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National College of Art and Design

Faculty of Fine Art

Department of Sculpture

**Sources, development and meaning of
Antony Gormley's figurative Art which
has revitalized the human figure in
sculpture**

by

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**Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and Design
and Complementary Studies in a candidacy for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts, Fine Art Sculpture**

1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem.

2. The second step is to analyze the problem.

3. The third step is to develop a solution.

4. The fourth step is to implement the solution.

5. The fifth step is to evaluate the results.

6. The sixth step is to document the process.

7. The seventh step is to review the process.

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INTRODUCTION

The work of contemporary artists has taken leave of the issues that concerned their predecessors in the Western tradition. It is as if we needed one pair of eyes to look at the achievements of a medieval, or renaissance master, and a different pair to look at and make sense of, the work produced by an artist of our own time. We can develop stereo-typed ways of seeing, which appear to fit the works of our illustrious past, and cannot accommodate those of the present. But the genuinely creative approach renews the appeal of the past artist, at the same time as it engages with the challenge of the contemporary period.

Modernism with its commitment to abstractism, seemed to put a full stop after many centuries of figurative art, and proposed a new starting point for the visual artist. What has been destroyed is a particular way of interpreting the mimetic role of a work of art, its status as a copy of the elements in the external world with technologies such as virtual reality, photography film and television, we can no longer accept the crude principle that the excellence of a work of art, depends on the degree of perfection with which it succeeds in simulating a refinement in the real world.

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In this thesis I will be discussing the work of Antony Gormley, his influences, development and the meaning behind his work, which has revitalized the human figure in sculpture. Antony Gormley's work is based on religious philosophy rather than a humanist one. The sources of his work are rooted in both Christian and Buddhist spiritual traditions, and his work resonates when placed in this context. Similar philosophies have engaged many artists this century, but Gormley has stayed clear of mysticism, and realists his ideas freshly and intensively. What Gormley proposes is that the human body is one amongst many, from the cellular to the celestial, and that all bodies are subject to the conditions of sculpture. I will be discussing why Gormley uses the figure in his work, and also how he returns to the fundamentals of sculpture, through the body in the relation of mass to space, which is important in his work, and how he tests our understanding of sculptures European history. Body becomes a vibrant word when used to refer to Gormley's sculpture. The human body becomes a vehicle through which to make art that explores questions which are essentially spiritual rather than emotional and material.

In Chapter One I will deal with the influences of Gormley's life, which are important in the development of his work.

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In Chapter Two I will be discussing his use of the figure in relation to the Western tradition of figurative sculpture, and the materials he uses and their significance, and I will show how Gormley has revitalized the figure in sculpture.

In Chapter Three I will be discussing examples of his work from the lead body cases, the terracotta Field, the concrete pieces and the expansion works and how Gormley has been gradually moving away from his use of lead.

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CHAPTER ONE

To discuss the sculpture of Antony Gormley we first have to look at his past, to the influences which shaped him as an artist and person. His grandfather was from Derry and moved to England before World War I. Gormley's father remained highly influenced by his Irish heritage and his strict Catholic upbringing. Antony was brought under the same influences. He was sent to a Benedictine boarding school outside of London. This spiritual discipline of Gormley's youth has continued to shape part of his outlook. His grandmother, a German, was a warm personality, and was nature centred and conscious of healthy living. Her respect for the material world and its organic processes found expression in Antony's belief in the body as a ground for all experience, the temple of life. So while his strict Catholic upbringing influenced a certain idealistic and spiritual discipline, he also inherited an impulse to celebrate the direct experience of being in the world, and the primacy of sense and experience as a form of knowledge.

Gormley studied archaeology and anthropology, and then art history as an undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge. It was during his time at Cambridge that Gormley was first exposed to the art world, through a friendship with Mark Lancaster and Michael Craig-Martin, both resident

The first part of the book is devoted to a discussion of the basic concepts of the theory of the firm. It begins with a review of the classical theory of the firm, which is based on the assumption of perfect competition and profit maximization. This theory is then extended to the case of imperfect competition, where the firm has some degree of market power. The second part of the book is devoted to a discussion of the theory of the firm in the context of the modern economy. It begins with a review of the classical theory of the firm, which is based on the assumption of perfect competition and profit maximization. This theory is then extended to the case of imperfect competition, where the firm has some degree of market power. The third part of the book is devoted to a discussion of the theory of the firm in the context of the modern economy. It begins with a review of the classical theory of the firm, which is based on the assumption of perfect competition and profit maximization. This theory is then extended to the case of imperfect competition, where the firm has some degree of market power.

artists at Kings College. It was also while at Cambridge that Gormley began to show his independence from current fashions, by writing a thesis on Stanely Spencer, the twentieth century mystic, whose painting was ignored by academics and artists. Gormley subscribed to the same ideals as Spencer, the development of human conscious as life's purpose.

Gormley's desire to transcend the limitations of his schooling, and his strict catholic upbringing brought him to India, where he sought to rediscover himself. Gormley became interested in Buddhism and began to study under the Buddhist meditation teacher known as Geonka, who taught him Vipassana. Vipassana is a meditational method based on awareness and attention, avoiding metaphysical speculation and encourages the development of 'sati' or 'mindfulness', a kind of unselfconscious awareness of the present moment. Vipassana meditation brings attention to bear on the ways in which ideas and sensations arise and disappear, detachment and freedom are generated. Vipassana emphasizes what is called 'bare attention' through a non-mediated attention to body states, removing one from the sense of cultural conditions, and replacing them with the immediate presence of the body and its function as the site for the flow of events. A belief that relates to the ideas underlying Gormley's sculpture.

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"From one moment I escaped monastic education I was looking for another world view. I left the sacraments, and yet up to that point, Catholicism had been the central moral and life supporting structure and remains a vital witness".

Gormley (McGonagle, 1993, p.4)

The energy in Gormley's work is in the contrast between Christianity and Buddhism, Eastern and Western.

Returning to England in the 1970's at a time when art and discourse about art, was highly focused on language, Gormley began a three year degree course in sculpture at the Central School of Art in London, but moved after one year to Goldsmiths College. Gormley's meditation technique and his experiences in India, greatly influenced him. Gormley was provided with a way of experiencing true nature, and looking at the relationship between mind and matter, he now had a greater insight into life, and he started making art questioning life's purposes.

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CHAPTER TWO

Since the Renaissance the representation of the body, in the Western tradition of figurative sculpture has been centred on the expressiveness of movement. The relationship between mind and body or spirit and matter was conventionally expressed through the tension of man struggling against the forces of nature, trying to impose order. Dramatic sculptures suggesting human potential can only be expressed, through the depiction of movement works such as Bernini's 'David', or the 'Laocoo', this expression had always been mimetic until the onset of modernism.

Gormley in contrast through his work conflicts with the opinion that movement, however dramatic conveys human potential, or the metaphysical tension between body and spirit. Rodin's 'Age of Bronze', might have momentarily recovered from the trap of mimesis by presenting a moment of becoming. What started as a heroic image of a soldier ends up being internalized, and becomes a moment of self consciousness with the body, a theme very central to Gormley's sculpture. Rodin's sculpture connects being with the sky, the head always raised addresses itself to the sky suggesting human potential but not through movement.

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Gormley shows us that it is possible to convey the notion of embodiment without mimesis, and having to describe movement or exact physiognomy. Gormley's sculptures are not in the same expressive tradition as Rodin or Bernini, instead of the body being a mirror of the soul Gormley's body cases are containers a difference which is emphasized by the way in which they are made, they are not surrogate human beings.

"I didn't simply want to continue where Rodin left off, but re-invent the body from the inside, from the point of view of existence".

Gormley (Gombrich 1995, p.10)

It has become important to Gormley's sculpture that his body cases are very formalized, to such an extent that they become familiar motifs, they give away their primary identity, their resemblance to Gormley, for a symbolic function. Gormley's sculptures are index's like a death mask on a foot print it remains a material trace of the referent. Each cast is taken from the artist's own body, and through a particular choice of attitude or gesture his sculptures are given their own identities, and the context in which they are placed give us a new refreshing perspective when dealing with figurative sculptures.

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When looking at Gormley's work Jacob Epstein should be borne in mind. Epstein in the 1940's found himself isolated because of his rejection of the modernist abstraction of Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore. Gormley like Epstein wants to challenge British art. Epstein's sculpture 'Lazarus', 1947 an image of a decayed body brought back to life conflicted with the ideal heroic tradition of sculpture in which perfect bodies are presented in perfect poses, a tradition derived from the Greeks, where beauty is one of the prime considerations. The effect of 'Lazarus', is strangely parallel to that of Gormley's lead coated sculptures, because the plastic well baked skin in Epstein's sculpture is instinct with lively motion the same can be said of Gormley's sculptures, where the lead skin does not erase the impulse of life. Gormley's work reinterprets not only the context Epstein's 'Lazarus' is placed, but also the strange and compelling tension invested in the sculpture. The body seems to force itself from within, so the formal patterns of the stone folds appear ready to flake away in response to the internal pressure.

Gormley's development as a sculptor over the past twenty years is not merely an autonomous process, which could be traced through a gradual evolution of techniques. It has been a process of understanding, and that understanding has been a measure of his participation in the revaluation of

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the Western figurative tradition and in the more recent history of modernism.

"The theme of the figure can embrace anything from the tortures of the Crucifixion to the Tesco shopper, from the surrealist dummy to the immaculate physique of universal man... the erotic, neurotic, the aesthetic, the academic, the political, the monumental, the repertoire goes on and on. The figure is so broad a subject, and any up-right stick of six feet can be read as a standing figure - that isn't a subject at all".

(Walker, 1984, p.3)

British sculpture in the early years of the 1970's was remarkable for its urban sensibility, Tony Cragg and Bill Woodrow, worked with the detritus of contemporary life, Richard Deacon and Alison Wilding more formalist interests. Gormley's concerns were more like those of Amish Kapoor being centered on the dichotomy between the physical and the intellectual. Gormley's work is not comfortable, or appropriate to be seen in modernist context, his works relates more to Indian sculpture and iconic Western art. Gormley shows a kinship with the ideals of Indian sculpture through his own work. In India the formal element in art is considered to be purely a mental activity, and the idea 'prama' the existence of 'types' and archetypes is the basis of a properly conceived design. What medieval

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2. The second part is a detailed description of the methods used.

3. The third part is a discussion of the results obtained, and a comparison with previous work. The fourth part is a conclusion, and a list of references.

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Christian mystic's and India aestheticians have in common is a belief that reality becomes perceptible, when the intelligible and sensible meet in the unity of being. This unity like that achieved through yoga or mystical practices, is the realization of identity of consciousness with the object of attention. Gormley's sculpture is based on his understanding of both spiritual traditions. Gormley's sculpture can be compared to Southern Indian bronzes, for example the 6th century 'Jan' sculpture. Stillness as if in contemplation, a quality that Indian sculptures possess is also a quality possessed by the majority of Gormley's sculptures. Gormley's sculptures can also be compared to medieval reliquary for example 'The Foot of St. Allard', 1331. This relic is both a mould and a container. It contains relics therefore the inside is crucial, like Gormley's sculpture we cannot see the inside but we are aware it contains something inside, however Gormley's sculptures differ, in the way that he does not use the body to indicate presence of body, instead his body cases are more like shadows.

Gormley has turned to the body, in an attempt to find a language that will transcend the limitations of race, creed and language, but will be about the rootedness of identity. His sculptures are an invitation to recognize a place, and a base of consciousness. He wants the body to be a sensing mechanism, so our response to the work does not have to be pre-informed.

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Gormley's initial quest, which was for knowledge and understanding of the world around him, he worked with objects which were cut open, or their skins removed, in the beginning nothing was hidden, but as objects become covered nothing was revealed. Although it was a short step from the encasing of objects in sheets of led, to the encasing of figures in the same material. This kind of work identifies an interest shared by many British sculptors. There has been a shift from structure, the skeleton as the frame work of the body. Today there is a fascination with surface, with skin as the envelope of form. Antony Gormley's observations about skin are the most enduring in his work. Skin in his work is a container for personal space. The skin is the visible appearance, the surface which establishes the boundary, the defining edge, from the volume within, to the surface without, Gormley's sculptures test the boundaries of skin.

Gormley sculptures despite their metaphysical underpinnings, are far from other worldly, his sculptures deal with what is seen as the deep space of the interior body, but also he is concerned with gravity, as the attraction that binds us to the earth. His works key strength is in his determination to accept nothing, until it has been lived and internalized, it is this way of working that sets Gormley apart from traditional ways of using the figure.

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There is a performative element in the way Gormley makes his figurative sculptures. His project is as much about the making of his sculptures, as it is about the finished piece. There are two stages in the making of his figures, the first and most important, because it is the foundation of his work, is the making of the mould, the second stage is the adding of the skins. Each of his works start with a real body in real time, and comes from a real event, it is like taking a photograph. He selects the position for a sculpture, and is then wrapped in plaster covered scrim. He then has to make a concentrated act of attention, gradually the plaster dries and he is held in place.

"One of the bases of my work is that it has to come from a real individual experience, I can't be inside anyone else's body, so it's important that I use my own".

Gormley (Gombrich, 1995, p.18)

Gormley's project is about making the work from the inside, internalizing it, rather than manipulating it from the outside. He uses his body as an instrument, and also as the material.

