

ANTONY GORMLEY BLIND LIGHT
THE HAYWARD 17 MAY - 19 AUGUST 2007



EXHIBITION GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

Antony Gormley's work centres on the body, as subject, object, and place. In this exhibition, a new series of dramatic and enveloping installations is accompanied by earlier sculptures, drawings, prints and photographs.

Taking the body as its point of departure, the exhibition is an invitation to embark on a journey through different kinds of space. It explores the ways in which we orient ourselves spatially; how we react when disoriented; how we relate to architecture and the built environment. It also probes into the imaginative and emotional space of our inner beings.

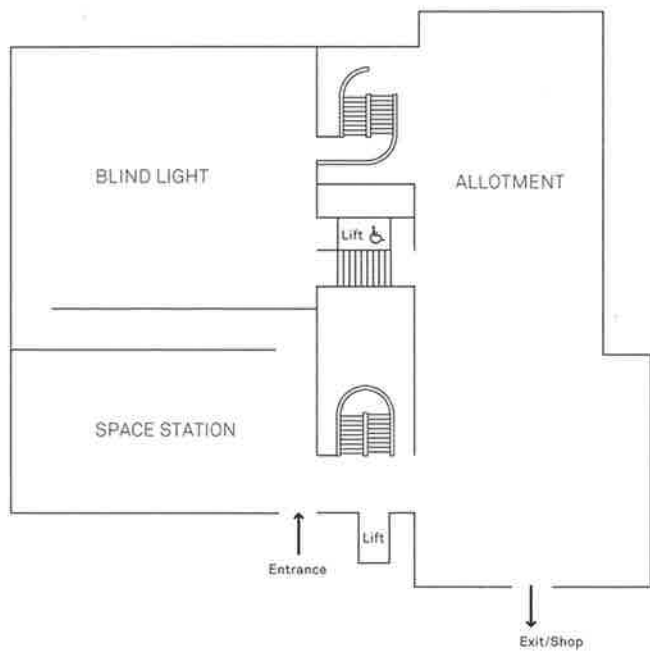
Within the exhibition, space is defined and articulated by crowds and solitary figures — concrete, steel, cast iron or lead; representational or abstract; real or imagined — and voids where bodies could be.

In encountering these presences and absences, we are asked not to be passive onlookers, but to become part of the work as we walk through or around it, navigating and negotiating space.

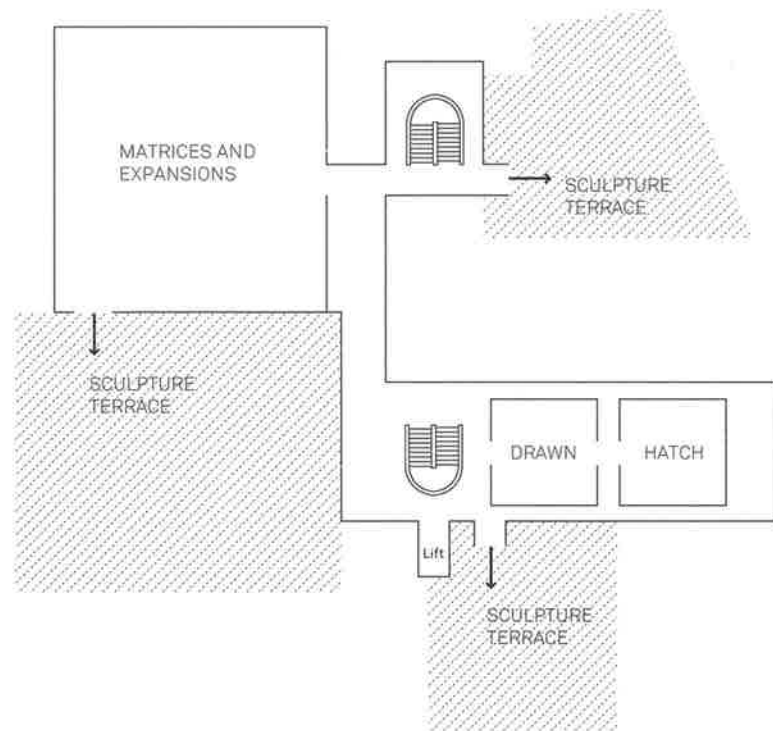
The journey extends both inside and outside The Hayward. *Event Horizon*, a vast outdoor project peopled with life-size figures on rooftops and pavements, carries our gaze up to the surrounding skyline and down to nearby walkways and bridges. Suggesting a field of witnesses, both seen and unseen, *Event Horizon* takes us beyond our usual sightlines and returns us to the ebb and flow of the everyday world.

