

# ANTONY GORMLEY

## *THE IMPOSSIBLE SELF (EXTRACT)*

*The Impossible Self* (cat.), Winnipeg Art Gallery, Manitoba, 1988

I think the whole history of man since the Enlightenment is one of control: of the world understood as an object out there, of vision requiring distance which promotes knowledge. My work tries to create a place of feeling, which is in contrast to objective rationalism.

I question the notion that retinal response is the only channel of communication in art, and the notion that objects are discrete entities. I want to work to activate the space around it and engender a psycho-physical response, allowing those in its field of influence to be more aware of their bodies and surroundings.

It is necessary these days to hold on to the crucial function art has in the continuance and regulation of life. It provides us with images and acts by which we identity ourselves but so often now in an unstable way. Art can be a focus for life by reasserting in times of vicissitude the central believers of a people. In tribal cultures it is a collective act whether in dance, carving, self-decoration that reasserts the body of the people and it is from this that the individual draws his or her power. Art and the practice of non-utilitarian skills is an act of will for the future and is as critical an aspect of survival as hunting or gathering food. What has happened to this urgency expressed in a collective creativity that projects into the future and ensures the belief necessary for life? It is not that we have lost it, but the repositories of dance, dream and art are dispersed into the hands of individuals who have responsibility not simply to a single family or tribe but as points of consciousness of the whole world.

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