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**The Constituency of the 'Self': an interpretation of the
work of Antony Gormley, with particular reference to the
concept of 'being' in Heidegger and Sartre.**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of plates	4-5
Introduction	7-8
Section I	10-15
Section II.....	17-24
Section III	25-39
Section IV	41-46
Conclusion.....	48-50
Plates	52-87
Bibliography	88-89

LIST OF PLATES

Plate nos.:

1.	<u>Field (Detail)</u>	1991
2.	<u>Land, Sea and Air I</u>	1977-79
3.	<u>Fruits of the Earth</u>	1978
4.	<u>Three Bodies</u>	1981
5.	<u>Flat Tree</u>	1978
6.	<u>Exercise Between Blood and Earth</u>	1978-79
7.	<u>Bed</u>	1980-81
8.	<u>Three Ways: Mould, Hole and Passage</u>	1981-82
9.	<u>Land, Sea and Air II</u>	1982
10.	<u>The Beginning, the Middle and the End</u>	1983-84
11.	<u>Learning to See III</u>	1991
12.	<u>Night</u>	1982-83
13.	<u>Seeing and Showing</u>	1991
14.	<u>Idea</u>	1985
15.	<u>Man Asleep (Detail)</u>	1985
16.	<u>Fathers and Sons, Monuments and Toys, Gods and Artists</u> ..	1985-86
17.	<u>Bearing</u>	c.1987-1991
18.	<u>Sound</u>	c.1986
19.	<u>Untitled (Diving Figure)</u>	c.1983
20.	<u>Close III</u>	c.1993
21.	<u>Learning to Think</u>	c.1991
22.	<u>A Case for an Angel II</u>	c.1990
23.	<u>End Product</u>	c.1990-93
24.	<u>Sovereign State (Detail)</u>	c.1989-1990
25.	<u>Still Falling</u>	c.1991

26.	<u>Still Running</u>	c.1991
27.	<u>Mind</u>	1984
28.	<u>Instrument</u> and <u>Exposure</u>	c.1988-1993
29.	<u>Body and Light</u> and <u>Meaning</u>	c.1988-1993
30.	<u>Augur</u> and <u>Oracle</u>	c.1988-1993
31.	<u>Bridge</u> and <u>Centre</u>	c.1993
32.	<u>Immersion</u>	1991
33.	<u>Flesh</u>	1990
34.	<u>Home of the Heart I</u>	1992
35.	<u>Home of the Heart II</u>	1992
36.	<u>Home of the Heart III</u>	1992
37.	<u>Room for the Great Australian Desert</u>	1989
38.	<u>Field for the Art Gallery of New South Wales</u>	1989
39.	<u>European Field</u>	1993
40.	<u>Peer</u>	1983-84
41.	<u>Address</u>	1984
42.	<u>Sense</u>	1991

"There's no coherent cosmology

Only a series of secrets

Slipped from one layer to another,

inner to outer"

(Twichell, 1992, p.63)

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of contemporary culture it is feasible to suggest that fine art which attempts to relate to anything beyond a particular group of people is impossible. To refer to anything 'Universal' is nigh on a futile endeavour. Homogeneity is an illusion in our heterogeneous, pluralistic, post-modern world. In the modernist art world artists often subscribed to broad ideologies relating to the nature and role of art. These ideologies can and have often engendered elitism. Some artists try to transcend cultural and political structures and even ignore racial, gender and religious differences.

Antony Gormley is an artist who attempts to create a broad appeal with his work. He focuses on the body and the nature of human 'being' to try to explore his interests. He does this outside of any particular framework or ideology. However, he is creating and exhibiting his work at this time and as such becomes prey to particular critical practices. Section 1 attempts to examine contemporary critical structures, especially in relation to issues of interpretation and how they form a broad context for my reading of Gormley's work. Also considered is a possible and relevant role for art in society, with reference to this artists work.

Gormley's work explores 'being' particularly the 'being' of humans in relation to their bodies. The contemporary cultural world however, denies the possibility of defining what man is or should be. Instead of trying to create definitions, his work opens channels of enquiry. His work poses questions and each question becomes different for any spectator who engages with the work.

There exists therefore, one can presume, several very different readings of Gormley's work. After a first-hand encounter with his exhibition in the Irish Museum of Modern Art between April-June 1994 and a subsequent study of his work, the framework which became relevant for me is a philosophical one; in particular aspects of the writing of Martin Heidegger and Jean Paul Sartre. Section 11 presents a brief account of *Dasein*, Heidegger's description of the 'mode of existence of the human being', and presents cursory references to Gormley's works.

Section 111 offers a much more comprehensive presentation of samples of Gormley's work which I feel are particularly relevant to *Dasein*. Throughout are quotations from Gormley himself which find resonance with Heidegger's ideas, although

Gormley has pointedly not expressed any debt to Heidegger. There are many interesting parallels between Gormley and Heidegger, also in terms of a use of 'authentic' language.

Gormley's work is based on the body as the vehicle of expression. As such the relationship of the body to the world it inhabits becomes important, especially in terms of 'self'-Other' relations. This finds relevance in certain writings of Sartre which have a foundation in Heidegger's work. The importance of the body in constituting the self, particularly with reference to interpretation is explored in Section 1V., with reference especially to Sartre and Mikhail Bakhtin.

This thesis presents, rather than a conclusion, a series of inferences. As such its value lies only in an engagement with the work of a very interesting contemporary artist, who reflects a particular paradoxically transhistorical aspect of 'post-modern' art.

"So the image of the world arrived
contaminated in my eye,
contaminated by its history in me"

(Twichell, 1992, p.62)

SECTION I

Issues of artistic intention, purpose, significance and representation, the very premises of fine art have become increasingly problematised in recent decades. The artistic arena has diversified into many heterogeneous categories relating to ideas about content, role, form, reception theories and so forth. Post-modernism is generally better described as a condition than as a category, and the years of the high-modernist frenzy which saw art spiralling in ever-decreasing circles until, it became the master of its own redundancy, bear witness to this.

Most contemporary artists have, blatantly in some cases, subtly in others, even unwillingly acknowledged a new policy of openness, a lack of surety or fixity of position. These ideas are compounded by thinkers such as Lyotard who began writing on post-modernism in the sixties. Deconstruction theories and post-structuralist discourses 'have taught us that there is no 'logos' or 'doxa', no substantial evidence supporting the notion of an absolute or complete centre from which truth springs, be it divine or humanistic. Meaning is always deferred and ever elusive in its subjectivity. "Work" as John Rajchmann puts it "often induces a state of uncertainty, an inability to name what it is that all these sites might refer to". (Rajchmann, 1991, p.106)

Naturally, alongside this exist artists with traditional hard-line, even dogmatic approaches. Many are still concerned with historical and/or purely formalistic problems, and others still regard art as the vehicle for social change in relation to issues of gender, race, sexuality and suchlike. Others have harkened back to the anarchy of Dada for their inspiration. It is this pot-pourri of 'anything goes', this attitude, which epitomises the post-modern condition.

There is, however, another very important 'category' of artists for whom modernist anxiety and post-modern paranoia have little relevance. The work and subjects they are interested in are almost ahistorical, outside of any particular artistic tradition or time. This indubitably can be beneficial, often giving the work an accessibility and a refreshing absence of elitism. It is not art about art, but art about ideas which have fascinated philosophers and artists from every arena throughout much of recorded history. One artist, in the field of the plastic arts who is exemplary in this very loose category is English sculptor Antony Gormley.

It is important to establish a position in terms of critical practice which is relevant to Gormley. The following contentions have a relevance to many practising artists and Gormley will, as stated, be discussed specifically later. Issues of criticism, interpretation and reception which have evolved mainly from literary and philosophical concerns must, after all, involve all contemporary artists.

For Lacan, Sartre and Barthes the 'Other' is an imaginary source of meaning, as opposed to the 'self'. In a particular location the art critic, professional or amateur, reviewer or casual observer, can function as this 'creator' or 'signifier' of possible truths. There may be no absolute empirically derived 'right' truth, but, there are still levels of verity which can be determined by various degrees or forms of interpretation. On confronting a piece of work the instinctive reaction (which is arguably only perceived as natural) is to seek a meaning, be it intellectual, emotional or aesthetic. One does not necessarily seek a relation to 'reality' or 'truth' but rather a connection relating to ones own consciousness. "My work is about identifying...a space for people to experience a different kind of being, to use different parts of their perception." Gormley, (Lynn,1990, p.61).

Not only does a spectator function as the 'Other' by shaping the work with his gaze, one also becomes, in some instances, the subject of the work. There is an openness in works of art which create frameworks and also generates or allow for the establishment of frames. 'Subject' and 'Other', viewer and object, seek a unity with each other as imagined sources of significance. How this process functions and particularly how an object can seek unity with the viewer will be discussed in depth later. Truth or falsity can be read equally well here; sometimes the absence of meaning is as significant or as telling as the traditionally epistemological approach to inferring 'truth'. Indeed, Gormley's work can, as Stuart Morgan puts it "furnish an argument for perceiving more clearly by withholding names, allowing things to become eloquent, while suspending that closure which definition entails".(Morgan, 1983, p.36)

Since the industrial revolution and the bristling faith in science and facticity, certain philosophers have engaged in systematically deconstructing notions of reason and common-sense as the guidelines for creative production. In many regards this structuralist and post-structuralist realm of thought has apparently remained somewhat irrelevant except in critical fields. However, Lacan, Derrida and Barthes and company have rejected these notions to varying degrees and have effected a quiet revolution in the plastic arts. Texts, verbal, visual or otherwise are constructions of language, which are historically

grounded and arbitrarily determined. These issues nevertheless can become largely irrelevant when taken to extremist or purist standpoints: the author is dead, man is dead, so is God.

Certain thinkers seem to believe that they will effect a far-reaching political and cultural coup d'état by redescribing identity as a construct of language. These notions and observations are of course true to a degree, but when elaborate philosophical and scholastic systems present an alien, difficult abstract notion of existence which ignores the fundamentally phenomenological nature of our day-to-day experience, the entire exercise becomes unpalatable and renders itself somewhat ridiculous in view of historical precedence and the character of the majority of people.

It is important to recognise that these issues of contemporary culture, especially regarding interpretation have got an inescapable relevance and that there is a middle ground occupied by theorists such as Umberto Eco and E.D. Hirsch. Eco refers necessarily to what he terms 'paranoid interpretation' brought about by unlimited semiosis, which leads to inevitably reductive and incidental readings. Hirsch also adopts what some would perceive as a contemptibly safe position whereby the framework established by the artist is not wholly disregarded. Eco describes reading as picnic where the author brings the meaning and reader the sense, but elaborates by saying that between the intention of the author, (which he says is impossible to locate or understand), and the intention of the reader, (who will beat the text into shapes which best serve his own purposes), there is the intention of the text. As such the proverbial baby that is meaning is not discarded with the bathwater of logocentrism. Meaning is not fixed and can become an arena of multiple possibilities.

A paranoiac and pessimistic tendency of ardent post/anti modernists has precipitated a crisis in art. It has often been suggested that art has no function in the contemporary world and that fine art has been outmoded by popular culture and technological progress. This way of thinking is generally symptomatic of total reliance upon theory rather than evidenced by reference to current artistic practices. This kind of mal-de-millennia philosophising which often works splendidly on paper and, as we recognise, has a certain vital relevance, can be fascinating and insightful, but does little to recognise the role art can still play in society. Surely too much reliance upon abstract mental gymnastics on paper is as bad as dogmatic empiricism. There is a broadening consciousness of fine art in society, which continually gains a stronger, more tenable role

across the West, be it through film, theatre, mass media, galleries or museums. The role, the place of art, must be examined or understood in some way in terms of potential.

Recognising that there is a place for art in society without further attempting to register its importance is perhaps forgivable, but it is of the utmost necessity to try to ascertain at least one possible and significant role for art in society, be it general or specific.

A primary function of art is to simply draw attention to something, to force the spectator to notice, to become involved with an idea, intellectual, emotional or aesthetic. It is here that the notion of 'self' and 'Other' and role formation gains relevance. The primary framework is formed by the spectator. There may no longer be a common-sense understanding of the romantic notion of the individual, but we are single discrete beings who have a set of perceptual abilities and take both verbal and physical actions. The framing of activity by an individual establishes levels of meaningfulness. Fine art is, by its quiddity, usually a personal experience, unlike socially interdependent popular culture such as rock-concerts and soap-opera. Involvement is, in the case of much art, an individual episode, a psychobiological process and unlike reading, where the physical aspect is minimal, most art work, however static, resonates with the physical and psychological presence of the spectator.

The element of time that involves the spectator concerns reflection. The work presents a point of stasis between origin and becoming. The spectator completes and in a sense becomes the work, by a reflexive action of relinking the work with the world. Gormley (Cooke, 1984, p.xv)

For this reason art can perform the function which Russian Formalist critic Victor Shklovsky wrote of in his essay Art as Technique. In this he describes the 'purpose of art' as being 'to force us to notice'. Very simply he argues that perception is all too often automatic, habitualized and unquestioned, and that art has the ability to impede our perceptions. Perhaps all the arts are capable of this to an extent, but the plastic arts have an autonomy, an independence (not always exercised or possible) from 'democracy' that the media for example does not. Art can provide an independent separate platform for artists to express themselves or draw attention to something. It is often the aesthetic, the 'artfulness' of the work which draws our attention and which can then convey a concept. We attempt to glean meaning and as such have a writerly role brought to bear on us. Art can disturb our familiarity or complacency or reinforce in a new way a previously held belief or thought. Shklovsky propounds his ideas in emotive and often didactic terms, in his essay he quotes Tolstoy:

"Habitualization devours works, clothes, furniture, one's wife and fear of war. If the whole complex lives of many people go on unconsciously then such lives are as if they had never been." And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life, it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony...(Shklovsky, 1965, p.12)

On this count Shklovsky can be taken as literally or as generally as desired. There exist many artists, among them certainly is Gormley, whose work can relate to the ideas posited by Shklovsky. (Also very important and particularly relevant to Gormley are Shklovsky's discussions of language. These discussions find parallels in the artistic language of Gormley and also with Martin Heidegger's writings on poetry, both of which will be considered later.) Constituting such basic reasons for making art these ideas though posited early in this century, slide easily into the realms of post-modernism, and just as easily will stand autonomously from it.

"The self hides in the center
and the mind is what
crackles around it - its voice"

(Twichell, 1992, p.63)

SECTION II

The time is a time of need because it lies under a double negation, the no-more of the Gods that have fled and the not-yets of the God that is coming. (Blackham on Heidegger, 1978, p.103)

In the late Eighties Jean-Francois Lyotard curated an exhibition held in Paris in the Centre Pompidou, called Les Immatériaux, the objective of which was to induce a state of 'uncertainty'. This exhibition which consisted of various art forms, focusing on installation work, multi-media presentations and generally futurological works was intended to blur distinctions between reality and representation, the world being, as Lyotard puts it, "populated less by things than by simulacra." (Rajchman, 1991, p.107)

Post-modernism for Lyotard is a kind of grieving for modernist ideas and ideals. Whereas Modernism is characterised by anxiety, post-modernism is more aptly described as being manic-depressive, a state induced by a sense of confusion and disarray. Without attempting to appease or explicate, Lyotard actively tried to promote the confusion and kindle the disarray. He opines that the human subject can no longer be placed at the centre of culture. Also that the humanistic modernist question of "What is Art?" should be replaced with "Who are we in all of this?". At this time Lyotard suggests we answer this question for ourselves by futilely trying to re-invent ourselves and this is all that we can do because there is no answer or metanarrative. On the reverse side of the coin there are the philosophers who do put the human subject, not necessarily at the centre, but at the starting point, simply because we are humans ourselves. Although coming from a very different angle, by using the human as the scale against which to measure everything else, they still pose the same question.

The philosophers who ask "Who are we in all of this?", what does it mean to be human and all of the ramifications this question has, are necessarily aware that it is the epic enquiry of philosophy since the earliest times. The absence of any reluctance to use the human subject as the genesis of meaning gives the investigation a much more popular, transhistorical aspect, than Lyotard's Baudrillardian maze of post-modern chaos.

At this time, historically speaking, for the very reasons that Lyotard professes, the question of Being must be raised. As a question it has over the centuries and especially in this one, become concealed almost entirely by industry, technology and science. While Lyotard explores identity in conjunction with these institutions, one of the 'giants' of twentieth century philosophy, Martin Heidegger who first recognised this concealment,

sees the necessity of rescuing the question from these epistemological constructs, the veils of the 'Other' and hence from irrelevancy. The question of 'being' has also been buried under elaborate metaphysical edifices and consecutive speculative scholastic systems which have replaced our temporally phenomenological experience of being with objectified abstractions and theologies which bear little relation to our sense of being.

Heidegger suggests that these constructions of knowledge have, in a sense, concealed the nature of being. In our quest for knowledge being has become obscured by what we have achieved in attempting to answer questions such as: "What is?" and "How?" Human Being has thus become equated with achievement and activity. Because our access to possible 'reality' is mediated by a filter of representations which we accept as natural, we have become disjointed from our primordial sense of the world. Therefore the question of common ground, in an increasingly decentred and heterogenous world becomes revitalised.

According to Heidegger the original topic to examine is the question of 'Being.' He intended to study fully the nature of 'Being' not just that of humans. In Being and Time however, he judged that the primary task is to explore and uncover the structure of human existence, that is what he called *Dasein*.

