

ANTONY GORMLEY: FIELD FOR THE BRITISH ISLES

Field for the British Isles is one of Antony Gormley's best-loved works of art featuring 40,000 clay figures. In 1996 *Field* was purchased by the Arts Council Collection, run by the Hayward Gallery, with the support of the Henry Moore Foundation and the National Art Collections Fund. Since its acquisition *Field* has been seen by nearly 400,000 visitors in Aberystwyth, Carlisle, Colchester, Gateshead, London, Salisbury, Sheffield, Shrewsbury and St.Ives. *Field* comes to the British Museum in November.

Winner of the 1994 Turner Prize, Antony Gormley is renowned for his distinctive representations of the human form. Gormley has described *Field* as '...twenty-five tons of clay energised by fire, sensitised by touch and made conscious by being given eyes...a field of gazes which looks at the observer making him or her its subject'. This arresting installation is a sea of thousands of miniature terracotta figures, clustered together. Some stand out because of their size and character, others are greyer than the earthy reds of the majority. The overall sight is both captivating and mesmerising.

The figures were handmade by 100 people, aged seven to 70, from a community in St Helen's, Merseyside in 1993. Every time *Field* is exhibited it takes about a week to install by a team of volunteers. Since 1993, *Field* has been seen in a diverse range of sites including a trainshed, a church, a cathedral, a gallery, and a warehouse.

Links to the British Museum's archaeological collections will be made through a 'trail' of individual figures from *Field*, placed within cases in the main galleries: the exhibition guide written by Professor Lord Renfrew, McDonald Professor of Archaeology at Cambridge; an on-line COMPASS tour of the installation and related BM artefacts, and a substantial educational and public events programme.

The exhibition is also accompanied by a Spotlight leaflet with a text by Chief Art Critic of *The Guardian*, Adrian Searle, priced at £1.

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Spotlight exhibitions focus on significant works by major artists in the Arts Council Collection, and tour to galleries all over the country. Some of these works have been acquired recently; others are among the most famous historical works in the Collection. *Spotlights* currently on tour include paintings, sculptures and drawings by Kenneth Martin and paintings and drawings by Euan Uglow.

The Arts Council Collection is one of the largest collections of modern and contemporary British art in the world and is managed by the Hayward Gallery on behalf of the Arts Council of England. It has over 7,400 paintings, drawings, sculptures and photographs by most of Britain's leading artists. The Collection has been built up since 1946 and lends work to public buildings around the country and to exhibitions in Britain and abroad.

The Hayward Gallery is a constituent part of SBC, which is also responsible for the 27-acre site from Waterloo Bridge to County Hall, including the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth hall, Purcell Room, the Poetry Library, the Hungerford car park and Jubilee Gardens.

For over 30 years, the Hayward Gallery has played a key role in creating imaginative, high-profile exhibitions in London and, through National Touring Exhibitions, within the UK. Both NTE and the Arts Council Collection are managed by the Hayward Gallery on behalf of the Arts Council of England, and add to the Hayward's distinctive national remit.

For further press information and images, please contact Ann Berni, Hayward Gallery Press Office on tel 020 7921 0887, fax 020 7921 0663 or e-mail abern@hayward.org.uk