



Large
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Antony Gormley

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Antony Gormley

Main Galleries

21 September – 3 December 2019

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In this exhibition, the artist invites you to engage with the spaces around you.

However, please do not touch the artworks themselves.

Some of the works contain water, have sharp edges or are made with materials that can transfer onto clothing.

Take care and please be aware of your surroundings, belongings and other visitors. Please accompany children closely.

If you are sensitive to enclosed spaces, some of the works may not be suitable. Please ask a member of staff if you have any questions.

Introduction

In this exhibition, the visitor is centre stage. Across thirteen rooms, sculptures and installations call for our physical and imaginative participation. In different ways, the works make us aware of our own bodies, the spaces we move through, and the infinite space of the mind.

The body appears in various modes: as a trace in early experimental sculptures; through action recorded in drawings; and as a form – cast in iron, stacked in steel, or present only as a void.

In several works, industrial and organic materials are used on an epic scale to create enveloping installations that energise and disrupt space.

For Gormley, the magic of sculpture is that it comes to life in the presence of people. Instead of including written information inside the galleries, the artist invites us to focus on the here and now and experience the works directly.

He says: "I want to use sculpture to throw us back into the world, to provide this place where the magic, the subtlety, the extraordinary nature of our first-hand experience is celebrated, enhanced, made more present."

Annenberg Courtyard

Iron Baby 1999

Placed directly on the ground, this small sculpture is tiny against the grand scale of the courtyard. The life-size form of a newborn baby is a solid iron cast based on the artist's six-day-old daughter. The artist has stated:

"Its density suggests energy potential like a small bomb. The material is iron (concentrated earth), the same as the core of our planet.

"Here, this tiny bit of matter in human form attempts to make us aware of our precarious position in relation to our planetary future. It is the gesture of a body closed in on itself, needy of comfort, shelter, sustenance and peace."

Iron Baby 1999

Cast iron

Private collection

1

Slabworks 2019

Fourteen sculptures are distributed across the floor. The dense, hard-edged steel slabs have been cut with extreme precision using industrial methods.

As we navigate between the works, what first appear to be building-like constructions are revealed as human forms. Stark, geometric volumes replace the human structure of bone, muscle, tissue and skin.

Each sculpture is made simply by stacking one mass upon another; in some, as few as seven elements make up a body.

Despite this extreme abstraction of form, the finely-tuned proportions trigger our recognition; we sense a human presence. Lying at rest, hunched, extended or standing, each pose evokes a certain bearing or attitude.

Moving from work to work, as if we are giants in a strange cityscape, these “beings” call on our emotions.

80mm and 90mm weathering steel slab

2

Early Works

This gallery explores the experimental origins of Gormley's practice during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The works resemble everyday items – bowls, a tree, bread, a blanket, rocks – the essentials of life and the tools of survival.

His investigation of natural and man-made components was shared by twentieth-century artistic movements such as Italian Arte Povera (known for transforming “poor” materials) and Land Art, which saw artists working out in the landscape and bringing nature into the gallery.

'One Apple' bisects the space: 53 lead cases record the growth of an apple from the first petal to fall from the blossom, through the stages of ripening to mature fruit.

Each contains the dried remains of the fresh apple which was moulded to make the form for each case. The apple recalls the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden; and Newton's apple that inspired his law of gravity.

In common with other works gathered here, 'One Apple' reveals Gormley's preoccupation with ideas of expansion in time and space.

In other works, the body appears as a trace: in the carved outline of the holding hand in 'Grasp', or as a void created by the simple act of eating in 'Mother's Pride V' (first made in 1982).

The wall drawing 'Exercise Between Blood and Earth', a work made in 1979–81 and recreated here, is likewise a record of an action. Its extent is determined by the reach of the artist's arm when standing in one spot, generating an image that captures a tension between stillness and motion.

The emanating lines recall something between a geographic contour map, the annual rings of a tree, and a vast fingerprint.