All works courtesy the artist unless stated otherwise
Please do not touch the works

LOWER GALLERIES



UPPER GALLERIES AND SCULPTURE TERRACES

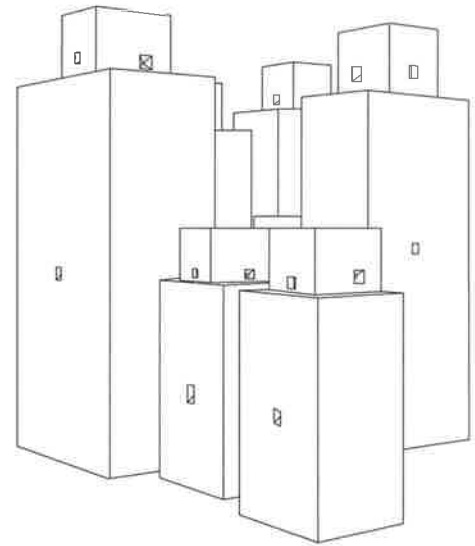


'You could say that there are two very discrete and almost oppositional places where a sculpture belongs. One is physical: in a landscape or a room, and the other is in the imagination of the viewer, in his/her experience and memory. They are equally important and in many senses the work is there waiting — almost like a trap — for the life of the viewer to come and fill it, or inhabit it. And then once "captured" the art — or its arising — inhabits him or her.'

Antony Gormley, 2001

ALLOTMENT II 1996

Reinforced concrete
300 life-size units derived
from the dimensions of local
inhabitants of Malmö aged
1.5–80 years



The individual units that congregate to form *Allotment* are derived from the vital statistics of real people aged between 18 months and 80 years. Besides the height and width of their bodies, thirteen other precise measurements were taken from each of the 300 volunteers. The hollow concrete 'body cases' constructed from these very personal dimensions have apertures for the mouth, ears, anus and genitals. Each rectangular 'room' represents the smallest space capable of sheltering a particular human being. As Gormley points out: 'Each one is different. The difference really matters, particularly with the children. You begin to see the eager ones, the sad ones.'

Massed together they form a virtual, maze-like cityscape. Moving between the rows and blocks, you notice that these eyeless watchers face in all directions, and form groups and relationships. As with living beings, they have been marked by time. Accidental stains and splashes — water, tar and bird droppings — have given them additional, unplanned characteristics.

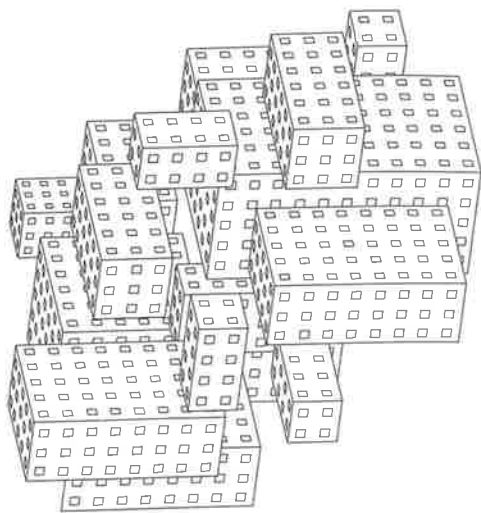
'The body is our first habitation, the building our second. I wanted to use the form of this second body, architecture, to make concentrated volumes out of a personal space that carries the memory of an absent self, articulated through measurement ... Bodies and buildings, cities and cells, monuments and intimacies, each of the "rooms" in this piece is someone's, is connected to the moving body of an individual, alive and breathing.'

Antony Gormley, 1997

SPACE STATION 2007

Corten mild steel plate
Jay Jopling/White Cube, London

Please be aware that the
outer edges of this work
are hard and sharp.



Tilted precariously within a space where it only just fits, this colossal 27-ton structure, in Gormley's words, 'conjures a dark, labyrinthine, prison-like space but also has the feeling of a sieve, of something perceptually open. Looking through the peepholes into the interior spaces of the boxes, we find strange places that are disorientating yet familiar.'

