

**ANTONY
GORMLEY
WELLS
CATHEDRAL**

26 AUGUST 2021

I am very aware of the paradox of placing an object called DOUBT on the facade of a building devoted to belief, but it seems to me that doubting, interrogating, questioning, are all part of belief. For me doubt can be a positive force and the imaginative engine of future possibility.

I am interested in conversations in and about time, and in art as a continuum that brings history to now, and vice versa. I have chosen this niche on the West Front of Wells Cathedral for its exposed position and visibility: the book at the end of the bookshelf. The layered facade plays a wonderful game with its serial structuring of absence and presence, of the named and nameless. Many of the features have been erased by time and weather, exposing the stone's material identity. The seriality of the niches, the quality and condition of the sandstone, and the gothic style of the front, are all complimentary qualities against which the geometric form, material, and industrial manufacturing methods of DOUBT are registered.

Most of the figures on the west facade stand facing the world in an open attitude of confidence, proudly

displaying their attributes – regal, military, and divine. In contrast, I have used the orthogonal geometry of our modern habitat to evoke the body as a place. DOUBT is literally on edge and teeters uneasily out of its niche, one foot perilously off the ledge and one shoulder jutting forward. This cast iron body has collapsed into itself, compressing torso to pelvis; energy is drawn inwards but the head juts out enquiringly into space at large. Whilst installing a work in Devon in 1993, I stood for a moment high on the trunk of a 10-metre dead oak tree in order to understand the feeling of a living Nelson on his column in Trafalgar Square. In a similar way, I see DOUBT as an attempt to invoke this feeling of being isolated and exposed on the corner of a Gothic masterpiece.

In the context of an 800-year-old celebration of hierarchy, I wish to make a space for a contemporary state of mind. Perhaps paradoxically, by using a rigorous abstract language, my primary purpose is to engage the eye and body of the viewer in empathic projection, to consider our time in the shelter of other times.

Antony Gormley 2021

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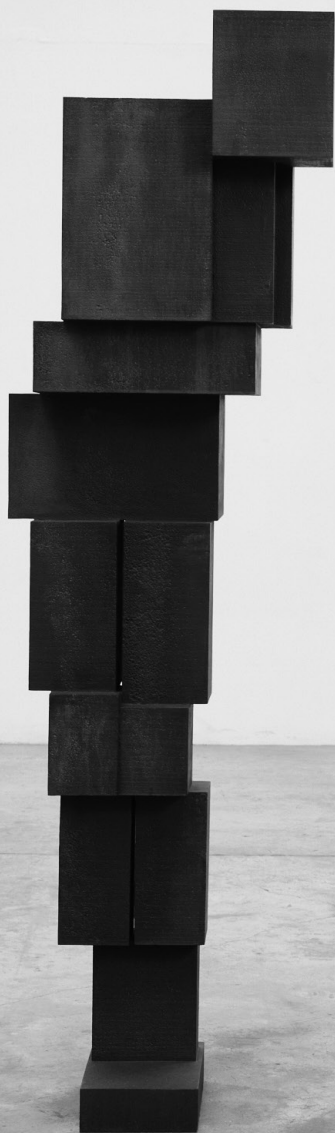
DOUBT, 2020

Cast Iron

180.5 x 53.4 x 43.3 cm

Photograph by Stephen White & Co.

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DOBUT

Born in London in 1950, Antony Gormley has had a number of solo shows at venues including Schauwerk Sindelfingen, Germany (2021); The Royal Academy of Arts, London (2019); Delos, Greece (2019); Uffizi Gallery, Florence (2019); Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia (2019); Long Museum, Shanghai (2017); Forte di Belvedere, Florence (2015); Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, Switzerland (2014); Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil (2012); Deichtorhallen Hamburg; State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (2011); Kunsthaus Bregenz (2010); Hayward Gallery, London (2007); Kunsthalle zu Kiel; Malmö Konsthall (1993); and Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen (1989). Permanent public works include the Angel of the North (Gateshead, England), Another Place (Crosby Beach, England), Exposure (Lelystad, The Netherlands) Chord (MIT – Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, USA). He has also participated in major group shows such as the Venice Biennale and Documenta 8, Kassel, Germany. Gormley won the Turner Prize in 1994 and has been a member of the Royal Academy since 2003. He was made an Officer of the British Empire in 1997 and knighted in 2014.