

ANTONY GORMLEY

EARTH BODY, GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC, SALZBURG, AUSTRIA, 2018

22 March - 12 May 2018

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to announce 'Earth Body', an exhibition of works by British sculptor Antony Gormley. This exhibition will be the most comprehensive presentation to date of Gormley's polyhedral sculptures.

The series, which began in 2008, replaces an anatomically described body with one made of tightly nested and sharp edged polygonal cells. This sculptural language derives from natural structures: the polycrystalline aggregation of basalt or quartz and the bubble matrices in foams and bone. The works BRIDGE and FIX (2017) recall in their condensed forms an earlier series, 'Insiders' (1997- 2005), which isolates the body's core and concentrates internal sensation. Other sculptures in the exhibition, like CONTRACT (2016) and COMPACT (2017) use similar bodily postures but provide an organic foil to the orthogonal rectangles of the artist's 'Blockworks' (2003 - present).

In describing body posture as "the language before language", the artist invites the viewer to empathetically project a range of emotional tonalities onto the work. With this exhibition, as with all his work, the primary challenge is to identify the body as a place in which thoughts, sensations and emotions arise, rather than as an object of idealisation or representation.

The show brings these geode-like bodies into the classical interiors of the Villa Kast, confronting its architecture with earthy forms that seem as random as they are absolute. They are cast in iron; the same material that forms the Earth's core and their rusting surfaces acknowledge the action of elements on matter and received ideas of how the body can be presented in sculpture while confronting us with our own being in time.

In the upper spaces of the gallery, similar forms such as BRIDGE (NET) and BOLT (NET) (2017), made in fine stainless steel bar turn these masses into fine webs or nets: three dimensional drawings that tremble in space.

'Earth Body' continues an investigation begun by Gormley over 40 years ago that asks where human being, human mind and human feeling fit within an unfolding world.
