

ANTONY GORMLEY

LEARNING TO SEE, GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC, PARIS, FRANCE, 1993

17 April - 22 May 1993

An exhibition of four works: STILL FEELING [PROP] (1993), STILL FEELING [CORNER] (1993), STILL FEELING [CORNER] II (1993), and LEARNING TO SEE III (1993). Gormley made these works specifically for this installation and they were designed to work in relationship to each other but also to function independently.

On LEARNING TO SEE, Gormley has said:

'The sculptures in this exhibition are made from my own body. Each work starts with a real body in real time and comes from a real event. It is not dissimilar to a photograph. I adopt the position which I have selected for a sculpture and am wrapped in scrim (an open-weave jute cloth) and plaster. Because the plaster dries quickly, within ten minutes, the work is divided into different sections. Usually I stand on a piece of scrim which wraps around my feet. Then my torso is covered. Finally, my assistant wraps my head. The whole process takes about an hour, perhaps an hour and a half. Then I am cut out of my mould and it is reassembled.

The mould has the same relationships to my body as a violin case to a violin. It is not a representation of my body, but a case around the space which I occupied. Then I simplify and consolidate the feeling in the piece.

I [then] add layers of scrim and apply, by hand, coats of a mixture of mica and plaster until I reach a point which lies somewhere between individual identity and total generalisation. The degree of generalisation varies with each work. STILL FEELING [CORNER] is the most generalised. The standing figure is the least generalised but, curiously, the most idealised.

In LEARNING TO SEE III, I was trying to do something which really might make the other side of appearance present, which might make visible the darkness of the body. I have acknowledged the eyes which I usually avoid. They are closed but suggest that I am becoming conscious of the space within the body. I am acknowledging that the body is a vehicle through which consciousness passes. I hope this exhibition will set up a dynamic between the body as a thing and the body as a space.

[The reception] is a room which resembles a passage. It is an in-between place, not quite the gallery but not the street. STILL FEELING [PROP] is the most undeclared of the works. It, too, is in a state of in-betweenness. When a broom leans against a wall, it is out of action, ready for action but out of action. It suggests a certain redundancy, a removal from direct life. I like that. It suggests that it has been used or is about to be used.'
