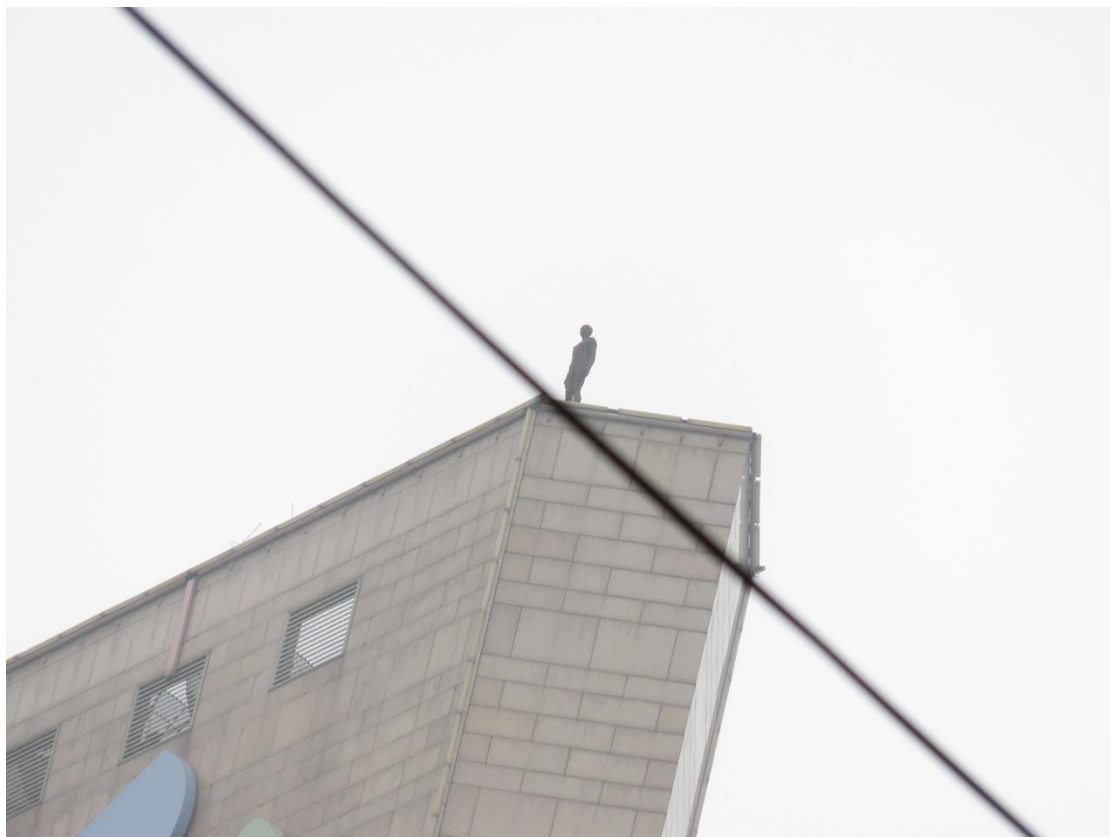


Artist Statement on Anthony Gormley's statues

'Where the human project fits into the scheme of things'.

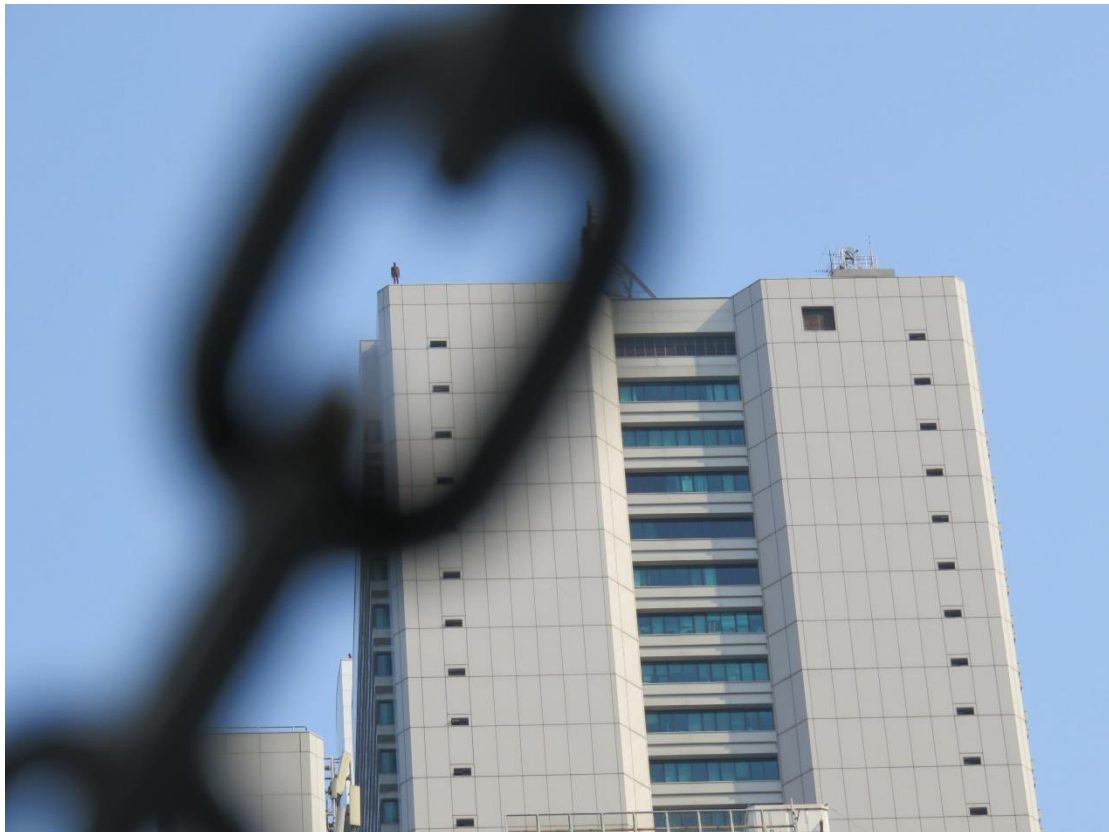
The conflict between nature and the constructed realm we are living in has never been more intense. Among high-rise in sprawling cities like Hong Kong, human beings are reduced to humbly trying to preserve our own significance. Where the 'scheme' of everlasting construction persists in the name of economic development, Gormley's statues are perched atop the edifice in Central, figuring out where they belong. Or sadly, *do* they actually belong to the city.



