

ANTONY GORMLEY

LINSEED OIL WORKS, 1985 - 1990

This extensive group of works from the second half of the 1980s sees the dominance of the warm, honey tones of linseed. Released from its conventional role as binder and operating as a free agent, the linseed oil often tends visually to dominate the smaller areas of black pigment and charcoal or is used as a coloured stain or broken ground against which the black elements are drawn. The oil, dropped from the bottle onto the paper in small dots or left to puddle on the surface, creates a free-form shape against which further images appear. In many instances, the density of the oil soaks through the support, making the texture particularly viscous and tactile and creating a warm aroma that saturates the paper. The element of chance involved in the pouring of the oil allows for greater freedom than was possible in the tighter application of many of the earlier pigmented works, while the yellow-orange coloration of the linseed coincides with the colour found in Gormley's cast-iron sculptures of this period (1987-8). The imagery itself also becomes more free-form. Floating figures and amoeba-like shapes suggest shifting states of becoming, while coupled pairs and embryonic forms reflect ideas of gestation which inevitably came to mind as Gormley's young family was completed with the arrival of his third child Paloma in 1987. Text by Anna Moszynska, from *ANTONY GORMLEY DRAWING*, Published by The British Museum Press, 2002
