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Chung, Stephy. "Event Horizon: Antony Gormley's immobile men invade Hong Kong," *CNN Style*, November 23, 2015.



Event Horizon: Antony Gormley's immobile men invade Hong Kong



"Event Horizon" in Hong Kong - British sculptor Sir Antony Gormley's work, "Event Horizon" consists of 31 life-size sculptures cast from artist's body. In Hong Kong, Gormley is interested in seeing how the sculptures will be interpreted in an Asian context. "Here, I'm dealing with a different culture. My uneducated feeling about southeast Asian sensibility, is there is extreme refinement about edges, about space, about personal space and collective space and how they define each other."

Each are placed within eyesight of one another, with four cast-iron sculptures found at street level and twenty-seven, made of fiberglass and suspended on rooftops.

Collectively, the figures make up "Event Horizon," a work by British sculptor Sir Antony Gormley.

"The idea is to make the built world, somehow the subject of reverie. To think about it imaginatively. To encourage people in some way to shift from a world of obligation and towards dreaming with our eyes open," explains Gormley.

City 'acupuncture'

The sculptures are molded after the artist himself -- embodying Gormley's slight hunch and tallish figure.

Each bear subtle variations -- most notably where the breath falls in relationship to the diaphragm.

The installation, which first exhibited in London in 2007, has toured Rotterdam, New York, Sao Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro.

But Hong Kong is "more manic and taller" than other host cities says Gormley, with its towering skyline rendering many of the works "photon-sized."

One of the most prominent figures is perched atop the 607-ft (185m) Standard Chartered Bank Building, a skyscraper in Central, Hong Kong's financial district.

If you stop and squint, you can just about make out the slight silhouette, looming ominously down, as if about to jump.

"Many of the buildings in Hong Kong have names of the corporation," says the artist.

"They identify the building as part of the mercantile world. I'm interested in liberating the buildings as shapes. Shapes of landscape.

"My idea is that this is a form of acupuncture. These tiny needles going in and around the collective body of the city -- in order to release an energy that wouldn't otherwise arise."

Hong Kong hosts more public art

Public art is no longer a rare phenomena in Hong Kong. Earlier this year, British artist Richard Wilson installed "Hang On a Minute Lads...I've Got a Great Idea" (2012), that saw a full-sized bus balanced precariously from the roof of The Peninsula Hotel.

Other public-facing efforts by the local government, to position Hong Kong as an international arts hub, have included hosting Art Basel Hong Kong (which in 2016, will mark the fair's 4th edition), and the building of M+, the city's future museum for visual culture.

As the artist behind the city's largest public art installation to-date, Gormley says that his work is intended to initiate a dialogue within the city.

"You have the reality of the buses and trams and people rushing and then you have these tiny, photon-size things, right on the edge of your visual field. But once you recognize it's there, to my perception, which might be skewed, everything changes.

"It maybe makes us look, in places where we don't habitually look, up towards the sky, up towards, that bit, of the built world, that connects with infinite space."

Works mistaken as suicide attempts

"Event Horizon" was first scheduled to appear in Hong Kong in 2014, but was cancelled, after an investment banker at JPMorgan jumped to his death from the roof of the US bank's headquarters.

The property was owned by Hongkong land, the original sponsor of the event.

The public was notified ahead of the launch of the six-month exhibition, amid concerns that the statues would be mistaken for suicide attempts, as they have been in other cities.



"Event Horizon" in Hong Kong, is set in the city's central and western districts.



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“Event Horizon” in Hong Kong – The installation was initially scheduled to appear in Hong Kong in 2014. It was cancelled however, after an investment banker jumped to his death from the roof of JPMorgan.



“Event Horizon” in Hong Kong – In Hong Kong, “Event Horizon” is presented by the British Council Hogn Kong with support from lead partner the K11 Art Foundation (KAF). Founder of KAF, Adrien Cheng, calls the installation, “a historic moment for the city.” By displaying the sculptures in public spaces, he says the installation breaks down barriers [to] have art for all.



“Event Horizon” in London – The public art installation was first exhibited in London in 2007.



“Event Horizon” in Sao Paulo – Aside from London, the installation has toured New York, Sao Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro. Currently, “Event Horizon” is in Hong Kong and will be shown until May 2016.



“Event Horizon” in Sao Paulo – Gormley says the work challenges people to think about the relationship between the imagination and the horizon. “I’m keen that people look out, and actually read their environment. And see the dialogues of shape and form, between one kind of building and another.”



“Event Horizon” in Sao Paulo – The process involved creating the figures required both craft and patience. Gormely first wrapped himself first in plastic wrap, and covered himself in plastic for hours. Each sculpture has slight variations. “You can read on the surface of the sculpture, the story of its making,” the artist says. Up close you can still see the impression of cling film of the figures.”



“Event Horizon” in Rio de Janeiro – “My desire for the work is that, while being absolutely still, it still expresses an alertness, an awareness, a mindfulness,” says Gormely.



“Event Horizon” in Rio de Janeiro – Four of the street-level sculptures are made from cast iron, and each weigh 1,388 lbs (630kg). The remaining 27 sculptures are made of fiberflass and weigh 66 lbs (30kg).



“Event Horizon” in New York – The project received mixed responses in New York. Although the local authorities had assured the public that the figures were works of art, there were still concerns over the similarities between the installation and images of 9/11 jumping to their deaths.

“Event Horizon,” When scouting locations for his installation in New York, Gormley focused on specifically on historic buildings, like the city’s famous Flatiron landmark.