

WHITE CUBE

Antony Gormley

In Formation

13 November 2019 – 18 January 2020

White Cube Mason's Yard

White Cube is pleased to present 'In Formation' by Antony Gormley, an exhibition of new cast iron work that questions to what extent we are the product of our environment and to what extent we are makers of it.

In the ground floor gallery are four 'Stack' works: massive, one and a half life-size sculptures built from solid cast iron blocks that each weigh between 11 and 700 kilos. The component parts are loose and use dead weight as a principle of construction; it is the subtle inflection of how one block takes the load from another that suggests the attitudes of repose, lamentation or alertness of the whole. Freshly unearthed from foundry sand, the blocks have the appearance of stone in their organic, silvered surfaces. Evoking the idea of the column, Gormley sees them as 'reverse caryatids', sculpted figures that served as architectural pillars in the ancient world. Rather than offering reinforcement, however, these 'Stacks' lean on the walls for support.

If the works on the ground floor reflect our dependency on the built environment, those in the lower gallery investigate the consequences of our ability to manipulate matter. The nine new blockworks, called 'Aggregates', are made up of aggregated blocks that treat matter as information and use the language of code to suggest both struggle and symbiosis between body and block. Each rusted figure appears to extricate itself or take support from a material mass, referencing Michelangelo's famous 'Slaves' (1513–16), where a body is emerging out of the solid block. Here Gormley asks, 'Is the body the product of the block, or the block the product of the body?'

Discussing his interest in the transformation that digitalisation has engendered in the way we relate to the world and ourselves, Gormley has spoken of this 'not as a noble conflict between spirit and matter, but an overturning of fixed principles that gives way to a continual and fluid translation from information into form and from form into information'. Works such as *Pack* (2019) admit to the ability of our technology to reveal and confound, just as *Hold* (2019) suggests a tussle between code and iron, where form and medium are so locked together as to be indistinguishable. In making the pixel physical, the 'Aggregate' works make palpable the ways in which we are now engaged with a new way of being and becoming in the world, what Gormley calls 'a mortal struggle between the immanent and the manifest'.

The works in this exhibition are part of Gormley's ongoing questioning of the human project in light of our industrial inheritance, our embodied selves at a time of perpetual mutability and the knowledge we now have of our profound effect on the elemental world.

BIOGRAPHY

Antony Gormley's work has been widely exhibited throughout the UK and internationally with exhibitions at the Royal Academy of Arts, London (2019); Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, UK (2018); Long Museum, Shanghai (2017); National Portrait Gallery, London (2016); Forte di Belvedere, Florence, Italy (2015); Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern (2014); Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasília (2012); Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, Germany (2012); The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (2011); Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria (2010); Hayward Gallery, London (2007); Malmö Konsthall, Sweden (1993) and Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark (1989). He has also participated in major group shows such as Documenta 8, Kassel, Germany (1987); 42nd Venice Biennale (1986); and 40th Venice Biennale (1982). Permanent public works include the *Angel of the North* (Gateshead, England); *Another Place* (Crosby Beach, England); *Inside Australia* (Lake Ballard, Western Australia); *Exposure* (Lelystad, The Netherlands); and *Chord* (MIT – Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts).

Gormley was awarded the Turner Prize in 1994, the South Bank Prize for Visual Art in 1999, the Bernhard Heiliger Award for Sculpture in 2007, the Obayashi Prize in 2012 and the Praemium Imperiale in 2013. In 1997 he was made an Officer of the British Empire (OBE) and was made a knight in the New Year's Honours list in 2014. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, an Honorary Doctor of the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Trinity and Jesus Colleges, Cambridge. Gormley has been a Royal Academician since 2003.

Gormley was born in London in 1950.

White Cube Mason's Yard is open
Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm.
Admission is free.

For further information, please contact
enquiries@whitecube.com
or +44 (0)20 7930 5373.

25 – 26 Mason's Yard
St James's London SW1Y 6BU
+44 (0)20 7930 5373
whitecube.com

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