

**Impressions on the 16th International Conference for Plastination  
Beijing, China  
July 23-27, 2012**

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I found myself in an interesting position at ICP 2012 in Beijing, since while I have a considerable interest in many aspects of plastination, I have no expertise in the technical aspects of it. I was therefore what one might describe as a committed onlooker, especially since I had been a strong supporter of the development of plastination in its early days at the University of Otago. It has been a joy to see the manner in which it has flourished there, not only in teaching but also in a fascinating array of research projects. The same applies to its development across so many countries and departments.

The scope of the topics and papers was considerable, pointing to the way in which plastination has matured both technically and also educationally. The scene was set by the plenary addresses varying as they did from ethical and educational issues in anatomy and plastination to technological insights into the plastination process. These were backed up by many illustrations of the numerous ways in which the uses of plastination throw light on anatomical structure and relationships. The scope was broadened by discussion of histopathology, solvent recycling, the way in which plastination can be combined with online modules in anatomy education, sheet plastination, three-dimensional reconstruction of anatomical structures using plastinated sections, and the use of plastination in community outreach. Plastinated bodies exhibitions were touched on in a variety of ways, including a survey of young people to investigate their perceptions of them, while exhibitors provided ample insight into their products in this and other ways.

The workshops were by all accounts a great success. I cannot comment on these since I was not present at them. But they were referred to on many occasions and quite clearly had elicited considerable interest. They were the end result of concerted preparation over a period of 2 years or so, and it is to be hoped that the workshops will remain a vital part of most future conferences.

One concern I came away with was the difficulties experienced in some countries. I am thinking particularly of African countries, where there is not the money to undertake plastination themselves nor to purchase plastinated material. This presents a major challenge for the plastination, and more generally, the anatomical community. It is fine for us to say what a wonderful technique this is, but we need to be aware that many of our colleagues are denied it. While I am not suggesting there is an easy answer, the Society for Plastination is the only group able to address this problem.

ICP 2012 provided a forum at which matters like this, as well as more general ethical ones, could be brought into the open, mainly because it attracted such a cross section of colleagues from a diversity of countries. Its value will be shown over the coming months and years as the many lessons learned are applied in our departments.

# The 16th International Conference on Plastination



# Welcome To ICP 2012 Workshop

