



Royal Academy of Arts
21 September –
3 December 2019

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Antony Gormley

Introduction



Antony Gormley (b. 1950) is a British sculptor. His work explores the relationship of the human body to time and space. Best known for his 'bodyform' sculptures, Gormley challenges and interrogates traditional notions of the presentation of the human figure in the history of Western art. Rather than monumentalising his subjects, he explores the body as a container for human experience, and the involvement of the viewer is integral to the meaning of the work. Ranging from small-scale to larger installations, his projects are realised both inside and outside the gallery space. In 1994, Gormley was awarded the Turner Prize for *Field for the British Isles* and in 1998 he completed his best-known work,

Angel of the North, which stands 20 metres high and is located just outside Gateshead in the north of England.

Born in London, Gormley was educated at a Catholic boarding school in North Yorkshire. After completing his degree in archaeology, anthropology and history of art at Trinity College, Cambridge, he spent three years in India. During this time, he studied vipassana, an ancient Buddhist meditation technique that focuses on the connection between body and mind. Moving back to London in 1974, Gormley studied at Goldsmiths' College before completing a two-year post-graduate degree at the Slade School of Fine Art. In 1981 he was offered his first solo show at the Whitechapel Gallery, London. Around this time he began to make the human body the primary focus of his work.

Many of Gormley's interests in the 1970s and 1980s are still present in his work today. Throughout his career to date, he has been intrigued by the dark space inside the body; the human experience of life, death, growth and reproduction; and the relationship between the natural and built worlds. Gormley's inventive approach to different materials and processes remains essential to the meaning of his work. Defying conventional approaches

to sculpture, he resists realistic representation, preferring instead to construct environments that focus on the experience of the viewer. As he explains, 'What I hope I've done is to completely remove the problem of the subject'

Left: Portrait of Antony Gormley.
Photo by Benjamin McMahon

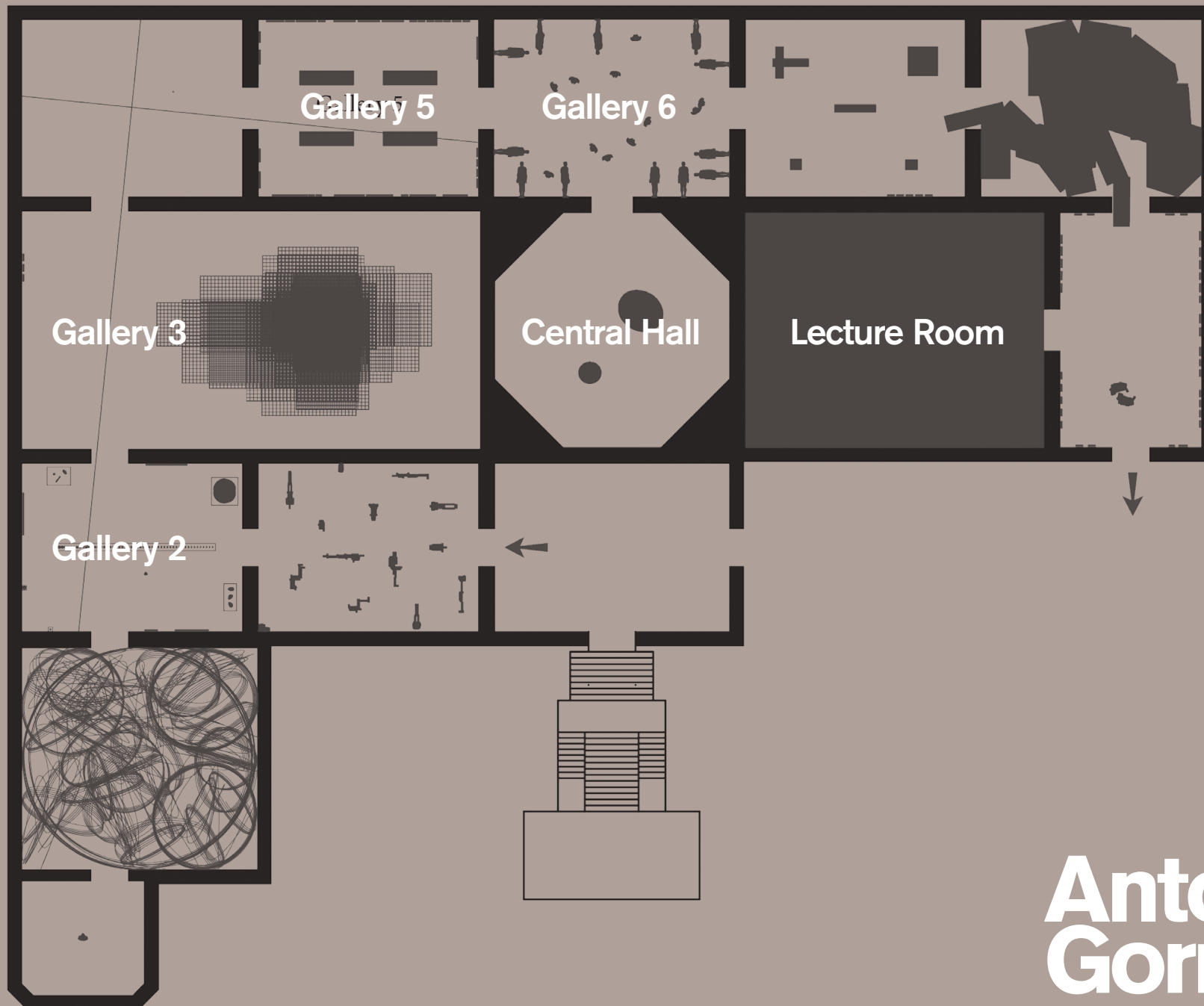
Below: *Field for the British Isles*, 1993.
Terracotta. Variable size: approx. 40,000 elements, each 8-26 cm tall. Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London © the Artist. Installation view, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland. Arts Council Collection, England

