

Press release
March 2009

ARTIUM

Basque Centre-Museum of Contemporary Art
Vitoria-Gasteiz

Exhibition

Between You And Me. Antony Gormley

North Gallery, from March 19 to August 30

Produced by ARTIUM (Vitoria-Gasteiz), Kunsthal (Rotterdam) and Musée d'Art Moderne (St. Etienne), with the collaboration of Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac (Paris, Salzburg)

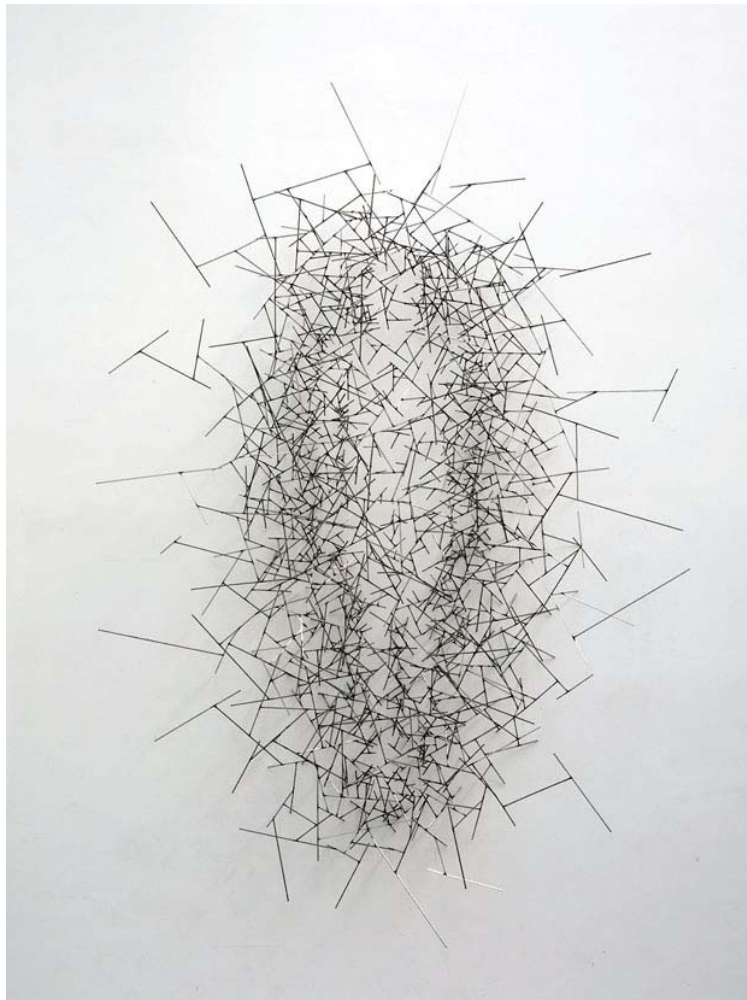
Sponsored by the Provincial Council of Alava, Ministry of Culture, Mondragon, Naturgas, EITB

Exhibition catalogue, with texts by Rod Mengham and Fernando Huici and an interview of Antony Gormley with Pierre Tillet.

Lecture by Antony Gormley at ARTIUM, March 18, 7 PM

The piece *Touch III* (2008) is on show in the entrance hall of EITB's headquarters in Bilbao

The piece *Reflection II* (2008) is on show outside the Museum and the Cube ARTIUM cafeteria



Quantum Void II
Antony Gormley, 2008

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ARTIUM PRESENTS THE EXHIBITION *BETWEEN YOU AND ME*, BY ANTONY GORMLEY

An international coproduction that features the essential works of one of the great innovators of European sculpture.

ARTIUM, Basque Centre-Museum of Contemporary Art presents the exhibition *Between You And Me*, by Antony Gormley (North Gallery, until August 30), a selection of works by this English artist who is considered to be one of the great renovators of European sculpture. Over the last 25 years, Gormley has revitalised the human figure in sculpture based on his perception of the human body as a place of memory and transformation. The central theme of his work is the individual and his position in the universe and Gormley's creations are full of great symbolic intention, from the forcefulness of the figures in iron and lead to the lightness and fragility of those made with rods or clay. *Between You And Me*, the first travelling exhibition of Gormley's work in Europe, is a coproduction of ARTIUM (Vitoria-Gasteiz), Kunsthall (Rotterdam) and Musée d'Art Moderne (St. Etienne), with the collaboration of Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac (Paris, Salzburg) and the sponsorship of the Provincial Council of Alava, Ministry of Culture, Mondragon, Naturgas and EITB.

