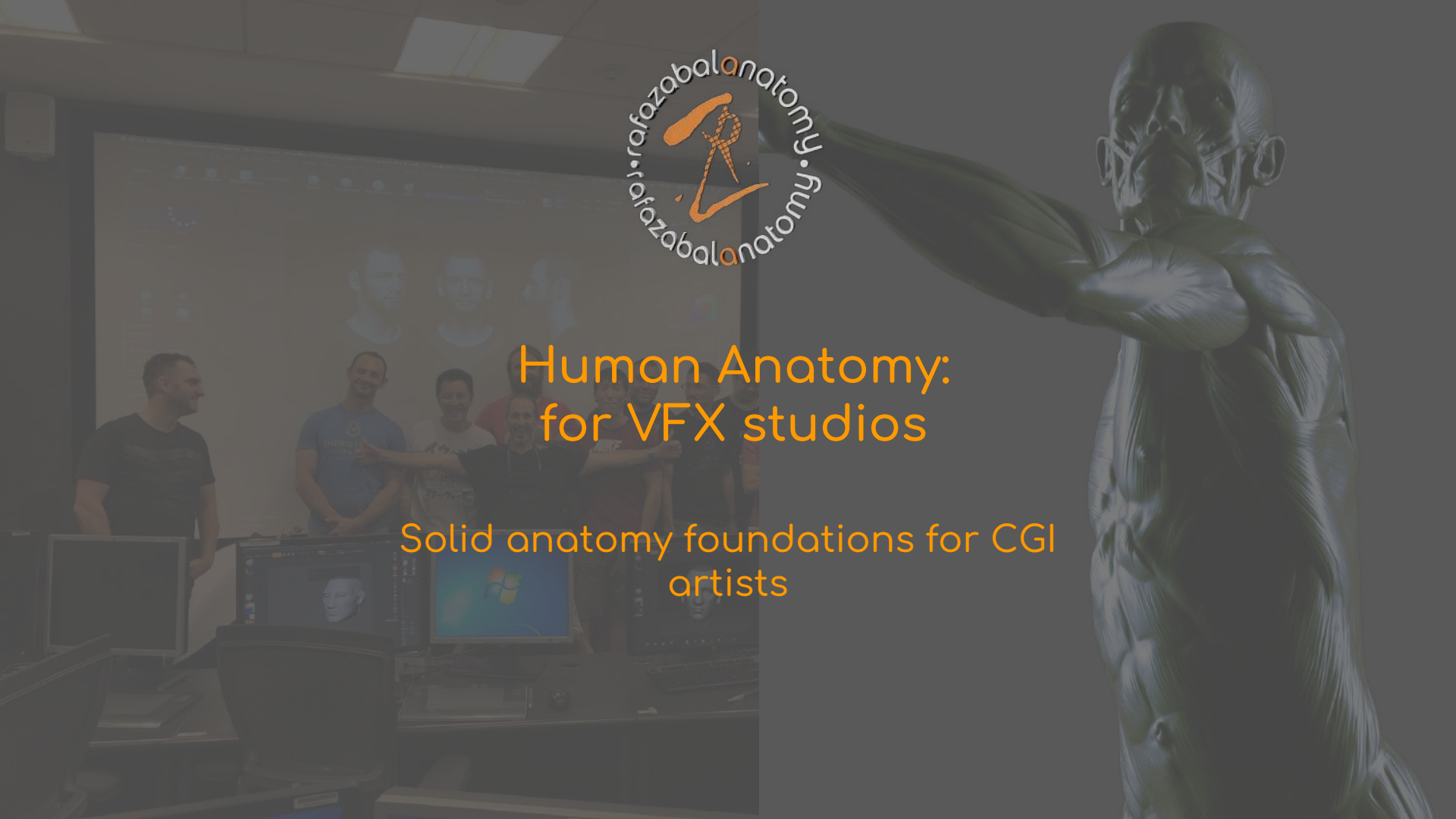
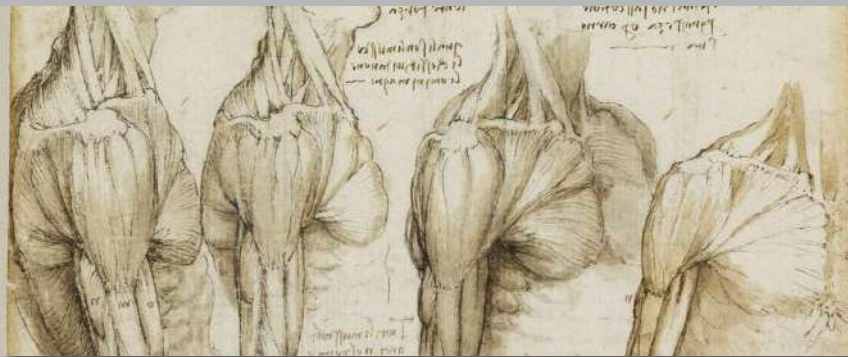




