Inside-Out and Outside-In: when setting and content interact

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“The structures that make up these works are random matrices that identify the body less as an object and more as a place of becoming [...]. The subject of the work is the viewer and their own perception as they move through these matrices. The matrices are measures taken directly from human life [...] By infecting the space with these ‘almost’ body forms that are virtual, silent, still, perhaps we can meditate upon our need of shelter and protected environments in order to survive” (Antony Gormley, 2004, p. 126)

Abstract

The paper analyses Antony Gormley’s installation of “Domain Field + Critical Mass” exhibit at Gulbenkian Foundation, in Lisbon, in 2004. The purpose is to investigate how the spatial properties of the temporary art gallery interact with Gormley’s work and correspond to his intention of bringing space together with the content so a narrative is created.

The paper is organized into three parts. The first one introduces Gormley’s conceptual approach within the framework of contemporary artwork. The second one analyses the pattern of spatial organization of the gallery and discusses its properties and abilities to receive different exhibition layouts. It is followed by the discussion of Gormley’s spatial strategy and the influences produced on visitors’ sensitivity. It is concluded that Gormley’s installation combines different forms of exploring and perceiving space namely through random walking and channel movement. Those result from different combinations of the spatial arrangement and the materiality of the sculptors, with the spatial characteristics and the syntactic properties of the exhibition setting.

1. Introduction

The paper concerns the experience of perceiving architectural space through a site-specific exhibition: Antony Gormley’s installation of “Domain Field + Critical Mass” at the temporary gallery of Gulbenkian Foundation, in Lisbon, as part of the “Mass and Empathy” exhibition.

“Mass and Empathy” revealed Gormley’s major theme: human body, considered the “locus of being, the place where mind and matter meet”. His sculptures reinvent the material and non-material dimensions of the body and, thus, they tend to establish a direct relationship with the visitor, assuming human form, mass, scale and position as paramount references within (and beyond) the gallery space.

“Domain Field + Critical Mass” installation aimed to explore visitors’ movements and their perception of the combined effect of space and content. Quoting Gormley, “This is
The primary dialectic: to make [...] the architecture a pertinent part of the show” (Gormley, 2004, p. 126).

The research question is focused on how the spatial properties of the exhibition setting interact with Gormley’s work and corresponded to his intention of bringing space together with the content so a “narrative” is created. “Narrative” means the way the contents are conceptually related through the space experience (Peponis, et alt, 2003). The purpose is to investigate how the spatial organization of “Domain Field + Critical Mass” (content) and the space itself (configuration) influence the visitor’s sensitivity i.e., the experience and perception both of the space and content.

On the other hand, Post War urban areas have a separation of inhabitants and strangers. The street structure is mostly non-distributed for the car traffic routes in the dwelling areas, while it is distributed on the main routes between the dwelling areas. Inside the dwelling areas the escape routes are either few or many. It depends on the network of footpaths. The number of people frequenting these areas is low. Any stranger inside dwelling areas must be recognised by the inhabitants. If a burglar should have success in these kinds of areas, he must then be one of the inhabitants.

In light of the referred objectives, space syntax methodology and analytical tools were applied to investigate the configurational properties of architectural space in order to correlate with socio-functional implications. As such, visibility graph analysis (VGA) was used, through “depth map” and justified graphs. Depth map allows to analyse the spatial structure of the exhibition setting and to correlate to spatial usage and visitors’ movements by exploring patterns of co-visibility and co-accessibility. It was also attempted to interpret, besides the internal relations of the space of the setting, the identifiable relations that concern the interior and the exterior of the building. The measures applied consider the visual integration and connectivity. The justified graphs (Hillier and Hanson, 1984) were adopted to complement VGA analysis to understand the relation between spaces in what concerns the composition or the structuring of the spatial layout and its implications.

Visitor’s sensitivity was assessed using an exploratory approach based on “focus group” methodological procedures. A group of about 50 first year architecture students visited the exhibition, and their spatial behaviours concerning the navigation pattern (e.g. movements sequence), the physical interaction with the artwork (e.g. proximity, distance) and the interface established between them (e.g. in group, isolated, talking, in silence) were observed and recorded in sketch maps. Later, a discussion was carried out in order to explore how Gormley’s artwork was captured and the “narrative” of “Domain Field + Critical Mass” was built.

