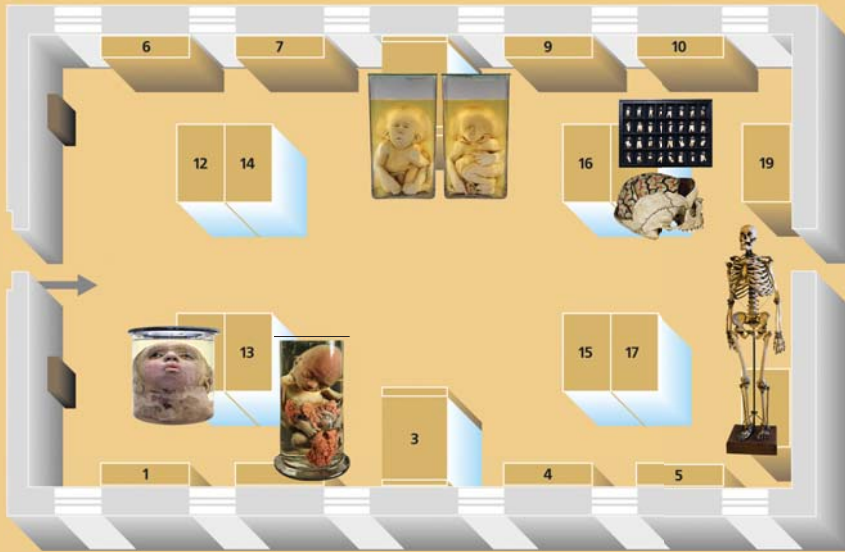




**ROOM  
"THE FIRST  
NATURAL-HISTORY  
COLLECTIONS"**

**IN FIVE MINUTES**

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▲ *Collection of teeth extracted by Peter I*

It is well known that Peter I mastered various professions. We should mention that he “skilfully extracted bad teeth and did it with eagerness”. The inventory lists 64 teeth extracted between 1721 and 1724. Among the tsar’s patients there were grooms, choristers, tailors, rowers and noble men, such as Count and General Admiral F.M. Apraksin, Georgy Dashkov (the Bishop of Rostov), Daria Mikhailovna (Duke Alexander Menshikov’s wife), Semen Blekloi (the commandant of Kroonstad) and Larion Dumashev (the commandant of the Kopor’ye fortress).

This is what Johann Shumacher, the curator of the Kunstkamera, wrote to the tsar when he returned from his travel abroad in 1722: “With mister Duvernoy, who promised to produce a wax anatomy, which he had agreed upon with late doctor Areskin, I had a lot of troubles, as he was very mean and gave me a calculation that I was astounded and scared by, and showed me the destroyed bank letters, which he had to accept for the money sent for this purpose, and the letter of late doctor Areskin, in which he promised to him a full collection of cheap anatomical preparations, and he did not keep this promise. And he claims, that since it was our party that broke the agreement, he is not liable to fulfil his obligations, moreover since the person he had concluded the contract with died. I thank God that with great efforts and different contrivances I have managed to get a cerebrum in cranium from him”. This “cerebrum in cranium”, i.e. a wax brain model in a natural skull, is displayed on our exposition.



▲ *Wax brain model  
in a natural skull.  
Paris, early 18<sup>th</sup> century.*

► *Skeleton of Nicolas Bourgeois*

The skeleton of a giant Bourgeois has always made a powerful impression on visitors to the Kunstkamera. Many travelers visited St. Petersburg in 18<sup>th</sup> century paid special attention to this exhibit while visiting Kunstkamera. A Frenchman Aubry de la Motraye, who arrived in Petersburg in 1726, wrote about the newly built town and his visit to Kunstkamera in his book *Voyages en Anglais et en Français en diverses provinces et places de la Prusse ducale et royale, de la Russie, de la Pologne etc.* (The Hague, 1732) and, in particular, about the skeleton of Bourgeois: «The skull of a Frenchman is the entire piece, composed of solid bone, without the slightest traces of cranial sutures. Frenchman suffered greatly from headaches, had a very big heart and a big stomach, and his genital organ was very small; he ate and drunk surprisingly a lot and was more than 7 feet growth»



The abnormality when twins are accreted with their occiputs so tightly that the brain of one is found inside the other twin's brainpan is referred to as a Janus-faced monstrosity. This abnormality usually causes the twin's death at a foetal stadium.

A god named Janus, who gave the name for this anomaly, was the god of doors, or entrance and exit. Ancient Romans depicted him as a grown-up man with two faces, one looking into the past, and the other into the future.

► *Ancient coin depicting god Janus*



▲ *Specimen of newborn twins with Janus-faced malformations. Photographed from the front and rear*



▲ *Specimen from F. Ruysch's collection — a baby's head*

Charming baby faces are touching and pure, even when dead. Look at this head of a one-year-old child. A dyeing injection into the blood vessels made its skin and lips look live. But this preparation is not only beautiful. It could also be used to teach anatomy: on the neck, near the cutting line one can see the carotid arteries and the trachea, and in the opened brainpan, from which brain had been removed, one can see the ends of cranio-cerebral nerves.



▲ *Injected specimen from F. Ruysch's collection — a fragment of placenta*

The collection of F. Ruysch contained preparations of embryos and foetuses on different stages of development. Visitors to his home museum could trace foetus development from a tiny embryo to a newborn baby, which astounded the anatomist's contemporaries. Before Ruysch, people had known little about this period in every person's life. On our exposition you can see many embryo preparations. Pay attention to this preparation of a seven-month-old embryo, next to which there is the amniotic sac and a fragment of placenta with injected blood vessels. The seven-month-old newborn babies are small, but viable as they are normally fully developed.