Antony Gormley (London 1950) graduated in Archaeology, Anthropology and History from Trinity College, Cambridge and after a period in India, where he studied meditation, he studied art at the Central School of Art, Goldsmith College and at the Slade School of Fine Art. Among other awards, he won the prestigious Turner Prize in 1994. Gormley regularly uses his own body as a model, tool and material, and since the Nineties, his commitment to the human condition has led him to produce large-scale installations that reflect the nature of the collective body and one's relationship with others. His latest works relate more to energy systems, fields and vectors than to his former preference for mass and defined volume.

The exhibition Antony Gormley offers at ARTIUM features two large installations, possibly two of the most significant works of his career: *Critical Mass II* (1995) and *European Field* (1993). In addition, there are earlier works ranging from *Bread Line* (1979) to *Seeds III* (1989) and other recent works such as *Quantum Void II* (2008). The exhibition features the piece *Reflection II* (2008), which is on show between the exterior of the Centre-Museum and the interior of the Cube-ARTIUM cafeteria, and *Touch III* (2008), on show in the hallway of the headquarters of EITB (Basque radio and television company) in Bilbao.

REFLECTION II, 2008

Cast iron. 2 bodyforms, each 191 x 68 x 37 cm

Alluding to mirroring as well as the necessity of self-knowledge through reflection the two identical bodyforms reference the tension between the palpable and the perceptual that runs throughout the exhibition as well as engaging the building and the space it contains as part of the material of the show.

SENSE, 1991

Concrete. 74.5 x 62.5 x 60 cm

At the beginning of the 1990s Gormley started producing geometrical blocks which 'describe the space between the body and a compressed notion of architecture'. Using the traditional 'lost-wax' casting technique, concrete was formed around a life-size wax mould of the artist's body. The wax was then melted and poured out, leaving a body-shaped void inside the block. In *Sense*, though we cannot see the space of the lost body in its hollow interior, the openings indicate other voids where the primary organs of sense – the hands and the head, with its eyes, nose and ears – are unconfined. The only visible imprint is left by the hands. While this work may carry overtones of horror, of punishment or sacrifice, it also conveys a sense of protection and preservation, and the mystery of incarnation. Talking about works such as *Sense*, Gormley has said: 'You can read them as tombs, but they are also a celebration of life. They are about experiencing freedom by knowing one's intimate relationship with one's environment, knowing where one fits, comfortably, perfectly.'

'I think that architecture is another kind of body, another container.'

Antony Gormley, 1994

BREAD LINE, 1979/ 2009

Bread. 1 x 1500 x 3 cm

BLANKET DRAWING V, 1983

White clay, white blanket . 170 x 226 x 0.6 cm

SEEDS III/V, 1989/93

Lead. Unit size: 3.5 x 1.1cm diameter. Collection Würth, Künzelsau, Germany

Antony Gormley's sculpture has always been about 'being'. In his early work he explored this phenomenologically through the use of materials such as bread, clothing, rubber, wood, stone and lead, observing that the job of sculpture 'is to transform what exists in the outer world by uniting it with the world of sensation, imagination and faith.' He made his first bread work Bread Line in 1979, using Mother's Pride, the epitome of industrially-produced sliced white bread. Dating from the late 1970s and early 80s, Gormley's early works were made during the Cold War when anxiety about the possibility of nuclear attack was at its height and the civil defence slogan was 'Protect and Survive'. Using materials such as bread, an old hospital blanket and lead bullets, in these works Gormley focuses on our means of survival — food, shelter and defence — and our dependency on the material world.

QUANTUM VOID II, 2008

3mm square section stainless steel bar. 322 x 210 x 90 cm

FREEFALL, 2007

2mm square section stainless steel bar. 290 x 185 x 180 cm. Private collection

All of Gormley's work is an investigation into the nature of the space a human being inhabits. 'I've never been interested in making statues,' he explains. 'What I try to show is the space where the body was, not to represent the body itself.' His recent matrices and expansion pieces are so open in structure as to become almost drawings in space, and each reveals an empty body-space at its core. 'Neither architecture nor anatomy,' as Gormley insists, they are 'more like the random matrices found in fractal geometry.' Though some body-shapes may be immediately apparent among the stainless steel elements others will only manifest themselves slowly. Speaking of the whole development of the Quantum Cloud and Bubble Matrix series the artist has said : 'These bundles of nothing are the most dematerialised works I have ever made. The bodies are free, lost in space, weightless, and with no internal determination — they are not "acting". They appear as emergent zones: you cannot be sure whether the bubble matrix is produced by the body zone or the zone by the matrix. The bubble matrix series is the closest I get to Brancusi's notion that you can turn an object into light. He did it by polishing sculptures, whereas I have tried to do it by abandoning weight and mass and dissolving surface.'

