

Original & Copycat

With several anatomical exhibits, similarly titled and derivative of *Gunther von Hagens' BODY WORLDS*, that have shown around the world —“Bodies...The Exhibition,” “The Amazing Human Body,” “Body Exploration,” “Bodies Revealed,” “Mysteries of the Human Body,” and “Our Body, The Universe Within,” “Our Body,” “Corps Ouvert,” and others —there has been confusion among the media and the public about *Gunther von Hagens' BODY WORLDS* exhibitions and their relationship to the copycat exhibits. These exhibitions are imitations of Dr. Gunther von Hagens' work, and in no way affiliated with, sponsored or endorsed by BODY WORLDS.

Dr. Gunther von Hagens is the world's leading anatomist, the inventor of Plastination (the method of specimen preservation that makes anatomical display possible), and the originator of BODY WORLDS or KOERPERWELTEN (its German title), the first of its kind anatomical exhibition. Dr. von Hagens invented Plastination at the University of Heidelberg in 1977, developed the use of plastinated specimens for medical education and preservation, and established the International Society for Plastination. More than 400 universities in 40 countries utilize Dr. Gunther von Hagens' preservation technique in their curriculum.

Many exhibitions have appropriated Dr. von Hagens' Plastination method and techniques, and frequently imitated the dissection principles and didactic presentations he uses in BODY WORLDS. In some cases, they have plagiarized the unique expressive character of many of his distinctive plastinate specimens. In one case, Dr. von Hagens has pursued the matter through the courts and sued for copyright infringement.

It is also important to note that the plastinated specimens on display in Gunther von Hagens' BODY WORLDS exhibitions—excluding a small number of specimens acquired from anatomical collections and anatomy programs—stem from a special Body Donation Program managed by the Institute for Plastination, Heidelberg, Germany. Currently, the Institute for Plastination has a donor roster of more than 17,000 individuals which includes over 16,000 Europeans and 1,300 North Americans.

All Institute for Plastination documents relating to donated bodies have been scrutinized and approved by two ethics committees formed by the California Science Center in Los Angeles and the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, where BODY WORLDS exhibitions took place.

In 2004, prior to introducing Gunther von Hagens' BODY WORLDS to American audiences, and updated in 2017, the California Science Center instituted a rigorous review process to assess the educational merit and ethical nature of the exhibition. The California Science Center's extensive review established an Ethics Advisory Committee made up of a diverse panel of ethicists and community leaders. The committee verified that specimens available for each BODY WORLDS exhibit were properly acquired through body donations, and the exhibit had considerable educational value. A summary of the review is available here: [Ethical Review Update 2016/2017](#), [Ethic Report 2004/2005](#)

With more than 40 years of research and development experience, Dr. Gunther von Hagens is the world's preeminent exponent of plastination techniques, and BODY WORLDS is the industry leader in providing high quality, educational exhibitions. Since 1995, more than 47 million people worldwide have visited Gunther von Hagens' BODY WORLDS exhibitions. Exhibits, which attempt to mimic BODY WORLDS, simply do not replicate the BODY WORLDS experience. Many of these exhibits appear to use specimen preservation and display techniques that differ from the high standards of quality used in BODY WORLDS.