

Thames  
&Hudson

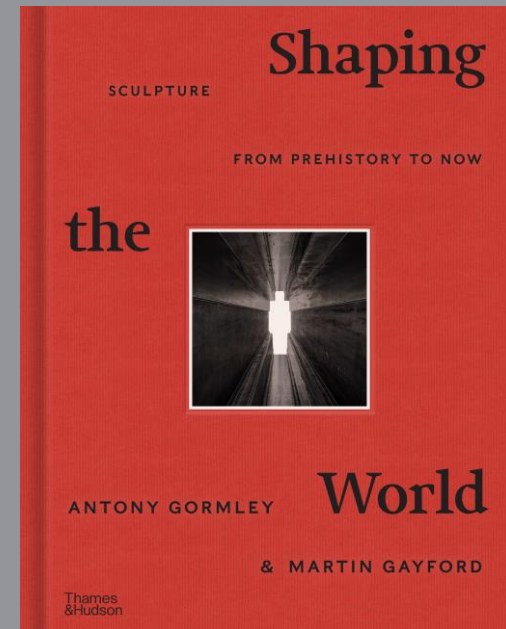


# Shaping the World

## Sculpture from Prehistory to Now

Martin Gayford, Antony Gormley

One of the greatest living sculptors and a well-known art critic examine the central role of sculpture in the development of human culture from prehistory to the present day



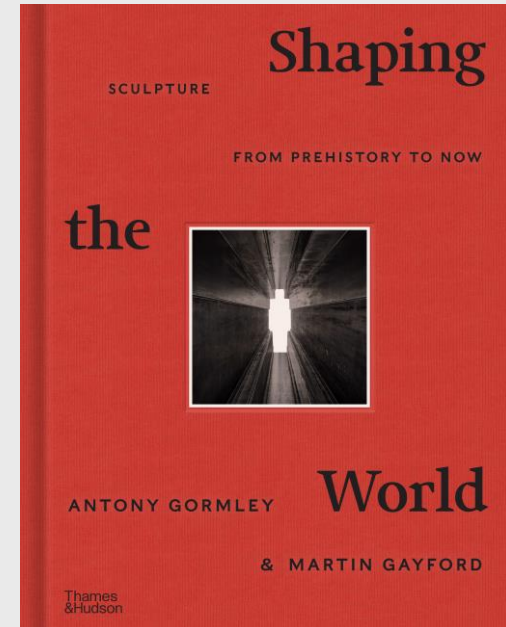
300 illustrations  
27.9 x 21.6cm  
392pp  
ISBN 9780500022672  
BIC Sculpture  
Hardback  
£40.00  
November 2020