The temporary gallery of Gulbenkian Foundation consists in an open space of rectangular shape, delimited by glass-curtain panels, establishing a strong relationship between the interior space and the exterior of the building. As required by a temporary exhibition room, different layouts of space organization may be proposed, from which different relationships of spatial and socio-functional nature emerge. Thus, it is argued that according to the possible configurations of space i.e., due to its spatial properties, functional and social effects or implications arise and can be explored. By this, it is meant that both the interface among visitors and between those and the content of the exhibitions (objects) are strongly influenced by the spatial properties of the configuration.

Gormley’s sculptures were allocated all over the temporary gallery as well as in the foyer, throughout the gardens and in a storage area in the basement and as if they were occasional visitors. “Domain Field” included a collection of about 87 sculptures. Each “individual domain” is constructed of stainless steel bars of various lengths, defining the
particular presence of a standing person. High levels of transparencies characterize this sculptural group, reinforcing the character of the gallery as a free-flowing space. A single open door placed on one of the tops of the exhibition room guided visitors to move into the basement were “Critical Mass” installation was placed: a rectangular room lacking of openings, with numerous solid and impenetrable bodies in various positions, standing, lying, crouching, and falling (fig. 96).

In “Domain Field”, visitors were impelled to move around the sculptures without significant constraints, while in “Critical Mass” a more restrictive and apprehensive attitude was observed.

This paper argues that the type of rules imposed on visitor’s movement by space constitutes the key condition in how information is received and the exhibition narrative is built. In this sense, the construction of Gormley’s narrative of “Domain Field + Critical Mass” is largely influenced by the combination, which underlies the artist/curator strategy. This combination is based on different forms of exploring and perceiving space namely through random walking and channel movement. These result from different combinations of the spatial arrangement and the materiality of the sculptors, with the spatial characteristics and the syntactic properties of the exhibition setting.

The paper is organized into three parts. The first one introduces Gormley’s conceptual approach within the framework of contemporary artwork. The second one analysis the pattern of spatial organization of the Gulbenkian temporary gallery and discusses its properties and abilities to receive different exhibition layouts. It is followed by the discussion of Gormley’s “Domain Field + Critical Mass” spatial strategy and the possible influences produced on visitors’ sensitivity.

2. Antony Gormley’s conceptual approach

Being a central theme in art history, the human body has been an inspiring and heterogeneous field of research for visual artists throughout the 20th century. From the reclining figures created by Henry Moore to the performances by Gina, from the pop irony of Jeff
Koon's billboard posters to the untitled self representations by Cindy Sherman, from the suspended bodies conceived by Juan Muñoz to the narratives of Paula Rego's paintings, contemporary art presents a wide range of reflections on the human body.

Influenced by his Catholic upbringing and training in Buddhist meditation, Antony Gormley regards sculpture as a “vehicle for universal themes to the human condition” (Blazwick and Wilson, 2000, p. 163). Focusing on the materiality of the body, he interprets and reinvents the fundamental features of the physical existence of the human body, replacing its composition and, consequently, providing it with a different density and weight, although preserving the same shape. In fact, the identification of each human figure seems to be granted by its original silhouette, despite any other properties.

This approach is essential in Gormley’s work as he considers that the sculpture acts “as a sounding-board for notions of self” (Blazwick and Wilson, 2000, p. 163). In so doing, visitors tend themselves to relate with the figures, not only for the affinity of scale and form, but also because they can see them as a vestige or an anticipation of their own position in space. Therefore, the perception of Gormley’s artwork implies the perception of the continuity of space (interior/exterior, here/there) and time (implicit movement).

In fact, the perception of space has been a major subject matter in contemporary creation, particularly within the field of the visual arts. According to Rico (1996, p. 31), the evolution of art museums during the last century was largely determined by “the active intervention of the artistic object in the configuration of the [exhibition] space”. By the active symbiosis that emerges from the relationship between the artwork and the built space, the contemporary artist seeks to influence the visitor’s perception of the contents, favouring his sensorial experience and prioritizing the individual searching of meaning.

Most curators face this problematic balance between the construction of a certain narrative associated to each display and the fruition of the artworks by the spectator. Within this context, many museums and galleries of contemporary art have adopted layouts that tend to favour the involvement and participation of the visitor. Serota (1996, pp. 54-55) analysis this question observing “the best museums of the future will [...] seek to promote different modes and levels of ‘interpretation’ by subtle juxtapositions of ‘experience’. [...] In the new museum, each of us, curators and visitors alike, will have to become more willing to chart our own path laid down by a curator”.