"It's a bit like taking an X-ray. Breath in and hold, you are aware that there is a transition, that something is happening within you, is registering externally".

Gormley (Biggs, 1994, p.20)

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Lead has become popular as a sculptural material. In the past it has been used by the likes of Jannis Kouenellis and Joseph Beuys. But it has not been used with such single-minded consistency as by Gormley, lead has become a signature material for his work, a uniformity that links all his body cases together, even as other materials such as terracotta, steel and concrete have entered his work.

Gormley makes his lead figures by placing sheets of lead over the plaster body casts which have been reinforced with fibre glass, when the lead is in place it is soldered, leaving a grid of horizontal and vertical seams like those you would see on a map giving you a fixed position in an area. The purpose of Gormley's grids is similar to a map, they are grids that locate the body cases within the context that they are placed, the seams conveying to us the notion of mapping. Other than the seams, all other detail on the figure is erased, toes and fingers are joined and even the facial features are smoothed. The lead bodies become ghostly figures of humanity, free from time, place and other cultural attributes, and devoid of individual personalities, a key point in demonstrating his rejection of the Western tradition's ideal figure. The nakedness of his figures, further removes them from culture, placing them in a nature that is comparatively timeless, it also reduces them to a childlike, and innocent appearance.

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2. The second part of the report is a detailed description of the study area. It includes information about the location of the study area, the population of the study area, and the characteristics of the study area. It also discusses the data sources used in the study.

3. The third part of the report is a detailed description of the study results. It includes information about the findings of the study, the conclusions drawn from the findings, and the implications of the findings. It also discusses the limitations of the study and the need for further research.

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Deprived of personality and culture they seem latent representing a state, both before personality and culture have been developed, there is the potential of becoming in all his leaden works as if a presence is waiting to emerge from the lead cases.

The heaviness of the lead body cases, can be seen as emphasizing the body as a gravitational tomb, binding the spirit to the earth, while at the same time lead has alchemical associations. The desire to transmute lead to gold in alchemical theory, a substance can be stripped down of all its qualities, by a special burning and returned to a featureless prime matter, and reborn as a new substance.

"Lead is ordinary, malleable, dense, undecaying and permanent. It also has a mercurial property that allows for the creation of surfaces, that reflect light while absorbing it".

Gormley (Hutchinson, 1995, p.53)

Gormley does not let the lead oxidize, so he can maintain its reflective surface. Lead also has protective qualities, lead can be seen as a shield, visually impenetrable and also impenetrable by radio-activity, it has remained of central importance to Gormley's sculptures because of these qualities.

1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem.

2. The second step is to gather information about the problem.

3. The third step is to analyze the information and determine the cause of the problem.

4. The fourth step is to develop a plan to solve the problem.

5. The fifth step is to implement the plan and monitor the results.

6. The sixth step is to evaluate the results and determine if the problem has been solved.

7. The seventh step is to document the results and share them with others.

8. The eighth step is to review the process and make improvements for the future.

9. The ninth step is to continue to monitor the results and make adjustments as needed.

10. The tenth step is to conclude the process and report the findings.

11. The eleventh step is to reflect on the experience and learn from it.

12. The twelfth step is to apply the lessons learned to future problems.

13. The thirteenth step is to share the results with others.

14. The fourteenth step is to continue to improve the process.

15. The fifteenth step is to conclude the process.

16. The sixteenth step is to report the findings.

17. The seventeenth step is to reflect on the experience.

18. The eighteenth step is to apply the lessons learned.

19. The nineteenth step is to share the results.

20. The twentieth step is to continue to improve.

In Gormley's drawings the body is not so much seen from the outside as felt from the inside, the experience of innerliness, within the container of the body lies a world of feelings and emotions. Bodies free float as in Earth 1994 or Into 1994, as if in the womb on a world of darkness, they interact

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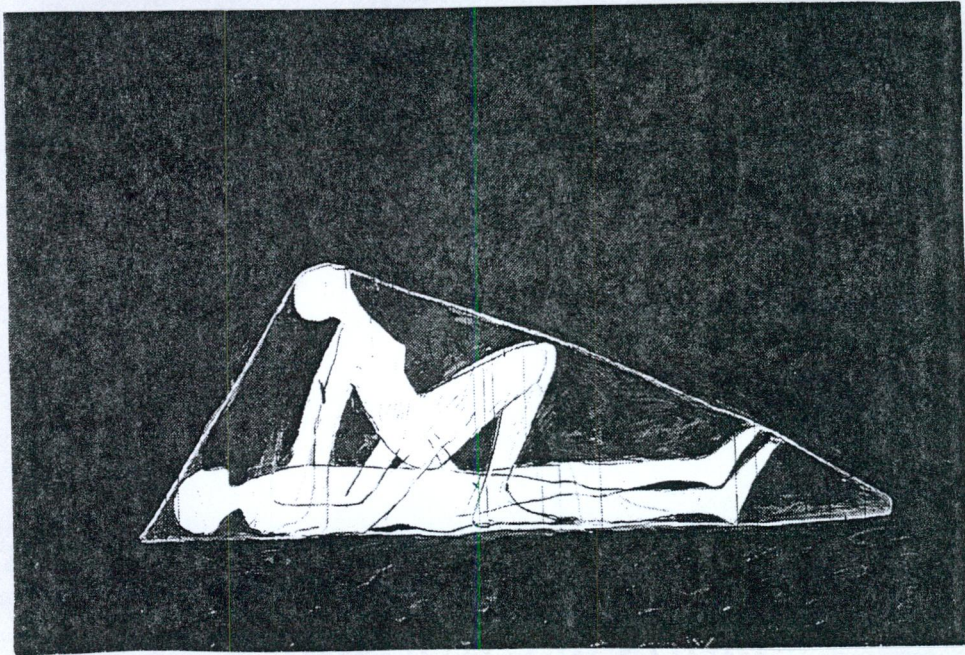


Fig. 1 **Untitled 1981**

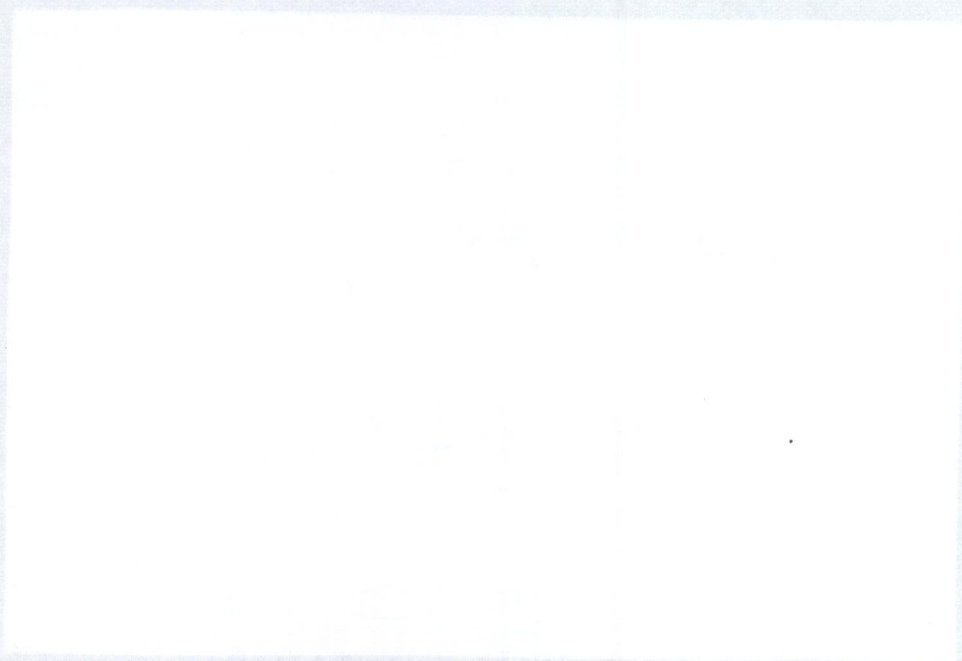




Fig. 2. EARTH 1994



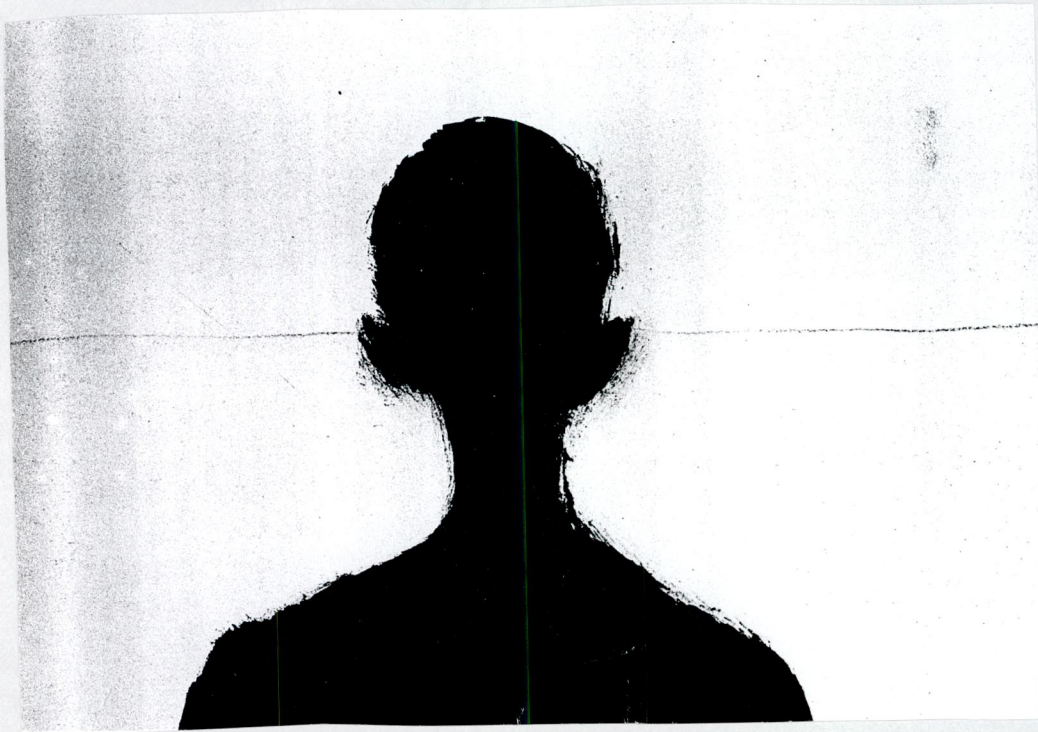
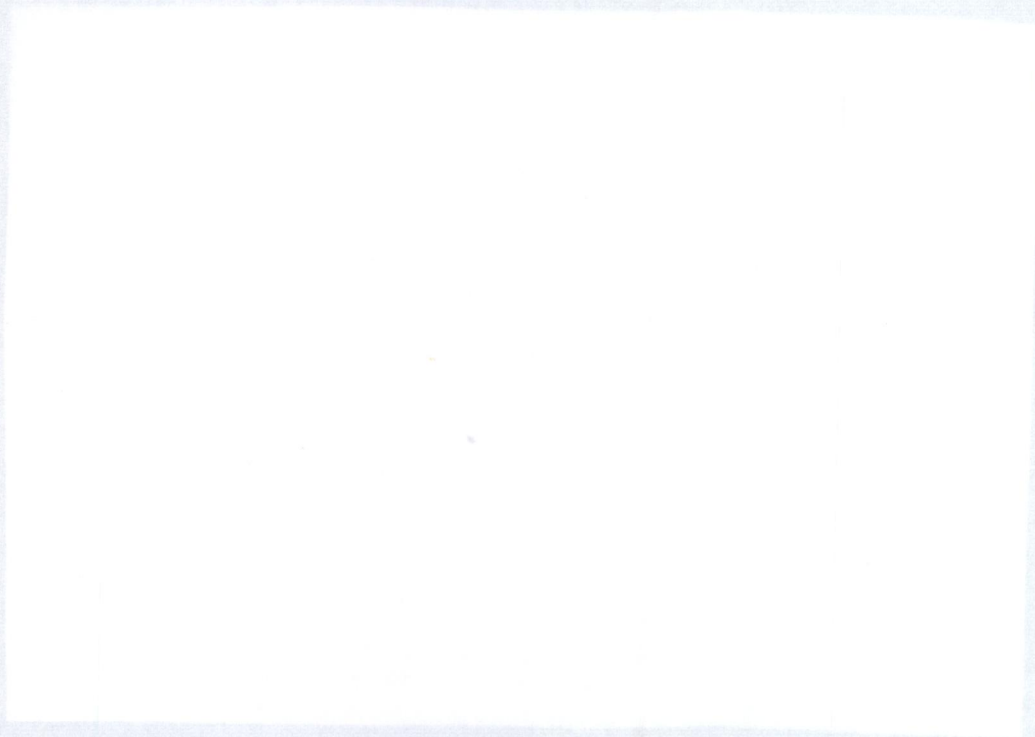


