

Press Release: 1 August 2011

**MAJOR SHOW OF NEW WORKS BY ANTONY GORMLEY IN
HERMITAGE'S GALLERIES OF CLASSICAL ANTIQUITIES**

Exhibition dates: 23 September, 2011 – 15 January, 2012

Exhibition location: Rooms N108, N109 The New Hermitage

Press Preview: 22 September 2011 at 1.00 pm at The Hermitage Theatre

A major exhibition of seventeen new works by leading British sculptor Antony Gormley will accompany his radical re-hang of the Dionysus Hall in the classical Greek and Roman galleries of the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg opening on **23 September 2011**.

The exhibition, *Still Standing: A Contemporary Intervention in the Classical Collection*, marks the first time that a living artist has engaged with the Hermitage's classical galleries. Gormley places nine ancient statues in a loose constellation directly on the ground so that these idealised and sexualised bodies share the same conditions as the viewer. The exhibition is important landmark in the Programme of the rearrangement of the Classical Antiquities Galleries, started in the in the State Hermitage museum in 1998 and nearly completed. The commission forms part of the *Hermitage 20/21* project, an ambitious programme aimed at showcasing the best of contemporary art in the Hermitage and expanding the display of 20th century art.

Seventeen of Gormley's solid iron blockworks will be shown in a rigorous orthogonal arrangement in the Small Classical Courtyard or *Antichny dvorik*, one of the most famous interiors of the museum. Developed over the last two years, these works re-describe the space of the human body using the Euclidean geometry of architecture. Their abstract and severely constructed modernist volumes and rough, oxidised surfaces will be

contrasted against the ornate neo-classical architectural surroundings and the idealised bodyforms of the previous room.

Still Standing affords a unique opportunity to experience anew the predetermined context and content of a museum. In dramatically altering the viewer's normal passage through the gallery space and relationship to sculpture the exhibition proposes that what is seen depends more on the engagement of the viewer's own imagination than on museological theory.

Dr. Mikhail Piotrovsky, Director, State Hermitage Museum, says: "Antony Gormley is a great sculptor with whom it is inspiring to work. He understands by sense and emotions the main principles of museum life in the Hermitage. He has created a vivid dialogue of cultures which demonstrates that differences are exciting. His exhibition is built in the Antiquity Galleries of the Hermitage Museum, where Contemporary and Classical sculpture speak in a new way. We will see how this new language will be appreciated by the visitor."

Antony Gormley was born in London in 1950. His work has been exhibited extensively throughout the UK, with solo shows at the Whitechapel, Tate, Hayward and the British Museum and internationally at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art (Denmark), Malmö Konsthall (Sweden), Kunsthalle zu Kiel (Germany), National Museum of Modern Chinese History (Beijing), Garage Centre for Contemporary Sculpture (Russia) and Kunsthhaus Bregenz (Austria). Increasingly, the artist has taken his practice beyond the gallery, engaging the public in active participation, as in *Clay and the Collective Body* (Helsinki) and the acclaimed *One & Other* commission in London's Trafalgar Square. Critically acclaimed permanent works include *Angel of the North* (Gateshead, UK), *Another Place* (Crosby Beach, UK), *Habitat* (Anchorage, United States) and *Exposure* (Lelystad, The Netherlands).

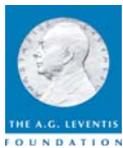
The exhibition is curated by Dr Dmitry Ozerkov, Head of Contemporary Art Department, and by Dr Anna Trofimova, Head of Antiquity Department, The State Hermitage Museum, in association with Antony Gormley.



The ongoing sponsors of the *Hermitage 20/21* project are Coca-Cola Export Corporation, Ilim Group, Leventis Foundation and Renaissance Construction.



The sponsor of the lighting system for the Dionysus gallery and the display of ancient sculptures is the A.G. Leventis Foundation



Still Standing is supported by the Hermitage Foundation UK, White Cube and the British Council.

A fully-illustrated catalogue accompanies the exhibition.

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