3. The exhibition setting

As suggested by Hillier (1996, p. 24), when talking about buildings both the relationship between physical/spatial forms and the bodily/social function consists in key aspects. It is according to how both forms and spaces are elaborated into patterns - configuration - that the socio-cultural function may arise.

Exhibitions settings are by definition places of social and informational interface, which may take place at different levels, namely among visitors and between those and the objects on display. Hence, the spatial ‘component’ must not be disregarded but considered as a prime determinant of how the socio-functional processes are (or not) generated (Hillier, 1996; Huang, 2001; Peponis et alt, 2003). Thus, it is how the internal spatial structures are constructed and, consequently, how they relate to some kind of social expression.

A number of previous space syntax theoretical and empirical research studies are focused on the spatial conditions of exhibition settings and the visitors’ perception of the contents. Although these studies are mostly related to conventional art museums (Choy
Figure 97:
Heitor, T., Tostões, A. Barranha, H and Pessoa, A. (1997); Straoulaiki and Peponis (2003); Tzortzi (2003) or scientific exhibitions (Peponis and Hedlin (1983), Peponis et alt (2003)) and not specifically linked to the context of contemporary artwork, they provide useful information about the influence both of the space itself and the curator on the visitors' sensitivity.

The present research of the Gulbenkian gallery of temporary exhibitions reflects how different spatial layouts (configurations) may influence or shape the perception and use of the space. This is to say that the way space is organized and how circulation patterns are proposed - space navigation - and hence how objects are spatially arranged that allows visitors to experience it.

3.1. The Gulbenkian temporary gallery

The temporary gallery is located in the institution’s building, which concentrates the administrative services, the conference hall, the auditoriums, the museum and the art library. It was built during the 60’s and it is considered a major project in the frame of modern Portuguese architecture. The building is located in the city centre, in a detached plot generous in size. It is surrounded by a green area (park), which was designed as part of the whole project denoting a careful landscape treatment. The building design takes advantage of this condition. It adopts a horizontal and fragmented distribution adapted to the site, which is reinforced with garden flat roofs and maximizes the visual relation between the interior and the exterior of the building, by means of a clear and consistent scheme, which incorporates large glazed openings, internal and external courtyards (fig. 97).

The temporary gallery constitutes the key solution for the institution complex programme, linking the administrative and the conference/auditorium areas to the museum and the art library. It performs the building core working simultaneously as an exhibition room, as a space of transition and of circulation. This single open space of rectangular shape delimited by wide areas of transparencies is the only internal passage to reach the museum and the library from the administrative premises. Hence, it assumes a particular significance on the whole complex, establishing at same time a strong visual relationship with the external space.

The gallery occupies a single floor adjacently, on one side, to the entrance hall, straight to the administrative area and to the main auditorium foyer. The boundary between these two spaces consists in glass panels and in wood panels. On the opposite side, a glass door provides access to both the museum and to the library area. A second narrow door opening, usually non accessible to visitors, gives access to a stairs core, which leads to the basement were a storage area is placed. This area was incorporated in Gormley’s exhibition.

3.2. The regular layout adopted for the temporary exhibitions’ gallery

Before moving into the Gormley’s installation, a comparative analytical example to test the spatial condition of the gallery space, namely its capacity to allow different spatial layouts was considered. In contrast to Gormley’s installation, a layout concerning a scientific exhibition to be presented later in Autumn 2005 (World Year of Physics) was analysed. As usually, this exhibition only occupies the gallery area and the exhibit strategy consists in the partitioning of the space, turning what was a single open space into a sequence of several exhibit rooms. Besides, visual relations between the interior and the exterior were partly abolished by means of covering the glass-curtain panels.
The result is a complex spatial organisation characterised, in general terms, by a linear and deep structure, which comprises a total of 12 steps of depth (fig. 98). The visibility graphs showing both the syntactic measures of visual integration and connectivity allow taking some conclusions (fig. 99). In what regards visual integration, both the foyer/entrance hall and the two first exhibits’ rooms attain higher values. The remaining spaces, along with its physical separation and increase of depth, become more segregated. Concerning the connectivity levels, the most integrated spaces (foyer/entrance hall) also acquire the highest levels. These spaces consist of the ones that can see more other spaces, consequence of the wider visual fields and of a fluid spatial interrelation, to which is inherent their transitional and distributional character. In what concerns the group of smaller rooms of exhibits, a distinct finding can be retrieved. Firstly, due of the constrained physical connections, visibility between the several rooms is quite limited, resulting in limited visual fields and in the low inter-visibility between them (fig. 100). Secondly, although the rooms of bigger dimensions present, as expected, higher levels of connectivity (fig. 103) a set of “ringy spaces” is proposed constituting an “island” within the overall exhibits space (fig. 98). The attained values of connectivity are the lowest, reducing or negatively affecting the visitors’ ability of recognizing how space evolves or how is structured, thus becoming space less intelligible.