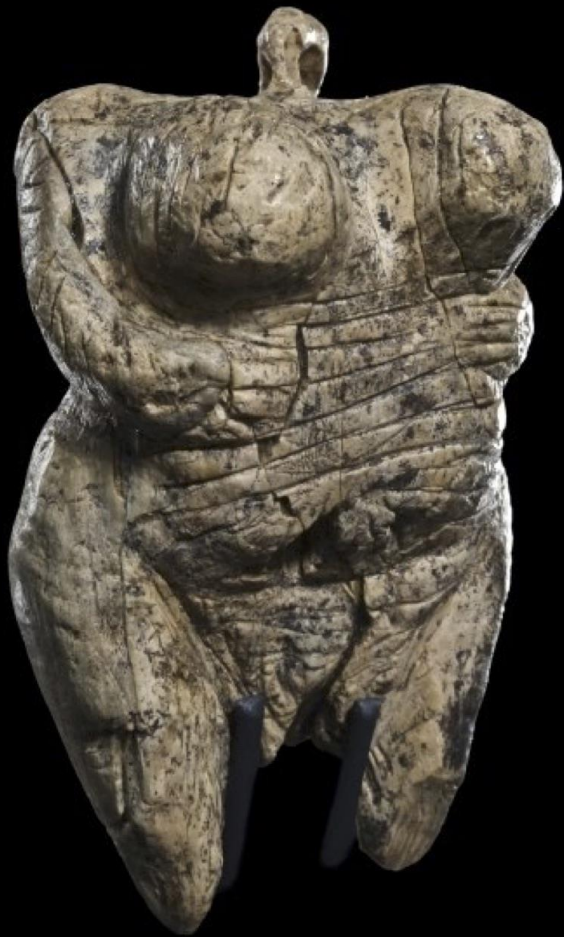
A4

Book

# Key Sales Points

- Co-authored by Antony Gormley, one of today's most prominent and celebrated sculptors, and the critic, journalist and historian Martin Gayford.
- Builds on the successful dialogue format of *A History of Pictures* by David Hockney and Martin Gayford.
- Illustrations range from the standing stones at Stenness, Orkney, dating from c. 3100 bc, to the steel stelae of contemporary American sculptor Richard Serra, from the Terracotta Army in China to Gormley's sculptures based on his own body, from Zen gardens in Japan to Robert Smithson's Spiral Jetty, from Aztec figures to Brancusi's Endless Column.







OPPOSITE  
Auguste Rodin  
*The Kiss*, 1901–4  
Marble  
182.2 × 121.9 × 153 cm  
(71 3/4 × 48 × 60 1/4 in.)  
Tate



ABOVE  
Constantin Brancusi  
*The Kiss*, 1916  
Limestone  
58.4 × 33.7 × 25.4 cm  
(23 × 13 3/4 × 10 in.)  
Philadelphia Museum of Art



wall as a way of stimulating the imagination. Artificial caves, with sculptural forms emerging from their rough walls, were a standard part of the 16th- and 17th-century garden. There is an extravaganza on the theme in the grounds of the Wallenstein Palace in Prague. It's a like a grotto turned inside-out and transformed into a walk-by Rorschach blot, over 150 feet long. At first glance, it looks like a huge array of stalactites and eroded rock.

Look closer and harder and you begin to discover endless animal and human forms: snakes, frogs, faces. But it is often hard to know what shapes are really there and which you are reading into randomness, as you do when you see faces or bodies in a splodge of ink.

AG Gazing at this dripstone wall in Prague is like looking into a fisherman's bucket of maggots. For me, again this links back to the experience of going into caves such as Les Combarelles or Les Eyzies in the Dordogne, where you immediately find imagery that is totally dependent on the bumps and hollows.

MG The more you think about it, the more you realize that nothingness – empty space – is an important element in the art of every period: in the same way that in mathematics zero is a fundamentally important number.

This truth was rediscovered by Modernist artists of the 20th century. Barbara Hepworth's *Configuration (Phira)* suggests caves and the internal spaces of the body, without actually imitating them. It also echoes the Mên-an-Tol, one of



LEFT  
Barbara Hepworth  
*Configuration (Phira)*, 1955  
Guarea wood  
68 × 68 × 64 cm (26¾ × 26¾ ×  
25¼ in.)  
Leeds Museums and Galleries

OPPOSITE  
Mên-an-Tol, Penzance, Cornwall  
c. 3500 BCE  
Holed stone, height 110 cm  
(43¾ in.), side stones, height  
120 cm (47¼ in.)



the prehistoric standing stones on the moors above St Ives in Cornwall, where Hepworth lived for many years.

AG I agree, in different ways hollows, voids or empty space, as well as object-hood or mass, have infiltrated into modern sculpture. Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth's idea – that the hole in a block could be as interesting as the thing you make the block out of – was the beginning of a concern with the void. That has opened up an enormous field of resonance between architecture and sculpture in contemporary art. The notion of the void has now become integrated into the language of art itself. In a work such as *Configuration (Phira)*, Hepworth was one of the first to make an object in which the inside is more important than the outside.

We know that the Mên-an-Tol was used as a site for ritual rebirthing. The idea of the hole as the threshold or as a potential place of rebirth is very deep in all cultures. The people of the Nuragic culture in Sardinia worshipped water in dark underground places, the Hellenes went to cracks and holes in the earth to listen



## CHAPTER 8

# The Body & the Block

AG Seeing Hoa Hakananai'a, the basalt moai from Rapa Nui (or Easter Island), an evocation of looking, of witnessing; an object that defines a place was another experience that made me want to be a sculptor. Where the figure looks – above the horizon, into space at large, acknowledging the limits of the horizon – is significant and that notion is especially potent in the most isolated inhabited island in the whole Pacific. This is an exemplary exploration of art as a tool for consciousness and transcendence. It's like a standing stone that marks time and space. It commands us to witness and be witnessed.

