artist truly understands the structure beneath the skin, they can invent, exaggerate, or stylize with confidence—because their choices are informed, not improvised.

The body is not just form, its function. Knowing how bones, muscles, and fat interact improves the way we sculpt movement, weight, and personality.

Who teaches the course?

The course is taught by Rafa Zabala, an artist and educator with an uncommon journey that bridges the worlds of sculpture, digital creation, and academic anatomy.

Rafa began his artistic path over three decades ago through traditional sculpture, working on large-scale artistic and religious commissions. His passion for form and structure eventually led him into the digital world, where he became a character and creature artist for some of the most prestigious studios in the film and video game industries.

His credits include major productions such as *The Hobbit*, *Planet of the Apes*, *Avatar: Frontiers of Pandora*, and collaborations with filmmakers like George Lucas and Steven Spielberg, as well as global icons like Paul McCartney and Lady Gaga.

Over time, his fascination with the human body evolved into a deeper exploration of anatomy, guiding him back to the foundations of form. Rafa now collaborates with the Faculty of Medicine in Valencia, assisting in cadaver-based anatomy courses and developing anatomical learning tools for medical education.

Combining his hands-on experience in dissection with decades of sculptural expertise, Rafa offers a unique perspective—equally visual, structural, and artistic. His teaching is direct, inspiring, and built to empower digital artists with a clear, intuitive understanding of the human body.

"Anatomy is not just science—it's the language of form. And once you speak it, you sculpt with purpose."—RZA



Instructor
Rafa Zabala

- Founder of Rafa Zabala Anatomy
- Tradicional sculptor
- Character and creature modeller
- Art Director
- Anatomy instructor



Anatomy as the driving force of my career



Since an early age, I've been passionate about anatomy. Its study and observation have always guided my artistic path.

What began as curiosity became a lifelong journey—from traditional sculpture to digital characters and creatures in film and games.

Today, my work reflects a deep anatomical foundation, not only in human forms but also in animals and imaginary beings. Recent years teaching at the University of Valencia and working with real human anatomy have brought new depth to my creative vision.



Bridging the Gap Between Entertainment and Anatomy

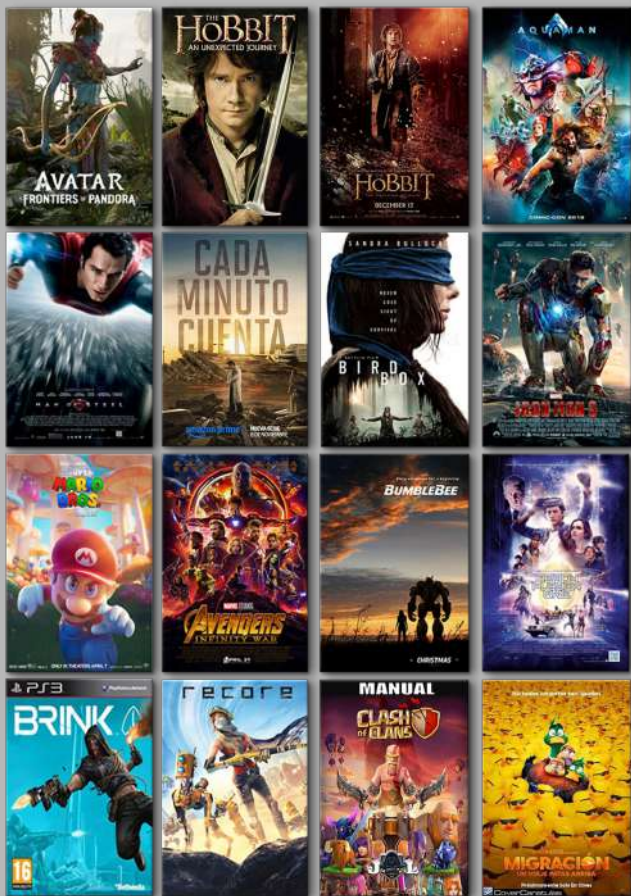
I've found a deep sense of purpose in my path as both an artist and educator.

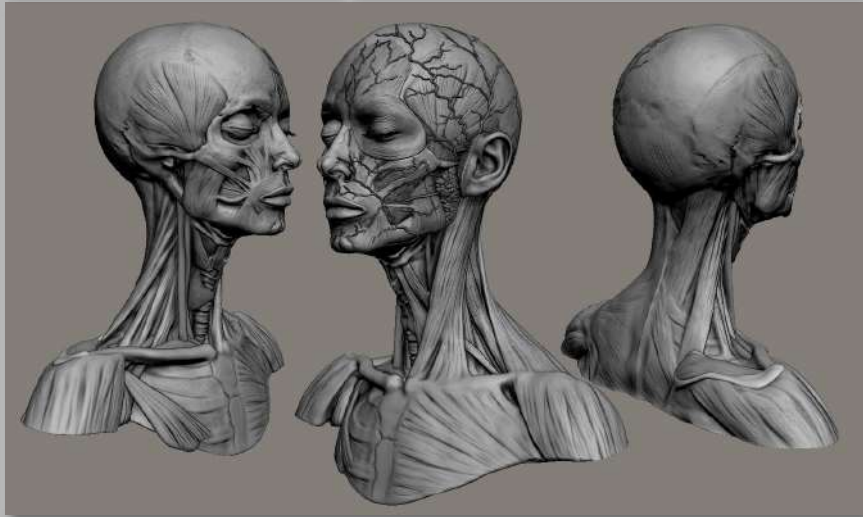
This journey has taken me across countries and cultures, connecting me with amazing people along the way.

