

ANTONY GORMLEY

CONSTRUCT, SEAN KELLY GALLERY, NEW YORK, USA, 2016

06 May - 29 July 2016

The exhibition begins with a life-size work from Gormley's series of bodycases, BRIDGE (1985), in the front gallery space. This is one of the earliest works made from a plaster mould of the artist's body, strengthened with fibreglass and encased in a skin of lead. Gormley sees BRIDGE as an objective mapping of the subjective space of the human body. The visible soldering lines on its surface form clear horizontal and vertical axes: the body is treated as the location of physical and spatial experience. BRIDGE is presented alongside the wall relief MOTHER'S PRIDE IV (1982, remade in 2012), in which an impression of the artist's body in the foetal position has literally been eaten out of a tightly packed grid of slices of industrially-produced 'Mother's Pride' white bread. Also on view alongside these works is SCAFFOLD (2015), a recent work in which Gormley has translated the grid of horizontal and vertical lines of BRIDGE into a free-standing three-dimensional mapping of the internal volumes of the body. Together these three works propose that we consider the body less as an object and more as a site and agent of transformation.

In the main gallery, the artist's exploration of the potential of the 'mapping' of body space continues with boldly physical sculptures that increase the dynamic between space and mass. Visitors will encounter five new monumental works from Gormley's recent 'Big Beamer' series. These previously unexhibited works deconstruct and reassemble the interior volume of the body through interlocking steel beams that run in all three axes. Created at one-and-a-half-times life-size, they represent a body in five unstable moments of rest, from crouching to fully erect. In spite of their grand scale, the works remain remarkably playful.

CONSTRUCT concludes in the lower gallery space with two new 'Stretched Blockworks'. These works continue the artist's engagement with the massive volumes of architecture by using rectangular iron blocks to translate body space into mass. Unlike the 'Big Beamers', these volumes are stretched along a single axis to echo the forms of classic New York high-rises of the early twentieth century.