Viewed from different perspectives, further away and higher up — on the stairs or from the top of the ramp — *Space Station's* syncopated and cantilevered volumes gradually resolve themselves into a recognisable shape, revealing the empty citadel not only as the collective city environment in its densest form but also as the compressed, foetal form of a human body. As Gormley points out, *Space Station* has a double conceit to it: 'It's a small thing that has been made into a very large thing, but that large thing is itself a model for something much larger.'

A new sculptural project, *Space Station* extends and develops Gormley's concern with the body as a place. It investigates the relationship of the body to the space it inhabits, both in the built environment and in the wider world. 'With *Space Station*,' Gormley says, 'the key question for me is how to unhinge people's comfort with the existing dimensions of their habitat. In doing this, a certain space is created that hopefully triggers feelings of exposure, nausea, perhaps fear, yet also excitement.'

'The idea of this temporary settlement in the architectural space of The Hayward, that has allusions to an orbiting, constructed asteroid, for me begs the question about human destiny, communities and futures. It's a permanently open question.'

Antony Gormley, 2007

SHIFT II 2000

Cast iron

Throughout his career, Antony Gormley has consistently used his own body as the starting point for sculptures that investigate what it feels like to be in a body, and to be a body in the world. In the 1990s he began to work with cast iron, making solid body-forms which are extremely heavy. As with his earlier lead body-cases, the figures originated as casts of the artist's body, for which he had to hold a particular pose. In this work, the figure is pressed hard up against a vertical surface as if held by a centrifugal force on a rotating wall of death. Its head strains upwards as if aware of its distance from the sky. Speaking of the moulding process, Gormley notes: 'It requires a moment of stillness, of concentration. I am trying to make sculpture from the inside, by using my body as the instrument and the material. The form comes from the concentration.'

HABITAT 2005

Mild steel blocks
Galerie Xavier Hufkens, Brussels

In an out-of-the-way space behind The Hayward's front staircase, a pixelated shape, formed from rectangular metal blocks, lies entrenched. Beyond reach and easily missed, this might be a prone figure whose identity has been obliterated, or a city seen from above. If *Space Station's* windows echo the regular fenestration of the Shell Centre building which stands behind The Hayward, what sort of habitat do these blind boxes configure?

STILL FEELING (CORNER)**1993**Lead, fibreglass, air
Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris

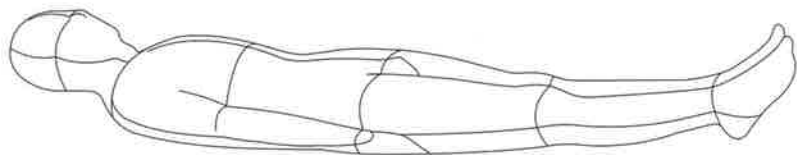
This is the position of the down-and-out; someone who has fallen out from society, a member of the 'homeless' who occupy the hidden interstices of the city.

Antony Gormley began making moulds of his own body in 1980, producing hollow lead forms in which the absent body is replaced by air. Lead has peculiar powers of protection as well as being highly toxic. It is infinitely malleable, but becomes resilient once it is formed into an enclosing shape. Lead's life-in-death properties are reflected in the process of making the body-cases, during which the artist is wrapped in cloth and plaster and concentrates on being completely still in order to hold his chosen position.

RISE
1983-84

Lead, fibreglass, plaster, air

Describing the mental processes involved in making the moulds for his lead body-cases, Antony Gormley says, 'I agree to become inert. I agree to go into another level of existence,' and adds: 'I want to recapture for sculpture an area of human experience which has been hidden for a while. It is to do with very simple things; what it feels like to look out and see, what it feels like to be cold or frightened, or what it feels like to be absolutely quiet and just aware of the passage of air around your body.' Besides being both memorials of a particular time and action and containers of memory, the body-cases are sites of transformation. Among the many dictionary definitions of 'rise', we find: to get up; to come back to life; to leave the ground; to come up to the surface.

