

2008 February

**ARTIUM PRESENTS THE EXHIBITION *GRAVITY. ERNESTO ESPOSITO COLLECTION***

Most of the works selected from among the extensive private collection of this well-known Italian haute couture footwear designer take a critical role at international art since 9-11



*Suspend Pompei.*  
Antony Gormley, 2002. Acero.

---

***Gravity. Ernesto Esposito Collection***

North Gallery, from February 1 to May 18

Curator: Enrique Martínez Goikoetxea

Exhibition catalogue, including an interview with Ernesto Esposito and texts by Enrique Martínez Goikoetxea and Laura Fernández Orgaz

---

*Gravity* is a production of ARTIUM (Vitoria-Gasteiz)

**‘Gravity’ refers first and foremost to a physical condition, to weight, to a ubiquitous force, as well as a constant struggle that we must perpetually fight. The attraction between the mass of two bodies suggests desire, the need to find oneself and the frustrations this entails. Eroticism, passion, attraction and, in the culmination of desire, the danger of destruction.**

Enrique Martínez Goikoetxea

**ARTIUM, Basque Centre-Museum of Contemporary Art, presents the exhibition *Gravity. Ernesto Esposito Collection* (North Gallery, from February 1 to May 18), a selection of sixty works from the extensive private collection of this well-known Italian haute couture footwear designer. The exhibition, which contains paintings, photographs, videos, sculptures and installations of more than 50 international artists, invites us to take a critical look at international art since the fall of the World Trade Centre, through the works of artists such as Antony Gormley, Vanessa Beecroft, Thomas Hirschhorn, Mustafa Hulusi, John Isaacs, Seb Patane, Thomas Ruff and Marc Quinn, among others. *Gravity* reveals how contemporary art seeks, on many occasions, to question established values and to cause us to reflect upon beauty and an apparent vulnerability. The exhibition catalogue has been designed in the form of a fashion and trend magazine, and contains an interview with Ernesto Esposito in his facet as a collector and texts by Enrique Martínez Goikoetxea, curator of the exhibition, and Laura Fernández Orgaz, who provides a commentary on ten of the works presented in the exhibition. *Gravity* is a production of ARTIUM (Vitoria-Gasteiz)**

*Gravity* is a review of contemporary art created over the last ten years, a convulsive period for the entire world, in which artists have followed (as can be seen in the exhibition) two different paths, spectacle and banality on the one hand and of transcendence, commitment and reflection on the other. The coexistence of these two apparently conflicting tendencies, is one of the elements of tension, attraction and repulsion, ideas alluded to in the title of the exhibition. Irony, severity, humour and transgression are, on occasions, contradictory instruments used to tackle questions such as individual identity, the question of gender, social condemnation and politics, and create a sense of insecurity with regard to models considered by society to be unquestionable truths.

From among the more than fifty artists on show, for the catalogue, ARTIUM has analysed ten works in greater depth to reveal in a more eloquent manner, if this is possible, the paths chosen by post-modern art and its derivatives. This involves artists who work with shapes and colour in juxtaposition to artists who act as chroniclers of society, who gain their inspiration from the language of fashion, advertising or the cinema to provide a vision of the world at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which is bitter on some occasions and ironical and critical on others.

Among this *top ten of Gravity*, one can find, for example, the dense mixture of colours of the Brazilian group *assume vivid astro focus*, the disturbing and attractive scenes of the Italian artist Vanessa Beecroft, the political sarcasm of Jota Castro, the obsession of the British artist Antony Gormley for the human figure, or the critical reference to the fashion world (and an allusion, on the one hand, to the collection of the footwear designer, as the piece represents a pair of fashion shoes) of the Nigerian established in New York, Ikè Udè. This *top ten* also comprises the feminine commitment of Ghada Amer, the reference to popular culture of Jeremy Deller, the emptiness of life of Jen DeNike, the transgressive spirit of the Chinese-Canadian Terence Koh and the affected style of Ugo Rondinone.

### **Ernesto Esposito**

But *Gravity* is also the presentation of a private collection and, through this, of the attitude to contemporary art of Ernesto Esposito, a designer of haute couture footwear who has worked together with the foremost names in the fashion world, from Karl Lagerfeld and Chloé to Louis Vuitton and Roberto Torretta, and who, in turn, when he still only twenty years old, met Cy Twombly, Rauschenberg, Gerhard Richter and Gilbert and George.

Ernesto Esposito's passion for contemporary art began 35 years ago when he was just 20, on the occasion of a retrospective exhibition of the work of Andy Warhol in Paris. As the interview published in the exhibition catalogue "*Gravity*" shows, "it was at that time when I decided that, sooner or later, one of Warhol's "Jackies" that hung on the wall before me, would be mine. I had no understanding of or grounding in art but my natural instinct and my predisposition for beauty and everything that is different made me decide at that exhibition that when I was a "grown-up" I would become an art collector".

Today, the Ernesto Esposito collection contains more than 800 works of art, in which no trace of any criterion formed under the parameters of fashion or currents can be found. "I feel free and as a result my choice of works for the collection have always been free of any restraint. (...) I have never followed any fashions or trends when purchasing art, but I have sought things that interest me in fashion and trends. I earn my living from work based on aesthetics, beauty and proportion. All of this, together with my instinct, has been the element that has helped me select the works in my collection".