The first point to recognise is that the essence of *Dasein* is in existence. It is the phenomenological, existential experience of being that is the essence of *Dasein*, not a conceptualised understanding of being. Existence is always from a point of view, subjective, and there is therefore an inexhaustible reservoir of meanings. Human reality is not 'given'; everything is open to interpretation, *Dasein* is thus perpetually in question.

Some artists, often very sophisticated and intellectual post-modern artists, attempt to breach the question of being from the simulative, parodic angle of Lyotard. There are also artists who approach the question in a more transhistorical fashion. Antony Gormley is one such artist. Gormley has many shared concerns with aspects of Heidegger's ideas, even similar interests in posing the question at this time: "In the world today we're absolutely information bonkers" Gormley (Nairne, 1987, p.104), he also has said that his work "is to make a place free from knowledge, free from history, free from nationality to be freely experienced" Gormley (Turnbull, 1986, p.25)

To describe the mode of existence of the human being, Heidegger coined the word *Dasein*, and set about exposing systematically the structure of *Dasein*. This mode of existence of the human being is characterised by various elements. *Dasein* is 'being-in-the-world', it is the 'being' of a self in inseparable relations with a not-self, other people, the world, et cetera. However, the immediate world of the self is not simply a world of objects in relation to other objects, but rather a world of preoccupations. Heidegger suggests that objects with which the self is concerned are better described as tools because they are bound systematically to the service of 'my' interests and further, they are bound naturally, to each other and other people. Tools are described as being 'ready-to-hand' rather than merely being 'something-at-hand'. Thus *Dasein* and tools are constituted by this system of relations. However, *Dasein* refers fundamentally to its own possibilities, it is not a tool in the system, rather *Dasein* gives intelligibility to the order of relations in its use of these tools. It constitutes a basic concrete meaning for these objects. *Dasein* gives comprehensibility to the world as the realisation of projects, projects constituted by a ready-to-hand attitude. Man's understanding of objects and tools in a system of relations and the ordering of objects is explored in Gormley's early works, such as Fruits of the Earth (1978) (pl.3) and Natural Selection (1981) which will be discussed more fully later.

Dasein determines and organises the world physically and psychologically in terms of preoccupations. It annihilates space and enlarges the world in terms of its senses. It is thus that man tries to constitute a coherent world. However as *Dasein* involves being-in-the-world, we are constituted by place. This implicitly involves being in the world with others who are also in the world in the same sense. (According to Sartre this difference in perspective turns on the body, in that the body becomes the focus of a crisis, a dialogue between 'self' and 'Other'.) This will be discussed specifically in the next chapter. Human existence is shared and *Dasein* means 'being-in-common'. We do not begin with ourselves as firm and given closed entities. Self-affirmation and self-awareness is constructed by the presence of 'Others'. This notion is perhaps one of the strongest sensations accrued in encountering Gormley's work, the sense of self-consciousness in the face of the Other (in this case the work), the realisation that one is being directed and formed by the work, as well as authoring the work and bestowing it with one's own form.

Gormley forces us to question our mode of existence. He takes us from a humdrum and normally objectival space of figure sculpture and entices us to look at human beings in a fresh, strange way. In general human life is a process of integration and inculcation whereby we achieve levels of conformity to the normative, established, ideas and judgements, the doxa. Assimilation to the conventional involves renouncing

many of our, the 'self's' possibilities. The frequently travelled path is the easiest to follow and comfort is readily found in the anonymous assurance and approval of a 'They'. Indeed the sense that one has no choice but conformity to certain often democratic ideals has become pervasive in much of Western civilisation. According to Heidegger this leads us to regard ourselves as cogs in a machine. We are simply objects surrounded by other objects, we must succumb to our facticity, which often happens unconsciously. However, it is difficult for us to accept ourselves as being limited to existing merely as substance with given properties.

Dasein cannot get rid of this utterly impersonal mode of being. However, we have the ability to question it, to transcend and become aware to our possibilities. We can perhaps modify our existence and rather than being one like many, we can get the will to forge a personal path to live as a particular amongst many. To take control or change our lives is an attempt to live authentically and consider the possibilities within the limitations of our situation.

Looking at Gormley's work can make us wonder at the sparsity of the body casts. The human being is reduced to such a basic image of existence, and the implication is that we are ultimately constituted by ourselves as bodies in the world, starting at the same ground.

"By what is man to regulate his actions? Firstly through communion with the natural world about him" Gormley (Cooke, 1984, p.xi)

We are implicated as being part of the world, abandoned to it, and constituted in part by others (similarly in Gormley's installations), we are not just spectators who can stand outside of history. It must be acknowledged by *Dasein* that man has no standpoint outside of the totality of things and that must be the reason why we tackle the problem of the individual human Being. We recognise that the things about us can be considered solely in terms of answering to the 'self's' possibilities, and therefore 'I' exist in terms of my possibilities. We exist continually projecting ourselves into the future, this gives us an intelligible stance on *Dasein*, that is on our mode of existence. Naturally not everything is possible and the world is in many ways elaborated by the realisations of others. Therefore Heidegger deduces that we are left with the choice of being authentically rooted in the explicit sense of our specific situations or being inauthentic and following 'automatic' channels.

In Gormley's work we can perhaps find this intelligible mode of being. The work provides an arena for meditation upon what it means to exist in our bodies and hence, also

in the world around us. His work is existential in that it does not conceptualise existence but attempts to capture an ontological spirit of being. Our state of being cast-into-the-world constitutes our existence and our power to comprehend the world in a particular way. In his works Gormley relies upon concentrating on the senses of perception, and the dialogue between mind and body as our means of comprehension. He denies particular contexts usually and thus allows for the possibility of anyone relating to a general unspecified image and giving it their own particularities. In Gormley's sculptural world we can find our own meanings and, perhaps can recognise an authentic mode of being at a fundamental, ontological level.

Any human action "can be carried on without explicit consciousness of what is being done, and usually is; but the agent may stand back from his operation and look at it critically or analytically." (Blackham, 1978, p.93) It is this habitualised familiar way of looking that Gormley, like Heidegger, seeks to deconstruct:

Tools or fruits have become technologically processed so that we no longer consider what we are doing or where they come from. We deny the common ground, I use that common ground as the basis for communication Gormley (Allington, Objects & Sculpture, 1981, p.17)

The meaning of any object is conceived in relation to proposed or possible activities of *Dasein* and thus they are understood as being in essence existential not conceptual. Recognition of the use of objects, seeing beyond a mere signifier of inherently 'meaningless' symbols is the root of language. It is the common ground of all language. It is the common ground of all language which is constitutive of *Dasein*, constitutive of being-in-common.

Dasein creates possible truths and gives meanings of existence, it becomes something in the world and indeed demonstrates that there is a world. Language at the level which Gormley uses it, in a poetic way can communicate authentic truth by overturning the habitual truth. Everyday language in constant habitual use loses touch with the objects to which it refers. There is a layer between signified and truth; the signifier as intermediary becomes the principal and the true principal is displaced and obscured. Commonplace language therefore creates untruth and reveals a primary inauthentic existence.

This is Heidegger's justification for using words of his own derivation which can be difficult, and smack of elitist jargon. This deliberate strangeness is also used to good purpose by Antony Gormley whereby he conceals the familiar and delays cognition, and

jars us from a routine, unquestioning way of looking. Ordinarily what is commonly said or seen passes without question and remains unchallenged, gaining a certain authority. It is essential to keep re-examining naturalised facts, to consider carefully the structures that we take for granted in order to stave off passivity and sterility and seek a genuinely intelligible world. On a micro scale we can find this site of 'authenticity' in works by Gormley, and this becomes a refreshing but not unchallenging place to be. His work is the antithesis of artists whose works are endless echoes of distorted and substitute meanings which pose only problems and give the onlooker little opportunity to find their own personal significance.

Heidegger suggests that what causes us to embrace the impersonal and authorised mode of existence is 'dread.' Not inspired by a particular cause or object, it is what Heidegger calls a pre-reflective mood. It is a state of being cast into the world, a feeling of dereliction. It is through the experience of 'dread' that the burden of having the option of taking authentic charge of our absurd lives becomes apparent. Gormley is however, a practising Catholic and he does not explicate or suggest in any further way why people choose an automatic existence. He is more interested in a way of existing physically and mentally as a human in a situation. The work does however, pose the question of who we are or what it means to exist at particular moments. Further to this he is interested in the mode of bodily being, contemplating the boundaries of future and past, life and death, and what we can do and be in a world to which we are intrinsically currently bound. This is expressed in Heidegger as 'Care'; an interest in the possibilities a concern for our situation in the world. A work such as Gormley's recent Field (1991) (pl.1) installation reveals this best.

For Gormley the origin of the Field works was a desire to make something about the unborn and hence about the future. These works in later form, consist of seas of rudimentary clay figures with only a semblance of form and crude eye-sockets, thousands of them are grouped together gazing in a single direction. They are unformed and malleable looking, appearing both vulnerable and absurd. We are implicated by these tiny men and their fixed gazes and we are perhaps momentarily forced to stand apart from this race which are intuitively taken as human.

The word 'field' evokes notions of a seedbed, or a crop waiting to be reaped. It is a sea of potential spread at our feet, our own and that of the people around us. Our own future and, a future in a community is in our hands. This work conveys an urgency and concern for human life in all its strength, vulnerability and absurdity.

We are in the condition of becoming, in a moment of present, we face an open future with the power to be and we are bound up with other beings encountered in the world, including the generation of not-yet-borns. 'Care' is primarily for the self; it is we who are capable of forming ourselves, constantly re-inventing and shaping our futures.

Against this, authentic living requires acknowledging that we exist in the shadow of death and accepting everything as equally worthless, and death as the end of possibility. An inauthentic life is filled with distractions to pre-occupy us, an authentic life is occupied with existing with an awareness (not a drive) towards death. (Even in this respect Gormley's work has an economy and simplicity verging on the austere. It is not bound up in an irrelevant or distracting horror *vacui* kind of aesthetic. We look immediately for meaning contained in a very bare essential aesthetic, it is the deep structure of the rather minimal but evocative works). "From this detachment springs the power, the dignity, the tolerance of authentic personal existence." (Blackham, 1978, p.97)

It is in the manner of living that authenticity is revealed, it is not our occupations which matter but rather the attitude and manner with which we carry them out. Every individual must be regarded as a unique case and philosophy should not be didactic or prescriptive, it must maintain its universality and concreteness in terms of ordinary phenomenological experience. This was very important to Heidegger, though he acknowledged that many people would never even consider the nature of 'being'. Gormley would probably support this absence of elitism and he also avoids any personal emotive input; the work is unexpressive in terms of pure form. It relies on the universal structure of the image which surprisingly enough, does not exclude women: although the casts are based on his own body the image stands on common ground. "I don't want the work to distract by suggesting a likeness or giving form to features: I want to make you aware of the whole." Gormley (Cooke, 1984, p.vii) He creates a general picture and the viewer supplies the particular. Resolution is always particular.

"Until personal existence is resolved in steadfast adherence to its existence in the world for death it has no unity or totality" Martin Heidegger (Blackham, 1978, p.99)

The final characteristic in this simplistic account of *Dasein* is temporality. This is not just an acknowledgement of death; we and the objects sharing our locations are constituted by a time process. Every 'now' is a moment for our consideration a care, it is indicative of a past and future. I am cast into the world and projected in advance of myself. This is what gives human consciousness its transcendental quality; that we can

always cast ourselves towards possible futures and can at least pose questions like: "Why?", "How?" and "What for?". We often do not get answers but we can create meanings and explore possibilities. The 'Nothing' that is our origin and destiny can annihilate personal existence, but at least it serves to make us conscious of the 'is-ness' of 'brute existence'. Nothingness, the before and after of the moment that becomes a place in Gormley's work, this puts 'being' into question and helps us to find poetry and transcendental possibilities which rescue us from mere facticity. He takes moments and makes them into places; "Over and against the world of change and separation, there is a timeless and spaceless place which is the source and goal of all our being." Gormley (Cooke, 1984, p.xvi)) and thus gives us glimpses of moments of essential existence.

SECTION III

In the following section Gormley's work is discussed in terms of the ideas which can be found to have common ground with *Dasein*. In other words a consideration of the evident connections between Heidegger's description of the mode of existence of the human being and how such an understanding of authentic 'being' can be fruitfully related to Gormley's work.

Gormley's creations, as previously and briefly mentioned, centre on the human body as the arena in which consciousness becomes apparent and can be described and hence perhaps understood. Heidegger was interested in the fundamental biological boundaries of human life, but, he did not discuss our consciousness in relation to the physicality of being a discrete individual with senses. To see how Gormley uses the physicality of the body is my understanding of how *Dasein* is conveyed by his work. This however, leads us to the question of the body and the importance of 'self'/'Other' relations. This will be discussed in Section IV with reference to Bakhtin and Sartre, but particularly the latter whose work was highly influenced by Heidegger.

Firstly I will briefly outline technique and the parallels between Skhlovsky, Heidegger and Gormley in terms of creating an authentic language.

"Someone had placed
a transparency marked with knowledge
over the world"

(Twitchell, 1992, p.63)

"Poetic thinking ... is a mode of speaking in accord with Being.."
(Kearney on Heidegger, 1986, p.43)

Very simply put Gormley's abiding interest which his work explores, is a very direct examination of humanness. He directly tackles man's 'being' and consciousness. He does not approach the subject in a roundabout or removed way by looking at man's culture or beliefs, society et cetera., he tries instead to take a straightforward look at what it is to be a human animal. Obviously this is a massive topic and there are no answers at the heart of a finite exploration. Gormley cannot explain the nature of human Being even on a purely personal level through his work. Instead the work poses questions; the questions we, as spectators, infer are the ones that speak through the work to us. This challenges the spectator/participant to re-examine what it means to have a body, to have a mind, and to have perceptions; or even how it feels to be this way. Never offering answers or being didactic, Gormley involves the viewer in the psychobiological process of experiencing art and through this an experience of humanness. To think, to look, to close your eyes, to defecate, to copulate or to be sick. Sartre said that 'being' is disclosed to us by some kind of immediate access to living such as boredom or nausea, and through these moments of physical or mental immediacy we rediscover the sensation of 'being': and our humanness is disclosed to us. Gormley creates these moments and they become a place for the viewer to be.

The technique of his work, not the actual production, but rather the style makes us look carefully at the work. "Poetry is recognised.... by its ability to make man look with an exceptionally high level of awareness." (Shklovsky, 1965, p.5). The purpose of the imagery is not to remind us by the approximation of those meanings for which the image stands, but rather it is there to be understood in itself not as a symbol. Symbols in art are in the end purely personal; they are fixed in meaning, referring to specifics to which the artist alone can intend or ascribe significance. Poetic language, which is essentially the silent language Gormley uses, is not fixed; it is not automatized speech. It suspends the common approach and meaning can transpire for those who wish to engage with the work. Poetic language, as Heidegger reminds us, is not a higher plane of ordinary language; on the contrary, he points out that everyday overworked language is so worn out, "The call is scarcely audible anymore" (Kearney on Heidegger, 1986, p.41)

The preliminary dispossession removes us from an everyday context so that we may understand ourselves anew as beings in a community and open ourselves to a genuine future. Heidegger writes of Holderlin speaking of homecoming not as mystificatory nostalgia but a responsible expectancy. (Kearney on Heidegger, 1986, p.43)

The poetic device is to make objects unfamiliar, this is the expentancy which a piece such as Field can arouse. Making forms difficult or strange, both Skhlovsky and Heidegger have written, impedes the process of perception (which is an aesthetic process in itself) and forces the viewer to become more engaged or involved with the work. Gormley estranges the ordinary, he obscures or transforms it and as such imbues it with a peculiar, strange quality. By concealing the commonplace we look beyond the everyday habitual surface and seek out a deeper significance or simply re-discover a familiar sensation. As Heidegger did with inauthenticity, Sartre equates the habitualised mode of language with a denial of 'being'. It is the mode which constructs and supports the 'doxa' and ultimately damages the 'self'. Gormley takes us a step away from our usual sense of the body (defamiliarisation) and puts us in a new perceptual arena enabling us to look afresh and read anew. Familiarity is, after all, as Heidegger, Sartre, Shklovsky and Gormley would agree, the enemy of authenticity, art, life, 'being' and mostly the enemy of the self.

"I loved both material worlds
the one I was
and the one surrounding me.

I was the living carting the dead around
I was a treeful of rings"

(Twichell, 1992, p.67)

Earlier Gormley was described as belonging to a very loose category , in that he is not part of any particular modernist or post-modernist tradition. Indeed his concerns are not part of any specific artistic tradition , rather they relate to more transhistorical ideas rooted in philosophical traditions. Gormley's work does not entail any understanding of his evolution as an artist , nor is it necessary to understand the context or background out of which his interests evolved. Gormley is however very vocal , which is usually enlightening, but can at times undermine work by perhaps giving too much away. It marks a conflict between one's desire to know the artist and become acquainted with his intentions or the wilful denial of authorial input. Gormley is however a particularly loquacious , articulate and intelligent commentator when speaking about his work and aims. He is never didactic , even going so far as to express disappointment when he feels people rely too much on his 'word' rather than on their instincts. "We're so keen to find out what the artist intended that we don't actually discover what the artist means." Gormley (Nairne, 1987, p 104).