Fig. 3. Home and the World 1985



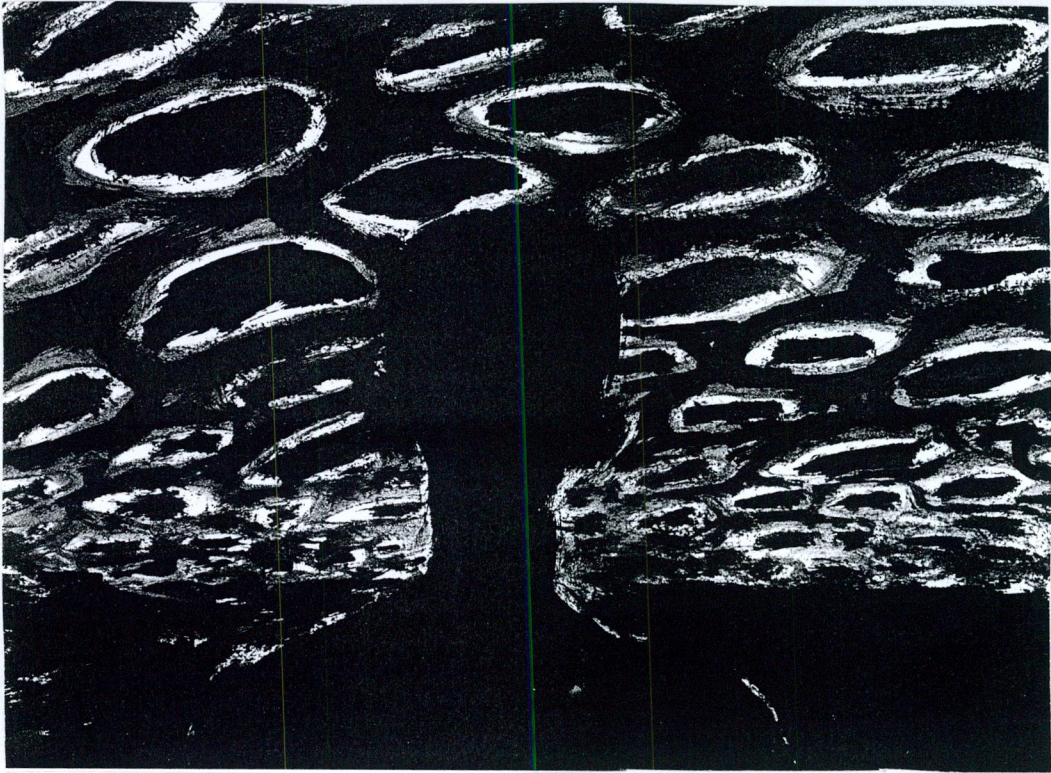


Fig 4. **UNTITLED 1983**



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with each other sometimes sexually as in Untitled 1981, but yet they remain fundamentally alone. They also seem to have overcome the division between body and spirit. A recurring image in Gormley's drawings is a solitary person turned away from the viewer and facing open natural expanses of water and sky as in Untitled 1985 and Home and the World, 1985. These drawings are reminiscent of Casper Friedrich, but because they are so dark they also recall the world of Edvard Munch. They are a direct contrast from his sculptures, which in part act as neutral receptacles for the viewer's own feelings and projections, the inner space of Gormley's drawings are melochic and attest to the vulnerability of openness. His drawings portray the darkness of the subconscious.

Gormley's sculptures revitalized the figure for several different reasons, his genuinely creative approach renews the appeal of the past, but it also engages with the challenge of this contemporary period. We have come a long way from the technologies of Rodin's time, we lead very different life styles and have a different system of ideals and values.

Gormley returns to the past, to help him re-invent the body for himself. He reevaluates the past and re-affirms a return to figurative sculpture.

Gormley's sculptures are based on religious philosophies, Buddhism and Christian spiritual traditions underlie the foundations of his work.

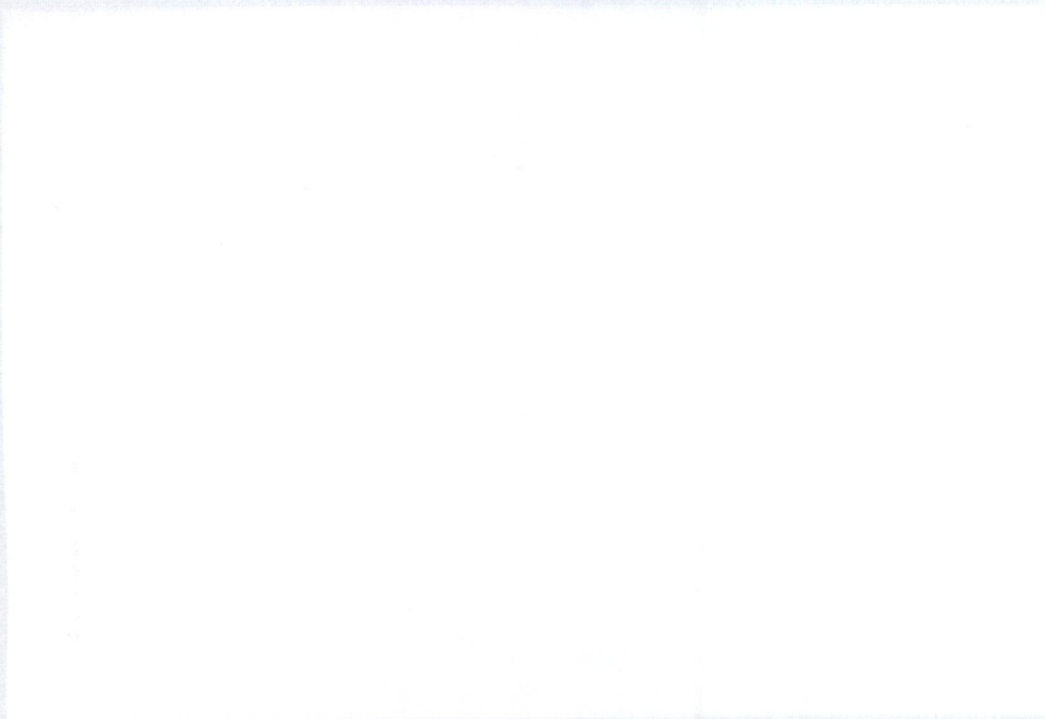
Gormley's sculptures all become subject to the conditions of sculpture. He returns to the fundamentals through the body in relation to mass and space. His sculptures are central to the revitalization of the figurative tradition because of the dynamic relationship, which he establishes between the work and its spatial context. Gormley also has a unique way of dealing with body in his sculptures. The body becomes the vehicle through which he can make Art, that reflects presence and yet is about 'being'. Within his leaden body cases there is the presence of life giving internal pressure on the skin, his sculptures do not erase the impulse of life. Gormley's sculptures revitalize the figure because they are about space, and containers of space volume within and surface without, testing the boundaries of skin. Gormley's sculptures are internalized by the artist by working from the inside during casting, registering pressure to give form to the outside lead skin, this gives life to the lead skins. Manipulating his figures from the inside instead of the outside, Gormley's body becomes an instrument, another way in which he differs from the making of traditional figurative works.

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Fig. 5. SLEEPING PLACES 1974



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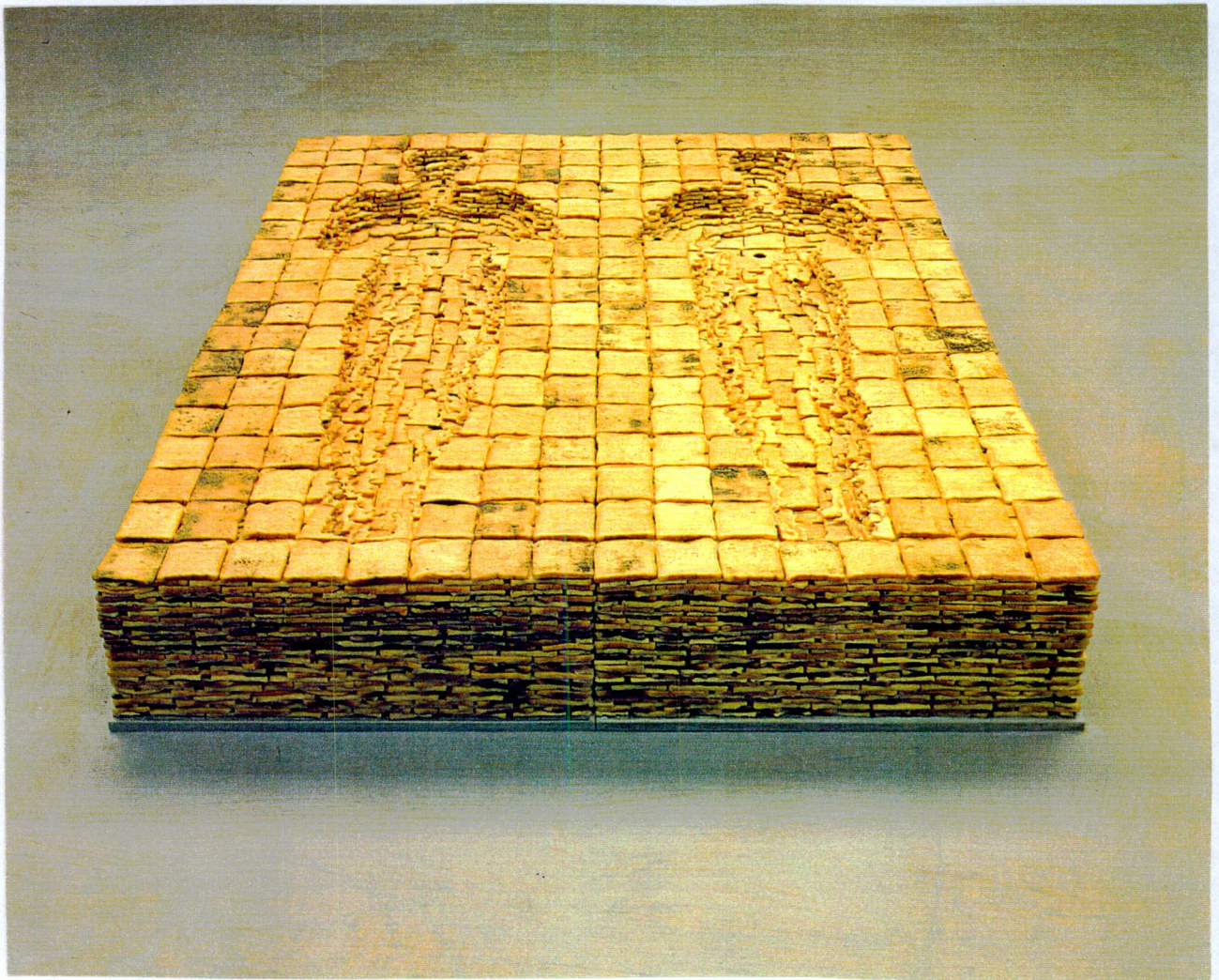
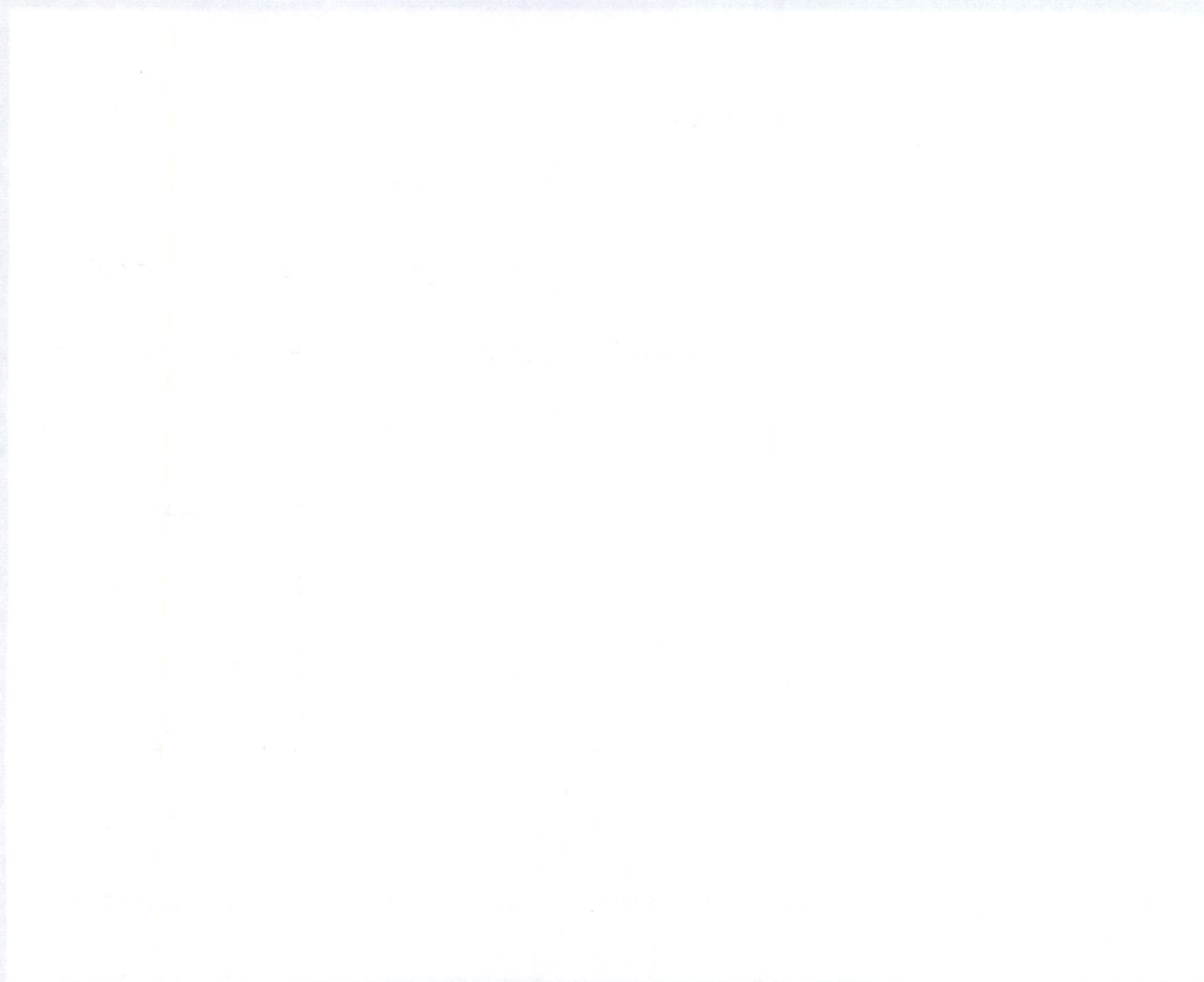


Fig. 6. **BED 1980**



CHAPTER THREE

Common to all of Gormley's earlier works was his approach to the body, and its absence. Some of his earlier works have links with minimalism like Sleeping Places 1974 and Bed 1980, they have formal links with the likes of Robert Morris, Carl Andre and Mario Merz.

