

Gunther von Hagens'

# **BODY WORLDS**

The Original

## & The Cycle of Life

### **BODY WORLDS: Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **What is *BODY WORLDS*?**

*BODY WORLDS: The Original Exhibition*, is the first exhibition of its kind to inform the visitor about anatomy, physiology and health by viewing real human bodies preserved through Plastination, the preservation process invented by Dr. Gunther von Hagens in 1977, while he was working as an anatomist at the University of Heidelberg. Since the beginning of the exhibition series in Japan in 1995, more than 47 million visitors in more than 70 cities in Asia, Europe, America, and Africa have seen the world's most successful traveling exhibition.

#### **What does *BODY WORLDS* show?**

Each *BODY WORLDS* exhibition contains real human specimens, including whole-body plastinates as well as individual organs, organ configurations and translucent body slices. The spectacular plastinates in the exhibition take the visitor on an exciting journey of discovery under the skin. It provides a comprehensive insight into the anatomy and physiology of the human body. In addition to organ functions, common diseases are described in an easily understood manner by comparing healthy and affected organs. They show the long-term impact of diseases and addictions, such as tobacco or alcohol consumption, and demonstrate the mechanics of artificial knee and hip joints.

#### **What is the purpose of the exhibition?**

*BODY WORLDS* aims to educate the public about the inner workings of the human body and shows the effects of poor health, good health and lifestyle choices. It is also presented in the hopes that it will stimulate curiosity about the science of anatomy and physiology.

#### **Who should see *BODY WORLDS*?**

Anyone interested in learning what makes us human. Adults of all ages and children will find the exhibits fascinating. Given the nature of the *BODY WORLDS* exhibits, it is up to parents, guardians or school staff to decide whether *BODY WORLDS* is appropriate for the children in their care.

**Where else has *BODY WORLDS* been exhibited? Where will they be on display next?**

There are nine *BODY WORLDS* exhibitions, which have been viewed by 47 million people throughout the world. *BODY WORLDS* exhibitions have been displayed in Asia, Europe, North America and most recently Africa. Additional *BODY WORLDS* exhibitions are planned. If you would like to know cities and dates for future presentations, please visit, [www.bodyworlds.com](http://www.bodyworlds.com), where you will find an overview of current, past and future exhibition venues. If you are interested in receiving additional information on current exhibitions, you may sign up online for the *BODY WORLDS* newsletter.

**Why is it important for the public to see these exhibitions?**

The organizers of *BODY WORLDS* believe that when people understand more about how the body works and how it can break down, they are more likely to choose healthy and sustainable lifestyles. We also hope it will inspire visitors to learn more about the life sciences. Knowledge about what the human body looks like and how it functions is basic life science information that should be available to everyone. During the run of the exhibition, we will be actively reaching out to educators and medical professionals to ensure that they have the opportunity to experience the exhibition.

**Would I be able to learn just as much from books or models of the human anatomy?**

The use of authentic specimens allows a penetrating examination and study of disease, physiology and anatomy unmatched by models, textbooks or photos. In addition, the exhibition allows visitors to understand that each and every body has its own unique features, even on the inside. The experience in other cities has clearly demonstrated that exhibit visitors are drawn to real specimens in a way that cannot be replicated by models.

**What is Plastination?**

Plastination is a unique process invented by Dr. Gunther von Hagens in 1977 to preserve specimens for medical education. The process replaces bodily fluids and soluble fat in specimens with fluid plastics that harden after vacuum-forced impregnation. After the bodies are fixed into lifelike poses, they are hardened with gas, heat or light. The plastinates show how our bodies respond internally to movements in everyday life, as well as during athletic activities. For more information about Plastination, go to [www.bodyworlds.com](http://www.bodyworlds.com)

**Where did the specimens on display come from?****Will we know who the plastinates are or how they died?**

The *BODY WORLDS* exhibitions rely on the generosity of body donors; individuals who bequeathed that, upon their death, their bodies could be used for educational purposes in the exhibition. All the whole-body plastinates and the majority of the specimens are from these body donors; a few organs and specific specimens that show unusual conditions come from old anatomical collections and morphological institutes. As agreed upon by the body donors, their identities and causes of death are not disclosed. The exhibition focuses on the nature of our bodies, not on providing personal information.

**Why are the plastinates posed the way they are?**

The poses of the plastinates have been carefully thought out and serve educational aims. Each plastinate is posed to illustrate different anatomical features. For instance, the athletic poses illustrate the use of muscle systems while playing sports. The poses are chosen to highlight specific anatomical features and allow the visitor to relate the plastinate to his or her own body.

**Will I be able to touch any of the plastinates?**

While you will be able to get very close to the plastinates, as a rule, visitors are not allowed to touch them.

**Is this exhibition appropriate for children?**

Forty-seven million people, including young children, have viewed the *BODY WORLDS* exhibitions around the world. If you are considering bringing children or school groups to *BODY WORLDS*, visit our website at [www.bodyworlds.com](http://www.bodyworlds.com) to find out how to use the exhibition as a learning experience.

**Is there an audio tour?**

Audio Guides are offered for an additional fee. The audio tour is designed for to enhance the exhibition content and to provide added insight to the specimens on display. The guide is available in English and Spanish. Personally guided tours through the exhibit are unavailable at this time.

**Have the ethical questions concerning this exhibition been addressed?**

Before the North American premiere of *BODY WORLDS*, a distinguished committee of theologians, ethicists, academics and medical luminaries conducted an independent ethics review. The Ethics Review of the origins of bodies in *BODY WORLDS* - conducted by the California Science Center, Los Angeles - is available for download on our website.

### **Body Donation for Plastination?**

Our unique body donation program was founded in 1982 by Dr. Gunther von Hagens and has registered more than 18,000 donors worldwide. Since 1993, our program has been managed by the Institute for Plastination in Heidelberg, Germany. Body donation is and remains the ethical backbone of our work. Our *BODY WORLDS* exhibitions and the high-quality educational specimens that result from our Plastination work would not be possible without the generosity of our body donors. We are very grateful to all of our donors and we are honored to be able to fulfill their last wish. In order for us to properly manage our donation program and serve our existing donors, we are unable to accept new donations at this time. The program has simply reached its capacity and we are indefinitely stopping the acceptance of new donor applications.

We encourage you to contact your local medical school to learn about their need for body donations. Please contact our body donation office if you have any further questions.

### **What educational materials are provided?**

Teachers will wish to prepare both their students and their adult supervisors carefully for their *BODY WORLDS* experience. Educator materials are available for download on the website, [www.bodyworlds.com](http://www.bodyworlds.com). Please inquire about educator preview opportunities.

### **How long can you stay inside the exhibits?**

We recommend allowing yourself about one to two hours. The length of time will vary on how long each visitor wishes to examine each specimen and read the information provided. An audio tour will increase your time in the exhibits. Reentry to the exhibition is not allowed, once you exit.

### **Can you take photographs or film in the exhibitions?**

Photography and filming, including pictures taken with cell phones, are not allowed in the *BODY WORLDS* exhibitions, except by accredited members of the media.