Human Anatomy: for VFX studios

Solid anatomy foundations for CGI
artists





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

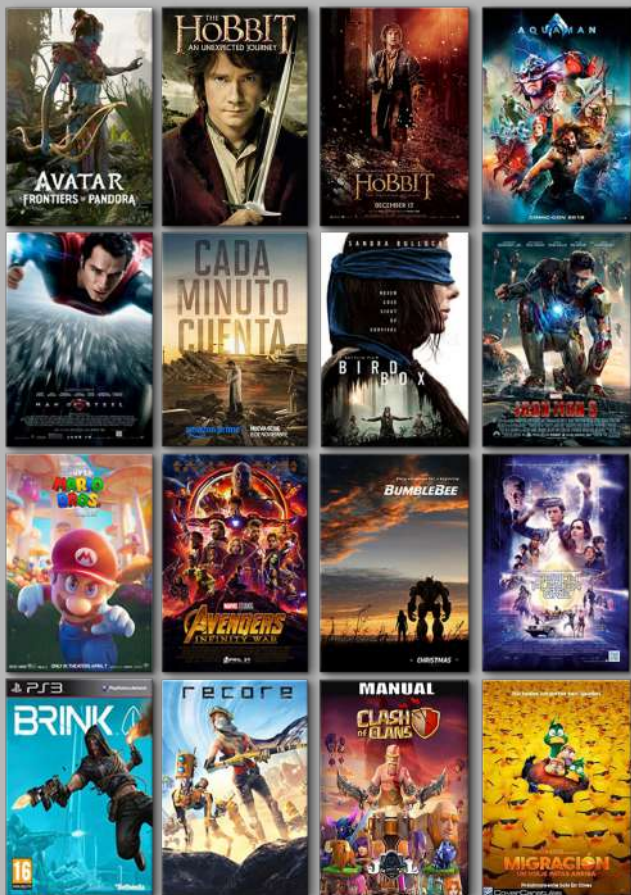
I've found a deep sense of purpose in my path as both an artist and educator.

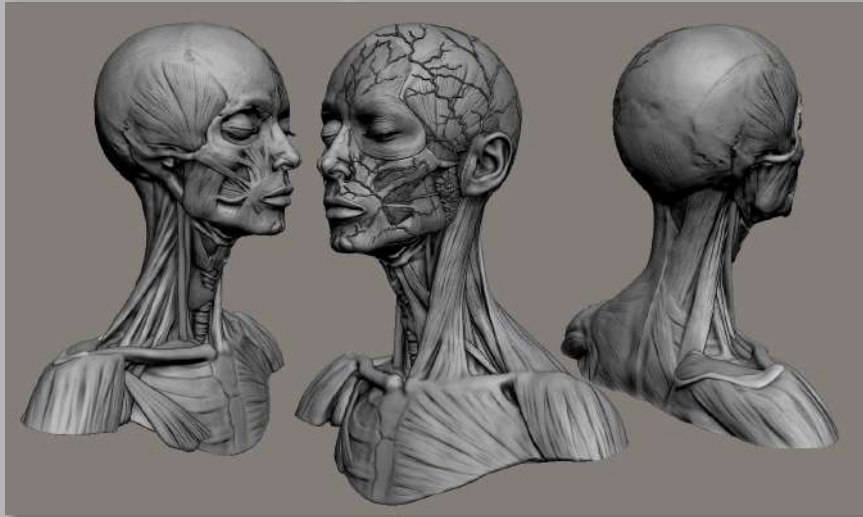
This journey has taken me across countries and cultures, connecting me with amazing people along the way.

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 study anatomy in depth?



I currently collaborate as a teaching assistant at the Faculty of Medicine of Valencia, where I help train future doctors in human anatomy. This continuous immersion in real, tangible anatomy also enriches my work as an artist in the film and video game industry.

To truly understand something, you must study it at its source. This course is designed to help you build the human body from the ground up: we begin with the skeleton and gradually sculpt each muscle of the trunk and limbs, understanding its form, function, and connections.

We'll also explore how factors like fat distribution, body proportions, and age influence the appearance of the human body, knowledge you can confidently apply to your creative projects.

This is a visual, structured, and revealing experience. No guesswork, just real anatomy in service of your art.

Who is this course designed for?

A tailored course for VFX teams who need a reliable and applied understanding of human anatomy in their creative workflow

It's designed for artists across the entire production pipeline, modelers, sculptors, animators, texture artists, and supervisors, regardless of their prior anatomical knowledge.

We start from the fundamentals and build up in a clear, structured way, ensuring that every concept makes sense and connects with what artists already know from their work.

By the end of the course, participants will have a deep, visual understanding of the musculoskeletal system and how it impacts form, movement, and expression.

This knowledge translates into stronger, more believable characters, whether stylized or realistic, and greater confidence in every creative decision.

Why this training is a smart investment

Great anatomy isn't just about making things look good, it's about solving problems before they appear.

When your artists understand structure deeply, they make faster decisions, avoid common modeling and deformation issues, and communicate more efficiently with rigging and animation teams.

This course saves time, reduces trial-and-error, and improves consistency across the pipeline, making your team more agile, precise, and creatively empowered.

It's a one-time investment with lasting returns, visible in every character that hits the screen.

Block 1

- Upper limb osteology
- Arm and forearm muscles
- How to represent muscular volume convincingly in characters

Block 2

- Lower limb osteology
- Thigh and leg muscles
- Muscle volume and anatomical surface logic

Block 3

- Torso osteology
- Back, chest, and abdominal muscles
- Volume structure and body proportions
- Introduction to movement dynamics

Block 4

- Skull osteology
- Head and neck muscles
- Representing facial anatomy with volume and accuracy
- Proportions, movement, age, and ethnic variation

Program suggested

This is our standard course structure, but it can be fully adapted to your studio's schedule and specific needs.

The course is typically delivered over 4 sessions of 2 hours each, totaling 8 hours of live online training. We also provide on-site training at your studio facilities.

Each session blends theory with sculpting demonstrations and hands-on practice in ZBrush (or your preferred software).

Sessions are usually scheduled in the afternoon to fit within the studio's workflow, but we can adjust to your team's preferences.

Custom formats, additional content, and follow-up sessions are also available on request.

Please, contact us to tailor this experience for your studio!