

ANTONY GORMLEY

DRAWINGS FROM 1981 - 2001

PARIS DEBELLEYME

06 Tuesday - 07 Saturday



Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to announce its first show of Antony Gormley's drawings. From his compositions using oil and pigment on paper, through earth and rabbit skin glue in the eighties, to the chemical aniline dyes of the late nineties, the show will encompass work from the last two decades, celebrating the artist's use of wide-ranging materials to evoke states of becoming.

Process, as well as material, is vitally important in one's approach to Antony Gormley's drawings. The drawings should not be seen merely as studies or sketches for larger sculptural projects, but as autonomous visual explorations of creation, fertilization and the artistic process itself. Fetal forms play a large role in his two-dimensional oeuvre, and these works represent a testing ground where ideas can germinate, and a means by which the quality of layered materials can be explored - both by the artist and the viewer.

In many ways, looking at one of Gormley's drawings is analogous to looking through the skin of one of his sculptures; the boundaries of internal and external become porous, and the viewer perceives a connection between media and content. Gormley has said, "It is important to me that the substances I use to draw with are not taken for granted, and lamp black, bone black, casein, linseed oil, milk, semen, blood, coffee, chicory, earth, shellac, varnish, all come with their own qualities, extracted from the body of the earth, from the body of plants or from living bodies. In their reactivation, these are not innocent parties."

Similarly, just as the media used to mark the surface of his drawings has its own significance, so too does the material used in Gormley's paper staining and marking. The artist often uses thick rag paper (used for etching), that absorbs the liquid materials as well as providing a surface support for them, allowing the paper to act, in Anna Moszynska's words, as, "the natural seedbed or geological substratum for the image to occupy." This tension between surface and substance is a mesh in which "feelings can be caught" (Antony Gormley interview, 1995, ArtPace Foundation for Contemporary Art).

Antony Gormley was born in London in 1950 and received a degree from Trinity College, Cambridge in archaeology, anthropology and history of art. Upon completing his undergraduate studies, he traveled for three years in India before returning to enroll in London's Central College of Art, Goldsmith's College, and the Slade School of Art. Gormley's works have been the subject of group and solo exhibitions in numerous, international museums and galleries as well as international art festivals such as the Venice Biennale and Kassel Documenta 8. He was awarded the Turner Prize in 1994, was made an Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1997 and has been a Royal Academician since 2003.