Nevertheless much of his recent exhibition in The Irish Museum of Modern Art (April-June 1994), was labelled not just with titles, but explanations. This displays a refreshing absence of elitism but it can take a certain amount of pleasure out of the aesthetic process of perception. Of course the choice of whether to read or not is ultimately the viewer's. The principal part of his work functions in conjunction with the titles, which generally add to the depth of the work. Sometimes they simply indicate a direction or a way of looking, other times they appear to state the obvious in the work until it becomes apparent that they reveal a paradox, or are ironic. Usually the titles are very evocative and are evidently highly considered , as Gormley has indicated:

The titles are as much a part of the work as finding the material. The process towards certainty is very physical. There is a journey that the work is making from the general to the particular , from the unnamed to the named. This is a physical journey towards recognition which is expressed in the name. Gormley (Allington, 1981,p.18).

Certainly most of the work resonates with it's title which suggests layers of meaning and generates subtle ideas without any trace of dogma.

Although unnecessary in terms of critical approach it is worth studying Gormley's work with some regard to chronology just to observe the evolution of his work. Since he began making art in the mid-seventies Gormley has had very clear objectives and his concerns have little changed. While his work has always been strong , the development of more eloquent vocabularies is evident. His work can be broken into three

rough categories, firstly that which is object orientated, based on things, secondly that which is based on or refers to the human body and thirdly figures and forms cast directly from the body.

Generally it is the first category which is evident in the late seventies. These works refer to his abiding interest in 'being'. As a student Gormley travelled quite extensively in the East especially India where he spent a period studying meditation with a Buddhist monk.

Vispanna...a type of meditation emphasises bare attention, through a direct, non mediated attention to bodily states, perceptions and feelings that progressively counteract the acculturated impulse to contain them in conceptual categories. Thomas McEvilley (Nesbitt, Field 1993,p.62).

This teaching stayed with Gormley and even in his early works not based on the body it is evident. Rather he undertook to deconstruct the prevailing ideas which see culture and nature as opposites. Land, Sea and Air I (1977-79) (pl.2) consists of three hollow lead shapes; all three were cast around the same egg-shaped stone. They contain the stone, water and air respectively. Perhaps they are the fundamental building blocks of life? Maybe they are eggs waiting to hatch? Is there the implication of genesis and creation or are they an ecological warning? Perhaps the implication is one of the destruction: must these elements be preserved for the future in leaden containers? More interestingly they suggest a unity between the three elements and how they can all be contained and given form by man. Gormley has taken nature and put it in little cases, unfortunately this containment renders them inert. In this scenario ought the cases be broken open?

Fruits of the Earth (1978-79) (pl.3) consists of a gun, a machete and a bottle of wine coated in layers and layers of lead until they have almost become unrecognisable. The forms have lost their familiar identity and in the process become much more 'natural'. As the title suggests an absence of distinction between culture and nature becomes apparent. Gormley has often remarked that he regards everything as earth above ground.

The objects function as indicators of man's relationship with the world, which is mediated by these objects and how we use them. It is reminiscent of *Dasein* and of how by regarding these 'tools' as ready to hand we constitute them in intelligible relations with our own Being. Gormley is referring to the common ground from which 'everything' originates. This is implied also in Three Bodies (1981).(pl.4) Here, lead casts of a shark, a boulder and a pumpkin, that is animal, mineral and vegetable were made. The three

distinct structures have the same surface and are each filled with earth. As such it forms a sort of binary opposite to Land Sea and Air.1.

Natural Selection (1981), refers much more obviously to man. It combines twenty-four natural and artificial lead coated objects in a line suggestive of an evolutionary process. The work forms a kind of dialect between the two, between creativity and destruction, male and female, and between nature and culture. The objects include a chisel, a carrot, a vibrator and the perception of femaleness being equable with creativity and nature is carefully destroyed at the centre where a goose egg meets a grenade. The work rails against a familiar, unthinking way of perceiving the world around us. The oppositions between culture and nature *et al* are levelled out at a morphological level.

During this period Gormley began working with bread as a material; ordinary white sliced pan. He began by cutting it, until he realised that the natural approach would be to bite it. These works evoke man's artificial relationship with the natural world. He uses a type of bread as technologically processed and as artificial as it can be. The biological processes involved in eating are suggested and our dependency upon natural resources for sustenance. Bread-line (1978/79) simply redescribes a loaf as a line of bitesize chunks, each mouthful is a step in a process of consumption and suggests that it is the temporal process that defines it.

This device of re-description is similarly found in Flat Tree (1978) (pl.5) which is an entire tree trunk cut into small discs each marked with the natural rings that time inscribed into it, they are then laid out in a spiral with the smallest at the centre. The life of the tree originates at the centre which was once the tip of the tree. The space it now occupies is horizontal not vertical.

Between 1978-79 he made Exercise between Blood and Earth (pl.6) in which a running man marked out by a linear form at the centre is echoed in ever expanding unbroken lines, in much the same way that the lines on the tree trunk echo each other. The 'rings' expand until they form almost a perfect circle. This is one of the earliest examples of the use of the human form. Contemporary to it is Bed (1980-81).(pl.7) Gormley stacked like brickwork layers and layers of sliced pan into a lowish double bed shape out of which he ate the two halves of his form front and back as if the left and right could be pushed together to form a full figure at the centre: (it could perhaps also be read as a sort of marital bed.) This piece evokes most clearly the interdependence of man and nature and how *Dasein* is constructed in relation to the world it inhabits.

In the early eighties he first began to make a cast, lead men based on casts of his own body. These works relate much more directly to an experience of human being. It is these works which best describe the moments of 'being' which constitute our lives. Nothingness precedes and follows them, they are themselves places of existence. "My body is good for matching experience visible because I inhabit it" Gormley (Cooke, Salvatore Ala, 1984, xii)

"I am now trying to deal with what it feels like to be a human being... make an image that in some way come close to states of mind." Gormley (Nairne, 1985, p.63)

Three Ways 1981-82 (pl.8) has a subtitle of Hole, Mould and Passage: the three men adopt different positions whereby the orifices which occupy the highest physical position are the anus, mouth, and penis (respectively). On each of the bodies only the one orifice is open. Hole has his head between his knees, in quite a gymnastic position and gazes up into his own anus, utterly preoccupied with himself. Mould adopts a foetus like position on his back, open-mouthed, he could be speaking, or is he waiting to be fed? Passage is supine with an erect penis. Maybe they represent three points in a life; Mould as dependency upon others, awaiting formation, Hole as independence, the body slowly unravels, until Passage where it is open ready to give and regenerate. These are states of being, boundaries between the self and the world marked by dependency upon the outside or control of one's own self.

'Three' is a significant number for Gormley, marking as it does the beginning of infinity. Land, Sea and Air II (1982) (pl.9) evokes physical states as corollaries of the natural world. One figure crouches with his ear to the ground, another stands gazing across the horizon and the third kneels, head inclined upwards as if breathing deeply. The figures seem to be actively absorbing their surroundings and engaging in a very physical relationship with the world. These sculptures are simply about being in a space and conscious of using the body, not just the mind as the "Vehicle through which all....impressions come." Gormley (Nairne, 1987, p.104)

The work consistently explores the relationship between mind and body. Our physical senses of perception form the paths through which all information is obtained. The body and mind are intrinsically bound together in a symbiotic relationship; they are not in opposition. The mind will not transcend the body, it is constituted by it.

The Beginning, the Middle and the End (1983-84) (pl.10) is delightfully ambiguous: at the foot of the figure is a 'pool' of lead and on his head squats a small human-like figure. If we read it from bottom to top we see primordial sludge developing into a human until finally evolving, through the head, the mind into a superior being. The other traditional or perhaps obvious reading is that the man squatting on the head represents pure concept. The human is the middle ground, and thus the harmony of thought and physicality which is the lead sludge or the inevitable path back into the earth, the most desirable state of being 'one' with the world.

Most of the cast-men made since the early eighties were of single figures. They are generally very autonomous and isolated-looking, in communion with their surroundings or utterly self-absorbed. Learning to See III (1991) (pl.11) features a lone upright tense looking man; this is suggested purely by the posture. With his closed eyes he is apparently absorbed with 'seeing' inside his own mind and his whole body becomes occupied with the process of concentration. Night (1982-3) (pl.12) is similarly shut off to the outside world. This time the figure hugs his knees to his chest, he is occupying the smallest possible area. It seems to suggest that the darkness of night can be compared with the space inside the figure's mind. He cannot rely on his sight in the dark and similarly has no need of the physical senses to 'see' or just be inside his head. Seeing and Showing (1991) (pl.13) has also got a figure with closed eyes. He sits on the ground, knees bent, and spread apart. His hands cover his eyes and face and his penis with a hole in the tip, rests on the floor. He is grounded to the earth by his penis, squatting heavily, his physical earthed side is much more evident than in a work like Night. In this case he is open to the world in a very physical way while hiding his face, the traditional instrument of expression, along with the hands in figurative works of art.

Idea of 1985 (pl.14) is reminiscent of The Beginning, the Middle and the End. It shows a man who appears to be stepping forward with a small egg-like object on his head. Is the man having the idea which helps him progress or is the idea/the egg the force generating the man, creating and propelling him? Does the egg generate the step or the step forward the egg? This ambiguity is typical in Gormley's work and of how the title can function to delay straightforward cognition or decision by opening the work to possibilities. In Man Asleep (1985) (pl.15) the figure is in repose and in front of him pass several dozen terra-cotta human-like creatures. Does the sleeping man dream the little figures, or are the little men imagining a giant God-like creature? This piece is evidently the origin of the works that are collectively known as Field. The inability to distinguish where the origin or 'Other' is as opposed to the subject, is explored throughout the work.

Also in 1985-86 Gormley made Father and Sons, Monuments and Toys, Gods and Artists. (pl.16) Very simply, it is a large adult accompanied by a cast of a child. The title says it all, but the question at the heart of the work is: which constitutes the other? There is no answer, except a suggestion that they are utterly dependent upon each other. One cannot exist without the other. Between 1987-91 the piece Bearing (pl.17) was conceived and made. A standing, totally generalised human form with no head; even the limbs are not defined. Instead, a squatting male figure has the body emerging from the point where his genitals should be. Who is bearing who? The lower 'bears' the upper as a thought or the other gives birth to a giant form which will perhaps evolve into a more recognisable form.

The absence of any modelling on the face and hands inevitably makes the posture, gesture or orifice that is cut away, the focal point of our understanding of these cast pieces. Often it is also the placing of the works in a particular location or a specific position in a room, for example Sound I (1986) (pl.18) ; Untitled (Diving Figure) (1983) (pl.19) Land, Sea and Air which was photographed on the beach, Close III (1993) (pl.20) was placed in the centre of the courtyard at Kilmainham. Although occupying this hierarchical position, the spread-eagled figure appeared to be entirely unaware of anything outside of the relationship between his body and the earth which he pressed against. He was pulled flat by gravity, making maximum contact with the earth as if afraid he would otherwise be thrown off. Learning to Think (1991) (pl.21) featured a group of exact replicas of the same pose, suspended from the ceiling, only showing from the neck down. The group is scattered. It looks as if the figures are pulling apart, seeking independence, though perhaps they are moving closer, attempting to form a community. It is a physical process and suggests not necessarily that their heads are on a 'higher plane' but also that they use their bodies for the process of thought. They are slowly moving downwards, finding a space in the earth. Perhaps it is Heidegger's poetic understanding of the soul as, "Something strange on the earth" (Kearney on Heidegger, 1986, p.41), the soul seeks the earth to fulfil its being, so that she may poetically build an dwell upon it. In Sick (1987-89) the figure is unhappily affixed to the wall by the soles of his feet, knees bent at a ninety degree angle, so his body is upright. The unnatural position and the title evoke the sense of physical imbalance: Is this perhaps Sartre's 'nausea'? A Case for an Angel (pl.22) exists in three different versions. In each the standing figure has extended wings emerging from its sides perfectly perpendicular to the body. The title could suggest a recommendation for an angel; a tomb for an angel, or a box where the 'spiritual' can be contained. The 'time of angels' is a time of spirituality without God. The wings seem to

be trapping the figure in the space it occupies rather than enabling some sort of transcendence. These pieces very effectively dominate and occupy the rooms in which they stand; their wings create barriers over which it is difficult to see. The 'angels' become very confrontational and almost threatening.

Works such as End Product (1990-93) (pl.23) and Sovereign State (1989-90) (pl.24) mark a sort of boundary between the cast works of Gormley's body and his more abstract engagements with the physical/mental aspects of humanness. Both consist of a hugely generalised body reached as if by casting layer upon layer over an initial mould. (The simplified form is achieved in a very similar way to Exercise between Blood and Earth). End Product occupies a much larger space than the other human casts. It is almost as if Gormley has cast this figure's personal space. The area he occupies is physically extended by his senses. Sovereign State suggests that the body is an autonomous realm which is self-perpetuating; the tubes lead from one orifice to the other via an intestinal-like mess of rubber. Yet the figure also looks terribly lonely, like a deposed king who has been pushed over and lies helplessly on the ground

From these one can see emerging works like Body: Fruit and Earth (1991), Still Running and Still Falling (pl.25) both also circa 1991. Like End Product and Sovereign State they are cast iron and seem like more swollen distorted versions of the above. Still Falling on its own looks almost like a giant turd chained to the ceiling, but the name and context of the exhibition give the sense of it being something in the process of becoming. (I believe that the space in which it is hung in the Irish Museum of Modern Art is too small to allow the work to function at its best.) It is being pulled to the earth by gravity and is gradually becoming more complex (or possibly less) and evolving. Its seams are bursting with a swelling generative energy and it towers over us as spectators. Still Running (pl.26) appears to be a continuation of the same form. It is like a cell which is dividing, becoming more complicated. There is a sense of the form twisting and bubbling with life on the path to its evolutionary future.

Mind (1984) (pl.27) also hangs from the ceiling; it is a huge structure which looks like a cross between a brain and a cumulus cloud. In spite of its heavy leaden form it seems to attempt to achieve the highest point it can. It perhaps also functions as the notion of form creating the mind, the physical generating the existential mind.

There are several other works of Gormley's which suggest the human body in a much more abstract way than the casts. In particular there are four pairs of works which seem to function as metonyms for the human body. They are Instrument and Exposure

(pl.28), Body and Light and Meaning (pl.29), Augur and Oracle (pl.30), Bridge and Centre (pl.31) all of which were realised between 1988 and 1993. Each of the four pairs suggest some kind of relationship between an object sitting on top of a steel box and a complimentary orifice in the partner box. They each evoke very different senses and disturb our usual parallels between certain organs and their functions. Without the two titles these works seem almost impenetrable, but by pairing them Gormley evokes a very definite sensation of the mental and physical state of being grounded in the real world. The steel boxes become centres of physical and mental consciousness.

Gormley frequently reiterates that his work is "to make a human space in space" Gormley (Serpentine Gallery, 1987) and even in its most abstract form, he manages to do this. This is evident throughout his work and perhaps particularly successfully realised in the concrete Room works. In 1990 Gormley made Flesh (pl.33) in 1991 Immersion (pl.32) and in 1992 the three versions of Home of the Heart. These silent blocks of concrete inspire a multitude of feelings and are arguably the most sensitive of his explorations of the human experience. There is the sense of the body's presence, the space that he once occupied, and the perfect impression he subsequently left behind in them. They have the same anonymity as the lead figures and they still manage to be truly breathtaking in their range of suggestiveness.

With these works the desire to touch them and make physical contact, as with much of his work, is very strong. They invite exploration and involvement. This is perhaps partly due to the human size of the scale and also because of the tactile quality of the impression contained within them contrasted with the flat planes of the outer surfaces.

Immersion is quite simply what appears to be a rectangular block, cast around a standing figure with hands by his side but palms turned to face outwards. The impression of the space occupied by the figure, the man's own space, with his only physical link to the world outside is through the most active 'organs' of touch. Curiously enough they are not tomb-like; one senses the life of the old inhabitant. They are like abandoned houses, not coffins. The interior becomes fascinating. Is the body entire? What is its precise position? Could the body touch, hear, feel?

Flesh is based on the cruciform, with the soles of the feet and the fingers breaking the surface to link with the outer world. The word 'flesh' conjures up paradoxical images of the concrete as flesh; a sort of skin, it implies sensitivity, softness and vulnerability in the hard adamantine surface. Flesh suggests change and even decay. The offsetting of

this word against the impenetrable concrete evokes the concealed delicacy in the deep structure which is only hinted at on the mottled surface of the concrete which sweeps across a range of soft greys and browns. Flesh hints at warmth, delicacy and transience; the figure reclines open-armed, receptive and passive. The spectator dominates and is yet overwhelmed by the strength of the implied presence. One cannot ignore the obvious Christian connotations of Christ on the cross, and the words 'Take, eat this is my body/flesh' et cetera. The bodycast contained in the shell, the solidified absence, strength and vulnerability work against each other to create an intriguing and beautiful work.

"A house is the form of vulnerability,, darkness is revealed by light".
Gormley (Serpentine Gallery, 1987, p..)