**SENSE****1991**

Concrete

At the beginning of the 1990s Gormley started producing geometrical blocks which 'describe the space between the body and a compressed notion of architecture'. Using the traditional 'lost-wax' casting technique, concrete was formed around a life-size wax mould of the artist's body. The wax was then melted and poured out, leaving a body-shaped void inside the block. In *Sense*, though we cannot see the space of the lost body in its hollow interior, the openings indicate other voids where the primary organs of sense — the hands and the head, with its eyes, nose and ears — are unconfined. The only visible imprint is left by the hands. While this work may carry overtones of horror, of punishment or sacrifice, it also conveys a sense of protection and preservation, and the mystery of incarnation. Talking about works such as *Sense*, Gormley has said: 'You can read them as tombs, but they are also a celebration of life. They are about experiencing freedom by knowing one's intimate relationship with one's environment, knowing where one fits, comfortably, perfectly.'

'I think that architecture is another kind of body, another container.'

Antony Gormley, 1994

SHIFT III**2006**Stainless steel rod
Private collection, Monaco

Like a spectral trace of the earlier cast iron *Shift II* (2000), with which it shares both title and pose (save that this work looks sideways), *Shift III* represents a transition from a preoccupation with mass, volume and surface to a concern with tracing the place of a body through three-dimensional drawing. The solidity and density of cast iron is replaced with an open structure made of stainless steel rod. Instead of an immensely heavy cast of a figure we are left with the fragile memory of a place where a body once was. It is entirely open; a drawing without mass, describing space but hardly occupying it. The title seems now to allude not only to a precarious stability but also to the sloughing of skins and mortal coils.

BLIND LIGHT 2007

Fluorescent light, toughened low iron glass,
ultrasonic humidifiers, aluminium, water
Jay Jopling/White Cube, London

Blind Light offers two very different experiences. From the outside, you can observe people vanish as they enter the brightly lit, cloud-filled glass box, eventually emerging as shadows as they come close to its outer edges. Inside, in this very bright space within the box, you can lose yourself in light and vapour. The visibility can be as little as two feet.

The effect is completely disorienting. Adrift in this void, we are made more conscious of our own body space as we cast blindly about. In Gormley's words, 'here light itself is the opposite of illuminating. The blinding light is part of an experience of disorientation.' The atmosphere is cold and wet, as though the weather we build shelters against has been brought indoors.

'Architecture is supposed to be the location of security and certainty about where you are. It is supposed to protect you from the weather, from darkness, from uncertainty. *Blind Light* undermines all of that. You enter this interior space that is the equivalent of being on top of a mountain or at the bottom of the sea. It is very important for me that inside it you find the outside. Also you become the immersed figure in an endless ground, literally the subject of the work.'

Antony Gormley, 2007

This installation is deliberately disorientating with very limited visibility and water under foot. Please note that there is a single entrance/exit. Visitors with asthma, claustrophobia or of a nervous disposition are advised to exercise caution when entering. Children must be accompanied by an adult. For small children, we advise you to keep holding hands while in the installation. Please do not run.

DRAWINGS FROM THE SERIES BODY & LIGHT, 1991-96

Black pigment on paper
Jay Jopling/White Cube, London

Drawing, for Antony Gormley, is a form of thinking, parallel to yet independent of his sculpture. The act of drawing is 'a journey into the unnamed parts of our internal landscape, or out into the unknown', and can take him to places which are not possible in life or sculpture, from outer space to deep water. Most of the drawings in his series *Body & Light* were made in the Lake District. 'I am attracted by the darkness of the water in Lake Coniston, and feeling contained by this fluid element,' he has said.

'What is drawing for me? It's a kind of magic, a kind of necessity. Drawing is an attempt to fix the world, not as it is, but as it exists inside me. So the drawings are mental diagrams ... Drawing is not so much a mirror, or a window, as a lens which can be looked at in either direction, either back towards the retina of the mind, or forwards towards space.'

Antony Gormley, 2001

BODY & SOUL 1990

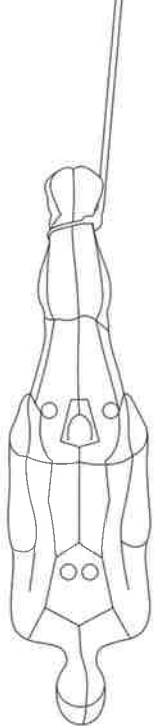
Etchings
Jay Jopling/White Cube, London
Paragon Press, London

Antony Gormley considers the nine prints that make up the portfolio *Body & Soul* as being among his key works, because in them the exterior and interior spaces of the body are unified. The prints have a sequence and can, he says, be seen as 'a meditation on two-ness and oneness. The body has within it unity and division, single foci like the mouth, the navel, the penis, that lie on the body's central axis; and dualities like the hands or the eyes that function in pairs.'