(1a)

In (1a), a Gormley statue is standing on a building. It may look normal if not for the blurred wire dissecting the picture. The statue, standing in peace, was brutally interrupted by such coarse human construct. The wire rhetorically slashed the peace apart and separated the statue from the imaginable ground below. This symbolizes the segregation suffered by some of humanity from the social process of construction and undergoing expansion, 'the scheme of things'. What the 'human project' could do is simply standing on top of a roof, staring at the horizon in search

for their doubtful future. The unreal sections, as cut by the wire, left the photo in bizarre shapes with tight edges. These somewhat mechanical, precise portions also imply our 'modernized' reality, where everything is arranged neatly in shape without room for the individual to survive. The human project may struggle, but as 'the scheme of things' accelerates, it is increasingly hard to fit in the bandwagon of development.



(1b)

(1b) constrains a Gormley into a ring of steel. The iron chain, normally used to fence off areas in commercial buildings, ingeniously traps the statue high above. The human's own agenda to survive in the hostile reality does not come without price tags. The 'human project' sacrifices its autonomy, its entity dictated by that very iron ring. Even the human manages to reach the blue sky, the ring follows. Can we overcome the situation, or allow ourselves to be consumed by the tide?



(1c)

(1c) paints a conflicted picture showing the clash between human agenda with the 'scheme of things'. Road signs are unconcealed testament of the modern metropolis's rigidity. Ubiquitous in the urban area, a Gormley statue is doomed to be squashed between. Conflicting commands of the signs are too often experienced daily. From a student's duty to study to the CEO's job to ensure the smooth operation of the company, there are simply too many calls to be answered. It is fortunate already if one is not driven insane in the hectic pace demanded by 'the scheme of things'.

'The tension between the palpable, perceivable and imaginable is heightened'.

While conflict between the individual and the potentially hostile environment can be a tragedy, a new perspective is also unlocked by Gormley's statues. By encouraging the audience to look up, we discover a whole new world alien to our horizontal sightlines. Some of the Gormley statues do not stand in broad daylight, they are rather discreet objects which sneak in and out of our eyes. This curiously mixes what we previously believed, we felt, and imagined.



(2a)

(2a) shows the bamboo poles used in construction work with a vague Gormley in the background. When we focus on the realistic world, we only see the poles representing urban construction and the noise it entailed. However, when we pull our attention away, we actually see more – the subtle plastic strip, indistinct buildings, bright white sky, even the Gormley standing silently, looking featurelessly at us. The disillusionment tears us away from ‘urban stereotypes’, what we expect to see normally in a city, and tell what we can detect but unwittingly ignored.



(2b)

(2b) puts the organic and the industrial together. A branch from a possibly dying tree overlaps with the grey walls and green cover of a building in construction. Again, the 'palpable' building in background is what we usually expected to see, while the branches are somewhat out of place in front of the artificial construct. The branches are not even well-focused, this adds to the uncertainty of our perception of the surroundings. When we only begin to comprehend what is beyond the 'known', the 'unknown' reveal themselves slowly. The Gormley again lurks in the background, enticing us to look upward to observe the narrow cityscape. What can we imagine? More concrete, more greenery, or... nothing? We have to jump out of our limited visual box and challenge the 'palpable'.



(2c)

(2c) gives us an overexposed version of a building with a Gormley it. Buildings are not always so white and the sky should be either grey or blue. When we look down at our smartphones or the latest lunch menu, it is only too easy to miss out such anomalies. Look up, and spot what we previously ignored. The weirdly angled structure proved our presumption wrong. We can extend our sensation and imagination even outside the photo. What is hidden past its boundaries? The Gormley did the first step by leading us to look up. It is up to us to decide which is true – experience, feeling, or our mind?

Anthony Gormley and his statues opened the debate for us to explore our relationship to the reality and attempted to break our predispositions. Next time when we look up, whether there be Gormley's statues or not, we must question, not surrender to what we are told to see.