While at the Central School of Art London, Gormley made his first figurative pieces Sleeping Places 1974, they were made by draping plaster soaked clothes over cloth over lying models' bodies. These were very formal pieces and as I said earlier the body was absent. These pieces were prompted by the memories of people sleeping rough in train stations in India, entirely wrapped in cloth. The sculptural interest comes from the resulting forms, the fact that they both expose the presence within, at the same time hiding it. Gormley's sculptures seem to have been already pre-occupied with edges and boundaries, meditations on the way in which a single membrane may both insulate and connect, conceal and reveal.

The human form appeared in negative form in Bed 1980, made from stacks of white coated in wax. Gormley consumed his own volume in bread leaving a hollow identical to his body's volume, half his volume is on one

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side of the bed and half is on the other, so the empty volume would be in the centre if the piece was folded over on itself like a tomb. It took Gormley three months to consume the imprints volume in bread. There is a suggestion of the Catholic sacrament and also, the empty tomb of Christ comes to mind. The empty tomb is a symbol of resurrection, and re-elevation to the realm of spirit, the 'bed' representing the nourishment and growth of the body, and at the same time, representing it's death, it's absence, it's tomb.

"I came to use bread as a material, because it is something that's with us all the time. What I like about bread is that it is one of the oldest manufactured things; it was part of the Neolithic revolution and it has been the same ever since. I'd been working with bread for two years before it become obvious to me that it was ridiculous to be treating it as if it were wood. I mean in the sense of sawing it up. So I started using my teeth thinking of bread more as a food substance".

Gormley (Blazcyk, 1981, p.17)

In Bed we become what we eat, our shapes are present in the absence of bread.

"Bed is very much about describing the way we are supported, by what is outside us, by making an image of substance out of what is normally inside us".

Gormley (Blazcyk, 1981, p.18)

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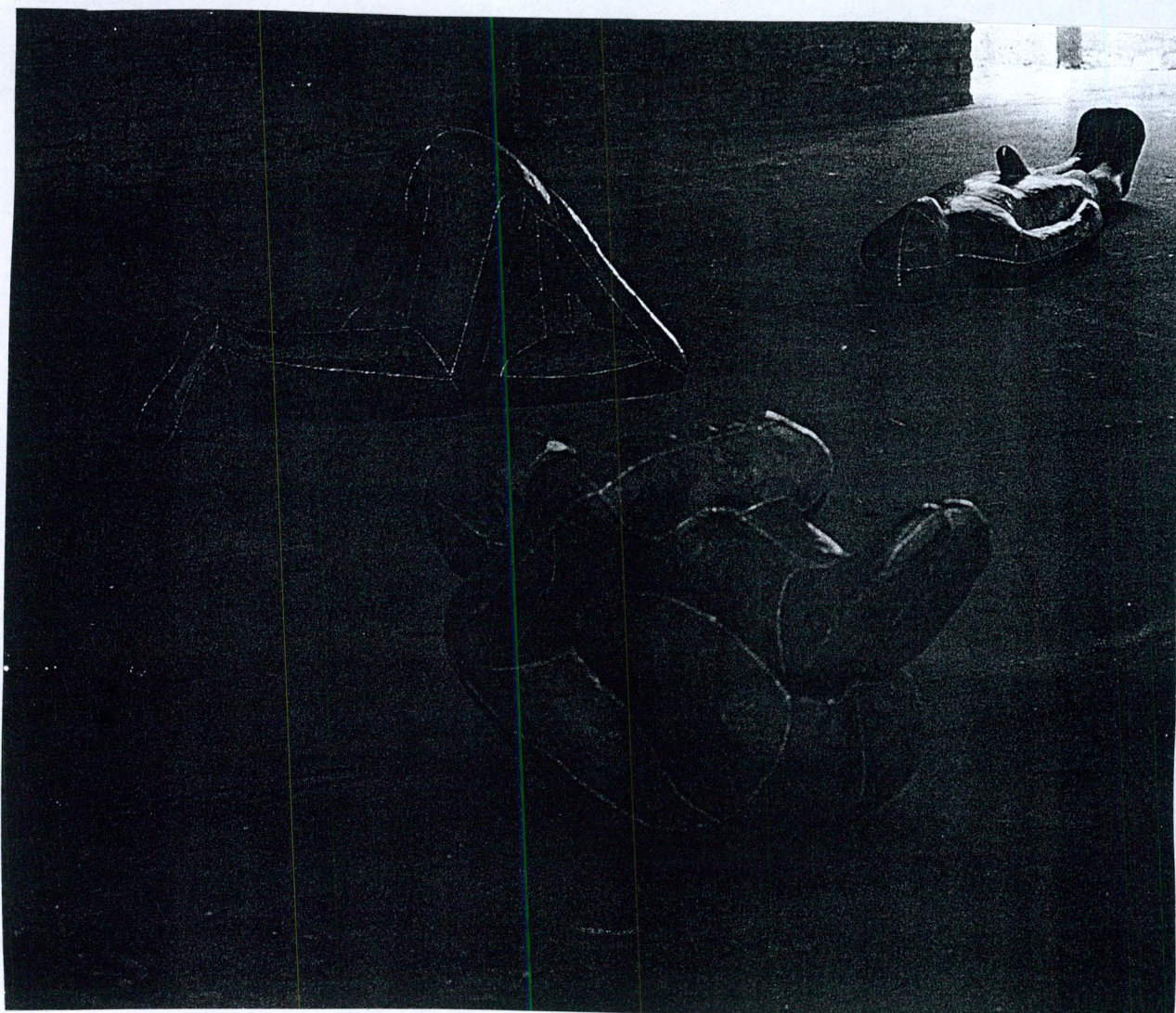
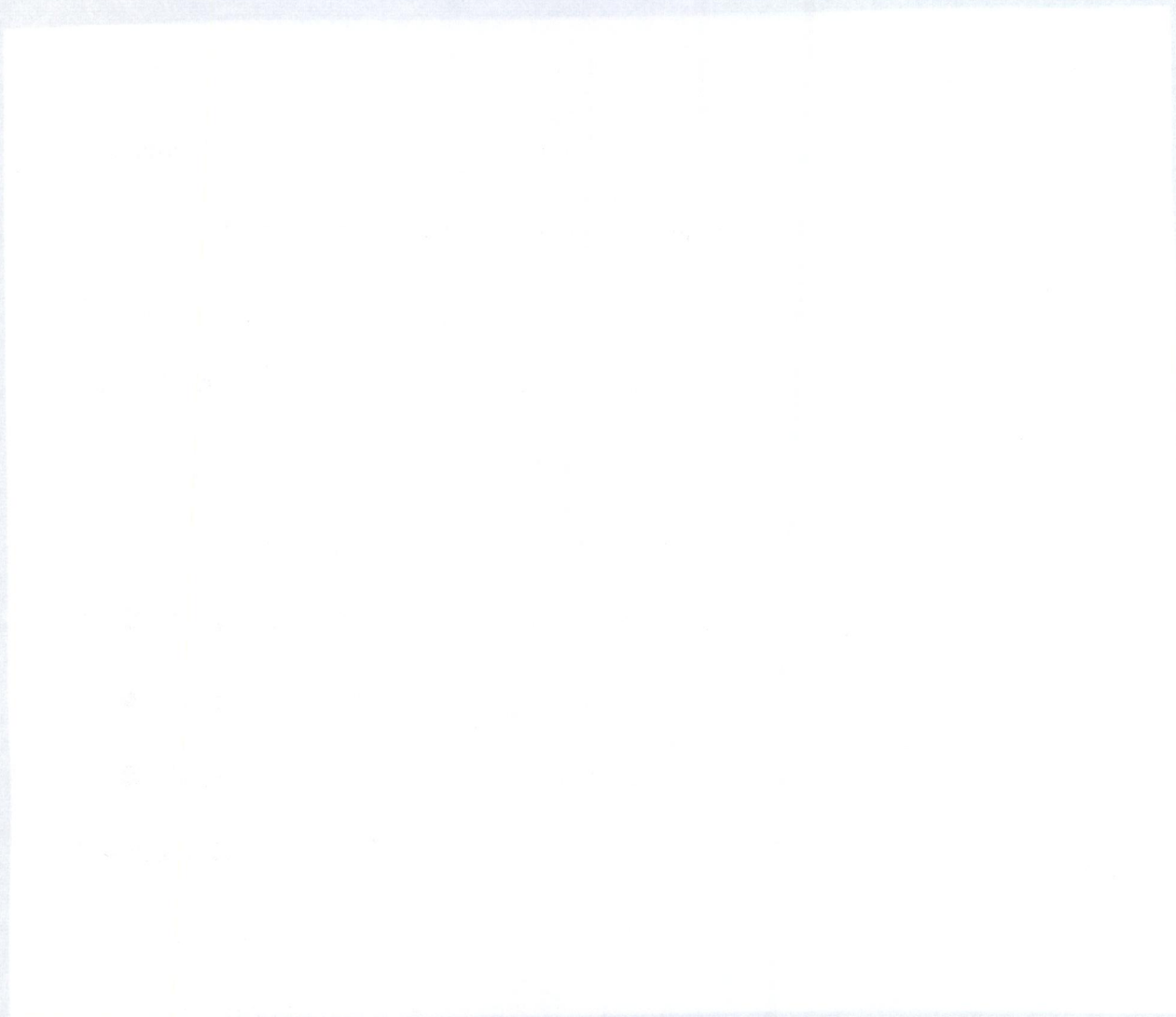


Fig. 7. THREE WAYS: MOULD, HOLE AND PASSAGE 1981



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Three Ways: Mould Hole and Passage 1981 was his prototype for a working method, that has formed a large part of his output. The three figures forming Three Ways have holes corresponding to the body's orifices, which suggest interaction between the outside world and the presence within the leaden skin. The three forms take on the emblems of birth, life and death. The 'dead' figure displays an erect penis and the 'birth', foetus figure is open mouthed, while the 'life' combines contemplation and provocation. Expressionless and undramatic they convey states of being.

Land Sea and Air II 1982 is one of the seminal pieces in the development of Gormley's sculpture, in which the process of Buddhist awareness is embodied, by human figures in three elemental postures, they stand, kneel and crouch, in their original setting on the seashore. This evokes completeness and harmony, and a sense of atonement with self and the world. They have a positive spirit of stillness and awareness. He has shown a preference to photograph his sculptures in natural or industrial settings away from the studio and galleries. One of the figures has an ear to the ground, another kneels with his head raised as if in awe while a third stares out to sea. This arrangement of figures and their placement, involves theatrical implications, even though Gormley has said that he does not want

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Fig. 8. LAND SEA AND AIR II





Fig. 9. VEHICLE 1987



his figures to be actors. The figures seem to be waiting in bare attention to what is happening, or about to happen to them.

Vehicle 1987 can be seen as a surrogate human being, in much the same way as medieval cathedrals were built in the image of man. The solo glider is so precisely designed as an extension of the human body, that it needs the body's weight to enable it to fly. Vehicle draws attention to what is being transported as well as how.

A Case for an Angel II 1990 is an image of a single standing figure, in place of arms there are wings which are stretched out vertically, contrasting with the contained nucleus of the body. The lead wings offer buoyancy and equilibrium to the piece.

"I don't want the work to be symbolic, I want it to be as actual as it can be , which is why my version of an angel is a rather uncomfortable mixture between aeronautics and anatomy".

