Germany's terminally-ill 'Dr. Death' to put own body on show

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The German anatomist dubbed "Doctor Death", who has turned stomachs worldwide preserving and displaying dead bodies, said Wednesday he is terminally ill and plans to exhibit his own corpse.

Gunther von Hagens, 65, told the Bild mass circulation daily he is suffering from incurable Parkinson's disease and intends to have his dead body put on display to "welcome" visitors to his exhibition.

"My wife Angelina Whalley, the curator of the Body Worlds exhibition, will plastinate my body. We are already making preparations for this," the publicity-hungry scientist told Bild.

"My plastinated corpse will then stand in a welcoming pose at the entrance of my exhibition. I want to be able to welcome my guests even after I am dead."

Hagens is no stranger to controversy. His latest wheeze was to offer preserved body parts for sale in a so-called "supermarket of death."

In a process invented by Hagens, the body parts are skinned and preserved with a synthetic resin, laying bare the naked muscles, nerves and tendons underneath.

At the centre in Guben, eastern Germany, a blackened smoker's lung sells for 3,600 euros (4,772 dollars), while a testicle costs 360 euros.

In 2002 he conducted Britain's first public autopsy in 170 years despite the risk of arrest. And in 2009, he put on an exhibition in Berlin showing dead bodies having sex.

He said the symptoms of his disease were becoming stronger day by day. "My movements are increasingly uncoordinated. I am losing the skills I previously had with my hands," he told Bild.

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