While younger generations today face climate change, Gormley grew up during the Cold War, when the nuclear threat was ever present.

Partly in response to “the notion that humans might be agents of their own destruction”, he used lead (which can insulate against radiation) as an artistic material, exploiting its malleability and subtle surface qualities to conceal objects.

‘Fruits of the Earth’ contains a loaded revolver, a machete and a bottle of wine, repeatedly wrapped until their hard edges are softened and they begin to resemble organic forms. The three apparently identical forms of ‘Land Sea and Air I’ pose the question: what is inside? Hidden from view, we are left to imagine their interiors – a rock, water and empty space.

Collectively, they represent the necessary conditions for life; in the artist's words, they are "seeds for the future".

Gormley went on to apply the technique of wrapping and beating sheets of lead to casts of his own body to create his famous lead "body cases".

Centre of gallery

One Apple 1982

Apples, lead and air

Clockwise in order of hang

Land Sea and Air I 1977–79

Lead, stone, water and air

Blanket Drawing V 1983

Clay and blanket

Mask 1978

Lead

Upright Tree 1978

Larch wood

Grasp 1982

Blackstone

Private collection

Full Bowl 1977–78

Lead

Private collection, Vienna

Exercise Between Blood and Earth 2019 (1979–81)

Chalk

Fruits of the Earth 1978–79

Lead, revolver, bottle of wine and machete

Mother's Pride V 2019

Bread and wax

Floor 1981

Rubber

3

Clearing VII 2019

This “drawing in space”, as the artist calls it, is made from approximately 8 kilometres of square section aluminium tube, coiled and allowed to expand until restricted by the floor, walls and ceiling.

The wild orbits of the line evoke the sub-atomic paths of electrons, or the frenetic scribbles of a child. ‘Clearing VII’ challenges the boundaries of sculpture: the space occupied by the piece and the viewer are one.

No longer a single object, the work becomes a spatial “field” (similar to a magnetic or force field, which is invisible yet charged). As we enter, we activate this “bundle of nothing”.

Choosing a route through involves a physical negotiation: stepping over, crouching or turning sideways, we become part of this dynamic artwork.

Clearing VII 2019

Approximately 8 km of 12.7 mm square section
16 swg aluminium tube

4

Subject II 2019

A single life-size body form, with head bent, contemplates the ground on which it stands.

Tightly packed vertical and horizontal steel bars map the internal space of the body – what the artist refers to as “the zone of life beneath the skin”. The materials and basic orthogonal structure of this work are shared by ‘Co-ordinate VI’, the work that intersects and connects four galleries in this exhibition (see Room 6).

Rather than measuring the space of architecture as ‘Co-ordinate VI’ does, ‘Subject II’ tests the boundary between the body and space; the “skin” dissolves and the imagined surface shifts as we move around the dense lattice structure.

Subject II 2019

10 mm square section mild steel bar

5

Matrix III 2019

This vast cloud is a mesmerising visual labyrinth, hewn from an ordinary industrial material. 98% recycled, the steel mesh – commonly used to reinforce concrete walls – is transformed into a complex phenomenon, by way of hundreds of thousands of spot welds done by hand.

Designed especially for this gallery, 21 suspended room-size cages intersect, surrounding a small concentrated chamber. This void at the core is what Gormley calls “the space of dreaming”, and is equivalent to the average size of a European new-build bedroom.

Looking up at this structure, our ability to perceive distance is challenged: our eyes struggle to decide what is close or far, in front or behind.

The certainty and solidity of the three-dimensional world is undermined. Gormley has described 'Matrix III' as "the ghost of the environment we've all chosen to accept as our primary habitat".

Matrix III 2019

Approximately 6 tonnes of 6 mm mild steel reinforcing mesh

Singularity 2014

Carbon and casein on paper

Fission 2014

Carbon and casein on paper

Chromosphere 2014

Carbon and casein on paper

6

Co-ordinate VI 2019

Three highly tensioned steel bars zip through space, as if travelling at the speed of light.