There is also a degree of formal clarification – the relationship between edge or ridge, mass and silhouette – that is unique to it: the ridge of the upper lip; the jutting of the lower lip; the sharpness of the jaw line; the deepness of the cleft of the under brow into the eyes; the swoop and elongation of the nose. This is a complete reappraisal of the morphology of a face to make something that, once these terms were set, remains pretty constant throughout. The sculptures express a relationship with stone, with time and with looking.

Carving in stone involves taking a hard, mineral piece of the Earth's crust, in this case by cutting from the sides of the volcano, and then altering it by bashing, splitting, scraping or rubbing until it looks like something different.

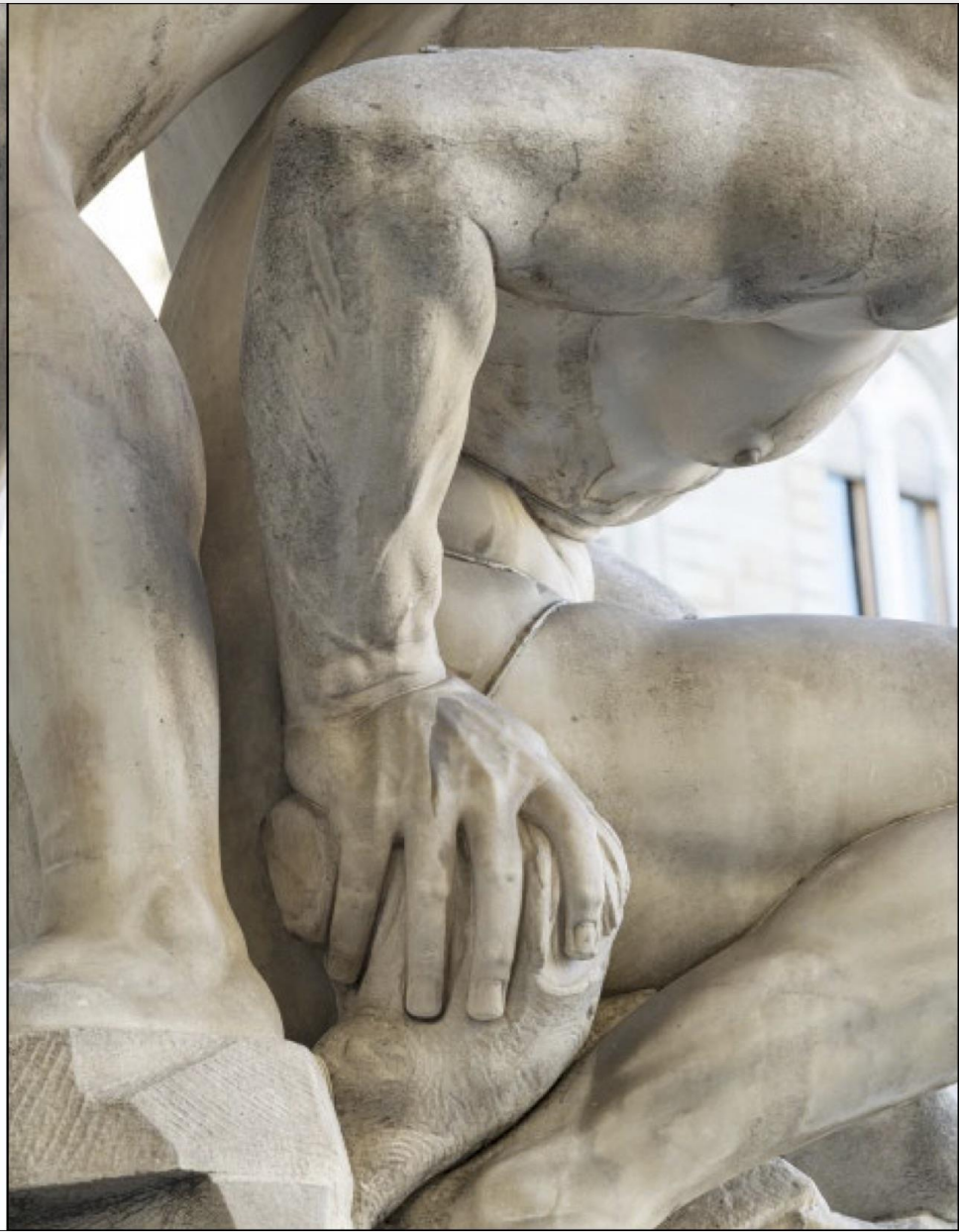
Hoa Hakananai'a is rare because it's basalt, but the majority of the Rapa Nui figures were made from volcanic stone that is easier to work. But the basalt ones are very skilled pieces of carving. There were no chisels, so it was all picked out with endless effort. The time invested in these objects is impressive: another expression of the 'will to form' – and in their bilateral symmetry cousins of the hand axe of Happisburgh (see p. 18).