Antony Gormley, 2007

'Sculpture reminds everyone that we are human and that we are embodied, incarnate, that all your sense of self and being comes through the body which is only fully itself when connected to an elemental world.'

Antony Gormley, 2001

FIELD (EUROPEAN), 1993

Terracotta. Approx. 40 000 elements, each 8-26 cm high

European Field was created by Gormley with residents of Malmö, Sweden in 1993. More than 200 men, women and children worked on the project, each instructed to 'take a hand-size ball of clay, and form it between the hands, into a body-surrogate as quickly as possible. Place it at arm's length in front of you and give it eyes.' Together they created approximately 40,000 figures. Originally conceived in Mexico in 1990, *Field* has since become one of Gormley's best known works.

'I wanted to see if I could make a work that evoked the silence of the ground and the necessity of touch — the necessity of touching the other side of life, that which lives behind appearance. I needed to work with others and with the earth, to do something direct with fire and clay. I wanted to use my life to change my life — to start again — to start with a confrontation with the ground, and in that ground to plant possibility. I also wanted to make something that challenged my ideas of form — of the refinement of form and how that happens. With this piece, nothing is finished — the process of making the piece is only each maker's familiarity and trust in the repeated motions of separating a lump of clay from the kneaded mass and forming it. There was not a touch, but touch itself. The "sharedness" of the origin of this work was the most complete of any I have attempted.'

Antony Gormley, 1991

CRITICAL MASS II, 1995

Cast iron. Variable, 60 lifesize elements











Critical mass, noun: the amount of fissionable material necessary to sustain a chain reaction at a constant rate; an amount necessary or sufficient to have a significant effect or to achieve a result: a critical mass of popular support.

'The use of this material – iron – is associated with the deep underground that lies beneath our feet and emphasises that our body is on temporary loan from the mass of matter constituting the planet and to which, in some way, we give shape.'

Antony Gormley, 1995

There are five suspended elements that are part of a much larger installation consisting of 60 figures, most of them earth-bound, which were cast from twelve basic body postures – a lexicon of body-language. The pieces are all allowed to be at rest, evoking different readings dependent on which way they are orientated (the kneeling figure when fallen backwards becomes an arch of hysteria, the mourning figure with its head bent becomes an acrobat when placed in a shoulder stand). 'The suspensions are vital. Maybe there are two things identified here: firstly, bearing witness to torture and execution, the worst destiny of the dispossessed. Secondly, through an arrested fall, activating a gravitational field (these forms have ten times the density of an ordinary human body of that size).'

List of works

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| <p>1 <i>Blanket Drawing V</i> 1983 TBC - but probably clay/ blanket/ linseed oil 170 x 226 cm GORMLEY, Antony</p>  | <p>2 <i>Bread Line</i> 1979 Bread 1 x 1500 x 3 cm GORMLEY, Antony</p>  |
| <p>3 <i>Critical Mass II</i> 1995 Cast iron Variable, 60 lifesize elements GORMLEY, Antony</p>  | <p>4 <i>Sense</i> 1991 Concrete 74,5 x 62,5 x 60 cm GORMLEY, Antony</p>  |
| <p>5 <i>Seeds III/V</i> Lead Unit size: 3,5 x 1,1 diameter GORMLEY, Antony</p>  | <p>6 <i>European Field</i> 1993 Terracotta Variable size: approx. 40 000 elements, each 8-26 cm high GORMLEY, Antony</p>  |
| <p>7 <i>Freefall</i> 2007 2 mm square section stainless steel bar 290 x 185 x 180 cm (47 kg) GORMLEY, Antony</p>  | <p>8 <i>Mother's Pride III</i> 2007 Bread/wax 285.5 x 230 x 1,6 cm GORMLEY, Antony</p>  |
| <p>9 <i>Quantum Void II</i> 2008 3mm square section stainless steel bar 322 x 210 x 90 cm GORMLEY, Antony</p>  | <p>10 <i>Reflection II</i> 2001 Cast iron 2 bodyforms - each 193cm x 66cm x 38cm. GORMLEY, Antony</p>  |