

NEW YORK TIMES
FRIDAY, JULY 28, 1995

Art in Review

'Large Bodies'

*Pace/MacGill Gallery
32 East 57th Street
Through Sept. 1*

Group shows based on the body have been done to death in recent years. But by concentrating on oversized photographs, this summer exhibition manages to find twitches of life left in the theme.

Providing a stirring opening is a friezelike work by John Coplans, with four triptychs of his hairy body arrayed across the wall facing the entrance. Renee Cox offers African-American updates on classic nudes, with life-size studio shots of a black man and woman; both of whom strike muscle-builder poses and glare impassively at the camera.

Other selections are predictable but welcome. Cindy Sherman, for example, is represented by one of her sex-mannequin nightmare figures; also featured is one of Andres Serrano's morgue photographs, of a corpse's bare arm covered with goose bumps.

Less familiar images include Bill Jacobson's pale, drastically out-of-focus photographs of reclining figures and Nancy Hellebrand's delicate side view of a person's naked belly. The wide variety of emotional tones in the work is exemplified by Chuck Close's brash, billboard-size triptych of a woman's torso and Craigie Horsefield's delicately printed image of a woman's leg.

No doubt many of the artists make large prints simply to increase the pictures' impact. But what gives this show its twist is that the images take on an extra charge of illusion, with the large-as-life figures seeming poised to step down from the wall and into the gallery.

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