You find similar qualities in Maori works or those from the Solomon Islands, but never to the degree of the moai of Rapa Nui. They make you think of the Olmec heads in Veracruz, or ancient Egyptian figures.

MG The heads carved by the Olmec people of Southern Mexico over 3,000 years ago are almost abstract: huge basalt boulders altered just enough to take on

Hoa Hakananai'a (lost or stolen friend), made by Rapa Nui people, Easter Island, 1000–1200  
Basalt  
Height 242 cm (95% in.)  
British Museum, London





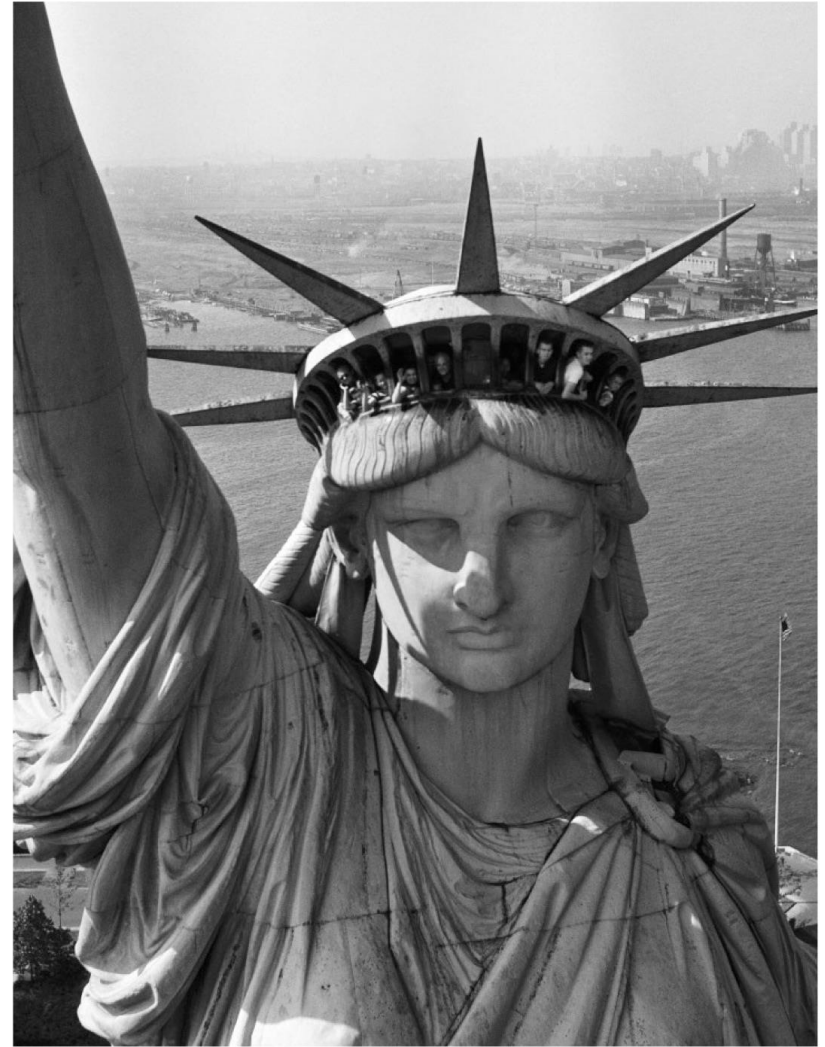
MG *Allotment II* is part of a long tradition of habitable sculptures, big enough to have room-sized spaces inside them. The Statue of Liberty in New York harbour belongs to this line: effectively, it is a tower with an internal staircase and an outer neoclassical, sculptural skin. She has a viewing gallery in her crown, and another even more vertiginous in the torch at the top of her outstretched arm – which, not surprisingly, made a perfect setting for the dénouement of Alfred Hitchcock's film *Saboteur*.