In Home of the Heart I-III (pls.34,35,36) it is only the torso which is encased; the limbs remain free to move while the chest, the cage of the heart, is fixed in concrete. The fact that one senses the freedom of the absent limbs is indicative of the power of suggestion in the works. The play on the phrase, 'Home is where the heart is' implies that self and location are completely identifiable. This is an idea Gormley often suggests. He has also said that "A house is inhabited by a body as the body is inhabited by life."
Gormley (Lynn, 1990, p.57)

An earlier version of the room works was made in 1989. Room for the Great Australian Desert.(pl.37) This was made and photographed and the print was shown in conjunction with an early 'Field' work, Field for the Art Gallery of New South Wales.(pl.38) Gormley explained the work thus:

The clay figures are a kind of infection of space. They are much more organic-biological infection in a crystalline space. To me Room is a crystalline infection into organic space Gormley (Lynn, 1990, p. 57)

These early terracotta figures are much more developed than the recent ones. Since Man Asleep Gormley has been progressively reducing and purifying the form until they culminated in their present form.(see pl.1 and pl.39) Each figure consists of nothing more than a roughly defined body and head with two staring eyes. The work Field for the British Isles featured in the Irish Museum of Modern Art exhibition attracted a huge amount of attention. Each little homonculus is individually made. They are the earth above ground Gormley has often suggested with his work. They are a site of becoming; in the process of evolving and looking to the future. Gormley sees them as the as yet unborn, gazing up at us anxiously and giving us a sense of responsibility. One cannot ignore the absurdity of the sight; their plaintive little expressions contrast with the strength of their numbers and the sheer wilfulness suggested by their powerful stare.

They strangely enough evoke the same sensations as the lead figures. They mark the common ground, and instead of the single general form suggesting the particular, the microcosmic community evokes the generality and universality of the human experience. We are all contained within the lead figures and all the clay-men are contained within us as an open-ended field of possibilities.

Gormley's art is fundamentally about human experience. Any reading of his art that elicits an exploration of humanness is a valid one. Faith in art to create a space for thought and life is not faith in a theistic or humanistic doctrine; it is simply a belief that art can enable us to recover and experience a fundamental or transcendental sensation of being alive.

Evidently Gormley uses the body as the vehicle through which he describes an experience of 'being'. Heidegger's account of the same, that is *Dasein*, refers basically to man's physical existence. However, he does not refer to the body or the 'self's' experience of the body. Sartre was greatly influenced by Heidegger and attempted to extend Heidegger's investigations into being, (Heidegger's work after all primed the ground upon which existentialism was built), and explored how the self is constituted by the relationship of its body, the subject's body, with the world it inhabits. Sartre's investigations have an important relevance to Gormley's work in this respect.

It is also in this context that we can see how the relations between the spectator and the art work, constituted in a classical approach to work, can be changed. When the relationship between the spectator and the art work turns on the body, that is when the body becomes the site of a dialogue between the elements, the spectator as evidenced by Gormley's work becomes implicated by the work. This is not usual in classical representation or relevant to the degree that it is here. It is through Bakhtin and Sartre's understanding of the body in representation and self/Other relations that an understanding of this difference can be explored.

"Its the extinction of the thinking mind,
the ink-dark paralysis, that terrifies

that fascinates me here, that divorces
the self into its lonely parts.

Its the trembling reflection
we see in the face of another.

and the fact that it breaks
when we sleep
back into nothingness because

no one is left to name it.

so its not the little mirrors
falling from eyes, or the cane

tapping in the orange leaves
that undoes us

but the disfigurement
the shame of bearing all the ugly
signatures of our abandoned selves:

(Twichell, 1992, p.66)

SECTION IV

Sartre, as stated, was very influenced by Heidegger's writings and although Heidegger refused to be classed as an existentialist, we find much in common between the two. For Sartre, meaning is not a gift of 'being', it is an invention of the human individual; man is what he makes of himself. "We are free because we define what we are". (Kearney on Sartre, 1986, p. 54) Each individual is a leap towards existence. To be authentic for Sartre is as for Heidegger, to embrace our existence as an open-ended field of multiple possibilities of self-identity within the limitations of our situation, and to acknowledge the absurdity of life as a useless passion. Similarly the authentic person concedes that there is no given self to be true to. For Sartre, existence is bound up inextricably with the body, not just in terms of physicality: existence is divided into 'being' and 'nothingness' and consists of a kind of dialect between the two. 'Nothingness' is better described as no-thingness, (since absence discloses 'being,' 'not to be' still means 'to be') it is consciousness as subjectivity, freedom, transcendence and anguish, taking place in the imagination. 'Nothingness' is consciousness for-itself. Appearance is the measure of 'being', appearing becomes a fully present positivity, in that it does not conceal essence but reveals it.

Both 'nothingness' and 'being' are explored in Gormley's work. They exist in many pieces as a dialogue. In the Room works the absence of the body still manages to convey the presence of a consciousness. In these it could perhaps be purported that 'nothingness' discloses 'being'. In the figures of the cast men it is often the 'being' which discloses 'nothingness'.

'Being' involves appearing to someone, the presence of the 'Other' is constitutive, intrinsic, hence 'being' for Sartre is necessarily bound up in objectification, facticity and shame. It exists in-itself not for-itself forming in attitude a type of parallel between Heidegger's division of objects being either ready-to-hand (for-itself) and merely something-at-hand, (in-itself). This is similarly reminiscent of Gormley's works discussed in relation to Heidegger's 'attitude'. The pieces such as Natural Selection and Fruits of the Earth where man gives these intelligibility.

Appearance is everything we present to the outside world and the ramifications of the dialect between 'being' and 'nothingness' manifest themselves as being most problematic in 'self'/'Other' relations.

One does not see oneself as seen by others and this difference in perspective turns on the body. In her discussion of this dilemma Anne Jefferson in her essay Bodymatters : Self and Other in Bakhtin, Sartre and Barthes recognises a common thread between the three in that they all imply in one way or another, that the body is not a self-sufficient mechanism. They also suggest that mental repression can in some way be resolved through a freeing of the body. The body for them becomes "the site and focus of a whole variety of problems and conflicts" (Jefferson, 1989, p.152) What these thinkers have in common is that they all suggest that since the body is what others see and the subject does not, the body becomes dependent upon the 'Other' and so becomes the location for a power struggle between 'self' and 'Other' with extensive implications.

One of the earliest studies of this theme in the twentieth century is Mikhail Bakhtin's essay Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity where he views relations between 'self' and 'Other' as equivalent to 'hero' and 'author'. He describes the body as incomplete, incapable of self confirmation and in need of the form-bestowing recognition of the 'Other'. The subject has only a fragmented understanding of itself: "The subject's position in the world is determined by his body and it is from this vantage point that his gaze embraces a world which he sees as if from a frontier" (Jefferson, 1989, p.154) It is through the body in connection with the 'Other' that the subject can relink itself with the world. Naturally the subject experiences the world differently through his own body and his external body is perceived as an object in the world.

According to Bakhtin the 'Other' authors the 'subject' which makes the 'self' reliant upon and instituted by the 'Other' and sets the two in opposition. The 'Other' relates to the 'self' by "building on that difference, not by attempting to relive the subjects sensations but by creating external shape and form for the subject's body." (Jefferson, 1989, p.154)

In this sense perhaps, the spectator can possibly function as the 'Other', in some way shaping or defining (that is authoring) the work. However, as we have seen, the equation becomes much more complex, as the spectator also becomes the subject of the work.

By these means the 'Other' is placing the 'self' as an object amongst other objects in the world. He reiterates the subject's facticity and makes no allowance for the 'self's' freedom or transcendence. Bakhtin sees the author as saving the hero from his own limitations and fragmented standpoint by expanding the boundaries of his perspective on himself and the world. This is an aesthetic act and an act of love according to Bakhtin, which renders the author as the active party and the subject/self as passive, "one is living

life and has become passive for the other which actively gives it form and celebrates it." (Jefferson, 1989, p.155) What Bakhtin does not consider is that although the 'Other' may be more active as such, and that the 'Hero' is the seemingly passive part of the equation, action is not necessarily measured by levels of actual activity (When the reader for example reads a text, the subject/hero becomes a source through which readers, often unconsciously, infer something: information or assumptions about the author. Even if the author is 'dead', the absence, especially if deliberate, becomes doubly significant). There is a form - bestowing action created by even the most passive of subjects, the relationship can only be reciprocal. Bakhtin does not recognise this, but rather sees the author and hero as living in blissful harmony. 'Self' and 'Other' are both subjects with a 'right of say'; and Sartre concedes this reciprocity.

In formal terms Sartre's position has much in common with Bakhtin's, the 'self' is constructed by his "physical location in it...(the world)... and the view he has on that world is the one provided by the body". (Jefferson, 1989, p. 159) Sartre cannot foresee an escape for the body from the grip of the 'Other' and unlike in Bakhtin, to be known by the 'Other' signifies, as in Heidegger, the death of possibilities. "I exist for myself as a body known by the Other", Sartre (Jefferson, 1989, p.159) Sartre depicts the subject as being less passive than Bakhtin's representation, and in response to the 'Other' the subject, recognising the authoring role, attempts to react and reverse the positions. Sartre concludes that the 'Other' is a source of truth which causes the 'self' to feel divided in himself between his existence. As he understands his 'being' in terms of the image of himself that the 'Other' relays, the self becomes alienated, and sees himself as pure reference to the 'Other'. He experiences shame and is ultimately deprived of his own mastery. The problem as Sartre defines it is that subject/'self' is ashamed of mere facticity; it is being read as an object in the world that causes the distress. This refers back to the passive/active equation whereby :

Passivity (in the subject) is the result of a privation of activity and (the 'Other's') activity is the means whereby he brings that privation about... result is a perpetual see-saw on which neither party can achieve ascendancy over the other. (Jefferson, 1989, p.161)

Thus there are two basic problems, firstly the subject cannot control the image or interpretation of his 'being' signified in the gaze of the 'Other' and secondly, that he is reduced to being a mere object without transcendental possibilities, "to the extent that I am conscious of existing for the Other I apprehend my own facticity." (Jefferson, 1989, p.161). The consciousness of the 'subject' is reduced to that which is judged and determined by the 'Other'. What is curious about Bakhtin's and Sartre's theses is that they suggest that being the 'subject or the 'self' automatically precludes the autonomous

side of 'Being', this seems to be attributable to the fact that they speak only in terms of a particular form of representation, of the relations between 'self' and 'Other'.

In 'self'/'Other' relations the 'self' is referred to as wordage, existing exclusively in literal or lingual terms. It is not the 'otherness' of the 'Other' which gives him the upper hand but rather it is linguistic priority which give his constructions the force of their conviction. As such Sartre declares:

the meaning of my expressions (the selfs) always escapes me, I never know if I signify what I with to...the 'Other' who is on the receiving end (of 'appearance') is always there as the one who gives to language its meaning (Jefferson, 1989, p.163)

Relations between 'self' and 'Other' are characterised by conflict in Sartre, and love in Bakhtin; but both involve a denial of the subject's/'self's' freedom. The recognition of the particular language role that Bakhtin and Sartre evoke precludes any possibility of individual initiative as a means of getting out.

It is specifically the term and mode of representation which shifts the emphasis on to authoring as the active role from the passive subject. Both thinkers fail to acknowledge a third party in the spectator, particularly surprising in Bakhtin's context. However, there is, Anne Jefferson discovers in Bakhtin's later work, "another world outside and beyond representation" (Jefferson, 1989, p.164), which does not involve the ascendancy of either party over the other. Relations of representation can be conceived as relations of participation. Contemporary culture enables the rejection of a specular basis of classical representation. Bakhtin's concept of 'carnival' is one which he related specifically to the middle ages and the grotesque realism of Rabelais. It is a notion and a practice which comprises an alternative to representation, it is not a spectacle to be witnessed. 'Actors' and 'spectators' are not distinguished between or at least boundaries are not clearly demarcated. Authoring is inherently a demarcating process but where the role of the author can be de-mystified and even largely ignored, this need not necessarily be so. The idea of 'carnival' embraces all people equally, it is democratic, popular and un-elitist. 'Carnival' creates a new order of representation which Jefferson calls 'participation' and it therefore becomes possible to overcome the impasse of Sartrian 'self/Other' relations. Equality can potentially be realised via an acknowledgement of freedom from specular/classical literal representation, and 'Other' and 'self' can co-exist as factual and transcendental 'Beings'.

This new order of representation is particularly evident in the realm of post-modern plastic arts. In Antony Gormley's work it is possible to recognise a 'carnivalising'

process at work. Much of his work is centred on the body. The pieces exist in an objectival sense but equally have an authoring role, in implicating us (the spectators) in the work. We are bodies in relation to other bodies and are inevitably made conscious of our own facticity when looking at the work. Equally the work does not master us, more than we master it. The sculptures take action on us by virtue of their passivity and autonomy. we cannot control the work, but we do interpret and change it with our senses. It is autotelic and yet incomplete without my presence. This is one of the paradoxes inherent in the relation between object and subject, between artwork and spectator and between the 'self' and 'Other'. The relationship is eminently reversible, perhaps it is even consistent. The object is bound up in itself, the relationship is between it and my mind, it and my body and thus ultimately between my mind and body.

My 'gaze' on the work is a reflection of myself as subject, the work's voice is not that of a 'They': it speaks through me while it authors me. 'Subject' and 'object' exist on the same interpretative plane and ultimately it is the meeting of the artist and spectator, but both parties are the origin of the complete work. Boundaries are destroyed and action is equal on both sides, neither ignoring their own or the others' facticity. The bodies involved in the work become sites for transcendence which is mediated by physical perceptions.

In the work of art the 'Other' does not have a linguistic priority, the dialogue is silent and in strangely poetic terms, the language is conceived by the artist and is interpreted by the spectator. One is forced to sit in judgement of oneself almost as much as the object. This is entirely different to the position of the spectator in classical specular representation. The object maintains its freedom to be other than what the spectator sees it as and the spectator who is normally the 'Other' must explore new possibilities.

This can be analysed more specifically in reference to the differences in the construction of the classical and carnivalesque body. The classical body is a complete entity sealed off from other bodies and from the world it exists in. In the arena of the carnivalesque the body is deeply positive, it does not exist as an exclusive private form, cut off from everyday life, it is something universal and general, inclusive of all people. The carnival body is usually depicted at moments which constitute boundaries in the biological mode of existence. Birth, death, copulation, defecation, eating; the boundaries are constituted by the body's physicality : "The individual body is frankly dismembered into a series of focal points which to or from bodies make contact with what lies outside them" (Jefferson, 1989, p.166) These are precisely the moments which Gormley examines:

The join between in and out, the stress on the skin as the limit of the body conveys also the psychological division between self and other, between one's own psyche and the world (Nairne, 1985, p. 63)

Gormley's bodies are in communion with the world: consider works such as Three Ways, Bearing, Address 1984, (pl.41) and Peer 1983-84.(pl.40) There is joy in the carnivalesque body where Sartre would find only humiliation. The objectification of the body is almost a matter of celebration, it is revelled in as an arena of physical and psychological pleasure. In the context of representation the Sartrian subject suffers a terrible trauma whereas in 'participation' the experience is re-evaluated to become an enabling and regenerative one .

By definition the classical body is final, finished, closed off, a 'readerly text' whereas in 'carnival' the body is unfinished and the "shape serves primarily to draw attention to the unfinished process of becoming".(Jefferson, 1989, p.168) This could be referring specifically to Gormley's work. The difference between the two bodies can be simply expressed as this: in classical art the body is a product and in the realm of carnival the body is a process.

Jefferson does not consider the visual arts and when she asks 'how might it be possible for carnival to turn the table on representation in occupying the dominant position?' she turns to Roland Barthes' writings, which are indicative of the same cultural shifts, that are relevant to Gormley.

In Barthes it seems to be the carnivalesque features of the body that enable the 'self/Other' relations to be altered from the fundamentally Sartrian form that is associated with their dependence upon the 'doxa', to something more positive and enabling. (Jefferson, 1989, p.171)

For Barthes this process is exemplified in the reading/writing process and when it is operating ideally both body and text are carnivalised and the distinctions between subject and object cease to be. When traditional framework is disregarded a connection between bodies is formed which transform 'self'/'Other' relations. An arena where the 'doxa' can be countered becomes possible, and this becomes possible in Gormley's work, which can be understood as an arena of authentic language or being. The traditional methods of criticism which see sculpture as object representation are changed utterly, the style and content of work is unfamiliar and we are disinured from a classical perspective.

"Its meaning lay in my gloss on myself
was I willing to track the image
back into the part of myself
where..."

(Twichell, 1992, p.62)

CONCLUSION

In conclusion I must re-emphasise that my reading of Gormley's work is personal. Although the connections pointed to between Gormley and the various philosophers mentioned are relevant, they are my inferences and not a connection that Gormley necessarily subscribes to. Nevertheless to say that they are personal is not to deny the influence of Gormley's writings or Heidegger's and company, upon the thought process. My original encounter with Gormley's work in the Irish Museum of Modern Art, is not therefore untainted. Having subsequently further studied aspects of Heidegger and Sartre as well as writings upon Gormley, I cannot claim to be capable of describing my original reaction in a pure vocabulary. This inevitable colouring of memory by idea and vice-versa is part of the complex process of looking at artwork. This does not in any way lessen or tarnish the authenticity of my recollection or reading and the subsequent inferences which draw these connections; rather the process points to the difficulty of making an interpretative or critical study. These connections and my understanding are validated simply by the aesthetic process of looking at an art work and engaging with it. This simple reason for looking at art is perhaps indicative of the times in terms of cultural practice. In a sense art is better capable of asking questions, and enabling us to pose questions, rather than offering edification or enlightenment in terms of 'solutions' or 'answers'.