'Co-ordinate VI' makes physical the abstract notion of the horizontal, vertical and projecting x, y and z axes. They provide the standard format for measuring the dimensions and positions of objects in space, as well as the language of architecture.

Here the three co-ordinates act, in the words of the artist, as "a perceptual location device", heightening our awareness of our position in space and time. Each axis is at right angles to the two others.

The promise of the meeting of the three can produce a similar feeling to the perceptual conundrums of 'Matrix III'. The lines pass through several galleries, activating the large volumes of these spaces, then disappear into the walls and roof, implying infinity.

Co-ordinate VI 2019

5 mm square section mild steel bar

7

Drawings I

For Gormley, drawing is a creative wellspring, a meditative daily activity.

Gormley's drawings dispense with recording appearances; instead they are a form of thinking and feeling.

He has spoken of "going places in the drawing that are not possible in life or sculpture – outer space or deep water".

Although visual relationships to works elsewhere in the exhibition are evident, these are not studies for specific sculptures: within each drawing can be found the germ of many paths investigated through Gormley's varied works.

Like his sculpture, Gormley's drawings evoke what it feels like to be in a body.

'Mould' is one of several made using thick black pigment mixed with linseed oil, applied with a brush. At other times, the creation of the drawing involves the physical activity of the entire body, as in the arcs of the 'Clearing' drawings, made with arm at full stretch, or 'Feel III', a body print made in crude oil.

Gormley always carries a workbook. The selection on display shows his ideas developing over four decades.

