

Antony gormley – testing a world view essay



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The physical features of "Testing a World View" are that it's a sculptural installation made of five identical iron figures bent at right angles. The sculptures are made from a cast made from the artist's body. Gormley would have started by covering himself in mudrock, creating with these bases moulds within sand and finally casting them into iron. As we know the body isn't symmetrical so it would've had to be cut while in the mudrock stage and realigned to create stability.

The main posture of the figurines is that they're bending forward at a 90 degrees angle, linking with the absolute laws of geometry. Gormley further explored by positioning the sculptures in different 'absolute' orientation. According to the artist, the positioning evokes states ranging from "hysteria, head-banging, catatonia, to the awakened dead and the about-to-be-beheaded" What you can see firstly is that the main subject is the human body. And Gormley looks deeply into this subject, within the making of the sculptures. The moulds started off with themselves are an "emptiness with a certain function", potentially to create something positive out of this emptiness.

I think the positive thing which is created from the emptiness is within the dark sculptures as they seem to be "trying" to evoke a feeling of freedom within them. You can clearly see that the sculptures themselves contain no features, and I think Gormley would have done it is does lose it personality, but would have to be noticed for its body alone and convey feelings of the body. This "communication through the body", is the language of the sculpture and an exploration of human freedom, and seems more important than the actual identity of the sculptures. It is an extraordinary thought

which makes this composition seem more exciting to me and anything from outdated. The sculptures invite me closer and make me more aware of my own body and make me want to explore this “unconsciously communication”.

The main reason why these sculptures work and evoke feelings, is the certain relationship it has with the space in which it is contained. The sculptures seem to compliment the surrounding space in my opinion, in the sense that the sculptures themselves are hollow and contain their own space confined in a solid “cage”. But it would create tension with the space surrounding them as it is the same “confinement”, maybe resulting in displacement? But there are certain elements within the space in which the sculptures are “confined” or “fused” with. The striking white walls not only contrast with the black sculptures but also bring a strong sense of life or freshness to the composition. What I find slightly confusing is the wooden flooring, which was used as opposed to using another white feature, it however “closes” this open space and brings the sculptures closer and shares its collective space giving a smaller atmosphere.

Another striking feature is the windows in this composition. There’s no need for the artificial light as the windows will let through day light altering the space and bringing in a sense of time within the work. But that confuses me more as to why there are artificial lights next to the windows? Likely to create different effects with the surroundings as day light changes, lighting the left hand section, giving a contrasted feel among the composition. Which is really weird as to how these simple elements can give such a different view to this one piece? Confirming that each person who views this

composition receives a different perception of it, and just a close step towards breaking down the boundaries between space and time.

Finally, although people will think that these sculptures are everything about this composition but I strongly think that surrounding space itself adds more to the overall composition.