The following is an account of my reaction to the 1994 exhibition written in 1995:

The surface structure of Gormley's work is expressionless; flat planes of concrete with the human shell inside. *Sense* (1991) (p1.42). Figures of a human male are deprived of every characteristic that enables us to recognise an individual. The exterior is divided into horizontal and vertical planes. It is the gesture, the inclination of the head, the position in the room or in relation to other bodies that provides any clue to the 'why' of these creatures. Yet they are so moving, these are not subjects in themselves; they are locations of spirit for every human being. They are hollow shells of one man; cases of a real time, a moment, a movement, or posture captured in temporal experience. In many cases they are simply like photographic records of moments of profound solitude. To see these instances captured is poignant because it is only in moments of stillness, of eternal contemplation, that we recognise our freedom. We know then that we can break free, mentally and physically.

These moments exist outside of any time or location other than where they happen to be. When one is beside them self-identity and location become woven inextricably, they are one. When you shut your eyes the experience of being inside the infinite space of your own head is the excitement contained in these casts. This is to become aware of the space your body occupies, the space in which you occur; a space of mental and physical freedom, a space of 'Being'.

Lacan described the mind as being divided into two parts: the conscious mind and the unconscious. The contents of the conscious mind are retrievable; the unconscious is a set of drives and forces, and because the subject knows that what it knows is not all that it is, the desire for the 'Other', for the source of 'truth' is a constituent part of the subject. 'I seek the other to know myself. Sometimes the 'Other' is divine, sometimes human in origin; in this case the 'Other' is art. I am the subject, the art is the subject, I am the site where the work of art acts like a mirror; the action of looking at the work is reflexive. Through me the work is relinked with the objectival phenomenological world.

I remain mobile, I walk from work to work; they do not immobilise me, and I free them. Through them I gain understanding of myself. They are not origins; they are not self-determining; I am. I use them; I take their significance and make it mine. I shape them, that is why they are lead, clay and concrete; the artist beats shape into them, which permanently captured can be easily destroyed. They are sites where my desire for the 'Other' meets the artist's.

These statues, monuments to moments cast solidly, they are not symbols or metaphors, perhaps instead metonyms of transience. Each one is the same, in a new role. I see; I hear; I stand; I think; I lie; I am captured by my mood and grounded in my location, my body. Stuck in my body, it is not a tomb for a spirit; body and spirit are one in the same and one must work through one to reach the other and vice-versa. 'They' tell me I am shaped by them, maybe I am shaped by my desire, and my awareness is heightened by 'Others' but my being is grounded here, in my mind and body.

I am here now; I will die but every moment, every mental change, every physical movement is a moment of rebirth, to the awareness of being in the world of phenomena. I exist ontologically, but am constantly aware as I move from image to image; statue to statue, each flick of my eye allows me to exist in the space of my head, outside history, outside time.

It is the strangeness, the otherness of these creatures that draws me in. Their leaden skins are evocative but not decorative; they absorb light, they function as individual cells of being, and yet function equally as a unit of cells. They constitute a body of being, and yet all of them together are still wrapped up in a multi-cellular experience of

loneliness. They are a microcosm of one man's life, and yet they are moments of all men's lives. They are one in particular and all in general.

These beings are featureless landscapes. Their surfaces, marked by their material are given form by their seams. Some of them have orifices. They are mirrors for our own perceptions, they mark boundaries between their origins and what they will become. Are they husks cast off like eggshells or are they tombs, death masks? They are formed by sense, their physical senses and yet they contain the sensation of the mind: what it is to live. They recover, re-present and transform moments into precious experience.

It is not the medium that constitutes the message, it carries it in an absence of worn-out signifiers. There is no scream, no grimace or laugh. Sometimes there is even less than a gesture, which contains more meaning than a single particular expression. In stone cases and blocks, holes cut through or cast at points of perception are evidence that once a human was here. We see hands spread out, to touch, to grasp. Here the head looks up and inside and we see the absence of a man who existed for a moment, who existed for the future. The surface is flat and uniform in its irregular markings and discolourations.

These creatures mark fundamental moments of creation and destruction, of solitude and action; moments of pure Being for the sake of being and nothing else. They are moments outside of and before language; before speech; the essence is lost in the expression of this. For that is what they are: essence, and this essence should be absorbed, alone, reflectively. They are moments of poetic thought which force and mark moments of contemplation.

It takes art to awaken us from the familiar, to remove our perceptions from the path of the habitual. Our lives are 'devoured by habitualization' and with the poetry of artistic language we can be disturbed and made to open our eyes, ears, hands and minds wide again. To rethink is to transform, to think authentically; the question starts as "what do they mean?", but ends up being: "why are they here at all?" and finally "who are we in all of this?"

"What else was lost, and where did it go?
Who has it now, and will I recognise
myself when I am a mirror to myself

The questions turn on themselves
mid-asking, and diminish.

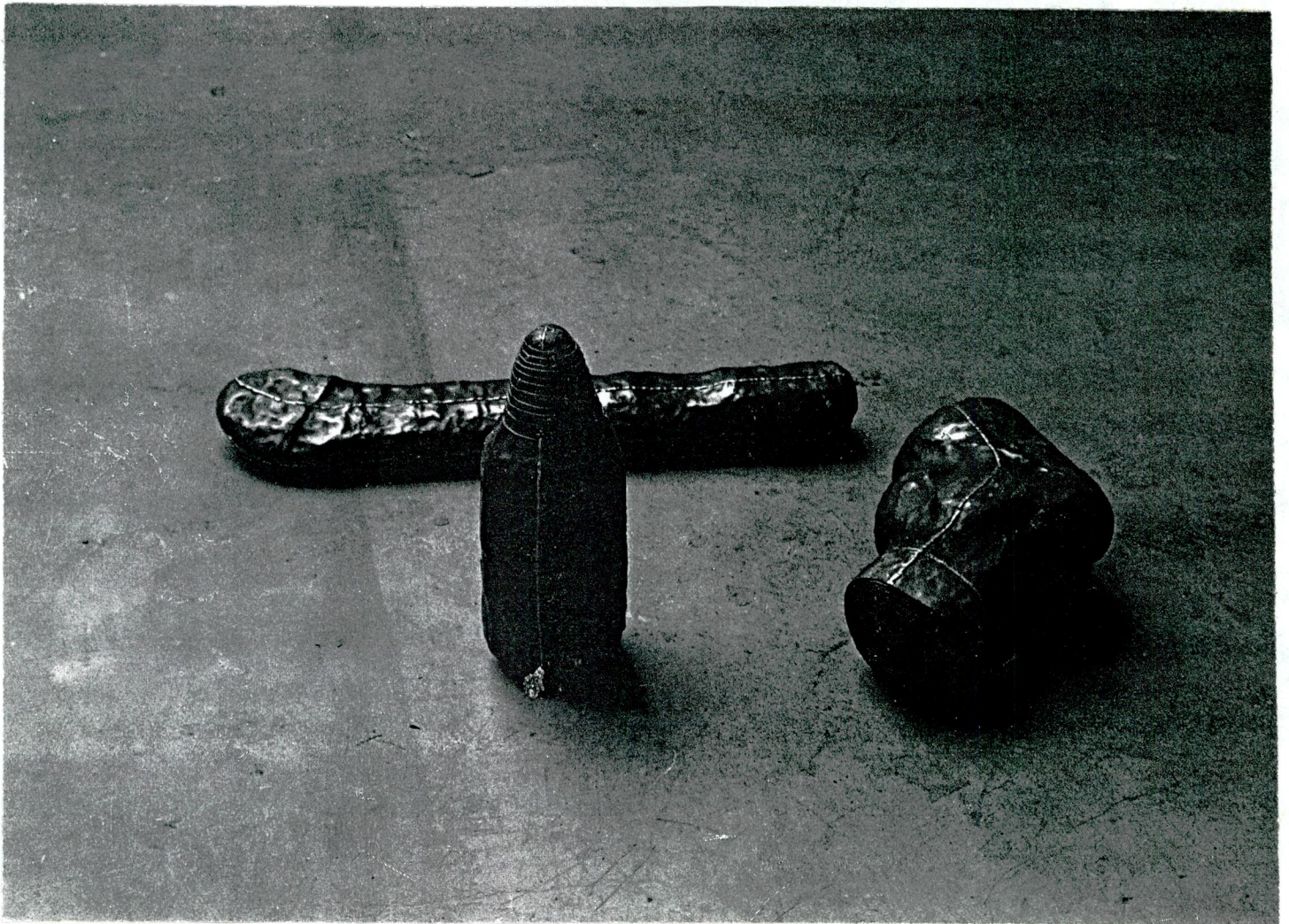
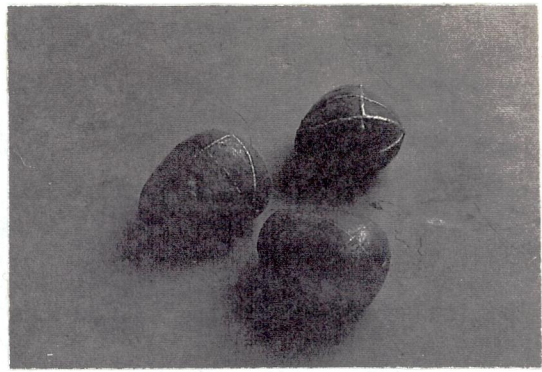
I diminish, shucking my skins as I go."

(Twitchell, 1992, p.68)



1 Field (Detail)..... 1991

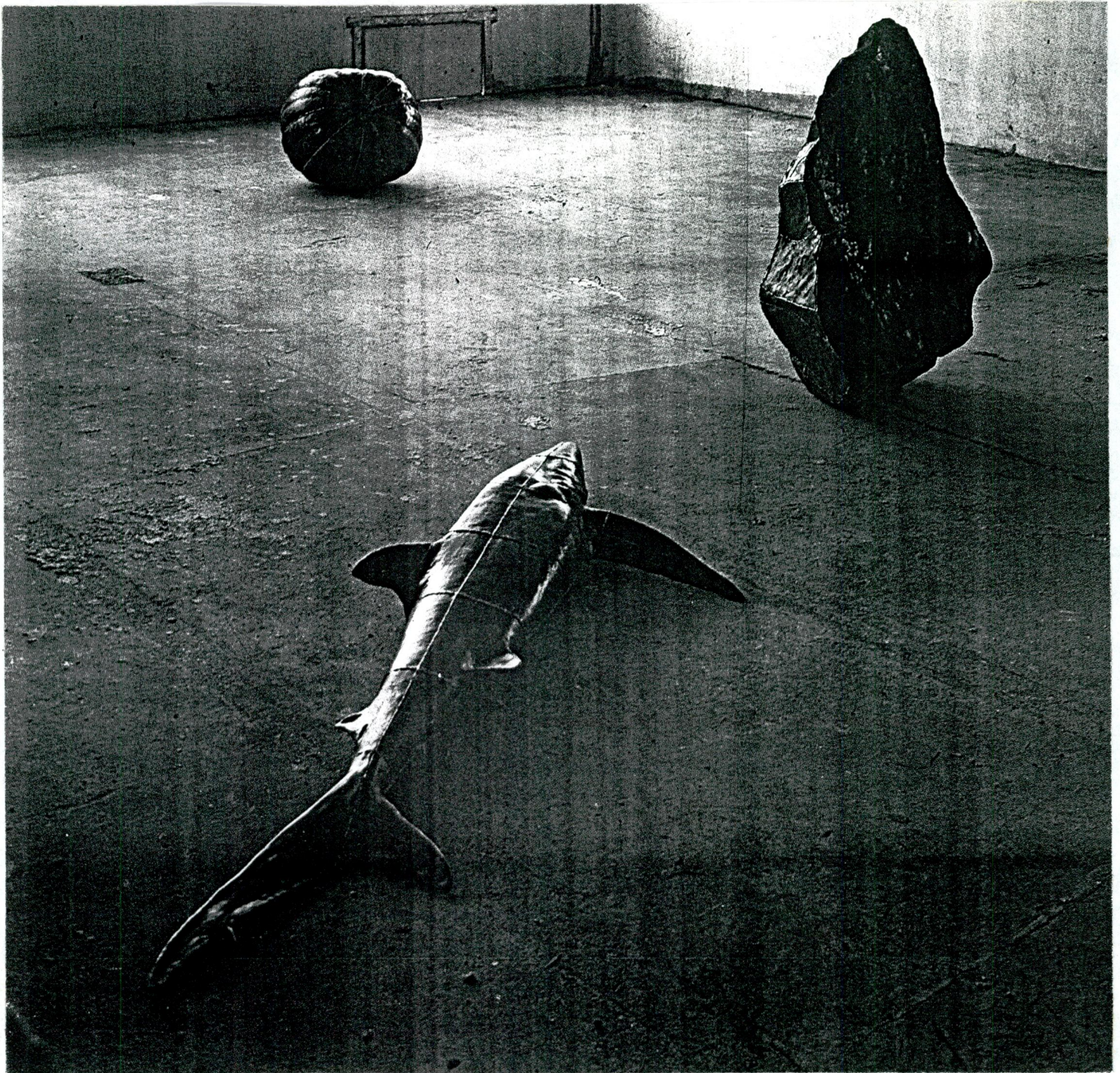




2. Land, Sea and Air I 1977-79 (TOP)

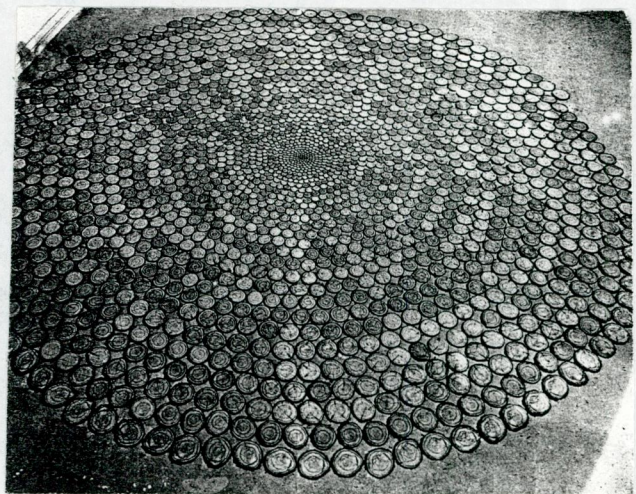
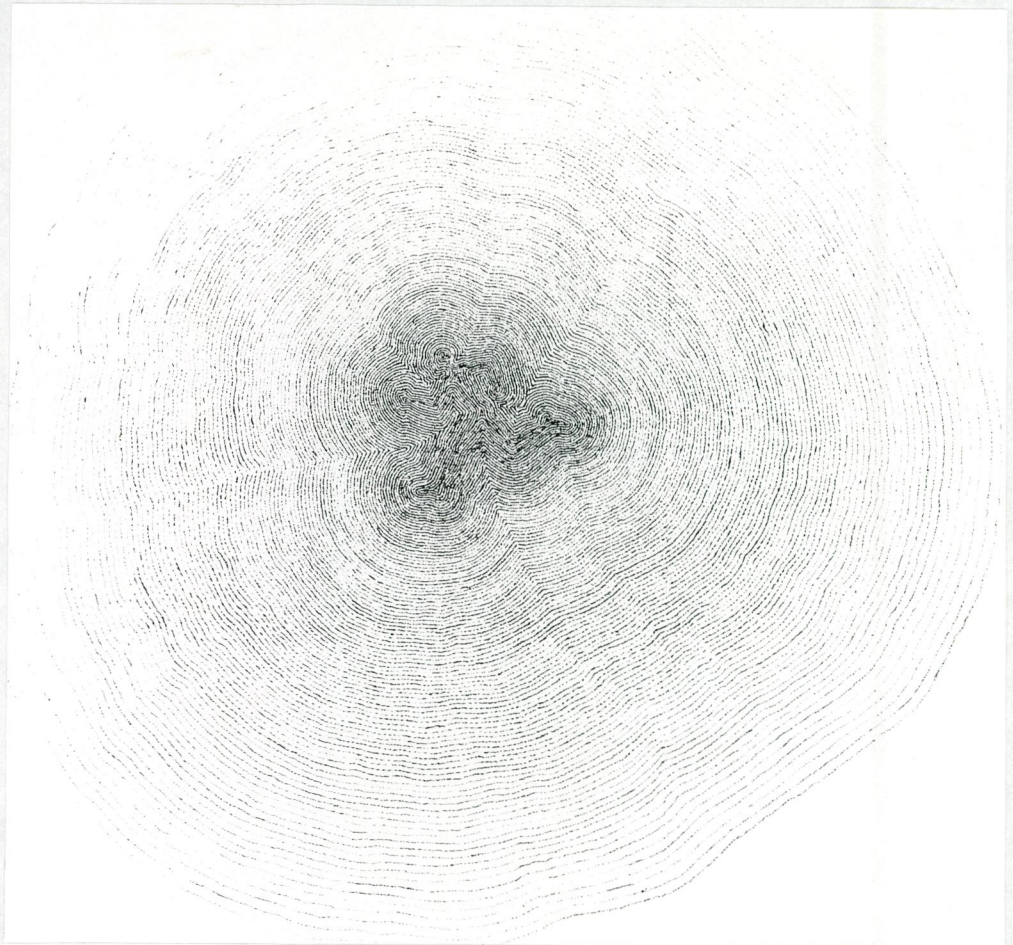
3. Fruits of the Earth 1978 (BOTTOM)





