

Gunther von Hagens'

# **BODY WORLDS**

## **The Anatomical Exhibition of Real Human Bodies**



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### **Aim of the Exhibition**

The aim of the exhibition is to inform visitors and to open up the opportunity, particularly to medical laymen, to better understand their body and its functions. When viewing the exhibits we can become aware of the naturalness of our bodies and recognize the individuality and anatomical beauty inside.

The authenticity of the specimen on display is essential for such insight. Every human being is unique. Humans reveal their individuality not only through the visible exterior, but also through the interior of their bodies as each one is distinctly different. Position, size, shape and structure of skeleton, muscles, nerves and organs determine our face within. It would be impossible to convey this anatomical individuality with models, for a model is nothing more than an interpretation. All models look alike and are, essentially, simplified versions of the real thing. The authenticity of the specimen, however, is fascinating and enables the observer to experience the marvel of the real human being. The exhibition is thus dedicated to the individual face within.

### **Theme of the Exhibition**

Until recently the privilege to view corpses and the human body's interior has been confined to medical students and anatomists in dissection rooms. It is only due to the invention of plastination that the general public is now also able to enjoy fascinating insights into the human body. The plastination technique has made a considerable contribution to health education.

In 1977, Gunther von Hagens invented the plastination technique, which marked the beginning of a second anatomical revolution. Andreas Vesalius, who created precise anatomical drawings as early as in 1543, was the pioneer of modern anatomy. Since then human corpses have slowly disappeared again from the human eye with the establishment of medical schools. A taboo emerged.

Gunther von Hagens' plastinated bodies obviously touch upon this taboo and trigger controversial reactions throughout the world. The high number of visitors, however, proves the general population's need to learn more about the structure and functions of their bodies.

The exhibition features the instructional display of individual exhibits, thus enabling visitors to experience anatomy step by step as an intrinsic part of their body – quite similar to a three-dimensional textbook.

The tour starts with a human skeleton, followed by the locomotive system, the digestive system, special nerve and vessel specimens, and even the development of new life in the womb. Visitors are provided with precise insights into the structure of their body's interior. Approximately 25 whole body plastinates reveal the true-to-life spatial relationships between organs. Diseased specimens due to infarcts or cancer are also on display; a lung blackened by nicotine illustrates the effects of tobacco consumption.

Medical professionals and non-professionals alike will certainly be fascinated when viewing their "face within". They will marvel at the diversity and beauty of human nature and have the opportunity to think about their own attitude towards health, life and death.

### **Plastination Technique**

Decay is a considerable impediment to morphological studies. Therefore, scientists have been searching for centuries for suitable preservation techniques. With the invention of plastination, it has become possible to preserve decomposable specimens in a durable and lifelike manner for instructional, research and demonstration purposes. During a vacuum process biological specimens are impregnated with a reactive polymer developed specifically for this technique. The class of polymer used determines the mechanical (flexible or hard) and optical (transparent or opaque) properties of the preserved specimen. Plastinated specimens are dry and odorless; they retain their natural surface relief and are identical with their state prior to preservation down to the microscopic level; even microscopic examinations are still possible.

The plastination technique was invented by Dr. Gunther von Hagens in Heidelberg, Germany in 1977.

### **Past Exhibitions**

So far nearly 16 million people throughout the world have visited the BODY WORLDS exhibitions. BODY WORLDS has become the most successful exhibition of human anatomy of all time.

Japan	1996/97/98	2,742,434 visitors
Mannheim	November 1997 to March 1998	774,440 visitors
Vienna	April to August 1999	543,180 visitors
Basel	September 1999 to January 2000	597,179 visitors
Cologne	February to July 2000	1,062,483 visitors
Oberhausen	August 2000 to January 2001	687,864 visitors
Berlin	February to September 2001	1,390,073 visitors
Brussels	September 2001 to March 2002	505,747 visitors
London	March 2002 to February 2003	840,611 visitors
Seoul/Korea	April to March 2003	2,022,653 visitors
Busan/Korea	March to September 2003	1,117,769 visitors
Singapore	November 2003 to March 2004	241,000 visitors
Stuttgart	March 2003	106,393 visitors
Munich	February to August 2003	860,382 visitors
Hamburg	August 2003 to January 2004	491,833 visitors
Frankfurt	January to June 2004	540,034 visitors
Taipei/Taiwan	April to October 2004	632,560 visitors
Kaohsiung/Taiwan	November to December 2004	53,186
Los Angeles	July 2004 to January 2005	over 500,000 visitors (as of 01/05/04)
Chicago	February 2004 to September 2005	(to be announced)

For more information, visit [www.bodyworlds.com](http://www.bodyworlds.com).