

ANTONY GORMLEY

BIG SWITCH, BIENNALE INTERNATIONALE SAINT-PAUL DE VENCE, FRANCE

The Biennale Internationale Saint-Paul de Vence is a contemporary art festival aiming to continue a tradition of culture and art, building on the village's heritage. Since the end of the 19th century, artists from around the world have flocked there, drawn by the light, the landscapes and subsequently, to the Maeght Foundation. The Biennale is a platform for internationally renowned artists, including in 2018, Vincent Barre, Jan Fabre, Antony Gormley, David Nash and Tania Mouraud.

BIG SWITCH (2014) is part of Antony Gormley's 'Big Blockworks' series, which started with the idea of building using physical pixels: over time, the blocks have become increasingly bolder and larger, and description has given way to the realisation that the way one block sits on top of another can carry the feeling of inhabiting a body. Its form is a translation of a tall twisting body with both hands on its left shoulder. Whilst being large in dimension and mass, at one-and-a-half times life-size, it is as playful as a tower built by a child from blocks of wood. Individual representation is replaced by the overall feel or set of the body, using a bold, simple and stable structure to celebrate the relationship between body and ground. Inspiration has come from fundamental architectural structures, whether the Cyclopean walls of Mycenae, the Trilithons of Stonehenge, or the buildings of Mies van der Rohe. The essential forms of architecture are here translated through modernism into a tectonic structure, in which each piece plays its part in a dynamic whole.