Giambologna's huge figure of the Apennine Mountains at Pratolino outside Florence is a Renaissance predecessor of Liberty. He is thirty-five feet high, as tall as a four-storey house. The colossus crouches on the hillside, grabbing a fish in one hand, from which a stream of water used to gush, his shaggy hair and beard as rugged as the ledge of rock on which he sits. But go behind *Appennino*, and you discover he has a back door, with lower and upper rooms inside.



LEFT  
Giambologna  
*The Apennine Colossus*  
(*Il Colosso dell' Appennino*)  
Park of Pratolino, Villa Demidoff,  
Vaglia, Tuscany, 1579–80  
Rock, lava, brick  
Height c. 10.5 m (34 ft 5½ in.)

OPPOSITE  
Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi  
Statue of Liberty, New York, 1886  
Copper  
Height (excluding pedestal) 46 m  
(151 ft 1 in.)







OPPOSITE  
 Kara Walker  
*Fons Americanus*, 2019  
 Installation view, Tate Modern,  
 London, 2019  
 Non-toxic acrylic and cement  
 composite, recyclable cork,  
 wood and metal  
 Main 22.4 × 15.2 × 13.2 m (73 ft  
 6 in. × 49 ft 10 in. × 43 ft 3¼ in.),  
 grotto 3.1 × 3.2 × 3.3 m (10 ft 2  
 in. × 10 ft 6 in. × 10 ft 10 in.)

RIGHT  
 Kara Walker  
*Fons Americanus*  
 Text of wall panel  
 Installation, Tate Modern,  
 London, 2019

of a plaster mock-up, and that mocked-up-ness makes its mockery even more potent.

The text on the wall is as important as the sculpture itself. It states that this is a gift to 'the Citizens of the Old World (Our Captors, Saviours, and Intimate Family)' from 'That Celebrated Negress of the New World, Madame Kara E. Walker'.

It is With an Overabundance of Good Cheer  
 and  
 Great Enthusiasm  
 that  
 We Present the Citizens  
 of the

### OLD WORLD

(Our Captors, Saviours and Intimate Family)

A GIFT and TALISMAN  
 Toward the Reconciliation of  
 Our Respective Mother-lands,  
 AFRIQUE and ALBION

### WITNESS!

the

## FONS AMERICANUS

— THE DAUGHTER OF WATERS —

An *Allegorical* Wonder

Behold! The Sworling Drama  
 of the Merciless Seas, Routes and Rivers,  
 upon which our dark fortunes were traded  
 and on whose frothy shores  
 lay prostrate Captain, Slave and Starfish, alike.

Come, One and All, to Marvel and Contemplate  
*The Monumental Misrememberings*  
 Of Colonial Exploits Yon.

Gasp Plaintively,  
 Sigh Mourfully,  
 Gaze Knowingly

And

R E G A R D  
 the Immaterial Voice of the Abyss  
 etc. etc.

in a

Delightful Family Friendly Setting

Created by that Celebrated Negress of the New World  
 Madame Kara E. Walker, NTY

The fact that it's a limbless fragment might have been part of the *Torso's* attraction for him; it was open-ended. No one even knows which classical hero or god it was meant to represent. Michelangelo is supposed to have advised the Pope not to restore it – and refused to do so himself. In the 16th century, the *Torso* was famous because Michelangelo praised it. We definitely know that's true: it's mentioned in a book published in his lifetime, by a young author who probably had excellent access to the great man. But we don't need that evidence to understand how much he learnt from it about how dynamism and struggle could be expressed by the anatomy of a muscular body – the tensed pectoralis major, for example – we just need to look up at the Sistine Chapel ceiling.