Gormley (Hutchinson 1995, p.25)

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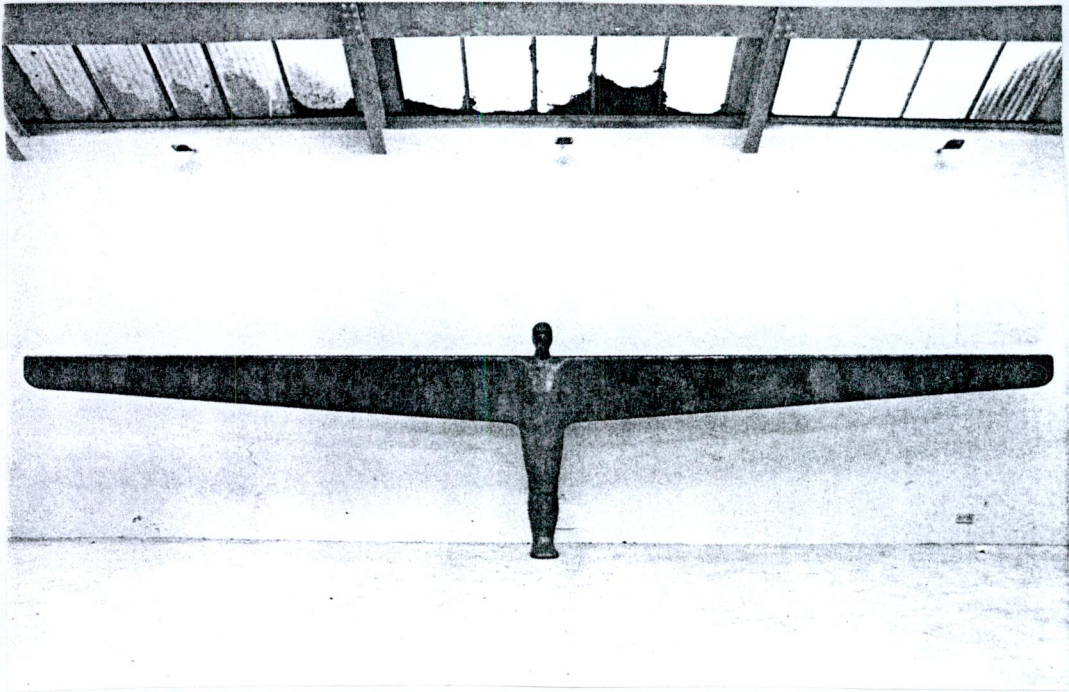


Fig. 10. CASE FOR AN ANGEL II 1990





Fig. 11. CASE FOR AN ANGEL III 1990

11 Case
for on
angel

A Case for an Angel III is an image of the body as a continuum between spirit and matter, like its predecessor it has been described as:

"A being that might be more at home in the air, brought down to earth... it is also an image of somebody who is fatally, who cannot pass through any door, and is desperately burdened".

Gormley (Njatin, 1995, p.61)

In A Case for an Angel III there is a fine balance between the feeling of reverence of the splendour of mankind's aspirations towards the infinite and the calm acceptance that, as human beings, we are necessarily grounded to the earth. When installed A Case for an Angel III can be seen as a barrier across the space it occupies, blocking out light and blocking the passage of the viewer, the top of the wings are actually at eye level and describe a kind of horizon beyond which you cannot see very much, and so you would feel trapped giving you the sense of asserting yourself against the sculpture.

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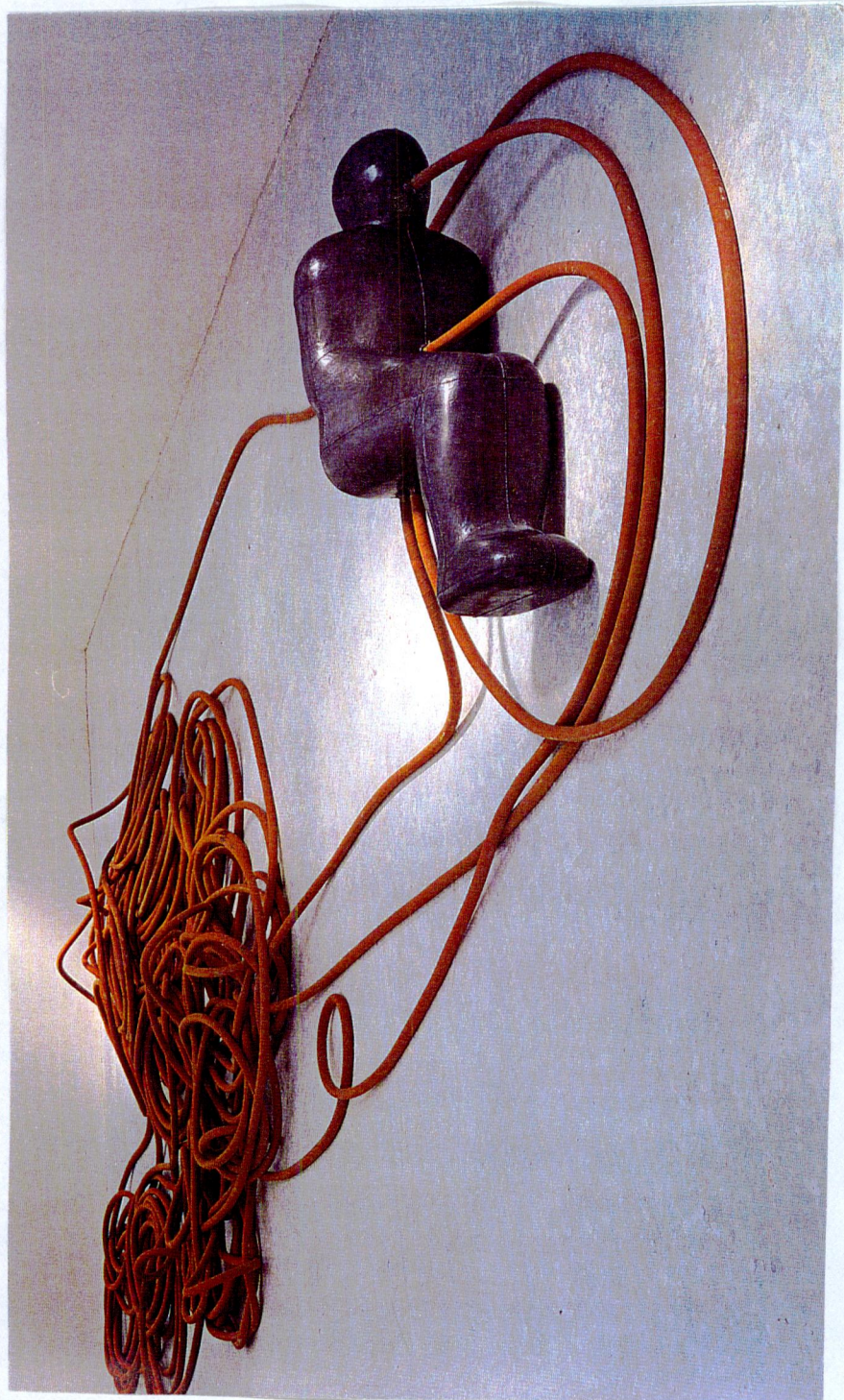


Fig. 12. SOVEREIGN STATE 1989

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Sovereign State 1989 as with other body cases, has perforations corresponding to the body's orifices, suggesting the interaction between the out and the inner.

"I wanted to make an image of power deposed, of a king pushed to the floor, lying next to his support mechanism, which echo's his biological mechanism. In expanding the body case it began to look like an astronaut's suit. In destroying the hierarchy, between the stratosphere and the earth, between the king and his subjects. One of the principle transitions of the work is to make the viewer himself the subject of the work, and that is also part of the sovereignty that the work depicts. Then I began to think about orifices and the necessary connections, and I want to connect the mouth to the anus and the penis to the navel".

Gormley (McGonagle, 1994, p.42)

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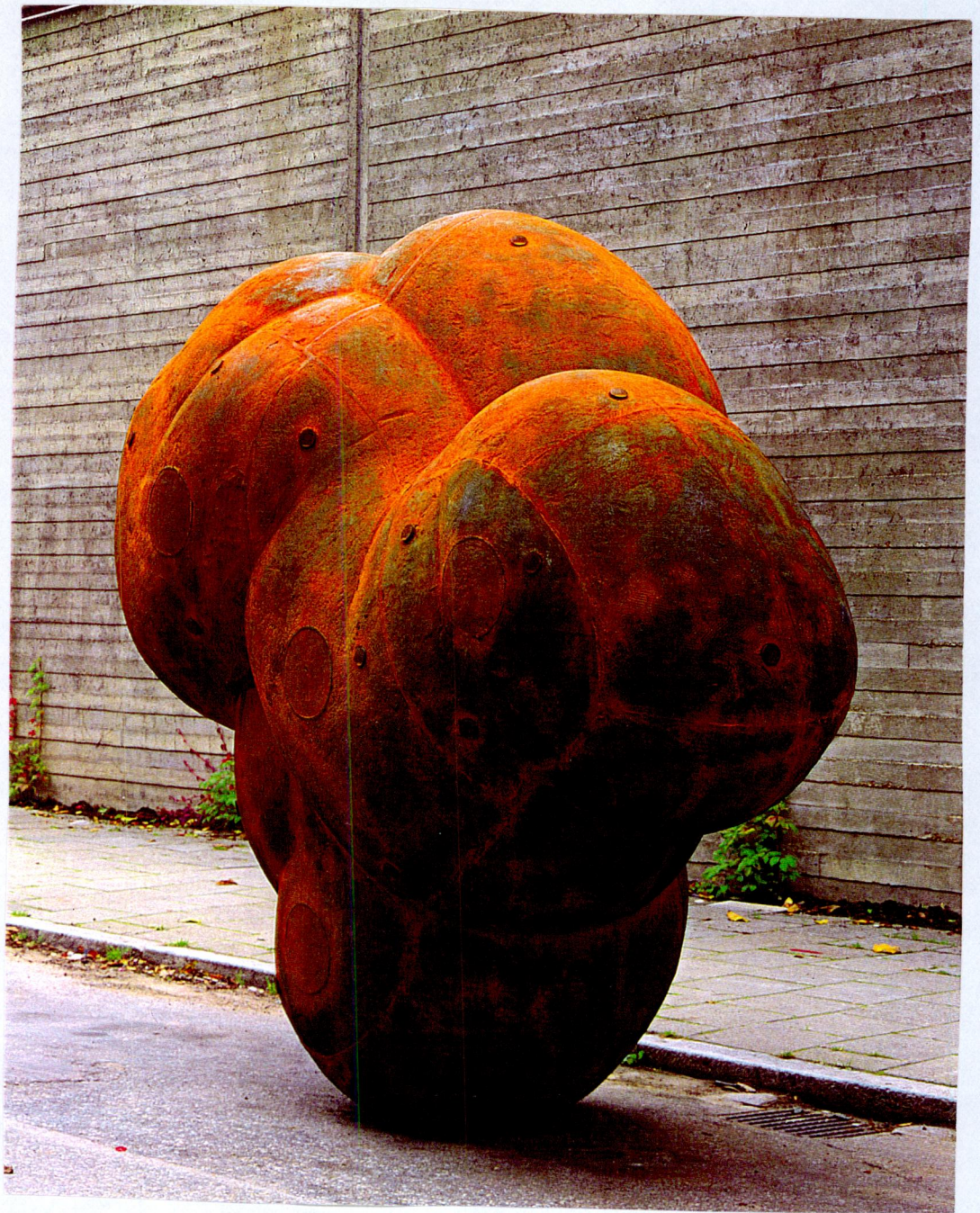


