

SKULLDUGGERY

Them bones, them dead bones. They are not so dead however that they cannot be objects of beauty, as artists and designers like Damien Hirst, Hans Van Bentem and Steven Gregory demonstrate. Sinister perhaps, but this is a trend that arrests us with a beauty that is as morbid as it is fascinating and is very much a part of a bigger trend we've noted towards

maps, botanical drawings, cabinets of curiosities and the work of 18th-century anatomists and public dissections. Once the fodder of regional museums or the collections of eccentric dilettantes, skulls, bones, anatomical parts and books are increasingly becoming the staple of those who want their homes to become archives and vitrine-filled museums.

KEY TERMS: ANATOMY, HUMAN FORMS, SKELETAL HYBRIDS, BEJEWELLED BONES, NATURAL RELICS, PRESERVATION JARS, VICTORIAN FREAK SHOWS, DUSTY TAXIDERMY CABINETS