4 Three Bodies 1981

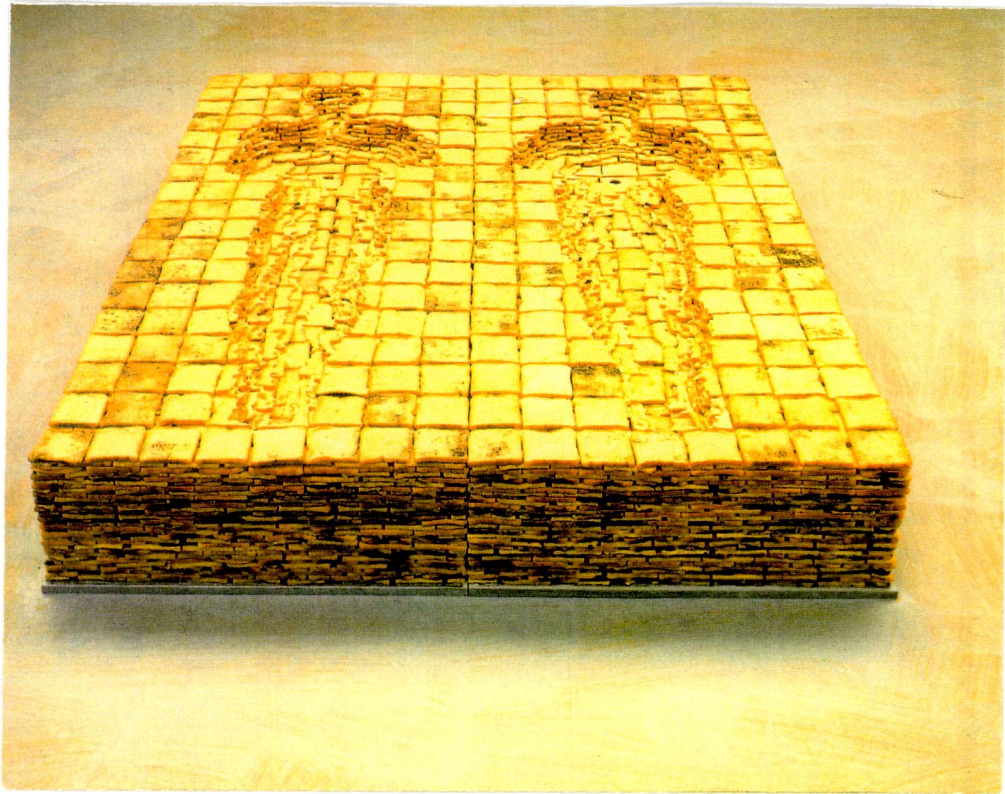




5 Flat Tree 1978 (BOTTOM)

6 Exercise Between Blood and Earth 1978-79 (TOP)





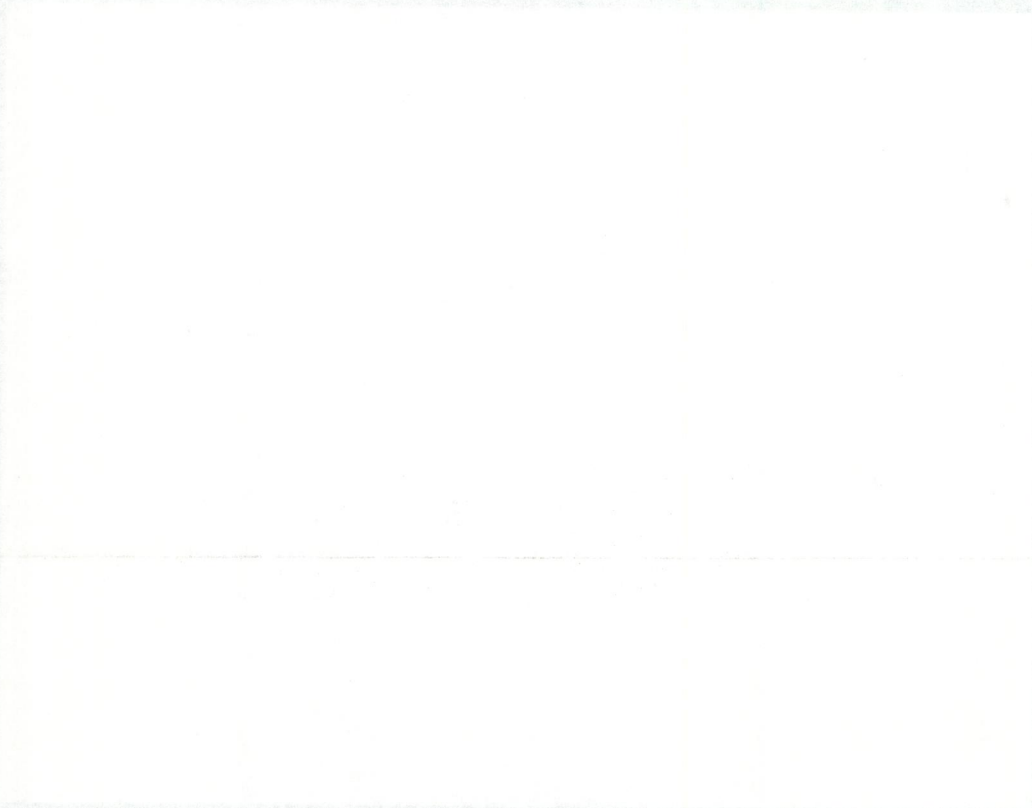
7 Bed 1980-81





8 Three Ways: Mould, Hole and Passage 1981-82 (TOP)

9 Land, Sea and Air II 1982 (BOTTOM)





10 The Beginning, the Middle and the End 1983-84





11 Learning to See III 1991



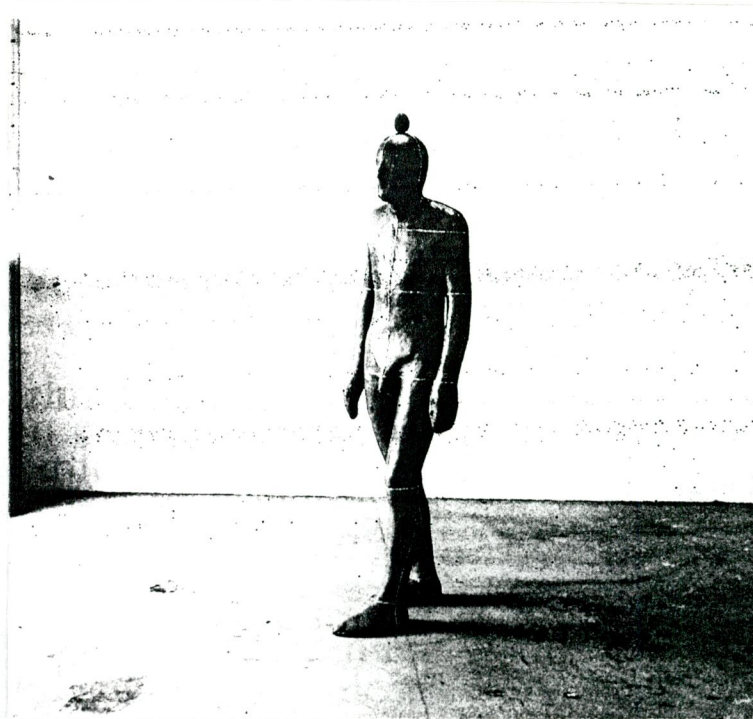


12 Night 1982-83



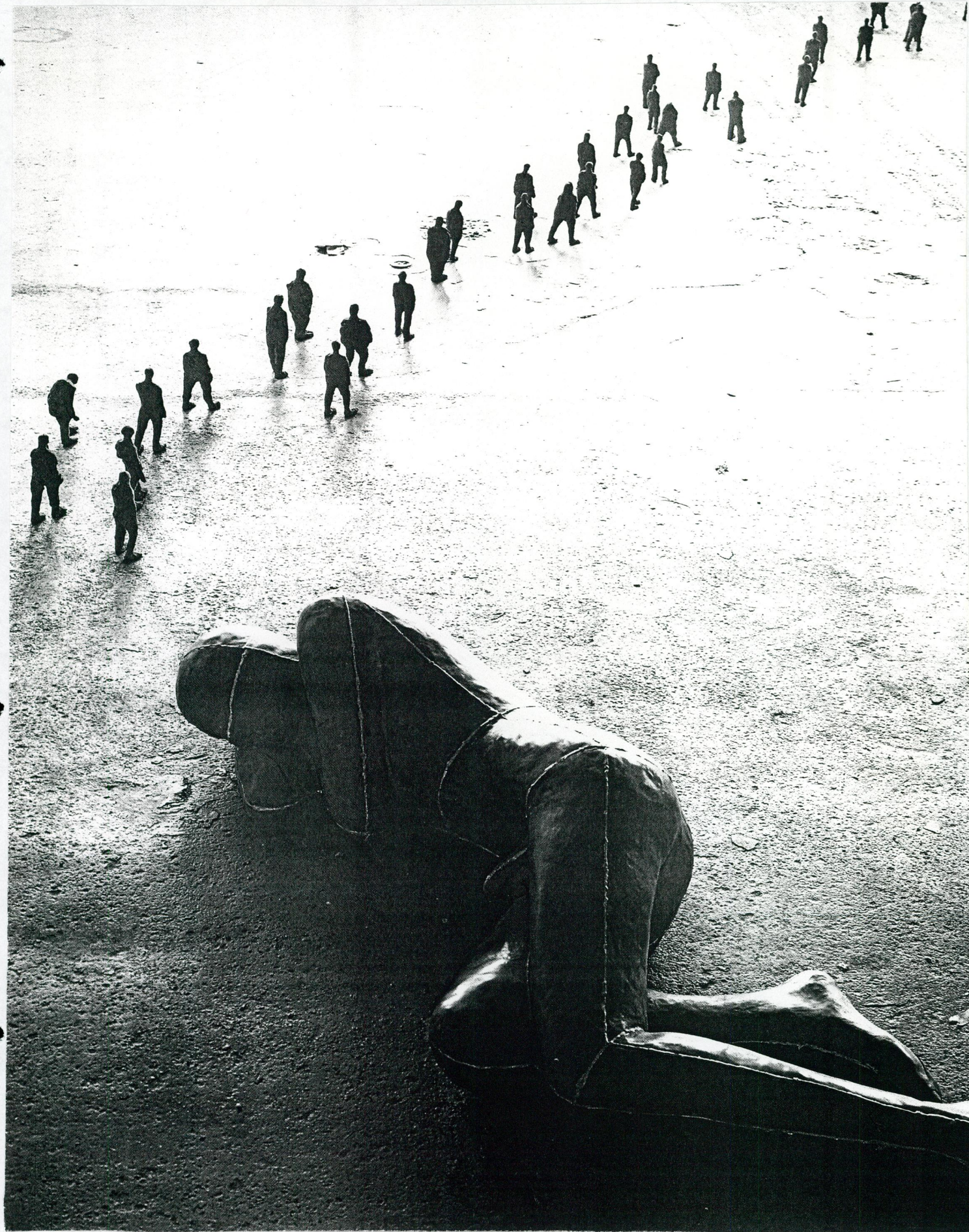


13 Seeing and Showing 1991

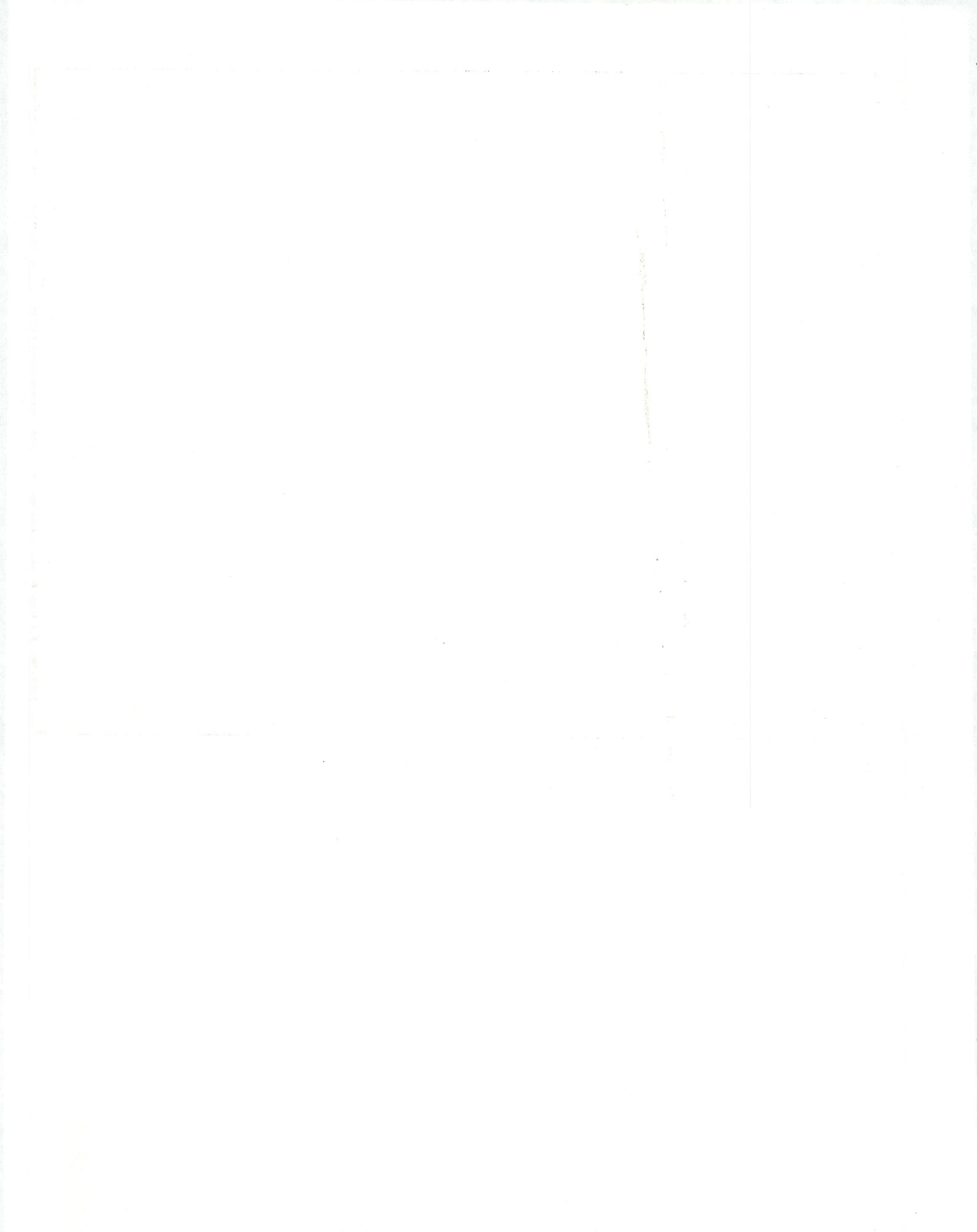


14 Idea 1985





15 Man Asleep..... 1985





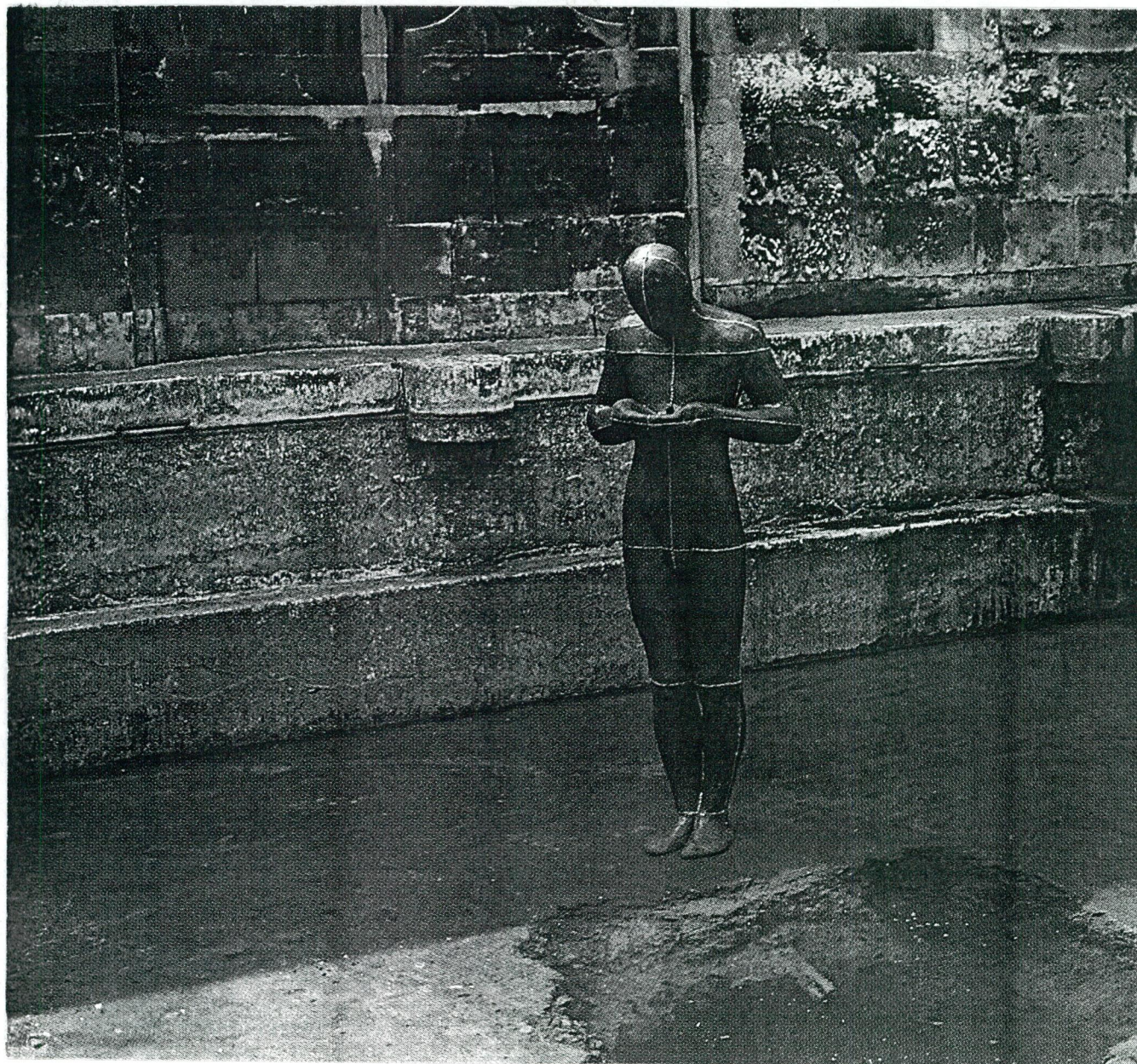
16 Fathers and Sons, Monuments and Toys, Gods and Artists .. 1985-86