At the heart of it all is my passion for anatomy—the driving force that led me to explore new creative horizons and eventually feel at home among doctors and surgeons, who now embrace me as one of their own.

They have become my mentors in a more demanding anatomical stage, offering knowledge that has profoundly shaped my perspective.

I believe every artist can benefit from a solid foundation in anatomy, and I'm here to share that knowledge with those who wish to truly understand the human body.





Exploring new applications

These are examples of medical simulators I've created in collaboration with the private company *Iface Simulator*. You can find more about their work on their official website.

Currently, I'm developing new and challenging projects for both the medical and industrial sectors—combining anatomical precision with innovative materials and sculptural techniques.



Why dive deep into anatomy?

My passion for anatomy has led me to explore it through real cadaver dissections, an experience that changed the way I see and sculpt the human form.

I currently teach anatomy alongside doctors at the Faculty of Medicine in Valencia, while continuing my work as a character artist for film and games. This dual path gives me a unique perspective that blends scientific accuracy with artistic vision.

In this course, we build the body from the inside out, starting with the skeleton and sculpting muscle by muscle. We also study how fat, age, and proportions affect what we see on the surface.

The goal is simple: to give the students and teachers a clear, structured, and practical understanding of real anatomy—so you can create believable characters, with confidence.

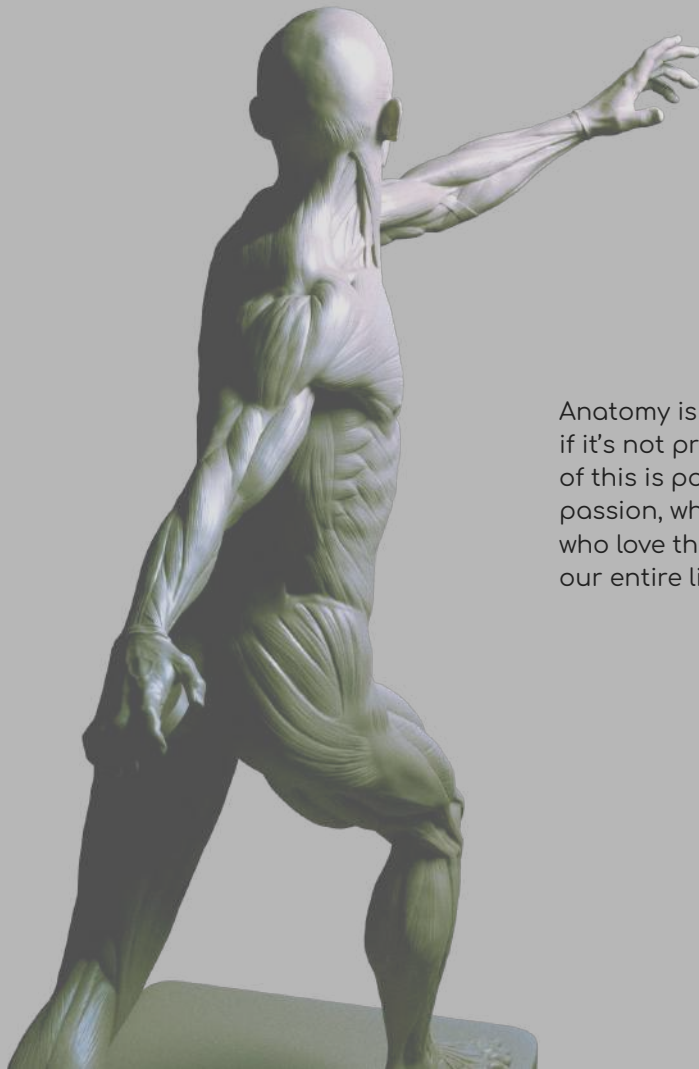


Who is this course for?

This course is designed for vfx schools looking for an intensive anatomy program that provides students and/or instructors with the tools to truly understand human anatomy, enabling them to create believable and effective characters and creatures.

No prior knowledge of human anatomy is required, as we'll build a strong foundation from scratch. However, a basic understanding of ZBrush or similar software is recommended.

Anatomy is a complex language, one that can only be mastered through persistent study over a lifetime. This course does not promise shortcuts like “learn anatomy in a week,” because the depth of the subject demands time and dedication. Instead, it offers students a solid anatomical foundation, empowering them to create with confidence and precision in their future artistic work.



Anatomy is a language—and like any other, if it's not practiced regularly, it fades. None of this is possible without a deep sense of passion, which is what drives those of us who love this subject to study it throughout our entire lives.

Block 1

- Osteology of the upper limb
- Muscles of the arm and forearm
- How to represent muscular volume convincingly in characters

Block 2

- Osteology of the lower limb
- Muscles of the thigh and leg
- Anatomical logic of volume and surface

Block 3

- Osteology of the torso
- Muscles of the back, chest, and abdomen
- Body volume structure and proportions
- Introduction to movement dynamics

Block 4

- Osteology of the skull
- Muscles of the head and neck
- Anatomical representation of the face with volume and precision
- Proportions, movement, age, and ethnic variation

Programme

This is a standard course example, but it can be fully tailored to the specific needs of your training center.

This is an in-person course that can be delivered over 1 or 2 days. It takes place at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Valencia.

Each session combines theory with demonstrations in ZBrush and cadaver dissection, allowing attendees to see and touch the muscles they will later shape in their creations.

This course is designed both for students and for training your instructors.

Customized formats, additional content, and follow-up sessions are also available upon request.

We adapt the training to your team's specific needs

Contact us for more information about pricing .

info@razabalanatomy.com