

ANTONY GORMLEY

ASIAN FIELD, M+, HONG KONG, 2021 - 2022

M+, Asia's first global museum of contemporary visual culture in the West Kowloon Cultural District of Hong Kong, opened to the public on Friday, 12 November 2021. The museum's opening displays include Antony Gormley's Asian Field - an expansive installation of tens of thousands of clay figurines created by the sculptor together with over 300 villagers from a Guangdong village in five days in 2003.

Gormley gave participants three simple instructions: each figurine had to be hand-sized, capable of standing up, and have two eyes. Otherwise, each maker was free to improvise. As an installation, Asian Field is meant to be experienced from a single point of view. As you gaze across a sea of figures, they appear to look back.

This installation belongs to Field, a series that Gormley began in 1989. Other versions of Field have been produced in Australia, North and South America, the United Kingdom, and Europe. In each location, the artist uses locally sourced clay and enlists local communities to mould the figures by hand. By far the biggest and most ambitious work in the series, Asian Field reflects China's vast territory and large population.

This presentation at M+ features the work of Guangzhou-based photographer Zhang Hai'er, who was commissioned by Gormley to capture and document the making of Asian Field. Zhang paired each maker and one of their works in a series of photo portraits also on display. The portrait subjects stared intently at the photographer, allowing us to imagine how their character and attitude might be transferred into the figures they created