While the white prints bear the imprints of hands, knees, forehead and spine, the five black prints each represent one of the body's main orifices, which appear as white marks on a black ground. Though made from actual impressions of the artist's body, their anatomical origin is deliberately unclear; they might be quite different natural forms such as shells, a comet, a planet, or a primitive life form. The effect is of being inside the body and looking out at the universe.

CRITICAL MASS II 1995

Dimensions variable, 60 life-size elements
5 cast iron suspensions from the installation
Jay Jopling/White Cube, London



Critical mass, noun: the amount of fissionable material necessary to sustain a chain reaction at a constant rate; an amount necessary or sufficient to have a significant effect or to achieve a result: *a critical mass of popular support*.

'The use of this material — iron — is associated with the deep underground that lies beneath our feet and emphasises that our body is on temporary loan from the mass of matter constituting the planet and to which, in some way, we give shape.'

Antony Gormley, 1995

These five life-sized elements, suspended at intervals through the full drop of this stairwell, are a part of a much larger installation consisting of 60 figures, most of them earth-bound, which were cast from twelve separate poses. As Gormley emphasises, 'The suspensions are vital. Maybe there are two things identified here: firstly, bearing witness to torture and execution, the worst destiny of the dispossessed. Secondly, through an arrested fall, activating a gravitational field (these forms have ten times the density of an ordinary human body of that size).'

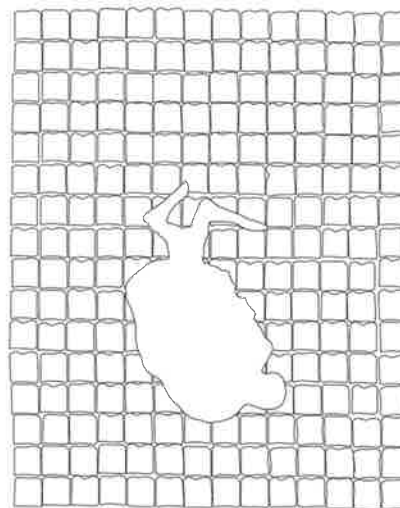
Nearby, at the foot of the stairs, is a lead chair, placed where a guard or invigilator might sit. Frail and almost skeletal, it does not look capable of bearing much weight or giving much support. Resting on the seat are two alabaster forms, which could be eggs, but might be testicles, or even eyes. *Chair* (1987-88) testifies to time and place and waiting, as well as suggesting loss and renewal.

MOTHER'S PRIDE III 1982/2007

Bread, wax
Jay Jopling/White Cube, London

Antony Gormley's sculpture has always been about 'being'. In his early work he explored this phenomenologically through the use of materials such as bread, clothing, rubber, wood, stone and lead, observing that the job of sculpture 'is to transform what exists in the outer world by uniting it with the world of sensation, imagination and faith'. He made his first bread work in 1981, using *Mother's Pride*, the epitome of industrially-produced sliced white bread. The first version of *Mother's Pride* was made the following year. Its theme is the place of sleep, a location of procreation or death, the site of dreams. As with *Blanket Drawing I* (1983) and *Floor* (1981), which maps the space spilling out around the artist's feet, absence is at its heart. The figure of the sleeper is a void, literally eaten away by the artist.

Dating from the late 1970s and early 80s, Gormley's early works were made during the Cold War when anxiety about the possibility of nuclear attack was at its height and the civil defence slogan was 'Protect and Survive'. Using materials such as bread, an old hospital blanket and lead bullets, in these works Gormley focuses on our means of survival — food, shelter and defence — and our dependency on the material world. *Seeds III/V* (1989/1993) consists of hundreds of lead-cast 38-calibre bullets, heaped up like a pile of grain or pods. 'You can say that each bullet in *Seeds* represents a life, in the same way that every grain represents a possible plant,' Gormley remarks.



CAPACITOR 2001

Mild steel
Collezione Longo Cassino, Italy

A black radiance bristling with probes, *Capacitor's* form comes somewhere between Gormley's open matrices — his 'bundles of nothing' — and his solid iron body-forms. The porous body-case is constructed from thousands of short tubes whose openings collectively describe the contours of the human body. Their dark apertures are contrasted by the reflective tips of the steel rods which extend from approximately half of the tubes. The body becomes a core at the centre of a field, but it is not clear whether this is expanding or contracting; a big bang or a black hole.