Clockwise in order of hang

Presence 1989

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

Light 1987

Linseed oil and pencil on paper

To the Ends of the Earth 1987

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

Private collection

Reach 1988

Linseed oil and charcoal on paper

1. Suspension 1990

Black pigment and linseed oil on paper

2. Seascape 1987

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

3. Venture 1986

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

4. Lesion 1986

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

5. Light Burden 1986

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

6. Twin Bodies/Dark Star Light Star 1986

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

7. Place 1986

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

8. Landing 1988

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

Collection of Dr Michael Gormley

9. Meeting 1987

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

10. Home and the World 1986

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

Private collection

11. Witness 1988

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

12. Soul and Search 1988

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

Private collection, London

Clearing L 2006

Carbon and casein on paper

Clearing 57 2007

Carbon and casein on paper

Wild Orbit I 2006

Carbon and casein on paper

To the Ends of the Earth II

1987

Charcoal and linseed oil on paper

Open 1985

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

Room 1987

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

Apart 1986

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

Untitled 1989

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

Territory 1985

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

Fold 1987

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

Mould 1981

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper
Private collection

Untitled 1981

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

Mansion 1982

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

Untitled 1982

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

1. Plant 1987

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

2. Sympathy 1987

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

3. Headway 1989

Black pigment, linseed oil and glue on paper
Private collection

4. Enlighten 1988

Black pigment, linseed oil and blood on paper

5. Untitled 1987

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

6. Double Moment 1987

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

7. Journey 1986

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

Fall 2016

Woodcut

Feel III 2016

Crude oil, linseed oil and petroleum jelly on paper

Structure/Road 1996

Carbon and casein on paper

Stretch II 1991

Carbon and casein on paper

Attempting Re-entry 1991

Carbon and casein on paper

Baobab II 1991

Carbon and casein on paper

Body and Light 1990

Carbon and casein on paper

Signal I 1991

Carbon and casein on paper

North 1991

Carbon and casein on paper

Hand Over Water 1996

Carbon and casein on paper

Commune II 1991

Carbon and casein on paper

Draw 1991

Carbon and casein on paper

Body Light Weight Water 1991

Carbon and casein on paper

Open Window 1991

Carbon and casein on paper

Between People Between Worlds 1991

Carbon and casein on paper

Present Time 1990

Carbon and casein on paper

Private collection

Nerve 1993

Diptych. Carbon and casein on paper

Private collection

Future Time 1990

Carbon and casein on paper

Brink 1992

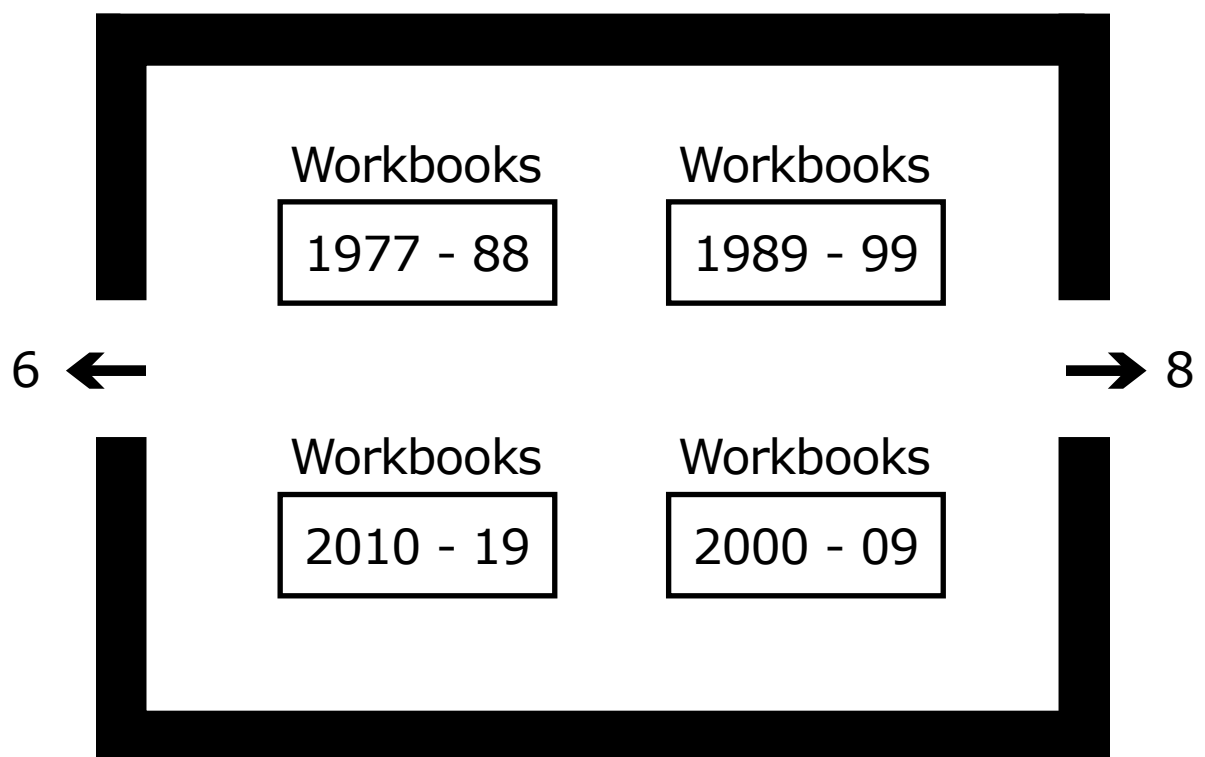
Carbon and casein on paper

Rain III 2008

Carbon and casein on paper

Rain VII 2009

Carbon and casein on paper



8

Lost Horizon I 2008

During the late 1980s Gormley began to work with cast iron, which offered durability for works outdoors. The process starts in the same way as the lead “body cases”: the artist remains still while he is encased in wet plaster.

The iron casts of ‘Lost Horizon I’ are generated serially from six moulds of similar poses, each one registering “a lived moment of time”, as Gormley describes it.

For him, when we close our eyes, but are conscious and aware, we occupy “another kind of space, without co-ordinates”.