According to Hillier findings (1996, p.315) when low spatial intelligibility is associated with the increase of depth, may produce an impact on its usage by not encouraging visitors to make an extensive use of the overall space. Hence, it is suggested that the spatial properties resultant from the sub-division and, consequently, from the considerable number of steps of depth conferred to space does not allow visitors to grasp or be aware of how space is overall structured. Moreover, the proposed layout also does not provide an immediate perception of the established internal relations in what concerns adjacent/other spaces (due to the partitioning of space) and with the exterior of the building. This means
Figure 99:
Inside-Out and Outside-In

3.3. The spatial condition of “Domain Field + Critical Mass” installation

In what concerns Gormley’s installation of “Domain Field + Critical Mass”, both the artist and curator opted not for partitioning the temporary gallery room but to consider it as a single open space - the “main gallery” and to add the storage space on the basement - the “lower exhibitions rooms”, which is directly connected through the stairs core adjacent to the door that leads to the museum. In doing so they extended and at same time split the exhibits space, so as to create an exhibition setting with distinct features (fig. 101).

The visibility graph illustrating the analysis of both floors suggests that the “main gallery” and the foyer are highly integrated, attaining both the stairs core and the access to the museum significant levels of segregation. This segregation is emphasized by the conditioned visibility towards these spaces (through door openings), which become not so intelligible, in prejudice of its regular usage (fig. 102).

This aspect seems and is confirmed by the analysis, to be reinforced by the fact that close to the access to the museum, a loose concrete wall exists in the room parallel to the glass façade, contributing even more to the unawareness of such space. Visitors only recognize the existence of such space either when walking aligned to the ‘channel space’ or when they get close to it (fig. 103).

With regards to the lower exhibition rooms, the analysis suggests (fig. 102) that, as expected, it consists in highly segregated spaces. Firstly, a number of sequenced and

that the way the exhibit space is organised does not reproduce the original design concept since visual barriers are generally proposed formalising this separation between interior and exterior.
“blind” spaces have to be crossed before one grasps the nature and the content of the exhibition room. Secondly, it represents a completely different scenario when compared with the “main gallery”, due to the spatial qualities, such as the area and the partitioning, hence to the deep structuring of space. Thirdly it performs a dead end.

Concerning connectivity levels (fig. 104), the analysis shows that the “main gallery” and foyer consist in the spaces that are directly more connected to other spaces. Nonetheless, it is possible to identify that especially the foyer and the immediate adjacent part of the “main gallery” are the spaces that present warmer values. Thus, it can be concluded that these spaces can be considered as the “knee-cap” of the plan of the building in the sense that not only make the transition within the internal space (entrance hall and gallery), but above all consist in the spaces with the highest level of visibility regarding the other spaces. It may be said that for these spaces a high degree of visual control both of space and of the generated co-presence is conferred.

To the remaining spaces of the main floor more segregated values are conferred especially in what concerns both the accesses to the art museum - clockroom - and the staircases core to the lower exhibition rooms. However these are considered ‘secondary’ spaces due to its role within the regular functioning of the building.

In what matters the lower level, it may be concluded that, besides its segregated character, in what concerns the integration measure, the sequence of spaces that provide the access to the exhibition rooms - stairs and corridors - also present low levels of connectivity. However, the central room acquires relatively a higher connectivity value (fig. 104).

4. The spatial implications of “Domain Field + Critical Mass” installation

In light of the research question, Gormley’s installation of “Domain Field + Critical Mass” established a very direct relationship with the spatial characteristics of the exhibits rooms although distinct strategies were adopted and implemented for each of the exhibits lev-
Figure 102:
els. In the “main gallery” the arrangement and material nature of Gormley’s “human sculptures” does not interfere radically with the spatial properties of the space, but take advantage of those. What is meant is, that due to the fact that they consist in sets of transparent “body forms”, spatially organized in a random way do not constraint visibility within the room and inter-visibility with the adjacent spaces. Rather, they benefit from the syntactic properties of the setting were they are placed such as the patterns of visual integration and connectivity.

