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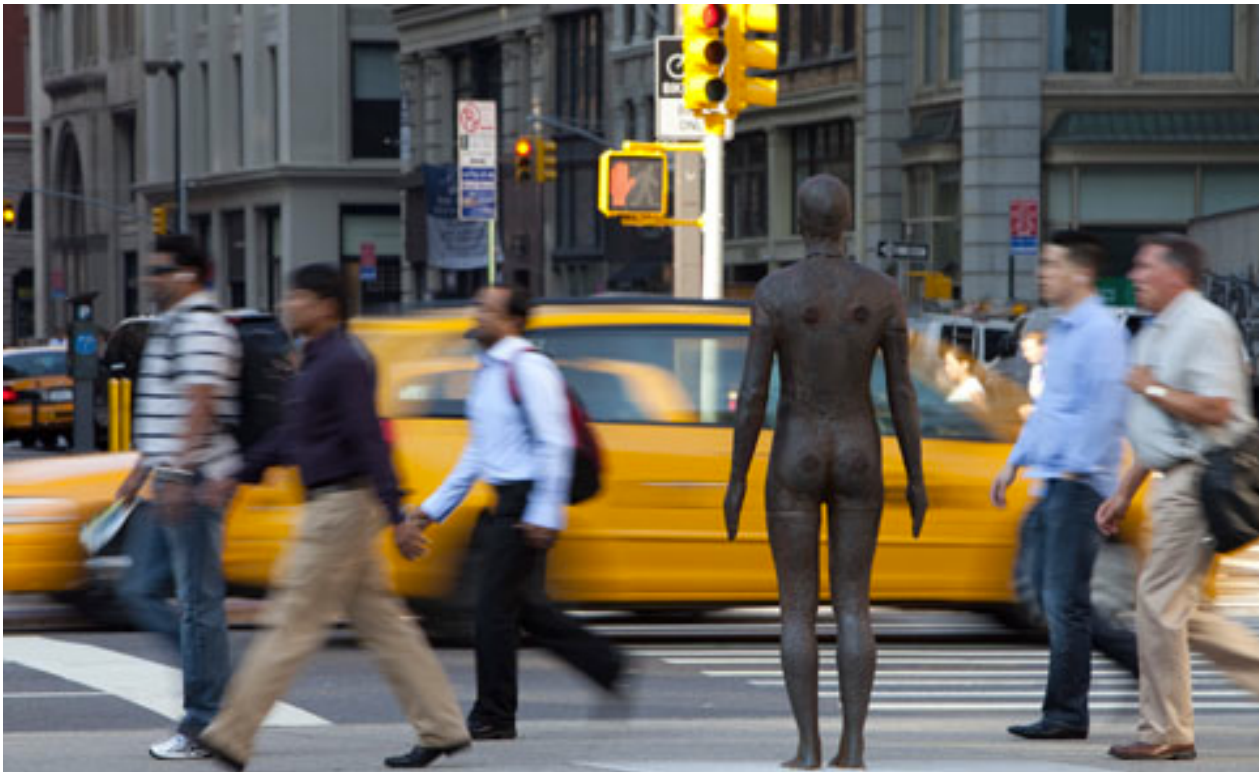
“Antony Gormley: ‘Corpos Presentes – Still Being,’” *Time Out Rio de Janeiro*, August 2012.



Antony Gormley: 'Corpos Presentes - Still Beings'

7 Aug 2012-23 Sep 2012 ★ Critics' Choice

Twenty years since 'Amazonian Field' was first shown in Brazil, the English artist is back in Rio for a major retrospective of his work



Antony Gormley's 'Event Horizon' as seen in New York in 2010

Following the success of his recent city-wide exhibition in São Paulo in June, Antony Gormley brings his first solo show in Brazil to Rio's CCBB, showcasing works that span the length of his 40-year career.

The British artist has had a long and involved relationship with Brazil, having first visited the country during the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio for which he was commissioned to produce 'Amazonian Field', a sea of 24,000 clay figures between 4-40cm high. In the wake of June's Rio+20 UN Conference on the Environment the work resonates even more strongly.

Visitors to the new show have the chance to see a large selection of Gormley's work, including the 'Amazonian Field' and the 630kg figures of 'Critical Mass'. As in São Paulo, 2007's 'Event Horizon' places 31 figures out in the open air of the city, cheek by jowl with all of its chaotic buzz.

Gormley's work confronts notions of space, and, as his extensive work with the human form shows, principally the way in which bodies move in it. The human figures that characterize his work are based on the blueprint of his own body, but the variety and richness in the way they interact with space has been a constant source of inspiration for spectators and artists alike.



With each exhibition he seems to re-define the use of the gallery space, exploring and disrupting the ways in which sculpture is often detached from its environment and spectators' reality. To that end, the exhibition's curator Marcello Dantas has emphasized the need to be physically present to best understand Gormley's art.

These structures can be both geometrically complex, like the carefully balanced collection of cubes that compose a delicately drooping figure in 'Block', and physically daunting, as in the huge 'The Angel of the North' in England, but always seek to reconfigure the way in which we inhabit our own bodies.

It is as if being in the presence of these iron and bronze figures alters the conception of our own physicality. Put simply, Gormley's bodies make us more aware of our own. Imagine a figure huddled under the immensity of The Angel of the North, craning its neck and hunching its shoulders in self-protection against the figure above. Imagine our sense of size and clumsiness in the face of 'Amazonian Field', perhaps twinned with a growing feeling of responsibility to see ourselves as part of a larger living body of natural beings responsible for the guardianship of the natural world. Imagine the surprise and morbid fascination as the dark heads of 'Another Place' slowly rise out of the lowering tide on Crosby beach (also in the UK),

testing our innate responses to a human figure out of its normal set of modes and boundaries. Gormley is constantly placing the human figure in direct and sometimes painful contact with its surroundings, forcing us to question our own human ecology in the larger environment.

Aside from experimentations with the psychology of physicality, Gormley also explores the limits of engineering, redefining the use of materials in space. The artist, as Marcello Dantas puts it, 'likes the impossible'. This precept, as defined by the curator, helps make 'Still Beings (Corpos Presentes)' one of the most important exhibitions of the year.