Fig. 13. STILL RUNNING 1990/93

still
running 1990/91

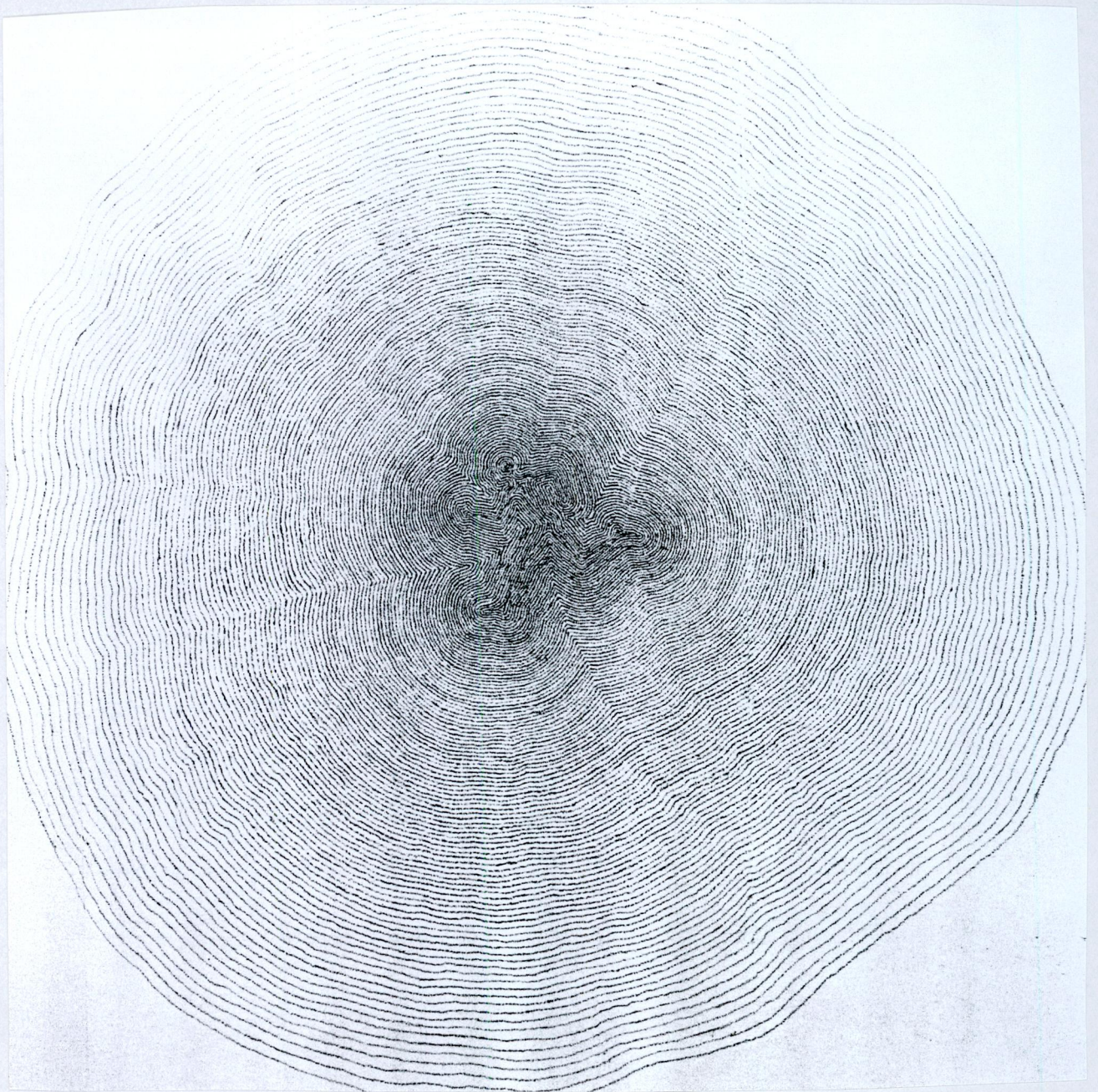


Fig. 14. EXERCISE BETWEEN BLOOD AND EARTH 1979

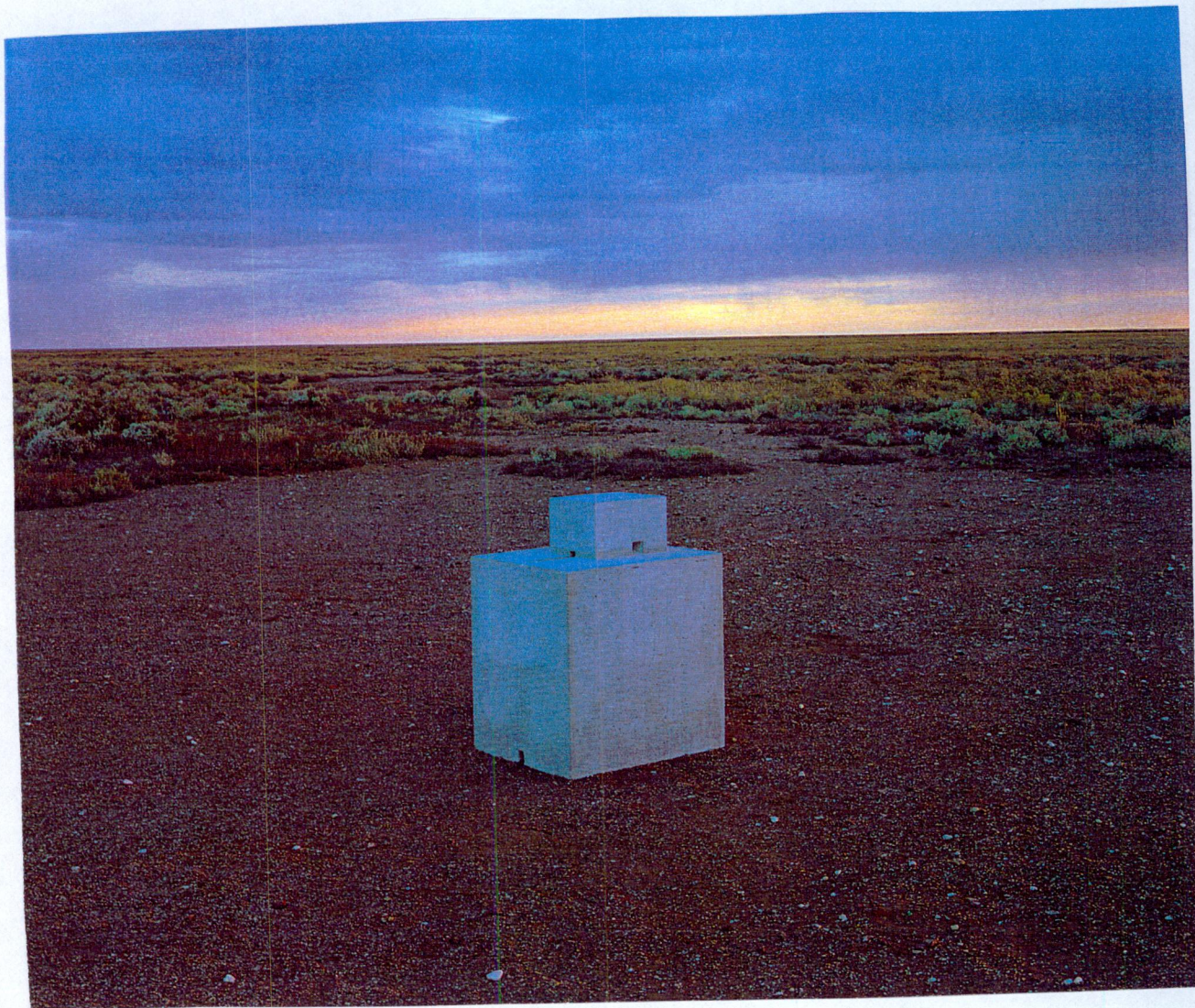


In 1990 Gormley began a group of cast iron expansion works, which decisively broke the scale of much of his sculpture. The 'expansion' pieces brought about an increased use of iron alongside lead. Iron closer to the earth than lead, responds to atmospheric changes, it rusts, corrodes and eventually disintegrates. At the same time iron is solid and relatively impenetrable. Gormley's use of iron is very effective these 'expansion' pieces. Still Running 1990/93, is a reprise of the drawing on Exercise between Blood and Earth 1979, in this early drawing the body's energy fields have been expanded to the point where they begin to resemble ripe fruits, that can barely be contained within their skins. A mould was made by the artist measuring out fixed points of the skin, an exact enlargement generalizes the shape of the body beyond existence, like the drawing. The expansion pieces represent a significant development in his work, because of their attempt to replace the body in the natural hierarchy of forms without the identification of the body, as with the lead body cases.

Gormley's works in concrete are also a manifestation of his growing desire to engage with the world.

"The block describes the space between the body and a compressed notion of architecture, and what I find makes them quite tender is that, the principal gesture of all these works is touch... The concrete has become, as it were, a necessary conditionality".

Gormley (Hutchinson 1995, p.84)



**Fig. 15. ROOM FOR THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN DESERT
1989**

ROOM FOR THE
GREAT AUSTRALIAN
DESERT 1989

His works in concrete identifies the minimum space necessary for a figure to occupy. Room for the Great Australian Desert 1989, made in the desert in Central Australia was the first piece Gormley made in concrete. A concrete container was proportioned in such a way that it would accommodate the figure of a man crouching on the ground with his knees close to his chest. The two inch shell is closed except for the body's orifices. As its title suggests it is a piece of architecture, a cell for the human body, it resembles Buddhist shrines into which people would be bricked up, leaving only one point open, as a means of communication with the outside world, a hole through which food enters and excreta exits. In these concrete works, it is as if the world has been contracted to become the second skin of the person. The concrete works forge the alliance of architectural space with body space and are close to the use of the lead body cases. They are blocks containing the space vacated by the artist's body. Flesh 1990, Sense 1991 and Home of the Heart III 1992 are concentrated catalysts for sensing space using mass to describe the spatial relationship between the artist's body and the condensed interior of the concrete rooms. These blocks set up a powerful dynamic with the space in which they are shown, engaging the body of the viewer in the interface between the space in the room, and the space in the block, the walls of the room and the rough texture of the block.

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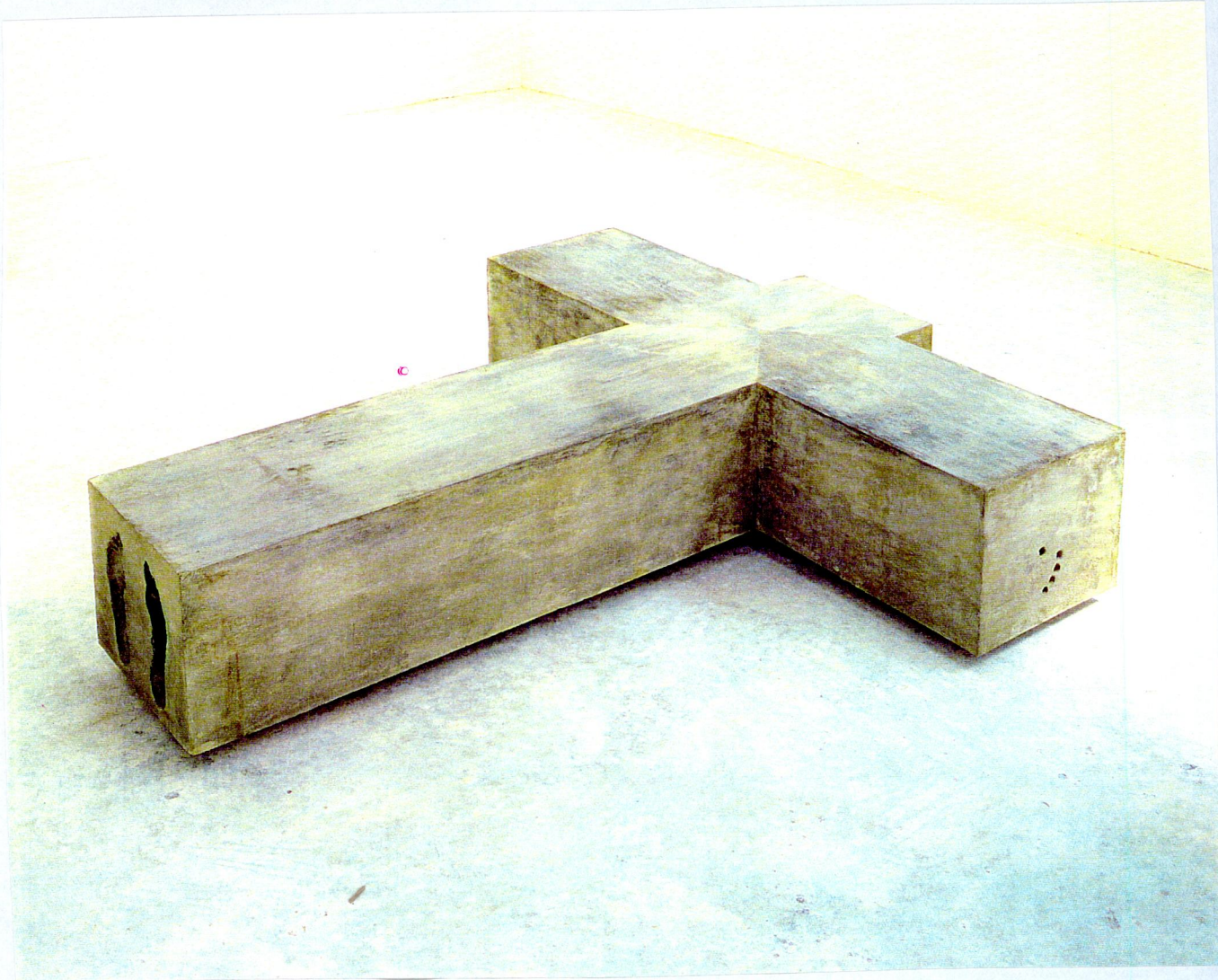


Fig. 16. FLESH 1990.