This happens either concerning the internal structure of the building as well as the presented strong relationship between inside (building) and outside (park). The latter takes place since sculptors are displayed both within the interior spaces and spread over the adjacent external space just like if the exhibitions’ content surpassed the limits of the built spaces, thus vanishing the borders between interior and exterior, as well as between circulation and exhibition spaces. This can be confirmed by the selected individual isovists that represent this strong relationship, maximising possible visual fields and levels of interface of the inside/outside of the building. (fig. 103).

The relation between the spatial layout and the spatial organization of the displayed objects produces an effect at the level of accessibility within the “main gallery” although not in a significant restrictive way (fig. 102). Space is itself not partitioned, maintaining the overall spatial properties of the layout and is only structured by the randomly allocated transparent ‘body forms’. As suggested by Hillier (1996, pp. 244-245), this does not confer space the existence of rules that condition in a determinant way the specification of the relation and the sequences of certain social actions and spatial behaviours. Therefore, the analysis suggests that there is not a deterministic circulation pattern in the sense.
Figure 104:
that movement and the potential level of co-presence and encounters are generated by randomness. It may be concluded that no viewing sequences are imposed both by the spatial layout and spatial arrangement of objects, providing the visitor the capacity of choosing their own path without being pre-determined and their actions constrained.

Unlike the traditional ‘enfilade strategy’ applied in the comparative example - the science exhibition - visitors are here confronted with a multidirectional space and compelled to find their way in between and around the sculptures. Based on Choi’s study (1997), in the “main gallery” visitors’ movement is carried out without obeying to a fixed itinerary i.e., information is collected in an explorative way, which is generated according to the syntactical properties of the layout to which he has designated as the probabilistic model. Conversely, the strategy of partitioning the gallery room into a sequence of spaces, reinforces the presence of a spatial hierarchy, from which an unevenly distribution of integration and visual fields emerges (fig. 99). Therefore, spatial configuration (structuring of space) determines to some extent the existence of a sequenced model of exploring space, imposing visitors a pattern of movement and of circulation.

As suggested by the visibility graphs analysis (fig. 104), the generalised and relatively homogenous high levels of integration and of connectivity play a determinant role in the sense of influencing the generation both of movement and of co-presence. Another factor of importance is that, due to the spatial layout, visitors when moving through the “main gallery” take advantage of the wide visual fields. (fig. 103). As Huang (2001) showed, reinforcing visual encounter/co-presence and control of the space, may give rise to an evenly distributed pattern of movement.

On the lower floor, a completely different strategy was adopted. Contrary to what was previously analysed, the dissimulated organisation of the transparent and light human sculptures in space (“main gallery”), was replaced here by allocating mass “body forms”. These figures are not standing (as in the “main gallery”) but lay down, sat, crouched and distributed over the rooms in clusters leading to a much more dense form of occupation of the space.

Again, the spatial arrangement of the mass “body forms” does not arise as an obstacle to visibility (although visual fields are much more limited due to the spatial features, (fig. 102-104) but to how visitors move (accessibility) and may interact with the displayed objects (fig. 103). Firstly, the spatial properties, such as the considerable levels of segregation and limited overall intelligibility of space that, as Hillier suggests (1996, p.315) results from the deepness of the spatial structure, i.e., a sequence of “blind” spaces, physically and visually ‘detached’ from the “main gallery” (fig. 101), may produce implications on the generated pattern of movement by creating a channel walking. Secondly, although the display of the “body forms” doest not create a pre-determined circulation pattern, it constrains movements since it leads the visitor to go around the clusters of objects thus regulating the possible routes.

In this sense, the artist and the curator attempted to take advantage of the spatial characteristics - dark, dimensionally confined - and the syntactic properties of the lower exhibition rooms - high segregation level, at the end of a deep organisational structure with limited inter-visibility - combining with the material nature and distribution of the mass ‘body forms’.

When spatial properties and observed visitors actions in the “in situ”, are taken into account, it is suggested that the referred factors contribute to the low movement and to the unevenly exploration of the space. Thus, it may be concluded that people may not be induced to visit the lower exhibition rooms in a dynamic way as it happens within the
“main gallery”.

