

ANTONY GORMLEY

CAST, ALAN CRISTEA GALLERY, LONDON, ENGLAND, 2016

13 May - 30 July 2016

Marking his first project and exhibition with the Alan Cristea Gallery, Antony Gormley has made a series of works that consider how our physical freedom and imaginative potential is increasingly conditioned by the built environment.

Installed across both galleries are a number of large 'Woodblock' prints based on seven distinct body poses. They reinterpret anatomy in the language of architecture and relate to a key work in the artist's recent practice, *EXPANSION FIELD* (2014), which applies the principles of an expanding universe to the subjective space of the body. At nearly three metres in height, the prints are made from blocks of sawn plywood to create multiple, ghost-like impressions of a bodily architecture.

The 'Woodblocks' are interspersed with a series of crude oil and petroleum jelly 'Body Prints'. The transfer is achieved by Gormley falling directly onto the paper, the weight of his body leaving a corresponding print. The sacrilegious use of crude oil as representative of the 'blood of the earth' highlights our dependency on the planet's solar memory.

Experienced in dialogue with each other, the tension between the immediacy of the 'Body Prints' and the elusiveness of the multi-layered 'Woodblocks' is made apparent. Whether through the indexical trace of wood or skin, both series of prints register, like a shadow, footprint or photograph, a lived moment in time.

Alongside are two further series of prints which also explore the fundamentals of printmaking. Ten 'Aquatints' (*MATRIX I - X*) constructed from single plates carry the silhouette of architectural blocks printed one on top of the other. This accumulation of black conveys a sense of inner embodied darkness. Each plate is created with rosin ground by hand, the resulting particles gently sifted through a sieve before being heated to make a granular ground.

The 'Aquatints' are juxtaposed with a suite of linear etchings made with a hard needle. Whilst they return to a graphic mode of representation, they also evoke states of embodiment and freedom; an enmeshment within a bounded body and release into space.