17 Bearing c.1987-1991





18 Sound c.1986





19 Untitled (Diving Figure)..... c.1983





20Close III.....c.1993





21 Learning to Think..... c.1991





22 A Case for an Angel II c.1990





23 End Product..... c.1990-93





24 Sovereign State (Detail) c.1989-1990





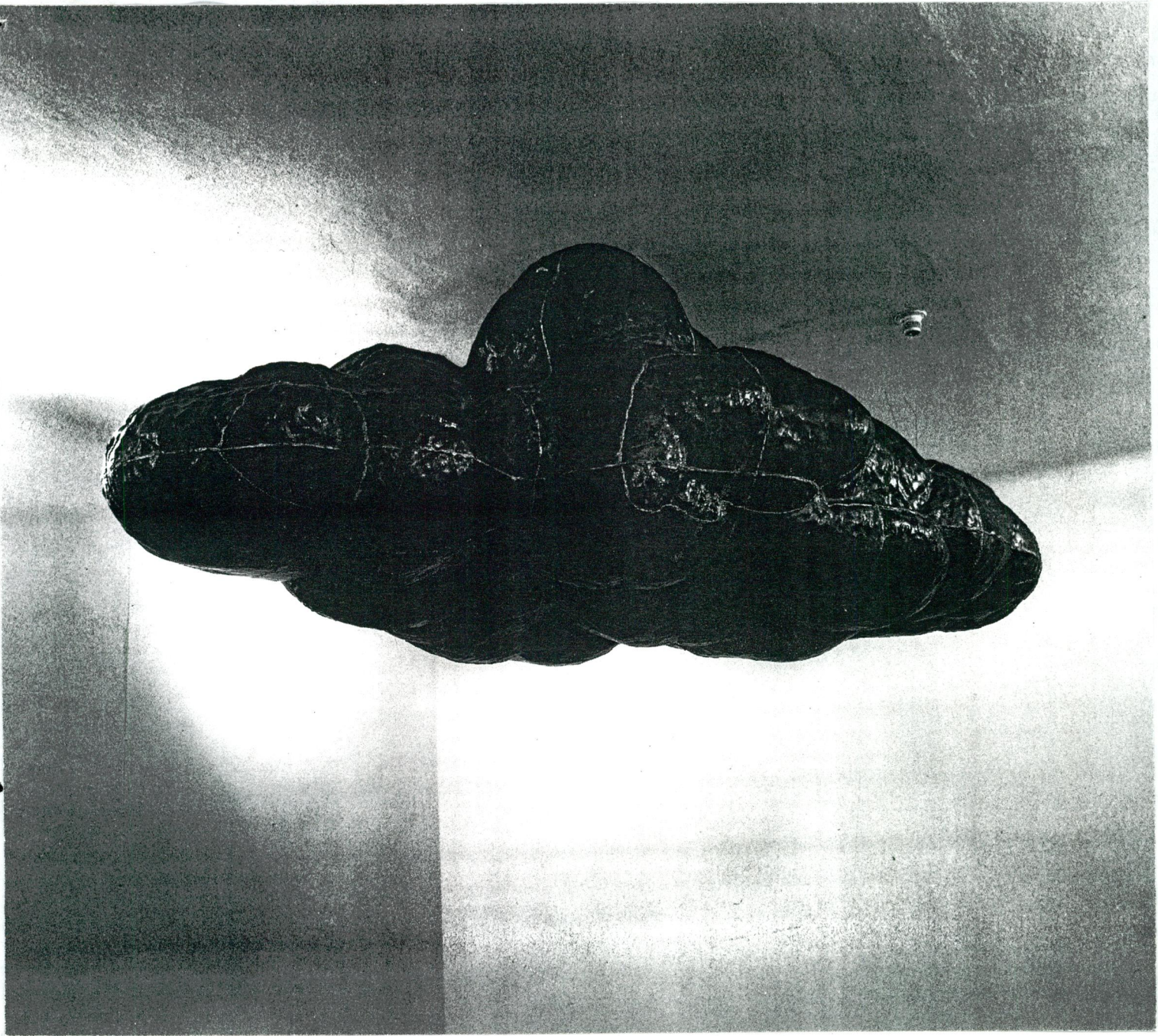
25 Still Falling c.1991





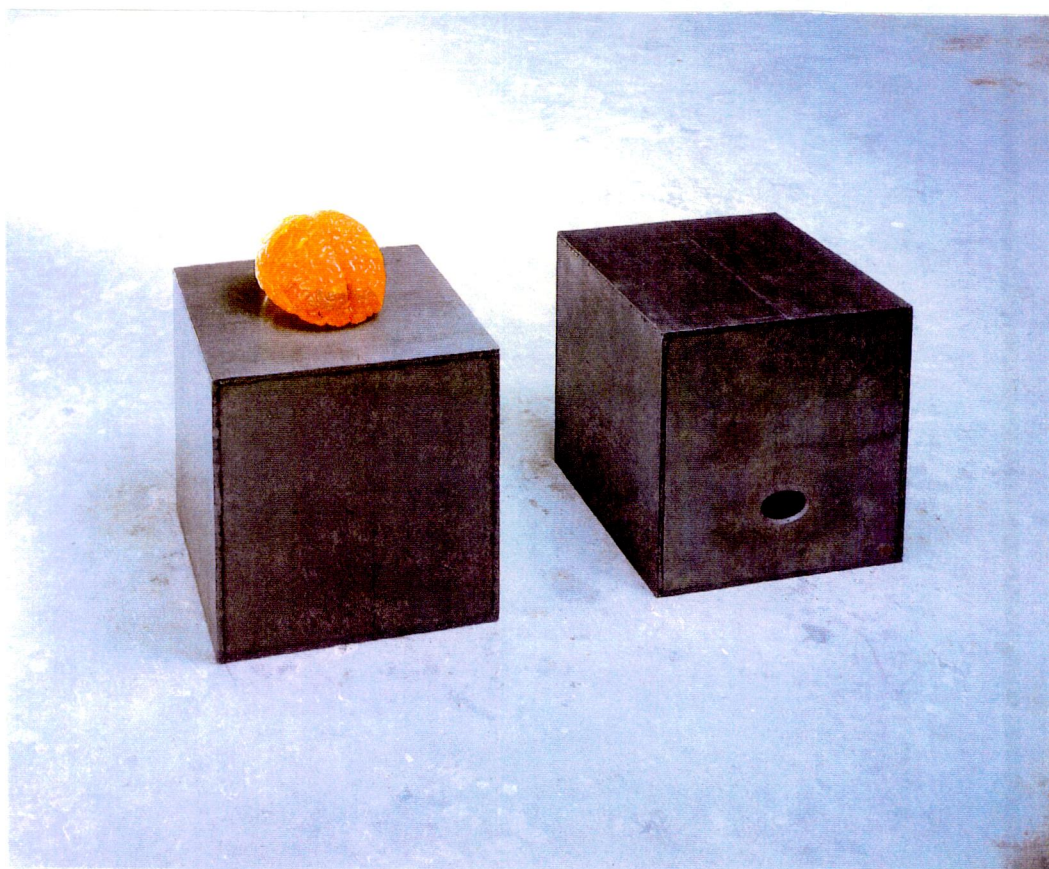
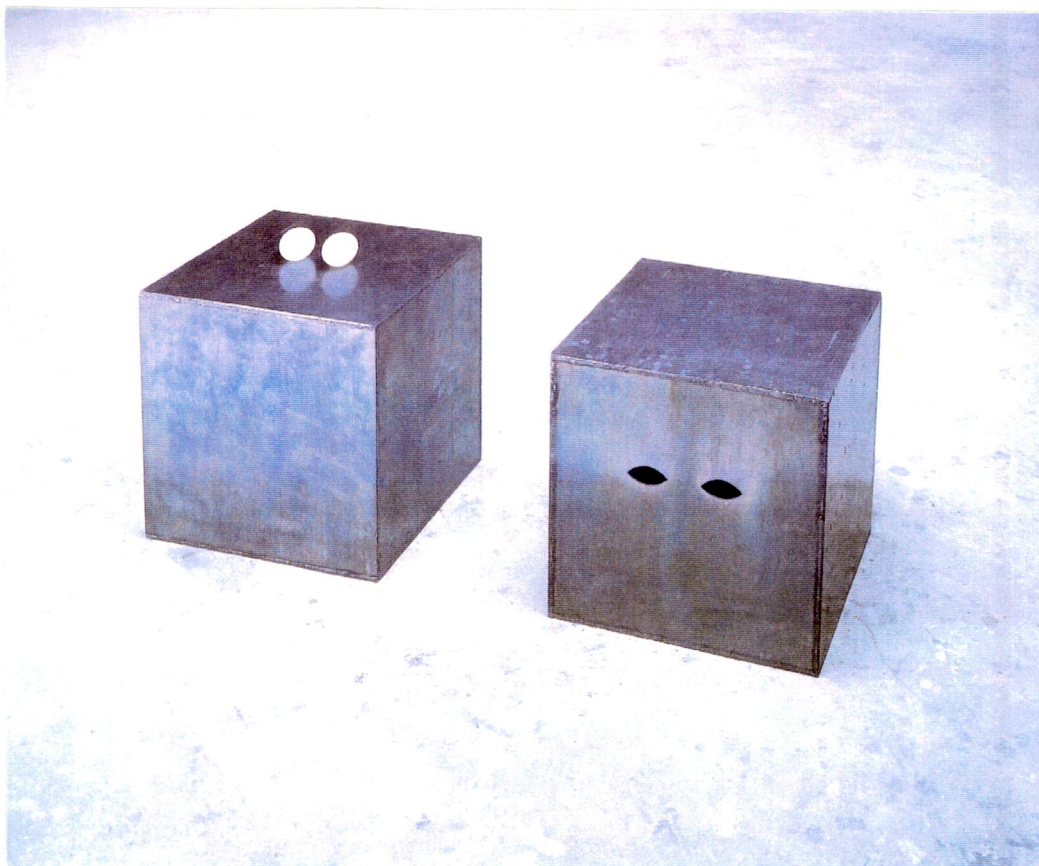
26 Still Running c.1991





27Mind..... 1984

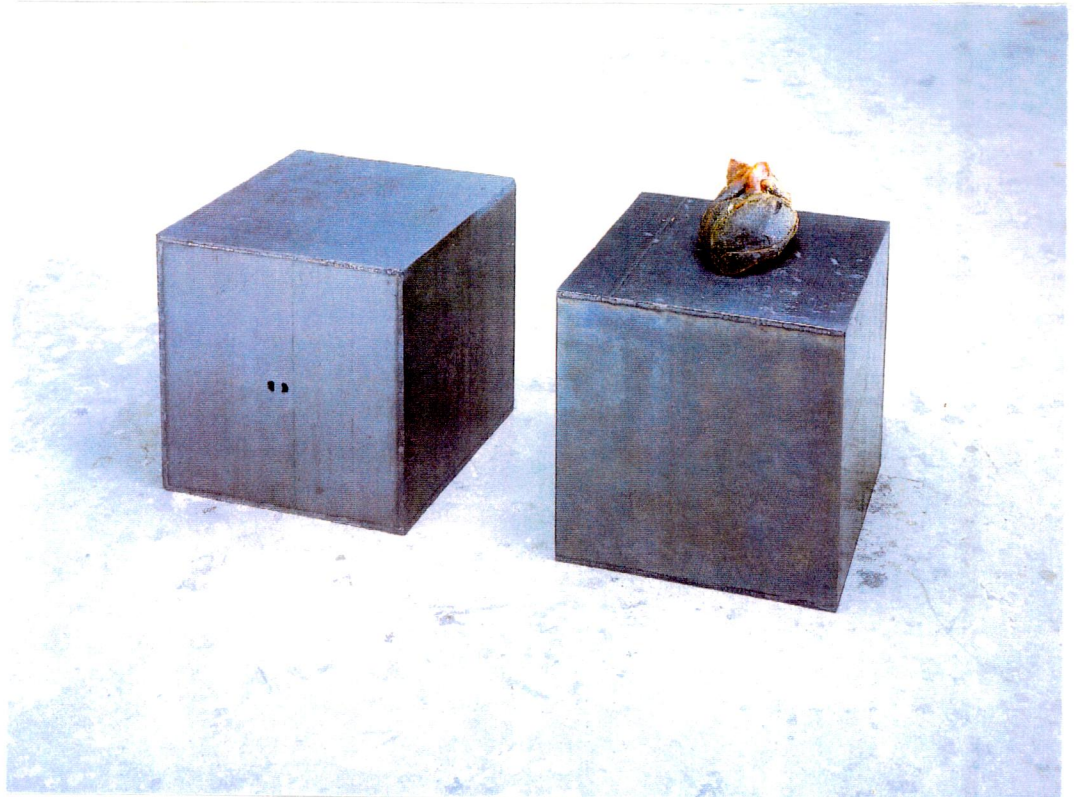
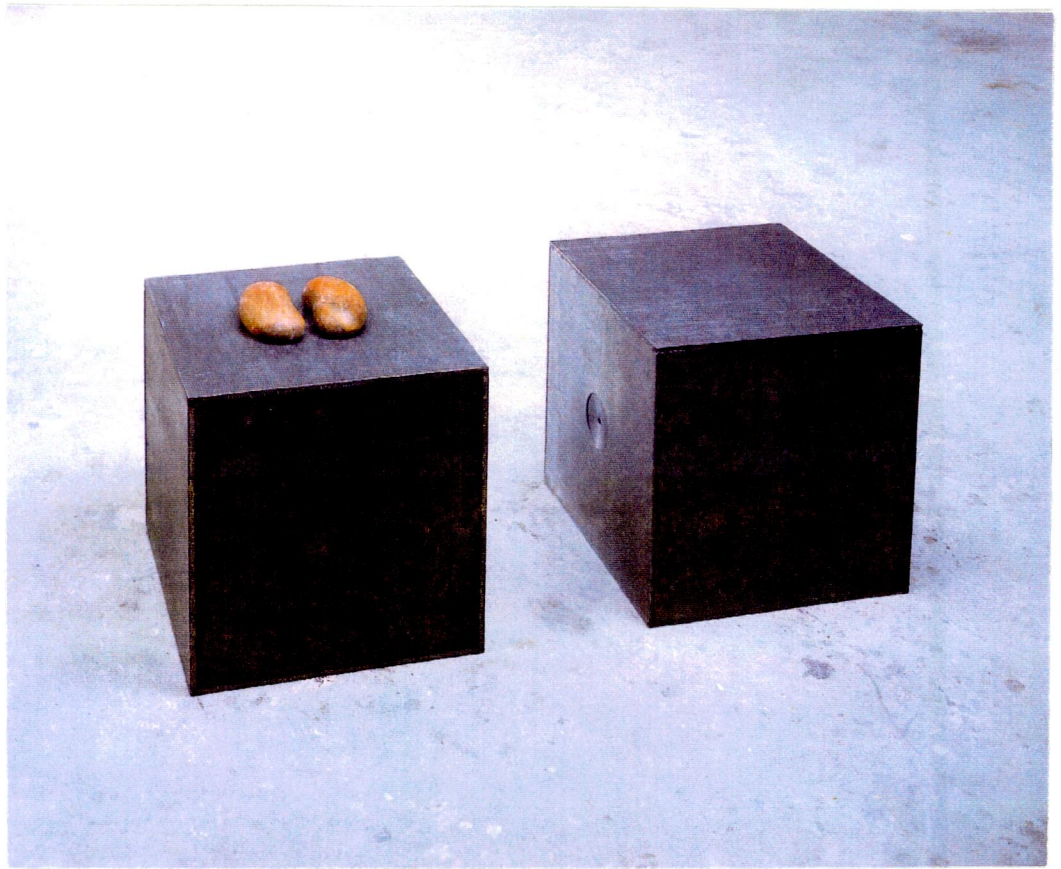




