



Antony Gormley

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EXCLUSIVE TOUR FOR THE MEDIA: Thursday, 20 November 2008, 12:00 pm.

EXCLUSIVE MEMBER'S PREVIEW: Wednesday, 19 November 2008, 8:30 pm.

GENERAL PUBLIC OPENING: Friday, 21 November 2008, 8:30 pm. Free admission.

CONTENTS: MARCO presents an exhibition of work by British sculptor ANTONY GORMLEY, bringing together installations, free standing sculptures, and works on paper from throughout Gormley's career in what will be the most extensive presentation to date of his work.

Over the past twenty-five years, using his own body as subject, tool and material, Antony Gormley has revitalised the human image in sculpture through his investigation into the body as a place of memory and transformation. Since 1990 he has expanded his concern with the human condition to explore the collective body and the relationship between self and other in large-scale installations, a series of which are presented as part of this exhibition. Gormley's recent work increasingly engages with energy systems, fields and vectors, rather than mass and defined volume. This is evident in works such as *Firmament II*, an enormous steel matrix that tests the space of a single gallery within MARCO.

Other exhibition highlights include an installation of *Field*, thousands of hand sized clay figures created by Gormley with people living in San Matias, Cholula in 1990, which will fill one of MARCO's exhibition halls. *Allotment III*, made especially for this exhibition, fills another hall with a maze-like cityscape of 300 concrete 'rooms', based on the body measurements of volunteers from Monterrey. These two works put the social forces of uniformity and the potential of the individual into dynamic tension while radically putting the spectator in the position of outsider and subject.

Antony Gormley has exhibited his work extensively internationally and has created ambitious permanent installations, such as the iconic *Angel of the North* in Gateshead, UK. He was awarded the Turner Prize in 1994 by the Tate Gallery, the South Bank Prize for Visual Art in 1999 and the Bernhard Heiliger Award for Sculpture in 2007.

HALLS: 1, 2, 3 and 4 - Ground Floor / 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 - First Floor / Sculpture Patio - Ground Floor.

ON VIEW: November 2008 - March 2009.

TECHNIQUES: Lead, terra-cotta, fiberglass, cast iron, aluminum, stainless steel, rubber, charcoal drawings, lithographs, among other.

NUMBER OF WORKS: Ten projects comprised of a varied number of elements.

CONTACTS FOR THE MUSEO DE ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO DE MONTERREY

Media Relations: Irma Richards, Leslie Alférez, Luz Grimaldo, Azael Rodríguez | Communication and Image Department
Ph. +52 (81) 8262.4500, ext. 546, 547 y 548 | Fax. +52 (81) 8262.4509 | comunicacion@marco.org.mx / www.marco.org.mx

PRESENTATION

The body as a point of departure has been the basis of the work of Antony Gormley for over thirty years. For the artist, one springboard for his sculpture is the relationship between physical sensations and the surroundings. Gormley sees the body as a receptacle, a place for energy to move about, thoughts. We are in this world to give physical form to that energy while it pursues its path.

Gormley considers that the cultural environment influences the way in which people sense all that is around them, and through his works he invites the spectator to become aware of their own body and to explore the extent of the individual and collective thought that is perceived. The artist's work is an attempt to clarify and understand the notion of space, starting with the analysis of the physical and mental structures through which we construct it. The work of Antony Gormley has been seen as an extraordinary endeavor to achieve, through the language of sculpture, an exploration of the human experience of freedom.

The following are brief descriptions of a few of the projects that will be on exhibition.

Allotment

The individual units that congregate to form *Allotment III* are derived from the vital statistics of real people from Monterrey who volunteered to take part in creating the work, all of whom are acknowledged with the work. 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' which will be cast during the exhibition are constructed from these very personal dimensions and have apertures for the mouth, ears, anus and genitals. Each rectangular 'room' represents the smallest space capable of sheltering a particular human being.

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.

Firmament II

Firmament, the ancient name for the night sky, brings to mind an assembled matrix of volumes that map a celestial constellation, while also implying the form of a body lost within it. An expanded field of nearly 2135 steel elements and 1238 steel balls welded together, the non regular polygonal structure of *Firmament* dissolves and resolves throughout the gallery. Literally a drawing in space, pressed against the walls of the gallery, Gormley's intention is for *Firmament* to loom over the viewer, giving a sense of both claustrophobia and landscape, testing our experience of space.

American Field

This work was created in 1990, in Cholula, Puebla, in Mexico, during a working trip of Antony Gormley's while he was staying with a Texca family. Nearly sixty members of the family from ages six to sixty worked on the pieces and much of the potential significance of it owes to the participation of these people.

The form of the piece does not allude to human figures, but instead to what precedes life; Antony Gormley wanted to explore through this work what comes before physical appearance, what is "on the other side of life." At the same time the work evokes an extraordinary gathering of silent and still beings, like those at a ceremony, in an environment of almost mystic serenity.

Block Works

The *Blockwork* series started as an attempt to make a body as a building, out of welded blocks of steel. How do you make a self-supporting brick wall of blocks, while at the same time following the contours of the form? Gormley describes the works as 'an attempt to make the pixel physical: substituting the structure of a digital image for the anatomy of the body.' The sculptures depend on there being a tension between the clarity of the steel blocks and a sense of exposure at the edge of the work, light and space seem to eat away at the embodied core.

Insiders

The proportions of the *Insiders* are the result of digital scanning processes, beginning with relationships between the widest and narrowest parts of the body. Gormley sees these reduced forms as antennae for a particular kind of resilience that exists within all of us, that allows us to bear suffering but is itself created through painful experience. There is no judgement about this. Their bareness is not the nakedness that reveals the flesh, it is the result of having had the flesh taken away, a loss which is not sentimentalised, but accepted. The *Insider* tries to up the ante between being and nothingness.

Breathing Room

Breathing Room can be read as a three-dimensional drawing in space, hovering between being an image of architecture and being architecture itself. Changing from being an illuminated object and becoming self lit, the work assumes an unstable position between the virtual and the real, challenging the way in which space is described and contained by architecture.

BIOGRAPHY

Antony Gormley was born in London in 1950. Upon completing a degree in archaeology, anthropology and the history of art at Trinity College, Cambridge, he travelled to India, returning to London three years later to study at the Central School of Art, Goldsmiths College and the Slade School of Art. His work has been exhibited extensively internationally.

WORKS IN PUBLIC COLLECTIONS (selection)

Arts Council of England
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
British Council
British Museum
Contemporary Arts Society
Henry Moore Foundation for the Study of Sculpture
Jerwood Collection, Witley
Jesus College, Cambridge
Leeds City Art Gallery
Tate Gallery
Victoria and Albert Museum
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australy
Museum of Modern Art, Vienna, Austria
Montreal Musee des Beaux Arts, Canada
Guangdong Museum of Contemporary Art, Guangzhou, China
Herning Kunstmuseum, Denmark
Centre Georges Pompidou, France
Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland
Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel
Nagoya City Art Museum, Japan
The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo
Tokushima Art Museum, Japan
Museet for Samtidskunst, Oslo, Norway
Fundação Berardo, Sintra, Portugal
Malmo Konsthall, Switzerland
Moderna Museet, Estocolm, Sweden
Weltkunst Foundation, Zurich, Switzerland
Museum of Modern Art, Fort Worth, Texas, USA
Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, USA
Walker Arts Centre, Minneapolis, USA
Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, USA