

ANTONY GORMLEY

ACCORDING TO A GIVEN MEAN, XAVIER HUFKENS, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, 2013

28 March - 04 May 2013

Taking a variety of geometries as a starting point for an investigation of space, place and reflexive architecture, the works in ACCORDING TO A GIVEN MEAN explored the ways in which mathematical principles of spatial organisation - ultimately foreign to the body - are able to evoke states of being or mind and provoke emotional responses through purely objective means. A number of works in the exhibition evolved from the language of the 'Polyhedra' series that was first exhibited at Xavier Hufkens in 2009. One example of this is SUM (2012), which was displayed in the upstairs gallery, a floor-bound, dispersed, crystalline landscape that encloses a body caught in a moment of aggregation or entropy. These sculptures use masses and space-frames generated by the Weaire-Phelan 'bubble matrix' to identify human forms in space. Gormley, having further experimented with crystal aggregation, explained: 'I encountered a vast variety of geometries, ranging from the pyramidal forms of sodium crystals to the more jagged formation of copper sulphate. Intrigued by the ways in which iron pyrite forms natural aggregates, I began to experiment and to use cuboids to form body masses.'

ACCORDING TO A GIVEN MEAN explored two further avenues. One series of sculptures was made up of randomly distributed, chain-like groupings of orthogonal space-frames that were based on the proportions of the body. The frames are interwoven, dispersed or suspended. In FRAME (2013), a six-times life-size body-form that was installed diagonally across the gallery's main space, the volumes intersected and reacted to the specific dimensions of the gallery whilst simultaneously lending their architectural surroundings a figural association. The work acted as a catalyst: by walking in, through and around it, the viewer's awareness of his/her own body is intensified.

A second series translates the volumes of the body into strict cubic frames, or solids. There are two modes: standing forms comprising unstable towers of orthogonal cubes that seem to be at the point of collapse, and bodies at rest which have lost their orthogonal qualities and are transformed into abstract matrices.

According to the artist: 'The shift into these jumbled abstractions was inspired, in part, by iron pyrite crystal agglomerations. For instance, RESORT III (2013), which is placed in the entrance to the gallery, uses the language of mineral precipitation to investigate the dependency of humans upon their habitat, whilst blocks are incorporated into the feet of the standing works to exaggerate their precariousness. This also references Brancusi's interest in turning the object's isolation from the floor into the structure of the object itself.'

Finally, the first in a new series of works, PUMP (2013), took full advantage of the gallery's height. This extended body-case, with its head pinned to the floor under the pressure of its vertical, thermometer-like body, tests the relationship of consciousness to incarnation.
