

ANTONY GORMLEY

BODY AND SOUL, 1990

In *BODY AND SOUL*, the exterior and interior spaces of the body are unified. The prints have a sequence and can be seen as a meditation on twoness and oneness. The body has within it unity and division, single foci like the mouth, the navel, the penis, that lie on the body's central axis; and dualities like the hands or the eyes that function in pairs.

While the white prints bear the imprints of hands, knees, forehead and spine, the five black prints each represent one of the body's main orifices, which appear as white marks on a black ground. Although made from actual body impressions, their anatomical origin is deliberately unclear: they might be quite different natural forms such as shells, a comet, a planet, or a primitive life form. The effect is of being inside the body and looking out at the universe:

'At first I spent some time considering objects with which I shared the world, that both existed within the sphere of a personal life and threatened it - they seemed to have a certainty about them - some hold on time and place.

Now I have crossed the threshold and have come to this closed ground of the body and I feel less certain. Before I was happy to explore, at arm's length, the abstract relations of form and content - now my horizons are both more circumscribed and more infinite, for one cannot touch the body without considering the soul - these things cannot be described, cannot be represented but somehow, if the certainty can be focused, if a true account can be given of the material facts, a potential might be expressed - which is where these prints may be relevant.

There is something about printing and the way that it encourages the maker of a plate to think about the mirror of his image and the reversal of his negatives and positives that links with the oppositions that have driven and exasperated me. Printing makes one treat day as night, and relieves the monotony of always living in one or the other.

In the work generally, I have tried to make a bridge between the inner and outer worlds, to bring light to weight to light. These prints are a continuation of the attempt. Printing was invented to touch the mind by disseminating the word. I am trying to return the mind to the body.'

BODY AND SOUL is a series of 9 etchings published in 1990 by The Paragon Press, London, England
