



1) Antony Gormley, LEVEL, 2019

PRESS RELEASE

**ANTONY GORMLEY
IN HABIT**

12 March – 2 May 2020

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac
7, rue Debelleyme
75003 Paris

We live in three places simultaneously: in the body, in the built world and on this earth. Increasingly, the second body (the built world), is the one that controls us the most. In devising a habitus in relation to a habitat, we reinforce – through habit – modes of behaviour that both protect and alienate us from the immediate life of the body and the cosmic life of the planet. – Antony Gormley (2020)

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac Paris presents *In Habit*, an exhibition of new sculptures and drawings by Antony Gormley, centred around one immersive site-specific installation. *Run II* is a singular, continuous, square aluminium tube that fills the space of the main gallery in snaking 90-degree turns, the horizontal sections recalling heights familiar to us in our built environment: chair or table, worktop or shelf, door or ceiling. It uses the simplest means to activate and energise space, to create awareness of the way we move about in our constructed habitat.

Run II runs freely through the gallery and, by stepping through the work, our bodies can recognise and be liberated from the effects of what the Japanese call the 'culture of the chair'. *Run II* is, in Antony Gormley's words, 'a zone of reflexivity in which light, air, volume

and your displaced biomass are all tuned by the orthogonal yet free play'. By encouraging you to be a figure in a ground, you become the viewed for other viewers and, in doing so, can use the space of art as an emergent field. Gormley invites us to pause and consider our dependency on this second habitat – the 'body of architecture' – and to create an awareness of the ground itself, to 'earth' you.

In his essay for the exhibition catalogue, art historian Jonathan Wood writes: 'It is not difficult to see *Run II* as part of an important turning point for his sculpture... a turn from the body of the artist to that of the viewer. *Run II* also, it should be said, signals continuity: extending the reach of a larger sculptural project that, with the human body – both of the artist and the viewer – at its centre, has been gradually developing over the last forty years. It is this ongoing, investigative project that gives Gormley's work its unique and important place within the history of sculpture... More is now asked of viewers of Gormley's work. They are asked to be more proactive and participatory – to dig deeper, you might say. Invitations to move, look and feel coincide with invitations to interpret and decipher: to read the work as well as sense it, and to enter into its realm physically and cerebrally, as much as emotionally.'

Alongside this new large-scale, site-specific work are several life-size cast iron 'Liners': single open lines, multiple lines and endless lines without beginning or end, that explore the internal volume of the human body, rather like the London Underground map. Like *Run II*, these works are seen by Gormley as 'diagnostic instruments' that attempt to re-locate you in your first habitat – your body. 'I do not want to illustrate emotion or sensation, but these rusty maps might be helped by your projection of what it feels like to do a shoulder stand – *Fill*; lie on your side – *Level*; balance on your bottom while lifting your head and feet – *Float*; feel your relationship to the earth while balancing on your feet and clasping your legs as tight to the body as possible – *Nest*.' Presented in the lower ground floor gallery, a delicate 'Framer' entitled *Rest*, alludes to body space as architecture, and is accompanied by a selection of spatial drawings.

Gormley believes that sculpture in the digital age has a unique ability to return us to first-hand experience and to become a ground on which our forgotten internal perceptions of *being in the world* might return us to being in touch with ourselves and our home planet.

A catalogue with texts by geographer Michel Lussault and art historian Jonathan Wood will be published to accompany the exhibition.



2) Antony Gormley, REST, 2018



3) Antony Gormley, 2009

About the artist

Antony Gormley, born in London in 1950, is widely acclaimed for his sculptures, installations and public artworks that investigate the relationship of the human body to space. His work has developed the potential opened up by sculpture since the 1960s through a critical engagement with both his own body and those of others in a way that confronts fundamental questions of where human beings stand in relation to nature and the cosmos. Gormley continually tries to identify the space of art as a place of becoming in which new behaviours, thoughts and feelings can arise.

Gormley's work has been widely exhibited internationally, with exhibitions at venues including The Royal Academy of Arts, London (2019); Uffizi, Florence (2019); Neon Foundation, Delos, Greece (2019), Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, USA (2019); Tate Britain, London (2018); Long Museum, Shanghai, China (2017); National Portrait Gallery, London (2016-17); Forte di Belvedere, Florence (2015); Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern (2014); Lehmbrock Museum, Duisburg, Germany (2014); The Museum of Modern Art, Hayama, Japan (2013); Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2012); Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia (2012); The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (2011); Kunsthau Bregenz, Bregenz (2010); Hayward Gallery, London (2007); Malmö Konsthall, Sweden (1993) and Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark (1989).

Gormley has also participated in major group shows, including the Venice Biennale (1982 and 1986) and documenta 8, Kassel (1987). Permanent public works include the *Angel of the North* (Gateshead, England), *Another Place* (Crosby Beach, England), *Inside Australia* (Lake Ballard, Western Australia) and *Exposure* (Lelystad, The Netherlands) and *Chord* (MIT – Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, USA).

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 awarded a Knighthood for Services to the Arts 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's large-scale quantum drawing *New York Clearing* is on view from until 27 March 2020 at Pier 3, Brooklyn Bridge Park, New York, in the context of *Connect, BTS*, an interdisciplinary global arts project including 20 major art commissions in five cities across four continents. His upcoming solo exhibitions include: *Ground* at Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar, The Netherlands (21 May – 25 October 2020) and *Learning to be* at Schauwerk Sindelfingen, Germany (14 June 2020 – 6 June 2021).

For press and visuals, please contact:
Marcus Rothe, marcus.rothe@ropac.net
phone: +33 1 42 72 99 00

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Photo: Stephen White & Co., London

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Credits

1) Antony Gormley, *LEVEL*, 2019

Cast iron, 49.5 x 186.7 x 33.9 cm

Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London • Paris • Salzburg

Photo: Stephen White & Co.

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2) Antony Gormley

REST, 2018

2 mm square section stainless steel bar

80 x 198 x 142 cm

Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London • Paris • Salzburg

Photo: Stephen White & Co., London

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3) Antony Gormley at Galleria Continua, Beijing, 2009

Photograph by Oak Taylor-Smith