

WHAT HOLDS US

09.05.2026 – 13.09.2026

Opening Saturday 09 May 2026

As a sculptor, I speak in the language of stuff: matter, in the belief that all matter has meaning. The possibility of a world starts with the possibility of a body – I want to re-imagine both. I hope this exhibition opens up a built world that we take for granted and allows us to experience it as if for the first time – a point of view shared by newborn and artist.

Antony Gormley

GALLERIA CONTINUA presents *What Holds Us*, an exhibition by celebrated British sculptor Antony Gormley that explores our condition as urban animals through the resonance of different materials, from primordial stone and clay to industrial concrete and iron, culminating in the most universal and insubstantial medium: cardboard.

The gallery's main theatre space is entirely occupied by a site-specific installation, *Innercity* (2026). Fifteen giant body buildings constructed from cardboard create an urban labyrinth that invites us to move between and through their open and closed spaces, which either deny us access or suggest that we crawl inside them. These works reinvent the body's anatomy in the language of architecture.

This playful recreation of our present state as city dwellers acts as a re-enchantment of environments that have, since San Gimignano's origins, fascinated us in their dreamworld potential for offering home and safety, a world we would like to think of as permanent – here though, it is rendered in the material used by Amazon to deliver over six billion packages per year worldwide.

For this exhibition, Gormley works with the whole building, inside and out. Basalt 'Blockworks' at the beginning of the exhibition employ stacking, where part relates to part, part to whole, and whole sculpture to building. These works treat

the gallery itself as intrinsic to the work, reversing the dynamic of the caryatid by depending on the 14th-century walls for support, conveying a sense of dependency while embodying a potential for collapse. In twice life-size terracotta 'Slabworks', Gormley also uses stacked deadweight to combine two bodies like a house of cards, creating unified structures of connection that suggest intimacy. A concrete 'Bunker', *Skew II* (2026), sits within the base of a collapsed tower, a hole at the position of the mouth granting visual access to its dark interior. Within the labyrinth, life-size and half-scale sculptures in concrete, stone, iron and terracotta trace Gormley's ongoing engagement with material and experimentation with mass, void and states of openness and enclosure. Outside, sculptures are seen against the Tuscan landscape.

Recent drawings on view in the labyrinth and surrounding spaces explore the experience of dark thresholds and other apertures that open onto light.

What Holds Us engages the viewer in a trajectory of experience that moves from confrontation to exploration, questioning what supports us, what contains us and what we believe to be permanent

About the artist:

Antony Gormley's work (b. 1950, London) has been widely exhibited throughout the UK and internationally with exhibitions

at Museum SAN, Wonju, (2025); Musée Rodin, Paris (2023); TAG Art Museum, Qingdao (2023); Lehbruck Museum, Duisburg (2022); Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar (2022); National Gallery Singapore, Singapore (2021); Schauwerk Sindelfingen, Germany (2021); Royal Academy of Arts, London (2019); Delos, Greece (2019); Uffizi Gallery, Florence (2019); Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA (2019); Long Museum, Shanghai (2017); National Portrait Gallery, London (2016); Forte di Belvedere, Florence (2015); Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern (2014); Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasília (2012); Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2012); The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg (2011); Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria (2010); Hayward Gallery, London (2007); Malmö Konsthall, Sweden (1993); and Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk (1989). Permanent public works include the *Angel of the North* (Gateshead, England), *Another Place* (Crosby Beach, England), *Inside Australia* (Lake Ballard, Western Australia), *Exposure* (Lelystad, the Netherlands), *Chord* (MIT - Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, USA) and *Alert* (Imperial College London, England).

Gormley was awarded the Turner Prize in 1994, the South Bank Prize for Visual Art in 1999, the Bernhard Heiliger Award for Sculpture in 2007, the Obayashi Prize in 2012 and the Praemium Imperiale in 2013. In 1997 he was made an Officer of the British Empire, and a knight in the 2014 New Year's Honours list. In 2025 he was appointed a Companion of Honour for his services to art in the King's Birthday Honours list. In 2025 he was appointed a Companion of Honour for his services to art in the King's Birthday Honours list. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, an Honorary Doctor of the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Trinity and Jesus Colleges, Cambridge. Gormley has been a Royal Academician since 2003.

From 23 May to 20 September 2026 the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp (KMSKA) in Antwerp (Belgium) will host *Antony Gormley. Geestgrond*, a solo exhibition of the artist, curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev.

About the gallery:

Founded in 1990 in San Gimignano, Italy, GALLERIA CONTINUA has expanded its locationsto Beijing, Les Moulins, Havana, São Paulo, Rome, and Paris. GALLERIA CONTINUA represents the desire for

continuity between eras and the ambition to write a contemporary story. In thirty-six years of activity, thanks to its commitment to revitalizing and breathing new life into forgotten and unconventional spaces, the gallery has developed a strong and unique identity. Located within a former 1950s cinema-theater, GALLERIA CONTINUA San Gimignano has hosted numerous exhibitions over the years, offering artists the opportunity to create memorable site-specific installations and tailor-made exhibition projects for these distinctive and character rich spaces.

GALLERIA CONTINUA / San Gimignano

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