In effect it was observed that the visitors’ mode of exploration of “Domain Field + Critical Mass” installation was not uniform. While exploring “Domain Field” they adopted a random itinerary without an apparent viewing sequence. Sometimes they walk in the middle of the room talking with each other, in close proximity with the sculptors, or nearby the glass-curtain walls so as to look at the other sculptures outside the room or even they move in search of the best view points. Besides the already referred spatial properties of the analysed space, as there was no orientation specifying the route to “Critical Mass”, most of the observed visitors didn’t become aware of the installation sequence. Hence they would simply turn back without visiting the basement. It was only when they were confronted with someone walking through the opening in direction to the stairs core that they realized that something was missing, and decided to explore the basement. When they arrived into the lower room where “Critical Mass” was installed some of them immediately stopped. Once again it was necessary to invite them to penetrate deep in the room. In doing so they walked in silence, firstly close to the surrounding walls, with some restraint. Only a small number decided to move into the middle of the room, to look over the “bodies”.

During the discussion that followed the visit, students referred that the spatial arrangement of the sculptors was crucial to understand Gormley’s conceptual approach. The presence of two distinct ambiences and the strategy adopted to make the transition between them, i.e. through a dark and unrevealed passage was considered, as the key factors, which mostly contribute to reach the artist goals. When they were asked about the change of spatial behaviours, they refer that in “Domain Field”, the absence of physical obstacles, the luminosity and the presence of sculptors inside and outside induced to circulate freely, while in “Critical Mass” the lack of light and the sculptures nature and arrangement deter them to move into the room.

5. Final remarks

The presented research investigated the spatial implications of the Gulbenkian temporary gallery in what concerns the experience of perceiving architectural space through a site-specific exhibition. The research was based on two different exhibitions layouts, which denote distinct informational strategies by imposing different types of rules on visitor’s movement. When the exhibition layout is based on the partitioning of the space, a more complex spatial organization takes place, leading to a rigid spatial hierarchy, which tends to interfere negatively in the visitors’ capacity of perceiving space. Conversely, when the gallery room maintains its basic condition of a transparent free-flowing space and visitors’ move without constrains, the class of information about (visual) space that is being collected allows a much clearer understanding of the global dimension of the spatial structure of the displayed content.

Gormley’s exhibition comprised two different interior free-flowing rooms connected through a channel space and adjacent external spaces, which are visible from the gallery. The gallery room kept its properties of shallowness and high visual integration, thus contrasting with deepness and visual segregation of the other room (lower floor).

Having explored visitors’ spatial behaviours, it was concluded that two different modes of exploring and perceiving space were combined: through random walking and channel movement. Those result from different interrelationship between the spatial arrangement and the materiality of the sculptors, the spatial characteristics and the syntactic properties
of the exhibition setting. This desideratum, while corresponding to Gormley’s intention of making “the architecture a pertinent part of the show”, also contributes to reveal his conceptual approach, allowing visitors to built the narrative.

In fact, Gormley seek to “implicate the [spatial] structure of the architecture in the meaning of the work”. In doing so, he assumed the building as more than a simple “frame or box”, making the visitor “think about the structure above and bellow, of shelter and exclusion, the incoming of light and the viewer’s narrative passage through the building as part of the work” (Gormley, 2004: 125). At the same time, the different characteristics of the sculptures included in the exhibition also emphasises the duality of the architectural environment that they (temporary) inhabited.

The contrast between “Domain Field” and “Critical Mass” is, according to the artist, part of a global questioning about the multiple dilemmas of human existence: “life and death, weight and lightness, high and low, fragility and force, opacity and transparency, full and empty, permanently referring to a unique form, the human, precisely that form for which these distinctions make sense” (Molder, 2004: 105).

These dichotomies, which are present in the spatial properties of the exhibition setting through the opposition between shallow and deep, confinement and expansion, transparency and opacity, the assumption of gravity and its denial, regulate both the perception of Gormley’s sculptures and the experience of the architectural space as a whole.

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“Depth Map” was developed at University College London. It consists on a class of tools for spatial description - analysis, interpretation and evaluation - of the spatial configurations of built environments, which incorporates Benedict’s pioneer work on isovists (1979) and other models of the description of built space developed by researchers on space syntax. The visibility graph comprises the breaking up of space into a grid of points which is then analysed on the basis of how may points can see how many other points providing spatial measures capable of explore patterns of co-visibility and co-accessibility.

Volunteers aged from two to eighty-five years were moulded in plaster. These moulds were then used to construct the individual “domain” sculptures by a process of welding steel elements together inside each mould.

Literature


