Antony Gormley

The Casting Process

I cover myself in cling film and two assistants cover me in plaster and scrim. And it takes about an hour or an hour and a half, the whole process. I used to do it all in one go, I now for safety and simplicity do the torso and legs in one part and the head and arms in another. The ontology of the work is readable on its surface. You can see traces of the cling film, you can see the way that the plaster mold was divided and reassembled, in the back that faces you from both sides you can see where the molten iron entered. The mold was finally broken off the risers, broken off with a sledge hammer. You can see this brutal umbilical separation between this cast body in this belly button-like break on the four buttons that are the back of the sculpture. This is not virtuous work, there has been little or no interpretation, there is little or no craftwork in its production. It is simply in the manner of a footprint, a thumbprint, a shadow, a forensic, an empirical sign of the existence of a human body in space and time.

Antony Gormley

The Two Confronting Figures

The steel human body is a dynamic, even if not locomoting, body posture. And the idea is to really capture a concentrated moment of being. For the work here at deCordova, what I was trying to do was really talk about that moment of confrontation, a human body at a moment of self-possession. From both sides, there is a confrontation. Is the internal man looking at the external man whose
body is contextualized by space, light, and the elements, nature? Or is the natural
man looking at the context of the conditioned, nurtured, and cultured man whose
condition is that of the internal furnishings of a museum?

Antony Gormley

Working with Iron

I’m interested in bodies in space. The primary bodies in space are for me planetary
bodies and human bodies. The material I choose to use is the material that we find
of the core of this planet. I use it at the same temperature that it is in the magma,
about 1,400 degrees Celsius. The reason that I use iron, is yes, that it’s an earth
material, that it has as it were, absolute qualities of crystal iron, mineral, molecular...
structure is not associated principally with art but with industry. So at a time of
mechanical reproduction, this material has a relevance. These are evidently cloned
objects. If one’s interested in the conceptual proposition that uses material to carry
it, the idea of combining body and industrial production is very appropriate.