This Turner Prize winning work consisting of approximately 40,000 clay figures of various heights from 8-26 cm was created by a community of 100 people from St Helens, Merseyside. The makers were given the following instruction: 'Take a hand-sized ball of clay, 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.'





Antony Gormley, *Angel of the North*, 1998.
Steel, 20 x 54 x 2.2 m. Permanent installation,
Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, UK. © the Artist.
Photo: Edifice / Bridgeman Images



**Antony
Gormley**

Gallery 2

Land, Sea and Air I





Land Sea and Air I, 1977–79.

Lead, stone, water and air. Three elements;
20 x 31 20 cm © the Artist. Photo: Stephen White
& Co.

In the summer of 1977, Gormley visited Ireland. While in Connemara, on the west coast, he picked up a granite stone and took it home. Back in London, he encased the stone in lead, welding the pieces together using plumber's solder. A year later, Gormley opened the wrapped stone. He went on to encase it in lead twice more. He left one of the lead cases empty, filled another with water, and left the third case with the original stone inside. Grouped together, these three rounded shapes form *Land, Sea and Air I*.

Gormley still sees this work as 'the foundation of everything [he is] trying to do'. His lead-encased objects were a precursor to the bodyforms he started to experiment with in the early 1980s,

and for which he has become so well known (see *Land, Sea and Air II*). The process of concealing the object to remove it from view was a revelation to Gormley and pre-empted his exploration of the dark interior of the human body.

Experimenting with different materials is at the core of Gormley's practice. In this work, the primary elements of earth, air and water are wrapped in lead, a permanent and irreducible substance. At once, Gormley both preserves and entombs nature.

In 1979, *Land, Sea and Air I* was exhibited as part of Gormley's postgraduate sculpture show at the Slade School of Art, where it was displayed alongside other works he had made from stone, wood and bread. In the Royal Academy exhibition, the work is shown in Gallery 2 in a similar context.

Key words

conceal

elements

encase

entomb

granite stone

irreducible

lead

plumber's solder

preserve

pre-empt

welding

Questions for students

Is it possible to guess which of the three objects contains the original stone?

Why do you think Gormley gave this work the title *Land, Sea and Air I*?

By referring to land, sea and air in the title, Gormley suggests a landscape. Many of his other works depict the human body. Suggest ways in which the human body could become a landscape.

Describe your own inner landscape. What shape would it have? What colours? What textures?

How has Gormley changed our perception of the stone, air and water by concealing them?

By concealing an object we could protect, preserve and even extend its life. Give examples of preservation of both natural and man-made things.

How do titles of artworks, such as *Land, Sea and Air I*, help us to relate to the objects we are looking at? What is the role of the title in revealing the mystery encased in the lead? Suggest an alternative title for this artwork.

How does this work compare in its use of materials to another work in this exhibition, *Host*?

Related themes and curriculum links

Art & Design

Explore connections with art movements such as Arte Povera, Minimalism and Land Art.

Design-Technology and Science

Discuss the properties of materials such as lead and techniques such as welding.

Consider the process of encasing objects.

Related art exam topics

the elements

connections

spaces

wrap

Link



Land Sea and Air II

In 1982, Gormley returned to a similar format, constructing another sculpture in three pieces, exploring the connection between the body and the elements of earth, water and air. In *Land, Sea and Air II*, the three pieces are not stones but bodies, placed on a beach. The first is crouching, listening to the ground; the second is standing, looking out to sea; and the third is kneeling with its nostrils open as if inhaling the sky.

Land Sea and Air II, 1982.

Lead and fibreglass, 45 × 103 × 50 cm (crouching), 191 × 50 × 32 cm (standing), 118 × 69 × 52 cm (kneeling). West Wittering Beach, West Sussex, 1982
© the Artist

Both works are titled *Land, Sea and Air* and each one includes three pieces. What other similarities do they share? Gormley used lead for both works, stating 'lead is a wonderful insulator, against liquid or sound leakage, against radioactivity'. Lead is long-lasting and offers protection to the fragile substances inside the cases. How does Gormley make us think about radioactivity and the environment?

In *Land, Sea and Air II*, Gormley placed the figures outdoors, facing the elements. Do we relate to works differently when we see them outdoors rather than in a gallery space? Can you think of an example where you encountered an artwork outdoors? Describe your experience.

