

SEANKELLY

Jow, Tiffany. "The Private Side of a Renowned Public Artist," *Artlog*, May 31, 2012.

ARTLOG

The Private Side of a Renowned Public Artist



Antony Gormley, *Body and Soul II*, 1990. © Antony Gormley. Image courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery, New York.

Most people know the Turner Prize-winning artist Antony Gormley for his iron sculptures prominently installed throughout Europe and recently in New York's Madison Square Park. With a penchant for examining the human form (usually cast from his own body) in relation to natural and urban settings, Gormley's sculptures establish a direct relationship with the viewer rather than relying on art history or theory. This month, The Phillips Collection in Washington is the first in the country to exhibit a more quiet and personal side of the artist's work.

Featuring nearly eighty works on paper alongside two recent sculptures, *Antony Gormley: Drawing Space* underlines the connection between drawing and sculpture over the course of Gormley's forty-year career. An essential part of his work, the drawings cast a different light on the artist's preoccupation with space and the body. We asked the Phillips' Senior Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Vesela Stretenović, to elaborate.

What can we learn from Gormley's works on paper?

Drawing reveals the artist's process of thinking. It is a visual diary of his inner thoughts and feelings. As he puts it, "It's a kind of magic—a mental diagram; a necessity."

How did you go about picking works to include?

Antony and I met a year and a half ago when he came to The Phillips Collection to give a talk and get to know our museum. The choice of included works came in a dialogue with the artist and was based on the configuration of our exhibition spaces but also his previous shows of drawings, namely those at the Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma in 2010 and the British Museum in 2002. We looked for works on paper that were available, that best-captured his opus, and that also worked well within our space. The Phillips exhibition is an extension or continuation of the previous two shows, since it includes many of the works previously exhibited. But it was conceived with our space in mind and in close collaboration with the artist.

Why include sculptures in the exhibit?

Two sculptures will be on view: Clasp II and Aperture XIII, both of which are from 2010. They are broken figures made of steel whose outlines dissolve into space. Their linear quality ties them to the works on paper and underlines the ideas behind the show: drawing space with two- and three-dimensional forms.

How does Gormley make his drawings?

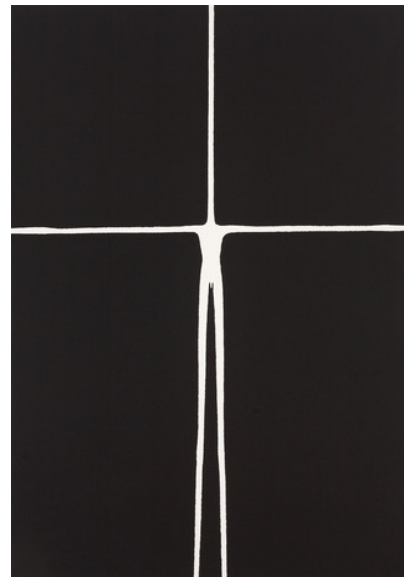
Gormley's drawings appear free and spontaneous—and they are. They are done in moments of quietude as visual reflections as opposed to his sculptures and public art that are the result of teamwork, laborious planning, and technical execution. Gormley's drawings are vehicles for imagination. Their energy is ethereal, whereas the physical presence of his sculptures defines them in space. Gormley often uses materials that reference earth and organic substances, such as casein, coffee stains, or bleach, and also the human body, such as blood and urine. All these allude to human insertion in the world.

Why mount an exhibition of Gormley's drawings now?

The act of drawing has always been a crucial part of Gormley's practice as the most fundamental expression of seeing and thinking. His drawings and prints reveal the artistic process in a more free and direct way, and work in tandem with sculptural work, the embodiment of materiality. They are two sides of the same coin: the artist's mind and hand.



Antony Gormley, *Clearing L*, 2006.
© Antony Gormley. Image courtesy
Sean Kelly Gallery, New York.



Antony Gormley, *Space*, 2007.
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Sean Kelly Gallery, New York.



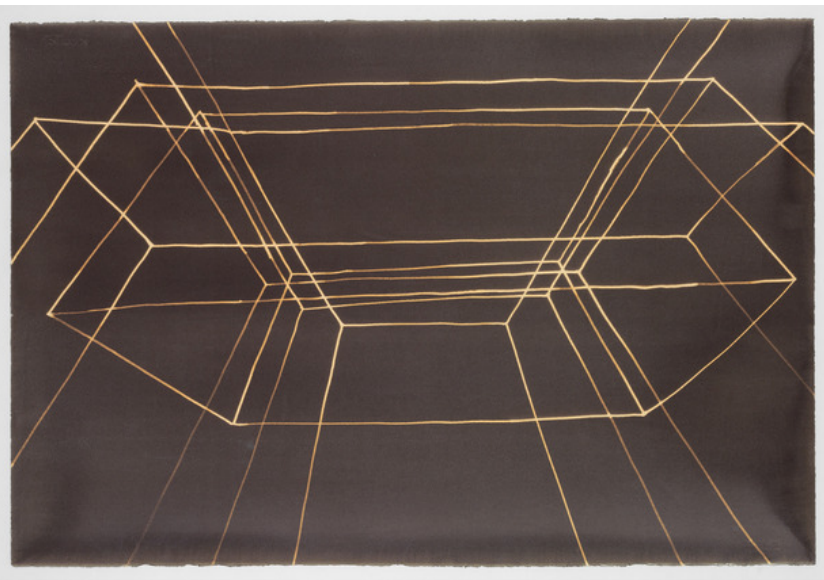
Antony Gormley, Signal I, 1991.
© Antony Gormley. Image courtesy
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Antony Gormley, Clasp II, 2012.
Heather and Tony Podesta Collection, Washington, DC.
© Antony Gormley. Image courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery,
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Antony Gormley, Untitled, 2001.
© Antony Gormley. Image courtesy
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Antony Gormley, Breathing Room XXIV, 2010.
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Antony Gormley, Bearing Light III, 1990.
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