

ANTONY GORMLEY

TERRACOTTA AND LEAD WORKS, 1983 - 1988

In the mid-eighties, I became interested in working, in a direct way, with material that would take immediate impressions of touch.

Lead always dealt with a condition, with taking the body as a readymade and making an indexical case. Now I was looking for ways of working where imagination could feed directly into material, like drawing.

I began by making houses such as *HOUSE AND BODY*, or *HOME*, using brick clay to make doll's-house sized archetypal houses. *HOME* evokes both claustrophobia and dream space, as well as tackling the mind-body divide.

This concern continued in works like *IDEA*, with a terracotta egg that balances on the head of a walking bodycase, and *THE BEGINNING, THE MIDDLE AND THE END*, where a terracotta homunculus sits on the head of a walking man preceded by a lead shadow. Here, the lead bodycase, which is made for a real body, is held between an abstract and an imagined body.

All this started with *WORK*, a piece that evokes the potential of clay: two lumps of clay cupped in either hand like a set of scales, evoking the potential combination of imagination and substance through the hands of the worker.

With *VIEW*, a bodycase gazes into an empty amphora. This contrasting of closed and open is like the earlier lead bowl and seed pieces.

The most fruitful of these works was *MAN ASLEEP*, which was eventually to lead to *FIELD*. It started with seeing a relief by Lorenzo Maitani on the façade of Orvieto Cathedral, which shows the creation of Eve when she is rising out of Adam's side. I took this as a parable about man's unconsciousness and feeling of a lack of responsibility for his own destiny. This is the mythical moment when duality and the possibility of evil comes into the world, and Adam is asleep.

I started with the idea of making Eve as a mushroom cloud coming out of Adam's side, but in the end it was all too metaphorically and physically heavy, and the solution was to make a line of walking terracotta figures that slink behind the head of the sleeping bodycase, as if a dream of history is passing behind an unconscious body.

The challenge was to wake Adam, as the viewer, up, and make him somehow the subject of time's gaze - both history and the future. *MAN ASLEEP* turned into *FIELD*: the final emancipation of terracotta, but before then there were a few works like *DAWN*, *NIGHT AND DAY*, and *TWENTY-FOUR HOURS*, that attempted, through scale, to make a field or crowd of small bodyforms that stood for a human population.