Extension for KS4/KS5

Giuseppe Penone | Arte Povera

Arte Povera was a radical Italian art movement from the late 1960s into the early 1970s. Artists who formed part of the movement were interested in exploring unconventional methods and using a wide range of non-traditional materials such as earth, rocks, clothing, paper and rope. The term Arte Povera means 'poor art' and was coined in 1967 by Italian art critic and curator Germano Celant.

Giuseppe Penone, a leading Arte Povera artist, shares Gormley's interest in exploring the nature of skin as a container of the body. Penone's *Breath* sculptures investigate the mark-making potential of the sculptor's hand on their work. The large, pot-like forms bear the imprint of the artist's body on the clay, from his open mouth at the top all the way down to his legs.

The series of drawings titled *Breath of Clay* document the thinking process behind the sculptures, as Penone imagined the form his exhaled breath would take and transformed it into a kind of clay container for his body.

Consider using easily available materials such as stones, mud or clay to explore the possibilities of mark-making that are unique to yourself and related to the way you experience materials through your senses (touch, smell, etc.). Create a visual diary of your thinking and making processes, documenting your attempts and explorations with drawings or photographs.

Classroom activity

Containers

When looking at Gormley's first work titled *Land Sea and Air I*, we need to imagine what is encased inside the lead containers. The substances have been removed from sight and touch. To recall the substance from the title, we need to use our imagination.

Divide the class into several small groups and ask each group to conceal objects (or an idea) inside three containers of their choice.

The containers should have something in common (materials, shapes, textures, size, etc.) and the objects inside them should be completely hidden.

Each group should choose a title for their work before the groups take turns to present their work to the class. Ask students to consider the relationship between the title, the substance they are encasing and the materials they will be using.

Discussing the materials he chose for this work, Antony Gormley explained that his lead works are 'responses to the Cold War and to the fear that humans might be the agents of their own destruction'.

Ask the students to discuss Gormley's choice of materials and how they help

us to understand the concerns, ideas and concepts he would like to share with a viewer.

Before deciding on a title, students should consider what hidden fears, aspirations, issues and opinions are important to them. When presenting their work to the class, they should encourage questioning and discuss a range of possible interpretations that their work might evoke.

Resources and materials

Found objects or small natural forms such as leaves, bark, small branches, stones, etc.

Materials for encasing the objects such as clay, paper, foil, cling film, mod-roc, papier mâché, fabric, wool.

Glue, masking tape, needles and thread.

Pencils, pens, paper (for sketching and planning)

Further Research

In response to the work of Land Artists such as Walter De Maria and Robert Smithson, Antony Gormley created his work *Re-arranged Desert*, 1979, in Arizona in the United States. Research Land Art and make comparisons with Gormley's ideas and interests.

Useful links

Art movement

Arte Povera
www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a/arte-povera

Artist

Giuseppe Penone
www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/giuseppe-penone-1754

Artworks

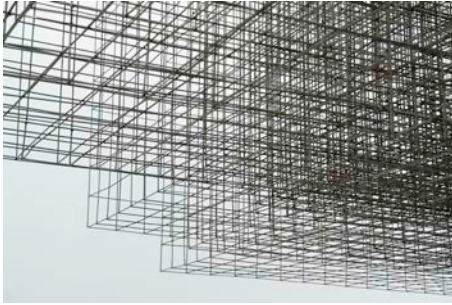
Breath 5, 1978 by Giuseppe Penone
www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/penone-breath-5-t03420

Study for *Breath of Clay*, 1978 by Giuseppe Penone
www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/penone-study-for-breath-of-clay-t06773

Gallery 3

Matrix III





Matrix III, 2019.

Approximately 6 tonnes of 6 mm mild steel reinforcing mesh, 7.1 x 9.3 x 15.15 m. Installation view, 'Antony Gormley', Royal Academy of Arts, London, 21 September to 3 December 2019 © the Artist. Photo: Oak Taylor-Smith

Matrix III is constructed from multiple sheets of recycled steel mesh. These metal grids are welded together to form 21 intersecting rectangular boxes of various sizes, with an invisible void at the centre. The entire work measures just over 7.1 x 9.3 x 15.15 metres and weighs approximately six tonnes. The steel mass is suspended just above head height at 1.95 metres. (Steel mesh is usually used to provide invisible support inside large concrete blocks.)

Embodying the theme of expansion, these repeated and extended rectangular forms derive from a core volume that is comparable to the average size of a new-build European bedroom. The relationship of the human body and the built world is a

recurring theme in Gormley's work. He deliberately used building steel to create the structure, describing the work as 'the cage we all live in, the ghost of the environment that we've all chosen to accept as our primary habitat'.

Created specifically for the Royal Academy exhibition, *Matrix III* is ambitious in scale. (Previous versions of this work have included up to just 16 rectangular mesh boxes.) Suspended from the ceiling of the largest gallery, it has the appearance of an enormous thundercloud. The complex steel structure disorients and distorts distance and perspective for viewers who navigate around and beneath it. Contradicting the assumption that architecture is a stable place that provides comfort and shelter, in *Matrix III* Gormley creates a skeletal and ephemeral giant with no boundaries.

