

ANTONY GORMLEY

BREAD WORKS, 1979 - 2019

BED started as a drawing. I lay on the floor and my wife drew around me. I made this silhouette into a contour map, making an approximation of the volume of my body divided into two identical halves: mirror images of each other.

The piece is roughly the same size as a king-sized double bed. I began a programme of eating that lasted three-and-a-half months, during which I ate my own volume in bread.

Before I began using my teeth, I had been using bread to make marquetry collages within the crust of a slice. BREAD LINE is a loaf of bread laid out one bite at a time, taking a common object which is close to life and presenting it in the way in which we experience it. I used the most commonly bought processed white bread in Britain: 'Mother's Pride'.

Bread and settled human life go together. BREAD LINE is a measuring of life, the distance we go, the distance we travel in a body, a moment at a time. Bites of bread laid out on the floor, footprints in the snow, bites in bread, traces in time.

At the same time, I was making simple silhouette pieces from a single thickness of sliced bread stuck on the wall. CONSUMPTION was a play on the Assumption, and a materialised reversal of transubstantiation. MOTHER'S PRIDE imposes the memory of the foetal body on a manufactured life-supporting material. MAN MADE is a late-20th-century version of Mantegna's dead Christ.

Sculpture has traditionally been about imposing mind over matter by an act of intelligence and will. I was looking for a more natural process, and eating is the primal process by which matter is transformed into mind.
