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## Body show demonstrates hand of God



An exhibit at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, "Body Worlds 2," is rightly touted as an amazing scientific exhibit.

A review of the show will run in the Lifestyle pages on Sunday. Readers can become aware of it then and there.

In a nutshell, the heart of the exhibit is the display of real human bodies, literally stripped down to show innards, organs, muscles, nerves, tendons and all those things that, because they are inside us, we never see.

The bodies and their various appurtenances are being shown by Gunther von Hagens, a German medical doctor and scientist who, in 1977, invented the art of "plastination," allowing him to preserve bodies and their parts. As important, he has manipulated them into real-life poses so that they become, at once, an art show and a medical exhibit.

And, it seems to me, a theological statement.

I write here with an admittedly limited insight - a viewing of the show and von Hagens' work, gained from an hourlong DVD and accompanying literature.

Despite that scant introduction to the show, it reinforces a concept in my simple mind: Things like human bodies - their individual, several and complicated parts and their generally well-coordinated interaction - don't just happen.

The complexity that exists in the 6-plus billion people who populate this planet, or in the many more animal and insect species that share our space, isn't, can't be, just happenstance.

You study but one eyeball and its function and you have to come to the realization, "Hey, this is no accident!" Two eyeballs that work stereoptically, thanks to a brain that coordinates their function, make it even clearer.

Multiply that by 6 billion humans, or by the number of people who have ever existed, and this thing called the body just can't be seen as an accident, not even a helluva accident.

We're not just talking eyeballs here, but whole, complex, muscular, neural, arterial, respiratory, cerebral, digestive, reproductive and skeletal machines that by and large work in fantastic coordination day after day, year after year and - historically and cumulatively - millennium after millennium.

I'm a long, long way from being a Biblical literalist; I cannot buy the story of a six-day creation.

I'm as far from being a scientist, but that principally has to do with a lack of smarts. Nonetheless, a strictly evolutionary process - while making perfect sense in most ways - lacks, for me, the answers to the essential questions: How? Why?

Cop-out as it may be, the notion of a plan and planner behind what we call evolution, a designer who indeed is intelligent, seems apparent.

The bulk of the explanations offered by evolution ring true to me; the ever-being-discovered rules and laws of science, of matter developing and coming to be, are a gradual revelation and unfolding of the plan and mind of God.

Looking at von Hagens' plastinated bodies affirms the reality of a design, just as does looking at the starry night or the patterns of nature.

It's related to Thomas of Aquinas' second proof for the existence of God, based on causality. When you find a clock, you take a logical step that posits the existence of a clock-maker rather than assumes that the clock has created itself.

When one admires and appraises a body, the one we're stuck with and the ones von Hagens has preserved and posed, the reality of a First Cause, God, is an inescapable conclusion, along with the evolution that took all of creation from that mysterious first moment to this one and to whatever lies beyond.

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