Key words

disorientate

distort

embodying

ephemeral

expansion

grids

intersecting

skeletal

suspended

void

Questions for students

When walking past a building site do you pay attention to the skeleton of the building? What do you notice? What kind of materials are being used?

Gormley wants us to think differently about architecture. How does walking underneath this heavy grid make you feel about the construction suspended above you? What new ways of thinking about architecture does it suggest to you?

How does it make you feel when you look through the complex layered grids of steel? Do you become more aware of yourself and your own body within the space?

What is the difference between your bedroom and the main hall at your school? How do you feel inside the different spaces?

If you could change something about a building that you inhabit regularly, what would you change? Do you prefer to be inside a building or outside surrounded by nature? What does it feel like to be inside a building?

Related themes and curriculum links

Art & Design

Compare and contrast with artists, such as Richard Wilson RA, who create large scale installations.

Design-Technology and Science

Learn about welding, suspension, weight, mass, balance

Related art exam topics

force

spaces

materials

assembled

out of place

interwoven

light and dark

Link



Horizon Field Hamburg, 2012

Horizon Field Hamburg is a platform 50 metres long and 25 metres wide with a horizontal security net along the edges. Viewers are invited to walk across the frame, which can carry up to 100 people at any one time. Their motion transmits vibrations and creates a powerful sensation for any visitor who is under it. The people walking on the frame and those beneath it are exchanging an experience of visiting the gallery and thereby becoming part of the installation.

Horizon Field Hamburg, 2012.

Steel 355, steel spiral strand cables, stainless steel mesh (safety net), wooden floor, screws and PU resin for top-surface coating, 20.6 x 24.9 x 48.9 m. Installation views, 'Antony Gormley: Horizon Field Hamburg', Deichtorhallen, Hamburg

Compare *Horizon Field Hamburg* to *Matrix III*. How do the large-scale installations create a sense of space? Or even terror? What does it feel like to be under a huge metal frame? How does the presence and even the conversations of other visitors contribute to the atmosphere?

Extension for KS4/KS5

Renzo Piano

In January 2019, during his exhibition *The Art of Making Buildings*, at the Royal Academy, the architect Renzo Piano Honorary RA discussed the influences on his work.

Piano was born in Genoa, Italy, into a family of builders. From the Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre in New Caledonia (1991–1998) to the Shard in London (2000–2010), Piano's buildings show a characteristic sense of lightness, along with an interplay between tradition and invention, function and context.

Research his work and consider the way architects like Renzo Piano create rewarding experiences and a pleasing atmosphere for the people who visit, live or work in their buildings.

Classroom activity

Suspended

Using barbecue skewers or uncooked spaghetti (cheaper but far more fragile), students can create several grids, similar to *Matrix III*, by attaching the BBQ skewers to one another with marshmallows.

Each student starts by carefully threading the marshmallows, spaced at regular intervals, along 8–10 skewers. Position the skewers vertically on a table with the marshmallows aligned so that another batch of skewers can be threaded horizontally to form a grid.

Ask the students to collaborate until a 3-D 'cloud' is created from the grids. Use two tables stacked one on top of the other to create a hanging space. To provide a sense of scale, ask the students to draw or cut out small groups of people from magazines to display beneath the clouds.

Resources and materials

A few packets of small marshmallows. Packets of wooden BBQ skewers or spaghetti. Sewing thread for hanging the grids/clouds, masking tape, rulers.

Further Research

Conrad Shawcross RA

The Dappled Light of the Sun

The Dappled Light of the Sun is an installation by Conrad Shawcross RA. The large-scale steel forms, made with thousands of tetrahedrons, are suspended like clouds above the viewers. In 2015, this installation was set up in the courtyard of the Royal Academy, allowing visitors to the Summer Exhibition to interact with the massive structures.

Shawcross explains: 'The Greeks considered the tetrahedron to represent the very essence of matter. In this huge work I have taken this form as my "brick", growing these chaotic, diverging forms that will float above the heads of visitors.'

Patrick Sykes, Conrad Shawcross: The Dappled Light of the Sun. London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2017

Useful links

Video

Learn more about making *The Dappled Light of the Sun*, by Conrad Shawcross RA.
vimeo.com/127855463

Artist

Renzo Piano
www.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibition/renzo-piano

Gallery 5

Mansion





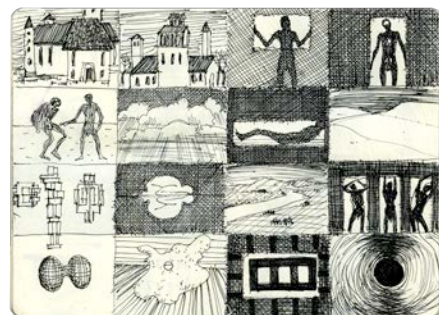
Mansion, 1982.