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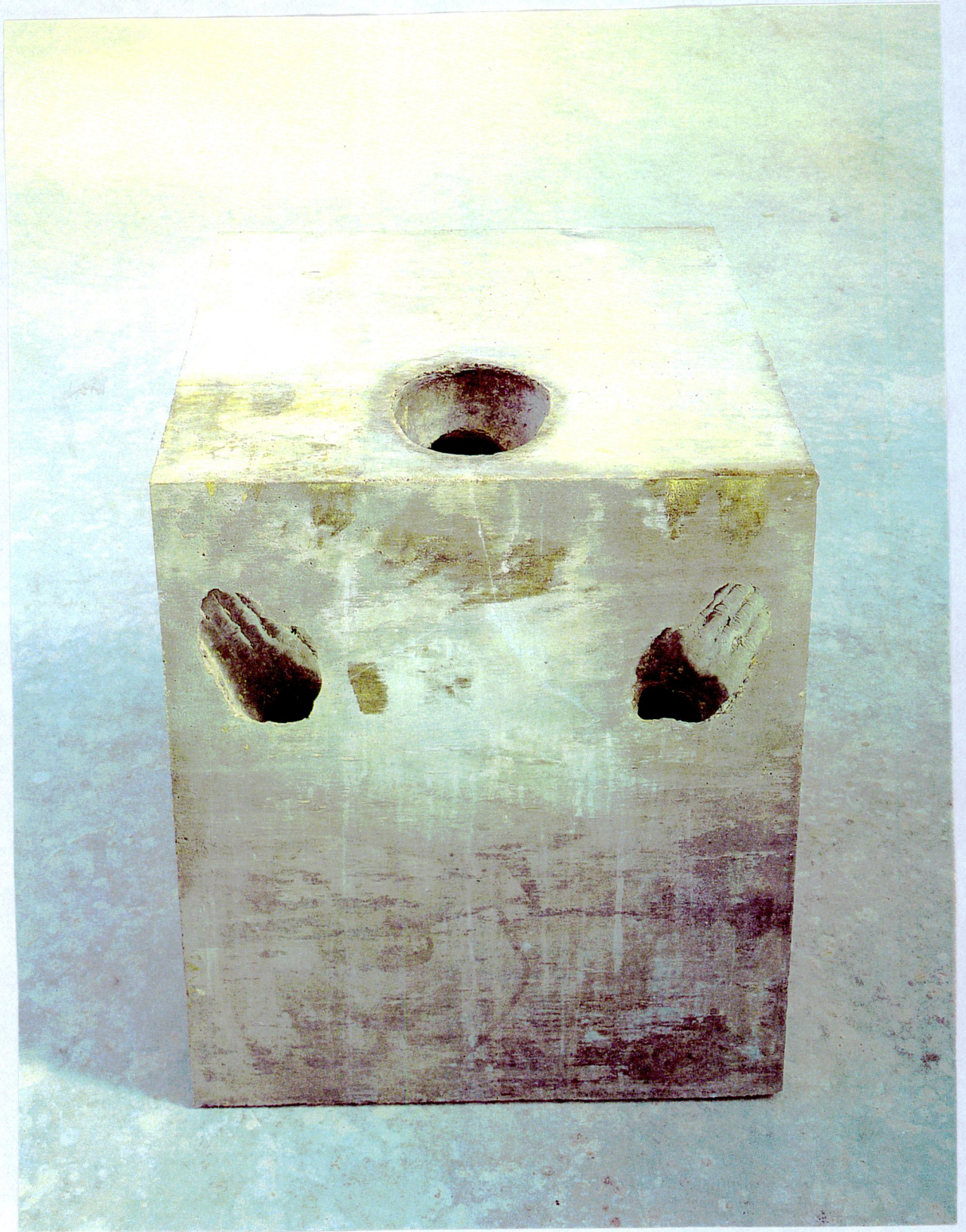


Fig. 17. **Sense 1991**

House
1991

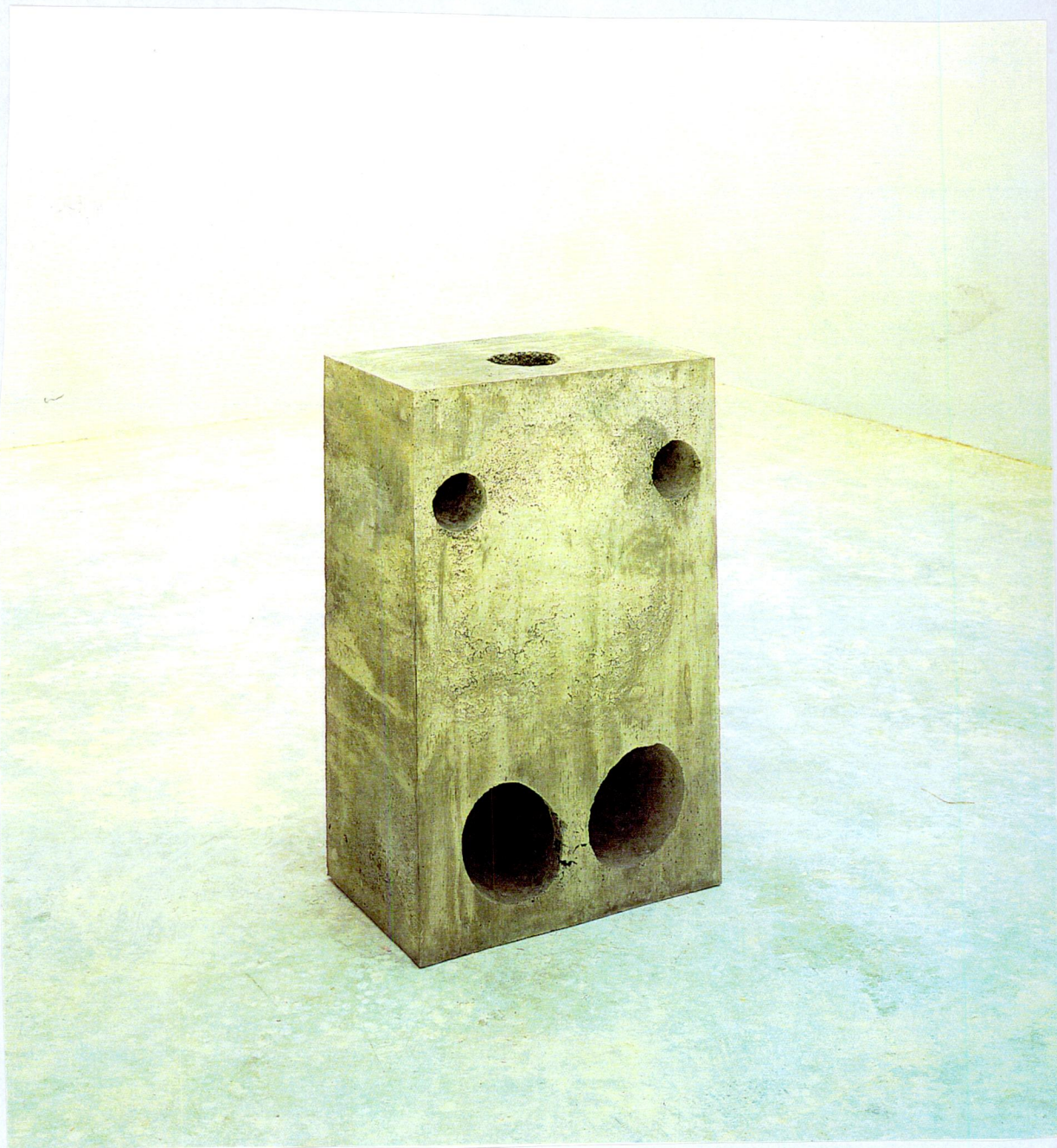


Fig. 18. HOME OF THE HEART III 1992



"The work has always identified the minimum space necessary for a man to occupy, but I think the concrete pieces do it in a more intimate, open and direct way. There is a real point of contact with the particularity of my body - slipped from life into art, with every wrinkle of the knuckles embedded in the concrete - maybe the concrete works have found a new way of engaging with the central premises of Western sculpture: the relationship of idea to raw materials, image to block".

Gormley (McGonagle, 1994, p.51)

During the 1980's Gormley began to focus on the idea of mind generated rebirth, and this brought about the use of Terracotta in his work. Terracotta has connotations for the prime matter, on the primeval mind out of which, in an ancient theological metaphor, God fashioned the first beings. A motif repeated in a number of his works, is the emergence of a smaller figure an object from the larger one, usually from the head as in The Beginning. The Middle and The End, 1983, Out of this World 1983/84 and Idea 1985, the small emerging figure of terracotta, seems a mental exercise, or a dream creation of the larger lead figure. It is as if the dream of the future is about to emerge from the present. In Man Asleep 1985 several dozen miniature figures walk past the head of a lead male figure, that seems to be sleeping. This is a suggestion of dreamed selves, setting out from the sleeping brain. This work could be associated with the Hindu sculptural icon of "Vishu Anatasayin", in which the God asleep dreams the world, which emerges

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Fig. 19. IDEA 1985.

Out of
this World



Fig. 20. THE BEGINNING, THE MIDDLE AND THE END 1983.

The beginning
of the middle
of the end 1983-1984



Fig. 22. MAN ASLEEP 1985.

Man
Sleep ..

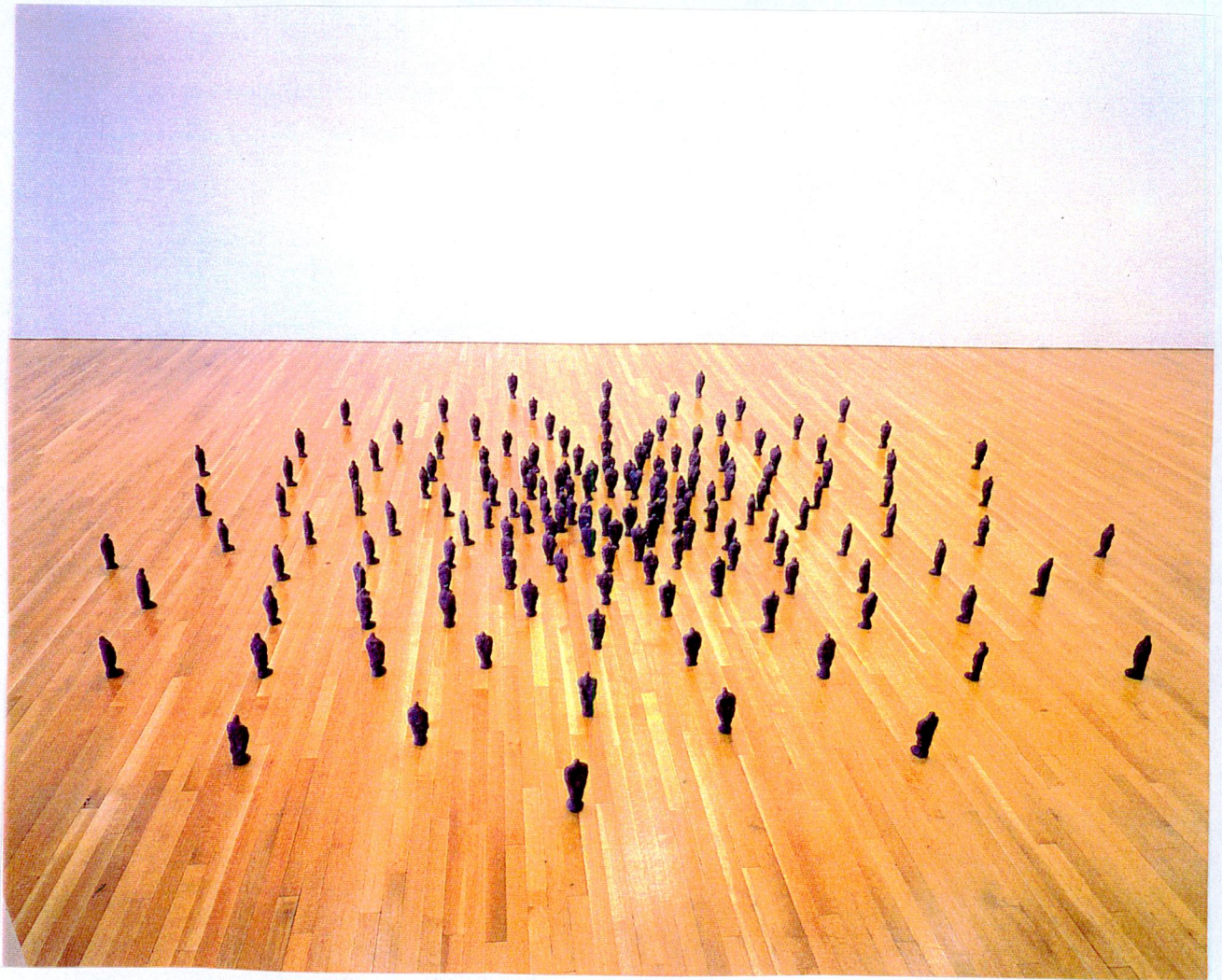


Fig. 23. FIELD I

FIELD I

1989

his mind. Man Asleep is a principal forerunner to Field in which the leaden figure becomes absent.

Field 1989 presents another radical shift in Gormley's work, the total elimination of the artist's body, and the lead from the process, and also there is a great reduction in the scale of the figures. Gormley has made three versions of Field from 1989 to 1993, the number of terracotta figures has increased from one hundred in the first version Field I to forty thousand in Field 1993 the last version. These pieces reflect a new spirit of openness, humanity, and a willingness to accept the responsibility of being a fallible human in a material world. Room for the Great Australian Desert 1989, was conceived as a counterpart to Field for the Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1989, taking a concrete architectural place to the vast red clay desert, and in Field bringing back organic clay into the formal architecture. In Field 1993 forty thousand roughly modelled figures occupy the space in which they are placed. Baked in brick kilns in Mexico, each figurine slightly different from the next, the hand seized figures gaze upward at the viewer, as if awaiting some summons, or announcement. Their eyes are black holes dug into the clay, staring upward, they stand out against the red terracotta. Field is based on a very simple idea. A group of people are brought together, to work with earth to create a collective body.