'Lost Horizon I', as its title implies, denies us the distant horizontal line that we use to orientate ourselves. Many of Gormley's outdoor works consist of "fields" of figures, placed across large areas in deserts, up mountains and on beaches.

In 'Another Place', for example, the bodies draw our attention to the horizon, and establish a link between the expanse of the landscape, and our capacity to "go places" in our minds.

Here, inside the gallery, gravity appears to be defied and space folds in on itself: bodies project from all sides, at odds with one another. Although the works are perpendicular to the rectangular architecture of the room, the effect as we move between them is disorientating.

Of course, a level horizon belies the roundness of the earth. As we live on a ball and not a flat plane, the works around us could be understood to represent the natural orientation of humans around the globe.

Lost Horizon I 2008

24 cast iron bodyforms

PinchukArtCentre, Kiev, Ukraine

9

Body and Fruit 1991/93

'Body' and 'Fruit' belong to a series called the 'Expansion Works'. These two sculptures originate from the artist's body held tightly in a foetal position; others in the series derive from poses in mid-run, jump or "free fall" – painstakingly held still, and moulded in plaster.

Rather than building up the form through the repetition of multiple layered contours or skins as in 'Exercise Between Blood and Earth' or 'Fruits of the Earth' (see Room 2), these expanded "body zones" were created using wooden batons that project outwards, indicating the edge of the "expansion", which was then cast in iron.

Suspended just inches from the floor in this domed, octagonal gallery, 'Body' and 'Fruit' activate a gravitational field that emphasises the inherent stillness of sculpture, in contrast to our movement around them.

The undulating surfaces suggest pressure pushing outwards from within – as if an explosion has been contained – and the rust shows the effect of weather or age.

This sense of natural transformation recalls the theme of growth across time and space. 'Body' and 'Fruit' call to mind the formation of asteroids or planetary bodies, and the ever-expanding universe.

Body 1991/93

Cast iron and air

Fruit 1991/93

Cast iron and air

10

Concrete Works 1990–93

At first glance, these works appear as nothing more than concrete blocks. In fact, each conceals a void in the form of a body. The feet, hands and head pass through the edges, allowing glimpses into the passages formed by the neck, arms, legs and torso.

The most compact work is 'Sense': a "house" the size of a box, the minimum space a person could occupy. It is a meditation "on the relationship between our organic body and our constructed habitat", which Gormley calls "our second body".

The interior surfaces of the voids retain the inverse impression of the skin. The details of the hands of 'Press', for example, make us alive to the sense of touch. At the same time, in revealing the familiar body as a strange absence, the works point to mortality, such as the coffin-like shape of 'Passage'.

Clockwise in order of hang

Flesh 1990

Concrete

Duerckheim Collection

Matrix XVIII 2014

Carbon and casein on paper

Matrix V 2014

Carbon and casein on paper

Matrix II 2014

Carbon and casein on paper

Matrix IX 2014

Carbon and casein on paper

Matrix X 2014

Carbon and casein on paper

Base 1993

Concrete

Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar, the Netherlands

Sense 1991

Concrete

Passage 1993

Concrete

Collection of Jill and Peter Kraus

Press 1993

Concrete

D.Daskalopoulos Collection

11

Cave 2019

'Cave' is sculpture on an architectural scale.

At the doorway, we may choose to either enter a constricted passageway, or to navigate around the outside.

From above, the jostling cuboid structures are revealed as a vast, hollow human form, crouched on its side. Here the body is transformed into a collapsed architecture that deliberately contrasts with the regular geometry and refined decoration of the gallery space.

The acoustic quality of the hard, rolled steel produces echoes inside and reverberations outside.

For Gormley, it is when we close our eyes that we most readily experience our body as a place: “that experience of interiorised darkness is not so different to the darkness of the night sky; the darkness of the body and deep space are a continuum”.

