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Plastination Fascination

COSI's anatomical exhibit combines science and art

By Rose Davidson

Have you ever wondered what your body would look like without all that skin getting in the way?

Wonder no longer.

Body Worlds & the Brain opened Oct. 17 at COSI. The international traveling exhibit features more than 200 human specimens, including whole bodies, individual organs and transparent body slices. All specimens, aside from a small number of historical contributions, originate from bodies that have been donated to science.

The exhibit, sponsored by OhioHealth, is part of COSI's strategic focus on health and medicine – an area the science museum works to promote in Columbus.

“We wanted to bring *Body Worlds* to Columbus because it educates the public

about the inner workings of the human body,” says Jaclyn Reynolds, public relations and social media manager for COSI. “We really hope it will stimulate curiosity about the science of anatomy.”

All specimens have been preserved using plastination, a method of halting decomposition that was pioneered by anatomist Dr. Gunther von Hagens at the University of Heidelberg in 1977. For one body, the process takes roughly one year to complete – but, once finished, each specimen tells a unique story.

As part of the plastination process, the bodies are strategically positioned in the act of performing various physical activities. The “caught in the act” arrangement of the bodies allows observers to see the

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Gunther von Hagens' BODY WORLDS, Institute for Plastination, Heidelberg, Germany, www.bodyworlds.com



inner workings of the human machine as it skateboards, plays basketball, dances ballet and more.

While their main purpose is educational, the specimens' depictions of everyday activities add another dimension to the exhibit. Along with showing the beauty of the human form, Reynolds says, the life-like positioning of each specimen illustrates the resilience and vulnerability of the human body.

"It's more artistic than you would think," says Reynolds.

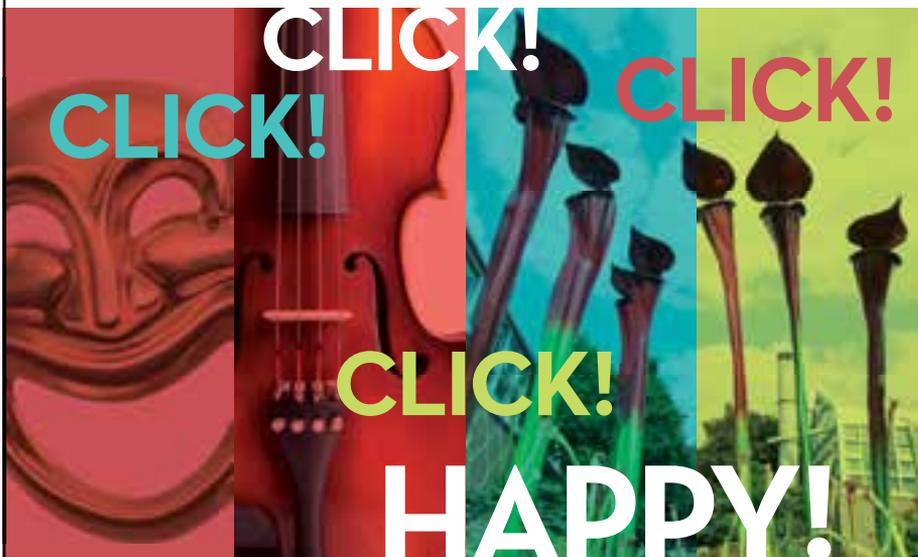
Body Worlds & the Brain is on display through Jan. 6. **CS**

Rose Davidson is a contributing writer. Feedback welcome at gbishop@cityscenemediagroup.com.

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