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Small BOM

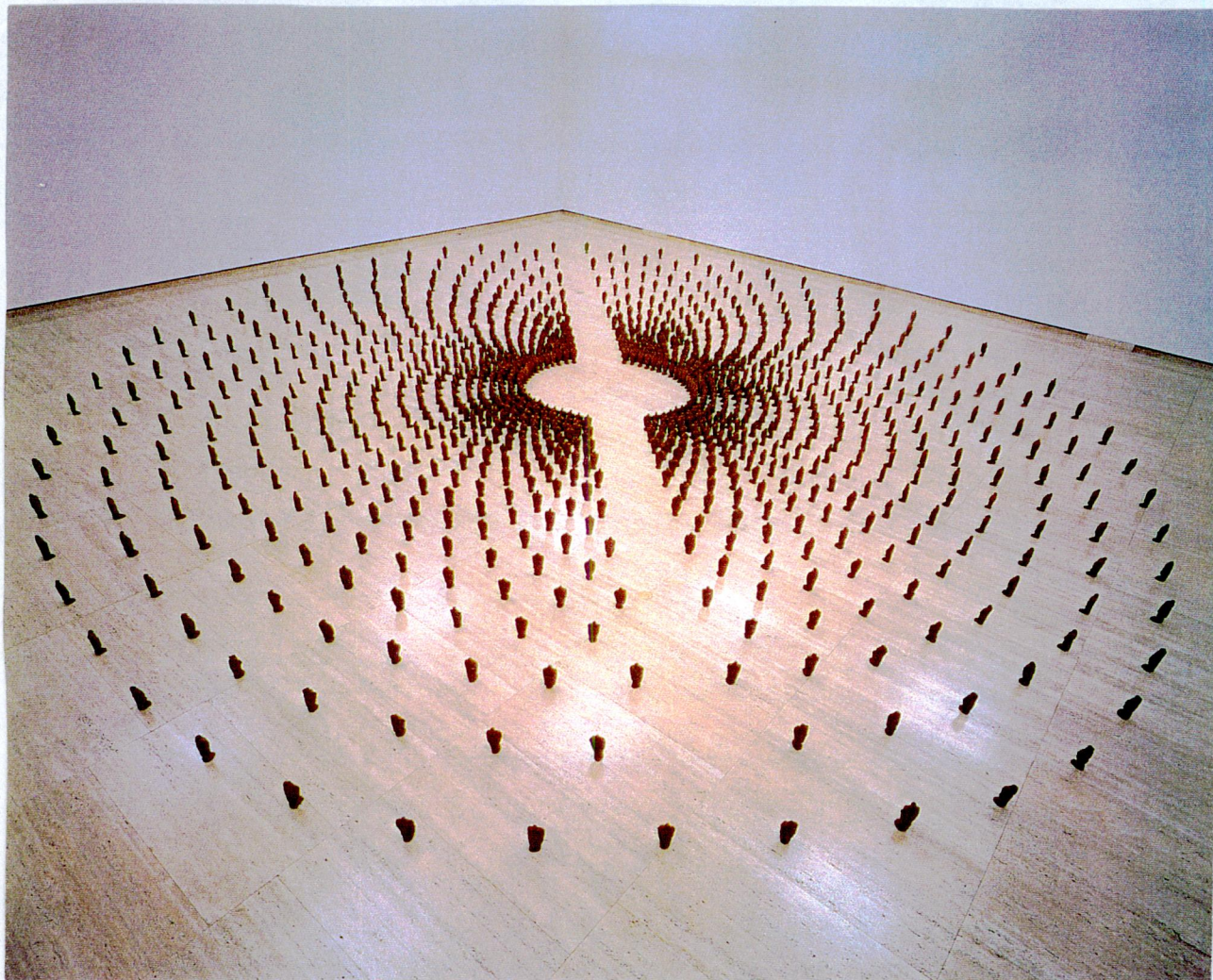


Fig. 24. FIELD II: Field for the Art Gallery of New South Wales

FIELD II
1989.

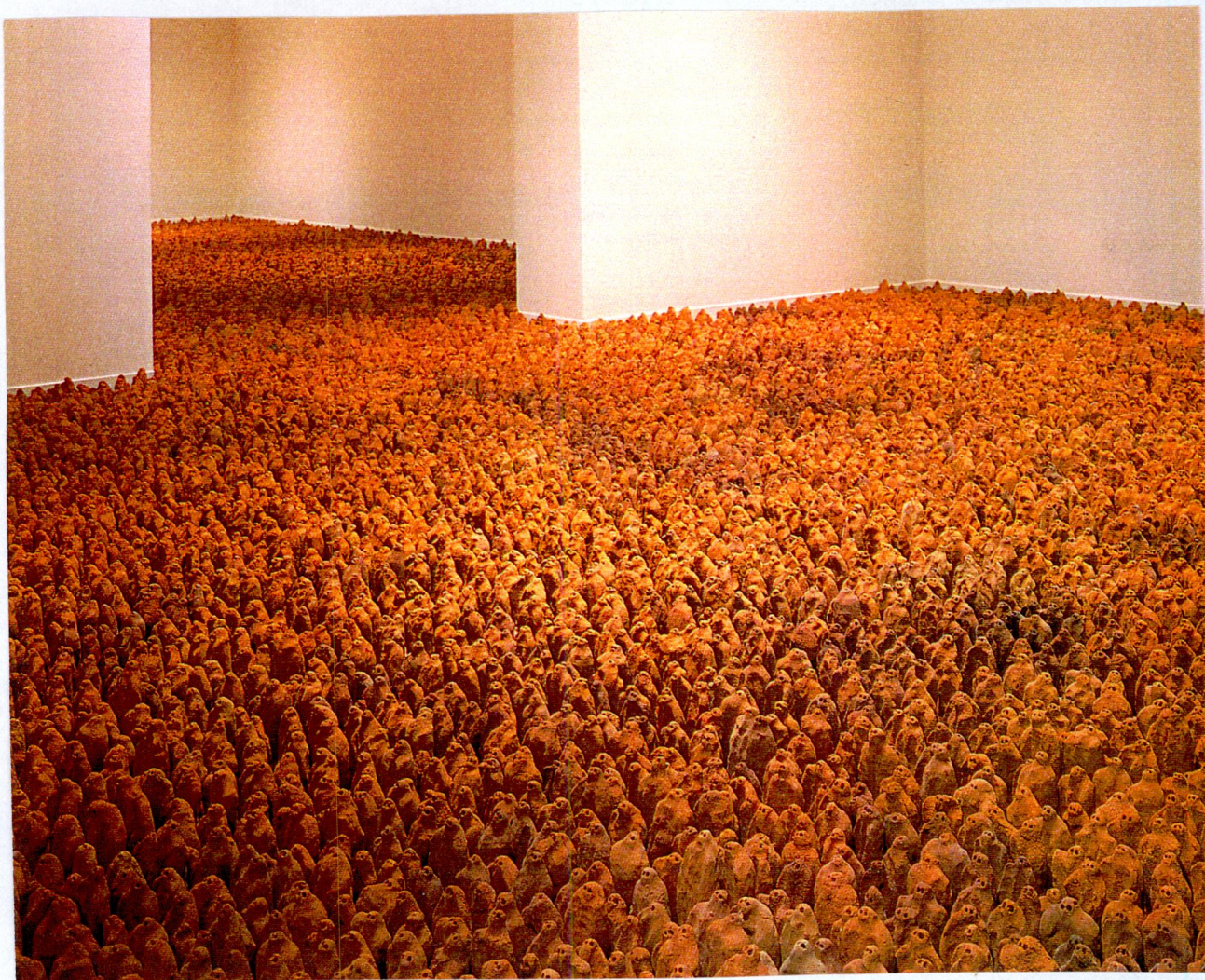


Fig. 25. FIELD 1993

Field 1793

"I needed to work with others and with the earth, to do something direct with pine and clay, and do it like some kind of party, a celebration, we could have made music, or at least drumming, or food, but we made forty thousand bodies, born in the hands like fruit".

(Orozco, 1993, p.22)

The figurines are a celebration of humanity and community. Field like the rest of Gormley's work cases work, causes the viewer to be self aware, but also in the case of Field to be self-important, simultaneously being only minute in the collective body of mankind. This work represents something close to the fulfillment of Gormley's artistic and ethical aspirations. Field 1993 breaks through the limitations of the Western sculpture tradition, it also reflects a movement away from 'self' in Gormley's work to dealing with 'self' and 'other' relations. The tension, between the self and not self, that characterizes the body cases is resolved by Field. The body cases have a self contained beauty. But Field is more about place. The clay figurines constitute a kind of seed bed, a place of becoming. It is reminiscent of biblical stories of creation and the Last Judgement at the end of the world.

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[Name] is a citizen of the United States of America.

WITNESSETH my hand and the seal of the Department of State this [Date] day of [Month], 19[Year].

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The body case in Gormley's sculptural has always reflected his determination to discover his own fundamental responses, to the world around him. Gormley's body cases in their contemplative stillness appear as if deep in concentration, on meditation maintaining a distance from the chaos of everyday hustle and bustle. The body case could be seen as containing vulnerable being's preserved in a dormant state. Many of the body cases as I have said earlier in this chapter are perforated as Three Ways having holes corresponding with the body's orifices, suggesting interaction between the presence within the lead cases and the external world. Sovereign State is the most complete example of the breakdown of his belief in the invulnerability and self sufficiency embodied by the lead cases. Gormley's works in concrete also show his growing desire to engage with the world. There is a shifted emphasis, reflected by Gormley's use of iron instead of lead, especially in the expansion pieces, iron as I have already said being closer to the earth. Gormley's exploration of the expansion idea is most fully expressed in his works in clay, clay being associated by him, with a sense of freedom. In works such as Man Asleep, Room for the Great Australian Desert, and The Beginning. The Middle and The End, the terracotta figures seem as if they are escaping from the larger lead body cases, which are read as images concerning withdrawal from the

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world. Field is the complete opposite, to the withdrawal of the body cases, it is as if the human race is set before a viewer in incalculable numbers.

There is concern to avoid any kind of formalism in this monumental piece, in the evolution of Antony Gormley's sculptural project.

BOMB

SMALL BOMB

CONCLUSION

Antony Gormley's sculptures reveal an obsession with grand emotive issues, such as birth, death and man alone with his fate. They are both passionate and reticent. But what concerns Gormley more than anything else is the paradoxical manner in which man, while containing space, is contained by it. Gormley's lead body cases create tension between the perception of the body within a space, and that of space within the body. Gormley's sculptures in lead are not ambiguous in their effect on the viewer. Gormley's creations also centre on the human body as the arena in which consciousness becomes apparent, and can be described and perhaps understood.

In Gormley's art, the life force is envisaged with explicit reference to human beings, particularly through visualizations of the art of breathing, or in situations that address our need for shelter, or communion with nature and open space. Gormley's body cases are executed from casts of his own body, through this process the artist becomes his own found object. In many interviews and writings he has alluded to his belief in the physical body as being inseparable from the consciousness, through his work he describes the body as a prison for the spirit, with the body's orifices being

the only conduits between the inner self, and the outside world, and occasionally the body is seen as the temple of being. Gormley's acceptance of the body as a temporary home of the spirit is characteristic of the Catholic ethos in which he was raised. Catholicism and Buddhism, are very central to the concepts underlying his sculptures. Catholicism stressing the body as a temple, and Buddhism through meditation stressing insight and awareness with one's body and surroundings. As I had said earlier the energy in Gormley's work comes from the friction between Eastern and Western religious philosophies, and his work can be understood better, when read in these contexts. His art like religion tries to deal with big questions. Who we are? Where did we come from? Where are we going?

Gormley's sculptures have revitalised the figure because they have refreshed our perceptions as deal with the figure, in relation mass and space. He is not continuing on from where Rodin left off, he is re-inventing the body from the inside, from the point of view of existence, starting with his own. Gormley's sculptures attempt to realise embodiment, to give presence to his figurative sculptures. His sculpture establishes an unmediated relationship with the viewer because it transgresses the line between reality and representation. His figures are body cases, cast from his own body, lived and internalised, this is a semiotic issue, the figure in his sculpture has

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SAVED PROOF

become an indexical sign. Gormley has recaptured through his work the sense of imaginative space in the body, because he has become the internal pressure which has registered presence as the skins of the leader cases. Gormley through his work wants to form a relationship that is about communication and confrontation between the viewer and the sculptures. His sculptures are an open invitation to all, to sense their own bodies through a moment of stillness, and self awareness, he wants his work to be catalyst for the viewer to discover new states of being.

Modernism has become redundant, disconnecting art from its social meaning and judging it only in terms of its formal properties, does a disservice to both the so called primitive practice, and modernist practice. Modernism and the pre-modern, many came in and out of fashion, or focus in human history, but the possibility for both exists now. That is what makes Antony Gormley a key figure in the revaluation of modernism, and the revitalisation of the figure.

Over the years it is easy to trace the evolution in Gormley's work through the materials he enlists to make his images. The body cases were about withdrawal, as they become perforated, they demonstrated Gormley's wish for the presences with the leaden body cases to interact with the

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external world. Terracotta and its use brought about a change in Gormley's work, he seemed to want to make works that engaged the world rather than hide from it the expansion pieces, the concrete works were a build up to Gormley's new belief which was to make Art that was engaging with the world.

BOND
SMALL BOOK

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