

Press Release

Antony Gormley
Facts and Systems | Fatos e Sistemas
White Cube at Rua Agostinho Rodrigues Filho 550
São Paulo
9 May – 15 July 2012
Preview: Tuesday 8 May 2012, 6-9pm

'The space of consciousness has a body shape, and that body shape has a second skin: architecture.'
Antony Gormley in conversation with Marcello Dantas, London 2012

White Cube is pleased to present its first Special Project in São Paulo – an exhibition of two new series of sculptures by British artist Antony Gormley. In one room, Gormley will present dramatic body forms made from stacked, mild steel blocks that punctuate and articulate the gallery. In another room, he will present a group of linear sculptures made from 6mm steel rod that continue his investigation into architectural space. Gormley has said of his work that it is an 'examination of what it feels like to be alive'; an attempt to describe the experience of inhabiting a body at a particular moment in time and space.

The works in massive steel relate to Gormley's ongoing interest in the displacement of a body space with modular material elements, referencing in particular his block works from 2001 in which the internal mass of the body was displaced with pixelated steel blocks. Together with the exploration of architectural principles and language, these new works are the result of Gormley's experimentation with the fundamental syntaxes of building or sculpture. Here, the tectonics of post and lintel architecture are used to translate body mass into the equivalent of a high rise tower or cantilevered pontoon. Although these works appear like carefully constructed body forms, their formation is actually more playful and free, reflecting the childhood game of placing blocks on top of one another, each time attempting to reach new levels of height and width before collapse.

The line works start from the humble principle of 'taking a line for a walk' in the gallery space. Aiming to present a three-dimensional mapping of the body zone, these works are formed by a steel line which, literally enters the gallery space, pierces the surface of a body shape, moves around its internal space through a series of sharp 90 degree turns, and then leaves the body again in a straight line on its other side. Using the principles of Euclidian geometry applied to the body, these works continue Gormley's use of his own body as a test site and reflect his understanding of architecture as a 'second skin' for the human condition, providing a way to materially define our experience. It is as if these schematic body forms made up of short, straight lines and right angles have been created by a force moving through the space, the lines of the sculpture physically describing its journey into and out of the room.

Both of these series of works use different organising principles to investigate the condition of consciousness. Gormley's sculptures aim to reflect back to their audience, an awareness of 'being' by providing what the artist has described as 'a foil against which the movement, the liveliness . . . [and] the freedom of the viewer is amplified'.

This exhibition will coincide with a major exhibition of Gormley's work at Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, on view from 12 May – 15 July 2012. 'Still Being' is the first major presentation of the artist's work in South America. It will be held in three venues in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasília, and will introduce the major themes that have concerned the artist over the last 40 years: the body as space and space as object.

In association with the British Council Antony Gormley will be in conversation with White Cube's Director of Exhibitions Tim Marlow, on Thursday 10 May, 7-8.30pm in the Duke of York Auditorium, British Council Building, Rua Ferreira Araújo, 741/3º andar, Pinheiros, São Paulo, SP 05428-002.

Born in London in 1950, Antony Gormley has had a number of solo shows including Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2012); State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (2011); Kunsthau Bregenz (2010); Hayward Gallery, London (2007); Kunsthalle zu Kiel (2010) and Malmö Konsthall (1993). Major public works include the Angel of the North (1995-98, Gateshead, England), Another Place (2005, Crosby Beach, England), and Exposure (2010, Lelystad, The Netherlands). He has also participated in major group shows such as the Venice Biennale (1982 and 1986) and Kassel Documenta 8 (1987). Gormley won the Turner Prize in 1994 and was made an Officer of the British Empire in 1997. Since 2003 he has been a member of the Royal Academy of Arts and since 2007 a British Museum Trustee.

White Cube at Rua Agostinho Rodrigues Filho 550, São Paulo is open Tuesday–Saturday, 11am – 7pm.
During the first week of the exhibition the opening times are as follows:
9, 10 & 11 May: 11am – 10pm, 12 & 13 May: 11am – 8pm, 14 May: 11am – 7pm

For further information, please contact Honey Luard or Sara Macdonald on +44 (0)20 7930 5373.