

ANTONY GORMLEY

FIT, WHITE CUBE BERMONDSEY, LONDON, ENGLAND, 2016

30 September - 06 November 2016

For this exhibition, Antony Gormley has configured the gallery space into fifteen chambers to create a series of dramatic physiological encounters in the form of a labyrinth. Visitors will be faced with a choice of passage through differently sized, uniquely lit spaces where each room challenges or qualifies the experience of the last.

Framed as the sequel to MODEL, which was shown in 2012 at White Cube Bermondsey, the exhibition considers the relation of the individual to the built environment, the 'making of places' and resulting displacement. The exhibition makes reference to both the citizens of a city like London and the migrant seeking refuge. FIT asks whether we as citizens identify with the forces that determine inclusion or exclusion from city or country.

The artist's concerns are most clearly articulated in the expansive installation SLEEPING FIELD (2015 - 2016). Composed of nearly 600 small iron sculptures, the work at first looks like a carpet of charcoal grey blocks, like a condensed landscape of high and low-rise buildings. Upon closer inspection and reassessment however, the forms resolve into hundreds of individual bodies displaced, redundant, at rest yet evoking states from lassitude to despair.

The notion of scale, in particular the scale of a human body in relation to architectural space, is explored in works like RUN (2016), a singular, continuous cast iron line which indicates the space of one room in snaking, 90 degree turns. In describing this work, which relate to the exact measurements of his own body, Gormley states, 'it is inviting one to pause and consider our dependency on the 'second' body, the body of architecture.'

In contrast to the dispersed mass of SLEEPING FIELD, BLOCK (2016), an immense 15 tonne concrete sculpture describes an abstract, contemplative body in an attitude of withdrawal and reflection, whilst two other sculptures, formed from industrially-cut steel plate slabs, playfully represent the form of the classical nude and the tottering stacks of blocks a child might make.

In PASSAGE (2016), Gormley creates a 12 metre-long tunnel, whose shape is modelled on a standing human form, suggesting a correlative for the interior of the body and offering a journey into darkness and the unknown.

Gormley's approach to exhibition making is a test ground for perception, focusing on the mapping of our subjective experience and the potential of the viewers' projected empathy. As Gormley explains further, it is his challenge to: 'make a show that allows forms and materials to work on us, releasing us from any expectations of what sculpture is and how it might act on us.'