QUADS 1979-2007

Inkjet on paper

These *Quads* are created from photographs taken during the entire course of Gormley's career. He sees the *Quads* as a kind of score, or 'a representation, if you like, of the sites of experience out of which the works in the exhibition come. Like my workbooks, they are both a source and notation.' Assembled into groups of four, each *Quad* reads like a magic square in which the component parts complement or contradict each other horizontally, vertically, and on the diagonal. Collectively and individually, they act as an important qualifier to the experiences of orientation and disorientation that run throughout the exhibition. Here, as in the show itself, themes of embodiment and disappearance, architecture and light, art and life, the built and the natural environment appear again and again.

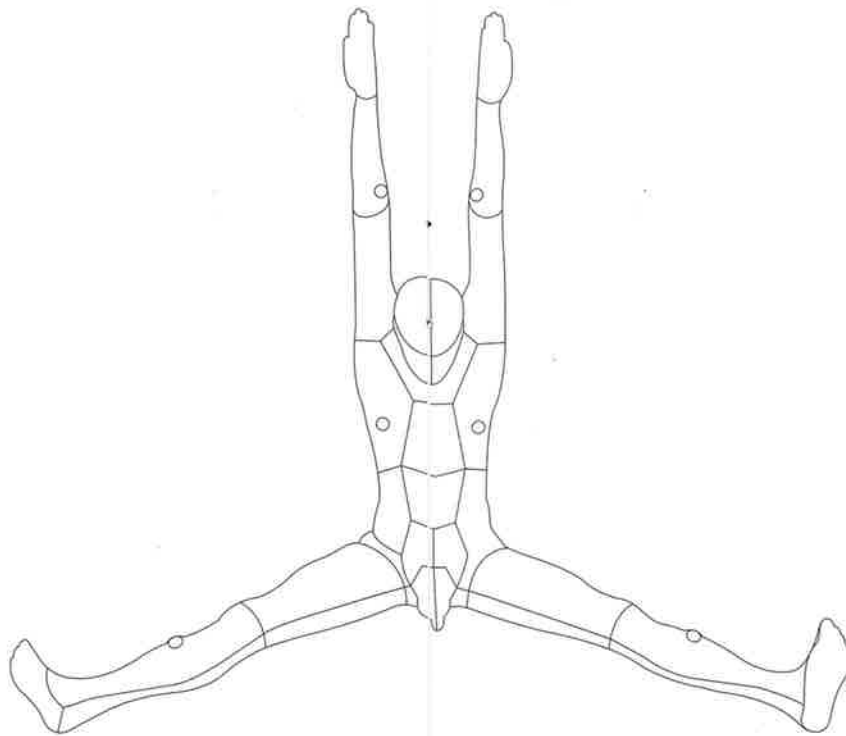
MATRICES AND EXPANSIONS 2006-07

Stainless steel

All of Gormley's work is an investigation into the nature of the space a human being inhabits. 'I've never been interested in making statues,' he explains. 'What I try to show is the space where the body was, not to represent the body itself.' His recent matrices and expansion pieces are so open in structure as to become almost drawings in space, and each reveals an empty body-space at its core. 'Neither architecture nor anatomy,' as Gormley insists, they are 'more like the random matrices found in fractal geometry.' Though some body-shapes may be immediately apparent among the froth-like polyhedrons, others will only manifest themselves slowly, over time, as we move around them.

'These bundles of nothing are the most dematerialised works I have ever made. The bodies are free, lost in space, weightless, and with no internal determination — they are not "acting". They appear as emergent zones: you cannot be sure whether the bubble matrix is produced by the body zone or the zone by the matrix. The bubble matrix series is the closest I get to Brancusi's notion that you can turn an object into light. He did it by polishing sculptures, whereas I have tried to do it by abandoning weight and mass and dissolving surface.'

Antony Gormley, 2007



DRAWN 2000/07

Cast iron
Jay Jopling/White Cube, London

Drawn, one of Gormley's most exposed body-form works, is a room within a room, containing eight identical figures; painfully forked caryatids cornered at different angles on the ceiling and the floor. As Gormley notes, the precisely cast iron bodies are 'very close to life — you can see the traces of all the processes that have gone into the moulding and casting, including every wrinkle of the cling film in which my body was wrapped.' Speaking of their relation to the architecture, he says: 'Not being sure which way is up hopefully puts the viewer into free-fall and loosens the boundaries of certainty. The gravity adds to the lever effect, hopefully making the viewer more uncertain about his or her position in space.'

