

Bodies exhibit – an education more than skin deep



By Denise Sloan Smart

SACRAMENTO – One would think that roaming among more than a dozen dead bodies might be creepy, but at Bodies Revealed, it's fascinating, even captivating.

Bodies Revealed is currently on display in Sacramento.

Bodies Revealed lets you explore deep within the human body in a way that is informative, but not frightening. As you move from gallery to gallery, the exhibition uses 14 full body human specimens and more than 200 human organs to tell the story of the miraculous systems at work within each of us every second of our existence.

The bodies are all small as they were, "Chinese men, all of whom died of natural causes," according to the docent who was working the day we toured the exhibit.

The full-body specimens are complemented by presentation cases of related individual organs, both healthy and diseased, that provide a detailed look into the elements that comprise each system that makes us tick. One body is nothing but a nervous system. Another body is stripped of everything but the circulatory system.

Did you know you have 100,000 miles of vascular system in you? And that you were born with 300 bones that grew into 206 bones?

One tour of Bodies Revealed and you learn our bodies are intricately developed machines; more complex and wondrous than all the computers and gadgetry we surround ourselves with today.

Yet most of us do not know what makes us tick. We don't know how we function, what we need to survive, what destroys us or what revives us.

Bodies Revealed is an attempt to remedy that lack of knowledge by presenting to the lay public material that was previously only available to the medical profession: A three-dimensional tour of the human body.

A tour of Bodies Revealed will give you a new connection to your own body because you will understand better how you work.

The Polymer Preservation process is a technique in which human tissue is permanently preserved using liquid silicone rubber. Polymer preservation provides a closer look at the skeletal, muscular, nervous, respiratory, digestive, urinary, reproductive, endocrine and circulatory systems. The end product of the preservation process is a dry, odorless specimen that resists decomposition. The "specimen," as the bodies are referred to, are so "plasticized" that you forget they were once living, breathing humans until you see eyebrows or get close enough to see eyelashes, then you remind yourself, they were real people. But they are so interesting that you can't stop staring, closely!

There is a fetal exhibit that is equally educational that has deceased fetuses at various stages of growth from 6 weeks to several months old. A sign explained that all had died "envitro" and of natural causes.

We skipped the \$5 audio headset and didn't feel like we missed a thing. The last date tickets are available is Oct. 24. The exhibit, at 2040 Alta Arden Expressway, opens at 10am seven days a week. Tickets range from \$12 for students to \$22 for

adults, not counting TicketMaster fees and surcharges.

Our self-guided tour lasted 1 hour, 20 minutes. We read every sign, looked at every specimen and didn't miss a thing.

Bodies Revealed is an exhibit that is not without controversy, but it is the most fascinating exhibit I've seen in many years. I'd go back again tomorrow.