

ANTONY GORMLEY

CRITICAL MASS, 1995

I was trying in this work to isolate basic body positions and then to test them by lying them at rest in different orientations - giving them contradictory and sometimes absurd connotations.

CRITICAL MASS is made up of 5 casts of 12 positions: ground-hugging, crouching, foetal, squatting, sitting, kneeling, standing, mourning and a final instability - an ascent of man ranging through the complex syntax of the body.

The bodyforms were cast from the outside of a plaster mould and all the imperfections of the mould surface are reproduced on the finished work, as are the signs of the loose pieces in the sand mould, the flash lines that exist between them, and the out-runners of the metal-pouring which are integrated into the surface, declaring their industrial birth.

CRITICAL MASS was made in direct response to a specific building, the Remise, an old tram storage station in Vienna. It is nearly 200 m long and 30 m wide, with 5 tram tracks embedded in the floor. I cut 14 pits into the floor between the tracks. This was also a way of activating the whole building and destabilising the architectural context.

The work is an anti-monument evoking the victims of the twentieth century. It also communicates the useless status of sculpture itself. In the original installation, only 11 of the bodyforms were displayed oriented in the way that they were cast (i.e. the body in a realistic body position); all the rest were tumbled, literally dumped from the back of a truck.