Black pigment, linseed oil and charcoal on paper,
84 x 60 cm © the Artist

Measuring almost one metre high, this drawing was made using thick black pigment mixed with linseed oil over charcoal. A large bodyform is drawn in negative against an opaque black field, which is set onto a plain white background. Inside the body is a smaller figure linked to the larger one by thin lines that connect its eyes, nose, ears, hands, feet and genitals to those of the other.

Drawing has always played an important role in Gormley's practice. Approaching it separately to sculpture, his drawings explore parallel themes and employ a similarly wide range of media. *Mansion* is one of a series of drawings produced in the early 1980s when Gormley was living in a new

house with his wife and newborn first child. It references the miracle of new life and comments on the relationship of humans to the built world. Describing architecture as our 'second skin', Gormley represents the bodies as voids inside a dark and confining space. The restricted limits appear to entomb them rather than provide them with comfort and shelter.



It was around the time of this drawing that Gormley started to experiment with lead body cases. His first was produced in 1981–82 and shared its name with another drawing from this series, *Mould* (also on display in Gallery 5). The drawings in this group were attached to the wall in Gormley's studio near King's Cross and were later described by him as 'a kind of manifesto of my life's work from then on'. *Mansion* and *Mould* are displayed in this exhibition in the context of around 60 other drawings – mainly from the 1980s and 1990s – together with a collection of the artist's workbooks, which he uses every day.

Key words

confining space

habitat

mansion

mould

negative space

opaque

parallel themes

pigment

void

vulnerability

Questions for students

Looking at this drawing, describe the way the bodies relate to the space around them and suggest why the artist would have given it the title *Mansion*.

How does Gormley use scale to make us think about the relationship between the figures and their environment?

Gormley describes architecture as our 'second skin'. How does this make us think about the buildings we occupy? Can you think of another type of skin that surrounds us?

How does Gormley express his personal experience (the birth of his first child) in this drawing? Do we relate differently to space when we experience a big change in our lives? Can you give an example?

Gormley draws every day and uses his drawings to think about his projects. How do you use your sketchbooks? What are your favourite materials for drawing?

Gormley is interested in the various ways our bodies contain space. What is the connection between *Mansion* and Gormley's body cases?

Related themes and curriculum links

Art & Design

Explore connections with conceptual art and conceptual architecture.

Design-Technology and Science

Explore how architects use scale to solve design problems.

Related art exam topics

Isolation

mark-making

relationship

transformation

architecture

Link



Sleeping Place

After completing his degree at Cambridge university, Gormley spent three years in India. When he returned he created *Sleeping Place*, a piece inspired by the moving memory of thousands of people he saw sleeping on the streets wrapped in dhoti, a traditional thin cloth wrap.

Gormley was interested in the fact that the dhoti cloth was the only thing separating each person from their environment. Gormley thought the cloth became in effect their dwelling, describing the cloth as 'the

Sleeping Place, 1974.

Plaster and linen, 55 x 91 x 106 cm
© the Artist

Model, 2012.

Weathering steel, 502 x 3240 x 1360 cm. Installation views, White Cube Bermondsey, London 2012 © the Artist. Photo: Benjamin Westoby; Courtesy White Cube, London

most intimate architecture possible'. He asked a friend to lie on the floor beneath a linen sheet dipped in plaster to re-create the vulnerability he had witnessed.

Look at *Sleeping Place* carefully, what can you tell about the person inside? Can you link this sculpture to *Mansion*? What similarities are there between these two works? What are the differences?

How does Gormley make us think about our relationship to architecture? What kind of environment makes you feel secure? Or vulnerable? Draw the figure inside the sheet. Think about the style of drawing and the materials you will use. What did you notice about the way the fabric encases the body?

Extension for KS4/KS5



Antony Gormley

Model, 2002

The spaces we occupy affect our senses. What would it be like to dwell inside a large, dark structure shaped like a body?

Model, created by Gormley in 2012, is a 32-metre long sculpture in the shape of a recumbent body. Viewers are invited to go inside it and negotiate its 24 individual cells. Most of the journey takes place in the dark, which makes it essential to use one's other senses, like sound and touch, to find a way through it. Gormley provides an opportunity for us to investigate how our own body reacts as we move through another body and have to negotiate some restricting spaces.

Research the work *Model* and compare it to *Mansion*. Consider the theme of scale and the relationships between the two figures. What does the large installation make us feel about the spaces around us? How do we relate to time? Can our experiences change our perception of time and space?

Classroom activity

Habitat

The word habitat describes the natural home or environment of an animal, plant or other organism.

As well as offering us security, human habitats are diverse, unique and multi-functional.

Where do you feel secure? Do you prefer an empty space or a crowded one? How does your favourite environment feel?

Use large pieces of paper, wide brushes (or sponges) and black ink to draw your habitat, reflecting on scale and your relationship with the space around you. Perhaps draw a place you like to study or the place you call home.

Try to reflect the physical environment you create for yourself (such as the way you arrange your bedroom or study space) but also consider how to show what it feels like to be in those spaces.

Resources and materials

A1 or A0 paper, large brushes (or sponges attached to sticks), black ink

Further Research

Conceptual architecture suggests a different kind of building to that produced with an 'architect as a master-builder' and where the guiding principles are craft and construction. Instead, conceptual architecture follows the principle that architecture can shape society through structures that make us think about our relationship to the environment.

Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio were the 2019 Royal Academy architecture prize winners. Their architecture practice DS+R has created many innovative buildings, structures and installations including *Blur Building*, 2002, a pavilion built of fog.

Diller and Scofidio work with artists, designers and researchers, creating platforms to understand the world we inhabit and working towards shaping a better one.

Research conceptual architecture, then design a structure that would express or promote your own idea.

Useful links

Architecture practice

DS+R
dsrny.com

Building

Blur Building, Yverdon-les-Bains, Switzerland, 2002 by DS+R
dsrny.com/project/blur-building

Gallery 6

Lost Horizon I





***Lost Horizon I*, 2008.**

24 cast iron bodyforms, each 189 x 53 x 29 cm.
Installation view, 'Antony Gormley', Royal Academy of Arts, London, 21 September to 3 December 2019.
PinchukArtCentre, Kiev, Ukraine © the Artist. Photo: Oak Taylor-Smith

Lost Horizon I is comprised of cast-iron bodyforms that stand upright, but are presented at different angles. Five of the 24 bodies 'stand' on the ceiling, while 19 other bodies are dispersed on the floor and walls. Each cast weighs 630 kg, around ten times heavier than the weight of an average male of the same height. Although the figures give the illusion that they are effortlessly placed on the ceiling and walls, they are in fact fixed via a complex method of reinforcement made from steel plates and pins set behind the plasterboard surfaces.

These iron bodyforms are created from six plaster casts taken of Gormley's own body over ten years. He started casting himself in plaster in the early 1980s, which involves covering his

entire body in cling film followed by plaster and scrim (a strong, coarse fabric) mixed with water. Creating the casts was a very physical process. He was helped by two assistants (one of whom was his wife, the painter Vicken Parsons) and had to hold himself in challenging poses for up to an hour and a half.

In the early years, Gormley used the casts to make bodyforms from beaten lead, transitioning to the heavier and more robust medium of iron in the late 1980s. To cast the iron bodyforms, the plaster moulds were used to create further moulds in sand, into which molten iron was poured and then extracted. Traces of cling film, sand, the seams of the mould and the round fixings from where the cooled iron cast has been detached from its support, are all left visible in the final work. Evidently created as multiples as opposed to being individually hand-crafted, the bodies represent our shared human experience.

With the casts placed at different angles within the geometric confines of the gallery, viewers are made aware of their own physical occupation of space. Following *Event Horizon*, 2007, in which Gormley placed standing figures on top of buildings across London, he describes *Lost Horizon I* as a manifestation of the same concept within an interior space.

Key words

beaten lead

comprised

dispersed

effortlessly

extracted

geometric confines

manifestation

molten iron

plasterboard

reinforcement

robust

scrim

steel



Jorge Lewinski, Work in progress, 1995, casting at Bellenden Road studio, Peckham, London © The Lewinski Archive at Chatsworth / Bridgeman Images; Antony Gormley, *Event Horizon*, 2007. 27 fibreglass and 4 cast iron bodyforms, each 189 x 53 x 29 cm. Installation views, 'Antony Gormley: Blind Light', Hayward Gallery, London, 2007. © the Artist. Photo: Richard Bryant, courtesy of the Hayward Gallery, London

Questions for students

Look at the figures and imagine yourself in their place. How does the artist make us think about the space around us?

Why did the artist use his own body to create a universal bodyform? What alternatives would you choose to use?

Looking at all 24 bodyforms, can you see any differences between them? Gormley created them over a period of ten years, a long time for the human body. Can you detect any differences that indicate the process of aging?

The forms are positioned at different angles, how does this change our interaction with them?

What kind of experience did the artist have to undergo to create these forms?

How do you feel when you are surrounded by so many forms made of heavy iron? Does it make a difference that they are human-shaped? Is it a comfortable feeling? Or not?



Related themes and curriculum links

Art & Design

Compare and contrast with the work of artists such as Alberto Giacometti.

Design-Technology and Science

Consider the process of casting and welding.

Learn about weight, mass, balance.

Related art exam topics

force

spaces

materials

landmark

assembled

out of place

Link



Still Standing, 2012

Still Standing was an installation of seventeen solid iron forms placed by Antony Gormley at the Hermitage Museum in St Peterburg in Russia. In another gallery, Gormley rearranged the museum's Greek statues (which usually represent power and beauty). Bringing them down from their usually elevated positions to stand on the floor entirely changed the experience for visitors. This was the first time any living artist has rearranged these traditional galleries.

Still Standing questions the role of museums in our collective experience and allows us to reconsider the ways we interact with works of art. How do you relate to classical sculpture, or to statues displayed on raised

'Antony Gormley: Still Standing'

Installation views, The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, 2011–12. Photograph by Yuri Molodkovets.

monuments? Do you think they communicate power? How does ancient craftsmanship contrast with Gormley's oxidised iron figures? Can you think of other places where you can look at classical sculptures? Why do we keep them in museums?