AG Michelangelo really learnt about invented muscles from the Belvedere *Torso*, didn't he? Looking at it one can see the rock it was made from, which reaffirms its object-ness and materiality. At the same time, here is an image in stone, which you are invited to extend and complete. It reminds me of a remark Michelangelo



LEFT  
Apollonios  
*Belvedere Torso*, 1st century BCE,  
possibly copy of a bronze  
statue from first half of  
2nd century BCE  
Marble  
Height 159 cm (62 3/4 in.)  
Musei Vaticani, Vatican City

OPPOSITE  
Michelangelo  
*Ignudo*, Sistine Chapel ceiling  
1508–12  
Fresco  
Musei Vaticani, Vatican City









AG I was absolutely astonished when I saw two anatomical machines in an exhibition called *Spectacular Bodies* at the Hayward Gallery in 2000. The show was about art and anatomy – medicine and psychology. But what I particularly took away from it was the memory of the ‘anatomical tables’ that were supposed to have belonged to William Harvey, who charted the circulation of the blood.

The table of the male nervous system carries all the charge of a totem or a fetish and yet it looks like a manufactured thing. At the same time it is indexical – real: the brain as a concentrated neural network that needs all this blood flow to keep it refreshed. You can observe the dialogue between the brain and the penis, both being very, very greedy takers of blood. Look at the penis, a pocket of blood. But, actually, it makes Goethe’s point: that we are plants rooted in the air, and that our two-sided brain, so like the hemispheres of a walnut, is a seed planted in the sky, and our torso and limbs like the branching system that stems from it. It was mapping created through dissection that led to the evolution of the wax anatomical model.

MG Yes. In the 18th century, there was a genre of medical sculpture intended, like the anatomical tables, to instruct medical students. This looked very different from the sort of work taught in academies of art. It was made of coloured wax, not marble and bronze, and dedicated to presenting the inside, not the outsides, of bodies. There is a huge collection of these late 18th-century wax figures in the museum known as La Specola in Florence, which were commissioned by the enlightened Habsburg rulers Emperor Joseph II and his younger brother, Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany.

AG This one, *Skins Man* by Clemente Susini, is terrifying. Look at those veinal systems! It is so fresh yet grisly. It is like an aerial view of the Amazon, where you have all these waterways. We are creatures that have rivers and streams running through us.

ABOVE  
Clemente Susini  
*The Skinned Man (Lo Spellato)*  
c. 1775–91  
Wax  
Length 150 cm (59¼ in.)  
Sistema Museale dell’Università  
degli Studi di Firenze Sez. di  
Zoologia ‘La Specola’

OPPOSITE  
Anna Morandi Manzolini  
External muscles of the eye  
1755  
Wax on octagonal table  
35 × 35 cm (13¾ × 13¾ in.)  
Museo di Palazzo Poggi,  
University of Bologna



MG Anatomical sculpture was a genre in which women gained a position. Otherwise, there are almost no European female sculptors recorded between the 16th and 19th centuries (probably because sculpture was considered a less genteel occupation, more rough and physical than painting). But Anna Morandi Manzolini was an exception.

She was married to a specialist maker of wax anatomical models for the renowned school of medicine at the University of Bologna. When he fell ill with tuberculosis, she persuaded the authorities to allow her to continue his work and also, in time, to teach anatomy. Eventually, she acquired a Europe-wide reputation.

Manzolini made a self-portrait wax sculpture, wearing fabric clothes, and even a necklace. She represented herself discoursing on an exposed brain inside a skull with its top neatly removed. In the pendant figure, her husband Giovanni is dissecting a heart: so, she was concerned with the organ of reason, he with the seat of the feelings – perhaps a sly proto-feminist point.

In retrospect, Manzolini’s works have a strangely modern look. The paired portraits call to mind the hyper-real figures by the 20th-century American artist Duane Hanson, while pieces such as this tray filled with eyes in various positions seem obviously surreal. Manzolini was teaching medical students, but Renaissance artists also learnt by cutting up the dead.