'*Drawn* is a dialogue with Kasimir Malevich. Previously I had made *Corner for Kasimir* (1992), which makes a reference to the Suprematist black square and the fact that Malevich put it up in the corner where the icon of Christ would normally go ... My work is totally a-religious, but that idea of the contemplative icon, an object that makes you stop for a moment in the bustle of everyday life, is central to me.'

Antony Gormley, 2007

'Sculpture reminds everyone that we are human and that we are embodied, incarnate, that all your sense of self and being comes through the body which is only fully itself when placed, connected to an elemental world.'

Antony Gormley, 2001

HATCH 2007

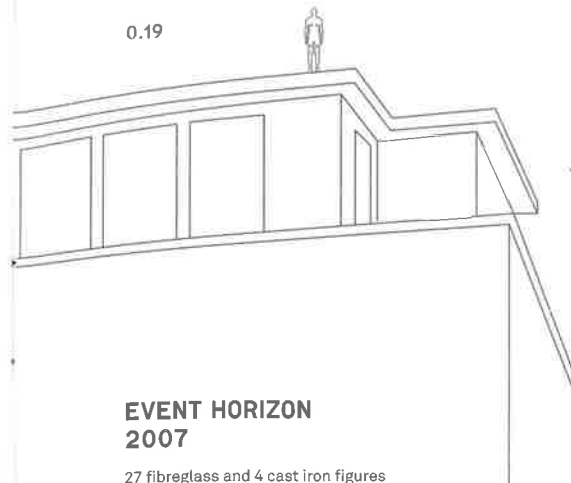
Square aluminium tube, plywood, plexiglass
Jay Jopling/White Cube, London

Like *Blind Light*, *Hatch* is a two-way experience: a room rendered porous like a colander so that light and the gaze can enter it. The inside can be viewed from the outside through the endoscopic tubes — instruments for looking deep within a body — while the interior can be directly experienced by crossing the threshold of the room. The aluminium tubes form a sort of benign Iron Maiden, a medieval torture chamber studded with iron spikes. As Gormley describes it, '*Hatch* is a kind of maze — a field in three dimensions through which you can make your bodily way but also see out and be seen. By looking down the tubes you also experience a kaleidoscopic effect: the single view is multiplied, refracting the subject into pixelated cubes.' He adds that he wanted *Hatch* to become an 'instrument that would detach perspective and deconstruct the co-ordinates of a room or a box so as to make its geometry physical.'

'Installations provide a resonating chamber in which the life of the viewer can in some way reflect upon itself. And so for me the viewer is absolutely essential, the third element: you have the work, the space and the viewer.'

Antony Gormley, 2001

Before entering this work please remove high-heeled shoes.
Please be aware of tubes projecting from all sides and the floor while navigating this space.



EVENT HORIZON 2007

27 fibreglass and 4 cast iron figures

Event Horizon, an ambitious new installation commissioned by The Hayward, consists of life-size figures — casts of the artist's body — placed on rooftops and walkways both north and south of the Thames. This invasion of foreign bodies spreads outwards from The Hayward in all directions over a 1.5 sq km area. All the figures face towards the gallery's three sculpture terraces, which form the main viewing platforms for the project as a whole. Depending on the weather and time of day, some figures will be clearly visible while others will be sensed only as presences on the horizon.

Event Horizon invites people to look afresh at the city and explores the way in which people view and interact with their everyday urban surroundings. As Gormley has said, 'As you walk out on to the sculpture terraces you might encounter individuals or groups of people pointing at the horizon in the manner of a classical group of sculptures. This is exciting to me: reflexivity becoming a shared activity. The conceit in all this is that in observing the works dispersed over the city these viewers will discover that they are the centre of a concentrated field of silent witnesses — they will realise that they are surrounded by art that is looking at them.'

'The title comes from cosmological physics and refers to the boundary of the observable universe. Because it is expanding, there are parts of the universe that will never be visible because their light will never reach us. I think that one of the implications of *Event Horizon* is that people will have to entertain an uncertainty about the work's dimensions: the spread and number of bodies. Beyond the figures that you can actually see, how many more are there that you can't see?'

Antony Gormley, 2007