Extension for KS4/KS5

Alberto Giacometti (1901–1966)

La Place, 1948

La Place or *Piazza* was created by the Swiss artist Alberto Giacometti in 1948. It shows five thin figures – four men walking and one standing woman. Although these emaciated individuals are in close proximity, they appear unable or unwilling to connect with one another. Through these sculptures, Giacometti gives tangible expression to universal feelings of what it is like to be alive in a world of isolation and separation.

Giacometti said that the way people move in the street, constantly re-arranging themselves into 'living compositions', was the inspiration behind pieces like *La Place*.

Look carefully at each figure. How do they relate to one another? Can you see a difference between the one female figure and the others?

The slab these figures are standing on is only 65 cm long. How might the scale of this work affect the way we interact with it?

Antony Gormley said about *La Place*, 'Giacometti's obsession was in dealing with how space and distance and the act of looking are inseparable from the thing that is looked at.' Can you explain his statement? When looking at Gormley's *Lost Horizon I* or at *La Place*, what part do we, the viewers, play?

Central Hall

Body

Fruit



THE WOHL CENTRAL



No entry

No entry



***Body and Fruit*, 1991/93.**

Cast iron and air, 233 × 265 × 226 cm (*Body*), 110.7 × 129.5 × 122.5 cm (*Fruit*). Installation view, 'Antony Gormley', Royal Academy of Arts, London, 21 September to 3 December 2019 © the Artist. Photo: Oak Taylor-Smith

Body and *Fruit* are part of the Expansion Works series that Gormley started making in 1990. Weighing six and two tonnes respectively, and suspended just inches from the ground, these monumental, amorphous shapes were created by expanding the form of a human body. Like *Land*, *Sea* and *Air I*, the works are the result of wrapping an object – in this case, a structure expanded from the mould of a body in a tightly-held foetal position. However, rather than repeating the wrapping process until he reached an abstract form, Gormley cast the body in position, then fixed wooden spokes of a consistent length to the defining points of the cast. These were then connected to create a continuous surface and it was subsequently cast in iron (see *Still Leaping*).

This series of works is the result of Gormley's life-long concern with natural growth and the expansion of organic matter. Recalling cells, bulbs or cocoons, these silent objects are at once industrial and organic, still and energetic, representative of both the beginning and the end. Their rusted iron surface reminds us that the objects are formed of an elemental, living substance. Capturing the body in both time and space, *Body* and *Fruit* hover in the centre of the Main Galleries like planets around which we must navigate. When we are within their immediate environment, they also encourage us to consider our own place within the wider cosmos.

Body and *Fruit* are shapes derived from the human form. The process by which they were made is integral to the meaning of the works. Through them, Gormley asks: what is left when we are without our physical appearance?



Key words

amorphous

clasped

cosmos

elemental

expansion

monumental

spokes

substance

Questions for students

When looking at the works *Body* and *Fruit*, what do their shapes remind you of? Does the rust on the surface make a difference to how you understand them? How?

Gormley describes *Body* and *Fruit* as 'contained explosions or an expanding universe'. How do we relate to the works once we have understood how the shapes were formed?

How does the way the two sculptures are suspended from the ceiling affect their impact on the space? Can you suggest how both the materials and the work titles interact to make us think about space?

In what ways are we aware of the space around us when we are swimming, running or walking against a wind? How do you think a sculpture could express one of these feelings?



Still Leaping, 1994. Work in progress. Bellenden Road Studio, Peckham, London © the Artist

Related themes and curriculum links

Art & Design

Explore connections with art movements such as Minimalism and Abstract Art.

Design-Technology and Science

Explore the ways designers consider weight, volume and mass in their work.

Related art exam topics

spaces

wrap

materials

Link



Still Running, 1990–93, and Exercise between Blood and Earth, 1979–81

Similar to *Body* and *Fruit* is a sculpture called *Still Running*, which Gormley has described as an attempt to translate the drawing *Exercise Between Blood and Earth* (exhibited in Room 2) into three dimensions. The drawing shows the silhouette of a running man surrounded by concentric lines which form an egg-like shape. *Still Running* and *Exercise between Blood and Earth* both explore the 'expansion' of a body shape. Describing his Expansion Works, Gormley explained that he was 'renegotiating the skin: questioning where things and events begin and end'.



How does Gormley question the boundaries of these pieces? How did he turn the drawing into a three dimensional object? How does Gormley redefine the volume of the body?

Still Running, 1990/93

Cast iron and air, 317 x 276 x 148 cm
Umedalen Sculpture Foundation, Umea, Sweden
[Krister Olsson, Umea, Sweden]. © the artist
Photograph by Jan Uvelius, Malmö

Exercise Between Blood and Earth, 2019 (detail).

Chalk on wall, Diameter: 1.96m. Installation view,
'Antony Gormley', Royal Academy of Arts, London, 21
September to 3 December 2019 © the Artist. Photo:
Oak Taylor-Smith

Extension for KS4/KS5

Alicja Kwade

ParaPivot

Weight and mass are brought to our attention in works such as *Body* and *Fruit*. *ParaPivot* is an installation created recently by the artist Alicja Kwade for the roof of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met) in New York. The sculpture of the solar system is designed to question our place in the universe and consider our relationship to space and time.

