

Bare Bodies

...the feeling of pure bliss.

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Bodies are abstract. There are many ideas and narratives surrounding them, when in reality it's simply a body. They are weird, squishy, and hairy. To live in a body means to confront societal perfectionism. For me, this weight tears down how I see and feel about myself. I am not alone. Through comments, criticism, and anger we can feel towards our bodies, it all becomes trivial when someone else is touching you. All of the notions that we perceive about ourselves and how others see us goes away. These are the moments of pleasure and bliss. In an instant, everything in the world makes sense. It is full of open-hearted love and honesty, and there's no sense of time, space, or judgment. In these moments it is you and this person, experiencing life in a euphoric way.

Comments are often made about my body. How it should look, how I should dress, what I should do with it, etc. Having a curvier figure means that people, especially older men, feel as though they have permission to comment on and sexualize it even from a young age. Catcalls in the streets, stares as you walk home, and even a honk on their horns as I walk by alone. It was as if no matter what I did or wore people were always going to sexualize me and obsess over my body. The same clothes would be worn as my sisters and cousins, yet I was in the wrong because my figure was not like theirs. Too big for the skinny girls and too small for the bigger girls; finding a place to fit left me lost in a void. I always wondered if there would be a place for me. After years of being in this back and forth, I decided to make a place for myself. I was tired of being pulled in either direction, so I stood up and said that I am allowed to simply exist in the middle. Everyone deserves intimacy in any form that they want. I was determined to create a safe space around me, where everyone feels comfortable to express themselves in any way they want. After being stuck in the middle for so long, I don't want anyone else to feel like that.

Everyone should feel as though they can express themselves fully, and that they are deserving of love.

When reclaiming the narrative around my body and treating it how I wanted, those around me did not like it, and called me names like slut, whore, easy, attention seeking, etc. Friends did not like how bold I became, family members didn't like how I wouldn't shrink when they made comments, and even those men in the cars would now receive a middle finger rather than just ignoring them. It is no longer about these preconceived notions surrounding the body, but how we are allowed to simply feel and experience moments of tenderness without anything in the world interrupting it.

Allowing yourself to feel good and be able to share that feeling with someone is vibrant. Creating images around these moments extremely close up heightens the fact that we all have bodies. The closer one gets to a body and sees the abundance of detail that it comes with, it forces you to see the body in this abstract way. Seeing the human figure like this doesn't allow room for other people's ideas and perceptions of what your body should be like or move like; it creates such a small frame that strips these ideas down to this one central rawness. These bare bodies, so close together, becomes more than a simple aspect of touch; it becomes about the abstract and almost tactile view that you get from the images. It takes away all of these notions that revolve around the expectations of a body and leaves it just as it is: a body.

This photographic work explores the nature of raw bodies and the way they interact with each other in these intimate ways. There's a sexual and explicit nature to these images that makes people turn away from or blush when they look at it. They bring up discussions of uncomfortability and why we feel the need to hide from these conversations. I am showing the electric feeling of a moment of touch between people and how this action becomes the only thing

you think of at that point in time. There is a specific closeness that comes with this series and by showing these events in such prominent detail it shows what the eye would see as you exist in this personal space/bubble that someone has allowed you to come into. It shows the boundaries of letting people in emotionally and physically, while also exploring skin on skin contact and the feelings that come with it. There's a rough tenderness that comes with these images, showing that these actions are done in a pleasurable way. A big thing in this series is being able to focus on the moment between these people and this connection and how every worry in the world fades away when it's just the two of you.

This topic about intimacy and closeness between people is not really talked about in our society in the way it should be. Some people will shy away from these talks, especially when they surround the notions of sex and explicit nature that comes with this moment between individuals. I am a big advocate for understanding and learning about your body, sex, the way it is talked about and looked down upon in our society. There are so many dos and don'ts regarding your body and the way it should exist in a space, yet that all of it melts away in these moments. My work pushes this electric feeling in the images, while also allowing the viewers to relate to some of the more intimate moments of touch between people. It allows for people to relate and allow themselves to feel the passion that comes from the more explicit images. Everything surrounding a body is gone and you're left with this raw and exposed part of someone.

Growing up with those around me being very thin, I didn't feel like there was enough representation of different bodies. When creating this series, I wanted to make sure to include bodies as they truly are. They have acne, rolls, hair, wrinkles, dry skin, etc. Deciding to emphasize these features for this project allows for viewers to relate to these intimate moments

and realize that although we aren't perfect, we are worthy. I was inspired and influenced by the images created by Elinor Carucci and Torbjorn Rodland.

Elinor Carucci frames her images in this soft way that forces the viewer to focus only on the experience being pictured. Her lighting and the way she captures her images makes it feel like life is frozen in that exact

moment.



Torbjorn Rodland creates these slightly off-putting images that make viewers feel uncomfortable, while also forcing them to face the reason why they are feeling like that. By combining these two characteristics from each of these photographers, I was able to hone in on the important details that make up my work.



For example, one of my favorite images that I created was the one with two tongues pressing against each other. They are portrayed in this warm glow from the sun, but are incredibly detailed. You are able to see the pores on the tongue, the spit coming from both individuals' mouths, as well as a tiny hair on one of the lips. These heightened details create this sensation that you can very rarely get from a flat image. The other image that I think portrays the qualities of Elinor Carucci and Torbjorn Rodland, as well as representing





different body types, is the one that has chests pressed together. It is one of the more abstracted images, but you are able to see that it is the side of a breast pressed against another person's chest. With this moment comes movement, and with movement comes twisting bodies. The breast and stomach are rolled and squished, creating this abstract and mountainous body. It shows stretch marks, back acne, and even a red mark from where a bra once was. It is framed in a way that you can't see anything else but the exact second that these individuals are pressed against each other.

This takes you away from the people and what's happening in the image, and makes you sit with the fact that these are bodies simply existing together.

Being able to portray bodies in intimate moments is important to me. I have gone through a lot over the years with my body, and learning to love it was the hardest. Being stuck in this strange middle meant having to reclaim my body to be whatever it wants to be. Bare Bodies is one of the biggest accomplishments of my life so far. It is raw and confronting, while also soft and intimate. It portrays individuals in these split second moments, where life fades away and it is just you and this person together. This series shows you are worthy of love and intimacy no matter what size, shape, race, gender, etc. These connections will exist in these images forever, and hopefully their impact will last long after the series is finished.