Inside Cave, the angular, winding cavern slows our passage through, and we must literally feel our way, relying on our senses to guide us through the darkness as soft shafts of light reflect off facets of the sculpture.

Cave 2019

Approximately 27 tonnes of weathering steel

12

Drawings II

In these drawings, the materials used reflect the subjects depicted.

Some explore the interior of the body, representing cells, organs and vessels; several are made using the artist's blood as ink. In others, untreated red earth provides the pigment for imagery concerned with the land, growth and basic architectural forms, often reiterating a horizon.

Many of these brush drawings were inspired by Gormley's experience of Australia, and powerfully convey sensations of light, heat, night and day. Works such as 'Home and the Underworld' link the vast space of that land mass with the limitless dimensions of the human mind.

On the floor, two sculptures – precarious stacks of hand-rolled clay – connect themes of body, building and ground.

Mercia 1987

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

In and Beyond 1985

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

Home and the Underworld 1989

Earth, rabbit skin glue and black pigment on paper

Structure II 1989

Earth, rabbit skin glue and black pigment on paper

According to the Earth 1989

Earth, rabbit skin glue, oil and black pigment on paper

Two Persons Reluctant to Be Born 1989

Earth, rabbit skin glue, oil and black pigment on paper

Strata 1989

Earth, rabbit skin glue and black pigment on paper

Continent 1989

Earth, rabbit skin glue, oil, black pigment and charcoal on paper

Private collection

Creating the World, Dividing the World II 1989

Earth, rabbit skin glue and black pigment on paper

Place 1989

Earth, rabbit skin glue and black pigment on paper

Black 1989

Earth, rabbit skin glue and black pigment on paper

Threshold 1987

Earth, rabbit skin glue and black pigment on paper

Earth, Body, Light 1989

Earth, rabbit skin glue and black pigment on paper

Flesh 1989

Earth, rabbit skin glue and black pigment on paper

Point II 1989

Earth, rabbit skin glue and black pigment on paper

Home Box 1989

Earth, rabbit skin glue and black pigment on paper

Threshold II 1986

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper

Untitled 1988

Blood on paper

Home 1990

Blood on paper

Pile 2017

Clay

Pile II 2018

Clay

Tribe 1988

Blood and oil on paper

Meaning 1986

Blood on paper

Reflection XXIII 2017

Crude oil on paper

Reflection XXII 2016

Crude oil on paper

Reflection XXI 2016

Crude oil on paper

Reflection XX 2016

Crude oil on paper

Reflection XIX 2016

Crude oil on paper

Brain 1992

Earth and rabbit skin glue on paper

Branches 1992

Earth and rabbit skin glue on paper

Placenta 1987

Earth on paper

Cells 1993

Earth and rabbit skin glue on paper

Growth 1993

Earth and rabbit skin glue on paper

Heart 1993

Earth and rabbit skin glue on paper

Horizon 1987

Black pigment, linseed oil and blood on paper

Untitled 1989

Oil, pigment and blood on paper

13

Host 2019

You might sense 'Host' before you see it – its smell, the humidity in the air. Here, you stand on the threshold of an expanse of clay and seawater.

What Gormley calls an “invasion of the inside by the outside”, this work provides a stark contrast to the gilded ceiling of the nineteenth-century gallery. In this exhibition, 'Host' sits in direct opposition to the rigid, hand-manipulated grids of 'Matrix III'.

Unlike that structure, which speaks of the constructed world and the buildings we make and inhabit, 'Host' is unformed.

Basic organic elements (earth, water, air) are temporarily given shape by this gallery. The work reacts to the atmosphere and changing light, gradually transforming over the days and months of this exhibition.

Is it an image of destruction – a devastating flood? Or of potential creation? 'Host' embodies the raw conditions in which life might emerge, a kind of primordial soup of matter, space and time.

Host 2019

Buckinghamshire clay (51° 44' 52.5" N 0° 38' 42.6" W)
and Atlantic seawater

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