Nothing gives a stronger sense of that academic process of transforming real bodies into acceptable artistic form than the figure known to generations of students at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, as ‘*Smugglerius*’. Reputedly, this was based on the dissected corpse of a smuggler. Whoever’s it was, the cadaver was



OPPOSITE  
Jorge Lewinski  
Photograph of Gilbert and  
George's *The Singing Sculpture*  
1970  
Black and white print

ABOVE  
Marina Abramović  
*The Artist is Present*, 2010  
Performance, three months  
at the Museum of Modern Art,  
New York

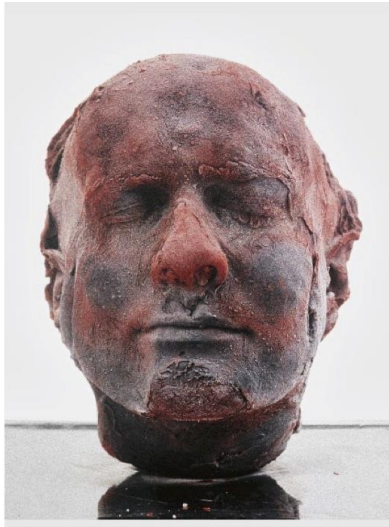


AG Myron's *Discobolos* and other trim and toned classical bodies have become icons for gyms and fitness programmes. Conversely, life can be a kind of art: actual bodies are often reconfigured as if they were sculptural objects. The skull-binding common among Native Americans of the Great Plains, Mayan culture and African tribal cultures are perhaps the most extreme examples of the sculptural effects found in the Amarna busts being applied as adaptations to the living human body.

However, it's not just in cosmetic surgery that we have a lot in common with the Aztec people or the ancient Egyptians. I am fetishistic in my work. By using blood in drawings, for example – as I have – you render an image of the body in a substance that is already completely associated with it, which is the life river. So, if you do a drawing of a body in blood it's got more chance of being attended to.

I want to rethink image with life, collapse the ideal into the real, literally allow the referent to be part of the subject. That is why I use blood and sperm – the substances mixed in Tibetan tantric practice in a bowl made from a human skull. The red and white fluids represent the two lateral 'nadis', the principal energy channels in the body. White is the colour of the brain/testicle/central nervous system connection and red is the colour of blood, the life-giver in our bodies.

MG Marc Quinn's *Self* dramatizes that point, in that it's made of the artist's own highly perishable organic material – his own blood. Consequently, it must be kept constantly refrigerated.



AG Because of the degree to which *Self* is an object that depends on being permanently plugged in – a frozen moment made of life blood – it's about a wish for continuity but also a certain *uncertainty*. *Self* is contemporary but it's riding on pre-modern, totemic and fetishistic values. You smoke or preserve the head of an ancestor because you think that it will bring you power. You keep it in the men's long house because it will guarantee continuity, the continued strength of the tribe.

MG Flesh and bone are the sculptural materials, if that's the right word, that are used in Peruvian mummies or the ancient heads found at Jericho. The motive power of medieval Christianity was provided by sacred relics, often the remains of saints and martyrs. Pilgrims travelled hundreds of miles to revere them, great churches were built around them, the rich and powerful competed to be buried near them or own them personally. The reason was simple: those bones had power, and it was desirable to be close to them on Judgment Day because they might save you from hell. What was displayed was frequently not the remains themselves, but a sculptural case: a head-shaped one for a skull, a hand shape for finger bones.

AG The idea that your passport to the heavenly is through a bit of dead flesh is fairly universal. It's a really primitive idea: the substantial being the gateway to the insubstantial or the ineffable; this whole medieval obsession, and not just medieval. The Buddhists are just as keen on it: think of the Temple of the Tooth at Kandy in Sri Lanka, where one of the Buddha's teeth is its greatest treasure. As we have seen, the stupas have relics in the middle.

In Christian reliquaries, there's often a subject/referent dialogue: the maker has put part of the actual head of a saint inside a sculpture of his or her head.

OPPOSITE LEFT  
Marc Quinn  
*Self* (detail), 1991  
Blood (artist's), stainless steel,  
Perspex and refrigeration  
equipment  
Overall 208 × 63 × 63 cm  
(82 × 24½ × 24½ in.)

OPPOSITE RIGHT  
The St Eustace Head Reliquary  
(detail), 1180–1200  
Wood, silver, rock crystal, pearl,  
gold, glass, cornelian, amethyst  
Height overall 35 cm (13¾ in.)  
British Museum, London

ABOVE  
Iatmul Ancestral Skull, East  
Sepik Province, Papua New  
Guinea, early 20th century  
Human skull, clay, pigment,  
cowrie shells, human hair  
21.6 × 19.1 × 23.5 cm  
(8½ × 7½ × 9¼ in.)  
Brooklyn Museum, New York