

GEORGIE BINKS:

It really only matters if you're skinny

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You're sitting there at the computer working away on a project you dearly love. Should you keep at it or head off to the gym for a gruelling workout? And if dinner's around the corner, will you burn in diet hell, if you grab a Big Mac, or do you make a healthy meal (although I can't remember what that is anymore because it changes daily), or simply eat pretzels and carrot sticks by the computer? After all, if you're a woman, you're probably trying to lose weight. And it's never far from your mind, is it? ...

... **An emaciated model isn't exactly everyone's** vision of beauty. Dove, in partnership with the National Eating Disorder Information Centre, has put together a show touring Canada now entitled *Beyond Compare: Women Photographers on Beauty*. It features pictures ranging from older women to young girls, complete with folds of flesh, wrinkled skin, freckles, tangled hair and chubby feet.

My favorite is the photograph entitled *Dixie Evans 2000*, by Katie Murray. I don't know who the subject is, or anything about her. But I do know that she is not 25, nor is she skinny, but yes, she is beautiful. Her lips, her nose and her eyes all have stood the test of time. Her breasts lie low on her stomach as breasts actually do after women breastfeed and they grow older, her hair is thinner, but through all of that, her beauty shines through.

The thing about the photograph of Dixie Evans is that even though I don't know anything about her, when I look at her I can imagine any kind of story at all because her body and her face have some character to them. Her life sits there in the wrinkles and folds waiting for me to imagine it.

Dixie Evans didn't ask Katie Murray if she looked fat in that outfit, I'd venture to guess. It's sad that so many women, and I include myself, ask themselves and the nearest bystander that question daily.

Think of the two royal wives, Diana and Sarah Ferguson, and think of how harshly old Fergie got it, all because she weighed more than Diana. But they were both victims, Diana with her bulimia and poor Fergie trying to redeem herself as a spokesperson for Weight Watchers. They both had learned, as most women do over the years, that the only thing that really matters is that you're skinny.

Dove's *Beyond Compare: Women Photographers on Beauty*

- * Calgary: Chinook Centre - March 31 - April 8
- * Vancouver - Pacific Centre April 17- 26
- * Montreal: Complexe Desjardins May 10 -16
- * Ottawa: St. Laurent Centre May 20 - 26