28 Instrument and Exposure..... c.1988-1993 (TOP)

29 Body and Light and Meaning c.1988-1993 (BOTTOM)





30 Augur and Oracle c.1988-1993 (TOP)

31 Bridge and Centre c.1993 (BOTTOM)





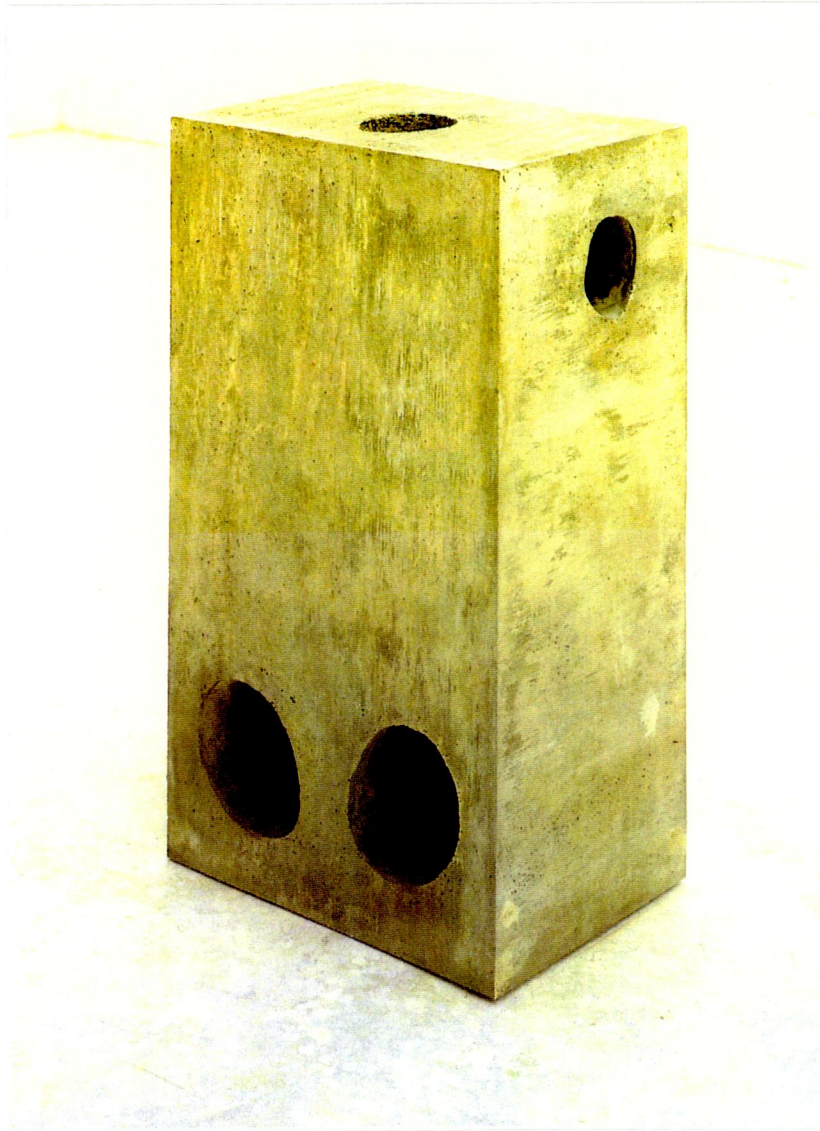
32 Immersion 1991





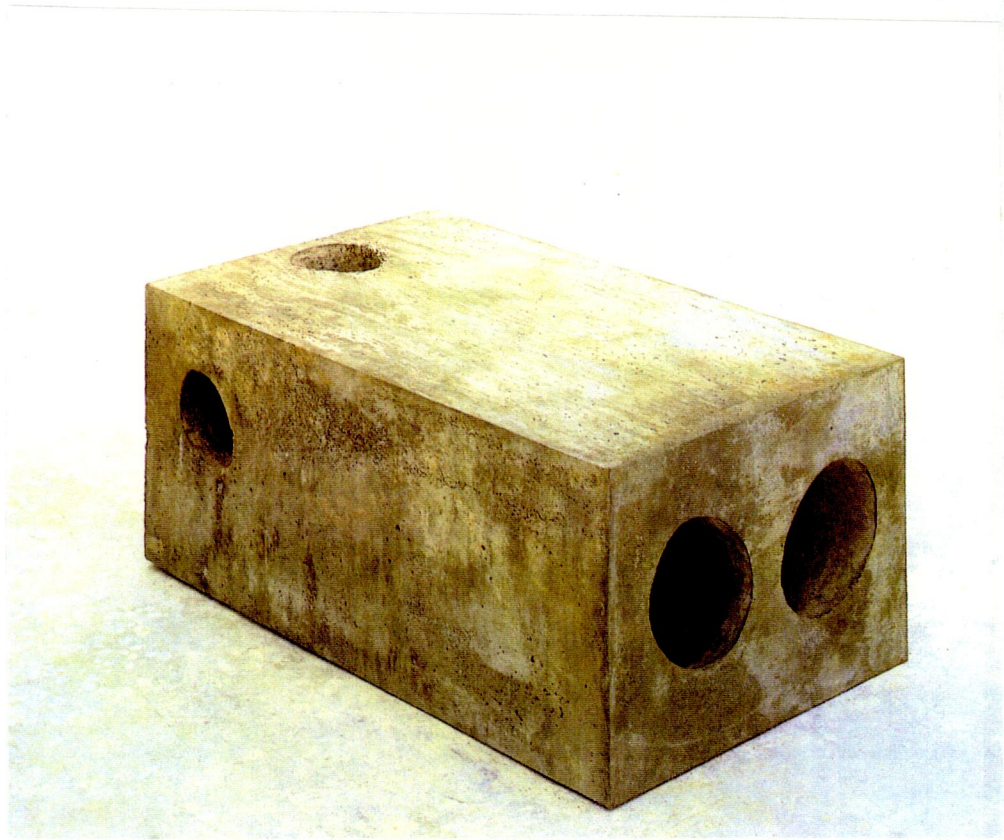
33 Flesh 1990





34 Home of the Heart I 1992





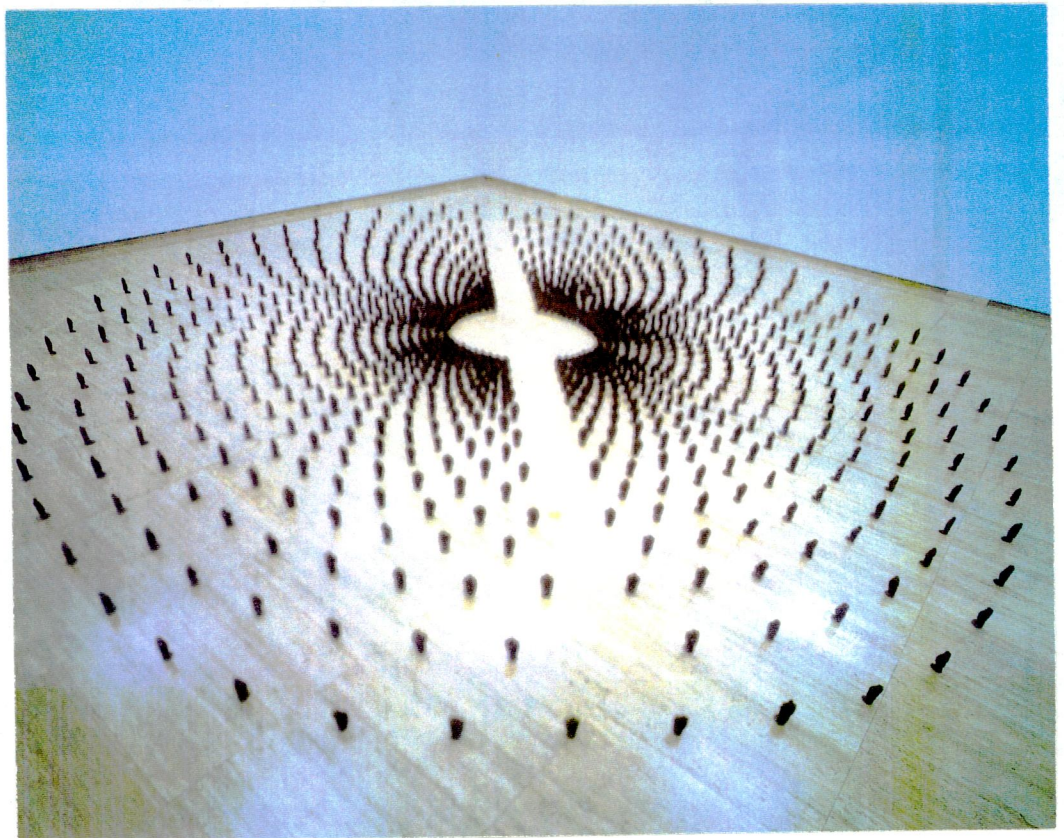
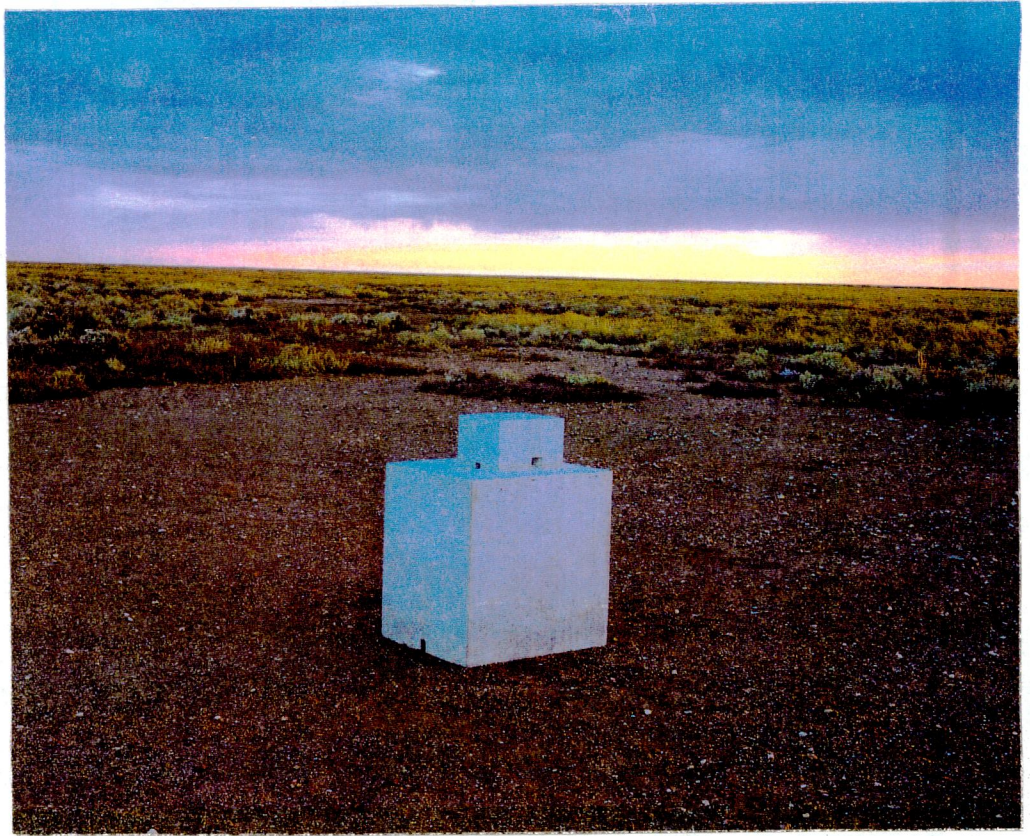
35 Home of the Heart II 1992





36 Home of the Heart III 1992





37 Room for the Great Australian Desert 1989 (TOP)

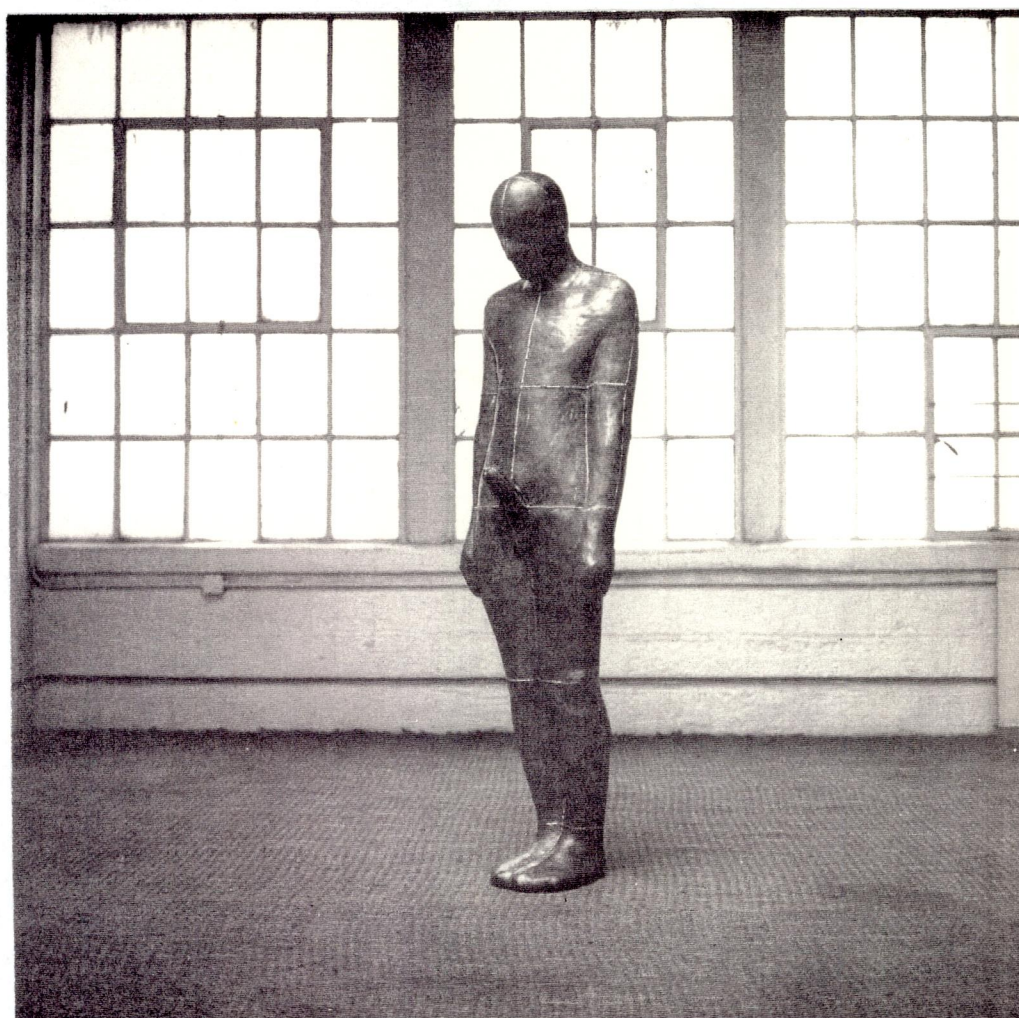
38 Field for the Art Gallery of New South Wales 1989 (BOTTOM)





39.....European Field.....1993





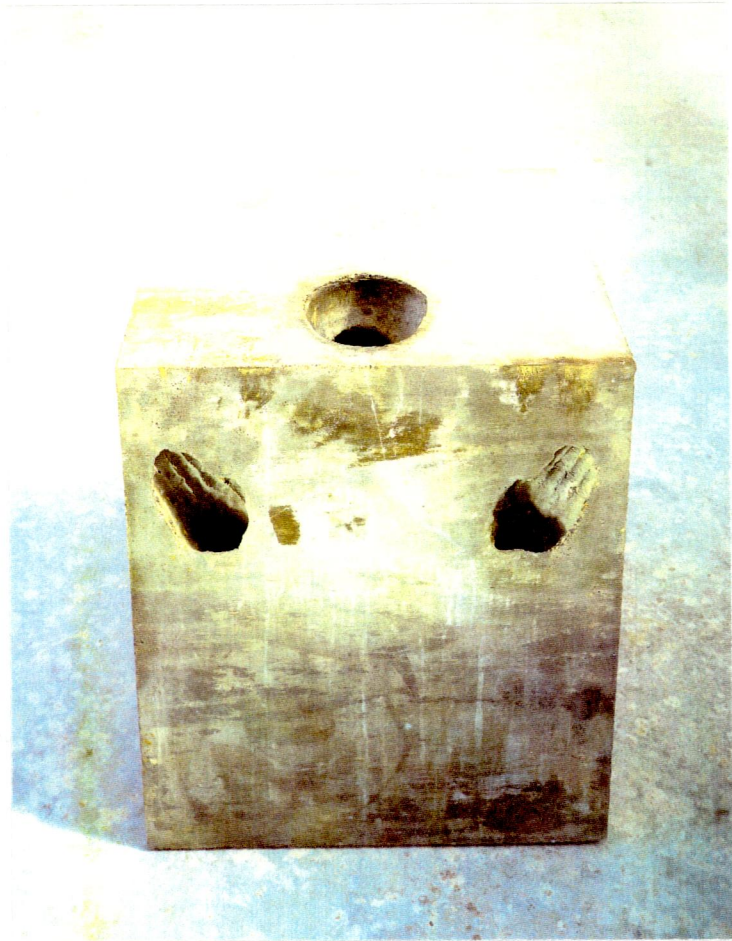
40 Peer 1983-84





41 Address 1984





42.....Sense.....1991



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