

a series of linked activities or processes to accomplish a specific goal in behavioural health care); and making improvements using rapid-cycle change (i.e., testing a small series of changes). Although specific details and references are not provided, Skinner claims “the approaches and tools have undergone extensive trials over the past seven years” across a wide variety of North American settings. The model appears to be a worthwhile heuristic; it is premised on theoretical and evidence-based support, is intuitive, practical, adaptable to a broad range of settings, and has relevance across a wide array of programs. Part III provides useful information for implementing information technology as an important and rapidly emerging mode of health care delivery.

Skinner’s work has a number of strengths in dealing with the complexities of behaviour change within organizations. He provides theoretical support for practical strategies with appropriate summaries of much of the key literature, along with case studies, practical applications and numerous user-friendly assessment and planning tools that appear to be intuitively sound.

The book can be used in various ways, e.g., in self-directed learning, courses, workshops, case studies and organizational auditing. Practitioners and managers will undoubtedly gravitate to the “how-to” of the second part. Readers will also find the various links to other resources and references beneficial.

For the busy practitioner not fully cognizant of the complexities of organizational behaviour change in health care settings, there are no magic bullets or overnight fixes to achieve effective and sustainable solutions. To this end, reading this text (or parts within) will certainly be worthwhile for gaining solid guidance.

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Lifeworks

Deep skin

A body

John Coplans
New York: powerHouse Books; 2002
164 pp, 115 duotone photos, 3 gatefolds
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Amid banter about the futility of life and the inevitability of death in Samuel Beckett’s play, *Waiting for Godot*, Vladimir says to Estragon, “We have time to grow old.” Yet in our society aging is a process that is often disguised, unacknowledged and delayed for as long as possible. In *A Body*, a new collection that represents a 20-year history of nude self-portraiture, John Coplans reveals the traditionally concealed reality of the aging male body.

In 1980, at age 60, after a highly influential career as a writer, critic, curator and a founding editor of *Artforum* magazine, John Coplans committed himself to becoming a photographer. His initial period of experimentation

and exploration with the camera lasted about five years and brought him to recognize his artistic subject: his own naked body. Twenty-two years later his headless, nude form, or various parts of it, remains the exclusive subject of his work.

These photographs, shot in black and white against an unobtrusive white background, not only display images that are culturally invisible, but also delve into what binds all humans together. Coplans believes that his body, like everyone else’s, is the culmination of a process of evolution. His genes link him to “remote ancestors, both male and female.” It is as if the history of all humankind were written in the creases of his aging flesh. In a photo of his chest and abdomen, void of his head or appendages, Coplans’ nipples form eyes, his umbilicus creates a mouth and his copious body hair works together



John Coplans, 2000. *Interlocking Fingers*, No. 16. Polaroid Type 55 Positive/Negative film, 33" × 26"

Courtesy powerHouse Books, New York, NY

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John Coplans, 1985. *Hands Squeezing Knees.* Polaroid Type 55 Positive/Negative film, 26" × 34".

with these elements to create the depth and expression of a disapproving face. This is the face of Everyman, which in this faceless self-portrait acts to give the subject a presence, identity and value in a society that discounts people on the basis of age.

A transcript from an interview with John Coplans in 1994 by Jean-François Chevrier follows the images in the book. Coplans, having long been an influential commentator on art, is unable to create a work without also expressing his views on it. "I'm seventy years old," he says, "and generally bodies of seventy-year-old men look somewhat like my body. It's a neglected subject matter So, I'm using my body and saying, even though it's a seventy-year-old body, I can make it extremely interesting. That keeps me alive and gives me vitality. It's a kind of process of energizing myself."

Throughout his photographic career, Coplans has consistently proved that he is able to make his body curious and compelling. This book spans his photographic development with images that examine his body in its general form and in its details. These are pictures that seek out the rules of anatomy and then attempt to transform them with a fresh perspective. The close-up views of body parts such as hands, feet

and back provide us with a renewed perspective. A series of photos titled *Interlocking Fingers* show woven appendages in minute detail. Even when reduced to a smaller scale in this book, the cascade of bands of flesh are larger than life. They form beautiful and complex forms, like patterns of frost crystals on a winter window, highlighted by deep creases and errant hairs.

In other series, each consisting of two, three or four images, Coplans

breaks down his body into torso, mid-section and legs. The individual images are placed in sequence to re-form the body and convey a cohesive pose. These disjointed views flow into one another and express strength with clenched fists, confidence with the focus on the genitals, and even femininity. One of these images presents a side view of Coplans lying flat on his back with hands crossed peacefully over his chest. This is the image of a corpse. Its reminder of death shatters the quest for eternal youth, and warns that no matter how much make-up, hair dye and cosmetic surgery we turn to, decay comes to us all.

Coplans' images offer a repeated confrontation with our culture. They present an unseen and frank reality that contradicts what our society reveres: beauty, glamour and sexiness. In the mass-produced world of corporate-driven publicity, everyone is tall, toned and youthful. Coplans' work defies the cult of uniformity and allows the presence of maps of wrinkles, the unruliness of unwanted hair, and the flabby sprawl of things that were once constrained by the shape of youth.

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Brother

At a time when you knew, you alone, that death was soon, sharing a second joint over the draughts, our game became progressively ludicrous and the music progressively profound. You smiled suddenly and said with unexpected intensity, "All knowledge is predictive."

When you were young and I even younger you showed me the way through the wood to the hidden pool. Five yews pinned it round, then other smaller trees, and box. With its banked lips it was shielded from the wind, so that on a dry day it was to the bright sky a white reply, broken by branches, sun comprehending glass.

The yews were easy to climb. One had a wayward bough hanging over the pond like a muscular arm. You showed me how to sit quietly in the groove between the muscles and wait for animals. I preferred, however, to drop stones, bigger and bigger, and watch the ripples move outward and inward until the image was calm again. Friction existed even there.

Given my first watch, I recorded again and again the time between splash and second calm.

Now in church, as I write in the back of my hymn book, decades fall away with the turn of a page. Would you smile at this gathering to speed you on with music? Is there any sound on the other shore for men of destiny? You will send no sign. Would you laugh at the sentimentality — tomorrow I retrace the path to the pool — of this fool who thinks you and identity aloft and laughing?

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