The materials stone and steel are important parts of this installation. Compare it to *Body* and *Fruit* and consider your own possible responses to the topic of outer space, or the solar system. How would you define outer space in relation to your own body? What materials would you use?

Lecture Room

Host





***Host*, 2019.**

Buckinghamshire clay (51° 44' 52.5" N 0° 38' 42.6" W) and Atlantic seawater, dimensions variable.
Installation view, 'Antony Gormley', Royal Academy of Arts, London, 21 September to 3 December 2019.
© the Artist. Photo: Oak Taylor-Smith

Host is a site-specific installation of 32,000 kilograms of red clay mixed with 25,000 litres of Atlantic seawater. It entirely covers the floor of the second largest of the Royal Academy galleries. Visitors are invited to stand in the doorway to view this expanse of stagnating organic matter.

The power of this work lies in its context. First installed in the Old Jail in Charleston in the United States (1991), then replicated on two other occasions at the Kunsthalle in Kiel, Germany (1997) and the Galleria Continua in Beijing, China (2016). *Host* exists in its fourth iteration at the Royal Academy.

Gormley describes the work as an 'infection of the museum' as the mix of organic material enters the built environment.

Viewing *Host* is a sensory experience. It appeals to our senses of touch (humidity), smell, sight and sound, reminding us that we are subject to the conditions that surround us. In the same way, *Host* responds to its own environment, reacting over time to changing light and humidity levels. As the last work in the exhibition and positioned in direct opposition to the constructed environment of *Matrix III*, *Host* presents us with a field of living matter that makes us aware of our own body, of time passing, of the beginning, and of the end. The horizon – something that Gormley repeatedly returns to in his work – though strictly confined between the four gallery walls, refers to the infinite potential of the mind.

Key words

expanse

horizon

humidity

sensory

stagnant

stagnating

Questions for students

Depending on when you visit during the exhibition, this work might smell and look different. Can you think of any other materials used in artworks that might change over time?

Did you expect to see a room full of water and mud at this exhibition? How did you react to seeing it? How does the exhibit contrast with the rest of your visit to the Royal Academy?

What is the relationship between water and air in this installation? How do these elements feel inside the gallery?

What is your role in the installation? Are you inside or outside it?

The gallery becomes a host to water. Why? What do you think the artist wants us to experience?

How does the artist make us think about the relationship between culture (the gallery) and nature (the mixture of mud and water)?

How do we relate to organic things when they are no longer in their natural environment? How do they change? What are the differences?

Antony Gormley describes *Host* as 'a changing painting that you can smell and sense, as well as see'. Would you describe this installation work as a painting or a sculpture? How does smell change the experience of looking?

Related themes and curriculum links

Art & Design

Research Land Art.

Research the work of the artist
Richard Long RA.

Design-Technology and Science

Consider the construction of the installation.

Consider the difficulties of bringing
'nature' indoors..

Related art exam topics

spaces

the elements

weather

materials

out of place

Link



Sound II

Sound II is an installation in the crypt below Winchester Cathedral. It includes a life-size figure of a man looking down. During rainy months the crypt floods with rainwater and the figure can be seen, partly submerged, holding water in its cupped hands.

Similarly to *Host*, in this installation the built environment of the church, a cultural place, is combined with natural elements, especially when the crypt is host to rainwater. The presence of Gormley's silent figure transforms the space into a place of contemplation. How does Gormley use the interior of the building in the two works *Sound II* and *Host*? How would the presence of water alter the atmosphere.

Antony Gormley, *Sound II*, 188 x 60 x 45 cm. © the Artist. Installation at Winchester Cathedral. Photo: Chris Deeney / Alamy Stock Photo

How would the title *Sound II* contribute to the experience of being there?
Sound II includes a lead cast of the artist's own body but *Host* does not. How might that affect your interaction with the two artworks?

Extension for KS4/KS5

Anya Gallaccio

Preserve 'Beauty'

In the installation *Preserve 'Beauty'* by Anya Gallaccio, hundreds of red gerbera flowers are pressed between a sheet of glass and the wall. Gradually, the blooms decompose, change colour, fall down and rot. The wall becomes dull, covered with mould, and the smell of decomposing flowers slowly fills the gallery.

Preserve 'Beauty' changes continuously throughout the exhibition. Every visit to the gallery results in a different experience, depending on the state of decay. Anya Gallaccio sees the work as a temporary collaboration between herself, the decomposing organic matter and the viewer. Her work invites us to reflect on ideas of 'place, time, life, decay, death, beauty and renewal'. Consider creating your own installation, bringing nature indoors and observing it as it changes. Record the process with drawings and/or photography.

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this resource?

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royalacademy.org.uk](mailto:studentgroups@royalacademy.org.uk)

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Quotes throughout this resource are taken
from Antony Gormley and Mark Holborn,
Antony Gormley On Sculpture, London:
Thames and Hudson, 2015

Antony Gormley

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