ANISH KAPOOR'S

CRIMSON TIDE

Renowned as a sculptor, the artist brings his incendiary style—*and fiery palette*—to the canvas in a new Venice studio

by **Jay Cheshes**

photographs by **Mattia Balsamini**

Originally built in the 1500s, the grand Palazzo Priuli Manfrin in Venice, with its elaborate architecture and ornate frescoes, will eventually house Anish Kapoor's foundation.

Paint-stained rags on the floor resemble the folds and undulations of the clothing in the ceiling art found at Palazzo Priuli Manfrin.

In a former boat repair workshop in Venice, down a narrow alley just off the Grand Canal dead-ending at the water's edge, hides a space now used as a painting studio with Corinthian columns and skylights overhead. Towering canvases hang on every surface. Many more are stacked like dominoes in the corners. A bloody shade of red, the artist's signature color, mixed from an oil paint base of alizarin crimson, is pervasive in the abstract work here.

"I've used it again and again and again and again," says Anish Kapoor, the 69-year-old British Indian artist behind this particular hue, chatting in his newly occupied Venice studio in August. Kapoor has spent decades exploring the possibilities of this corporeal color, in three-dimensional objects forged from silicone, wax and other malleable materials and, increasingly, in gobs of thick paint on canvas.

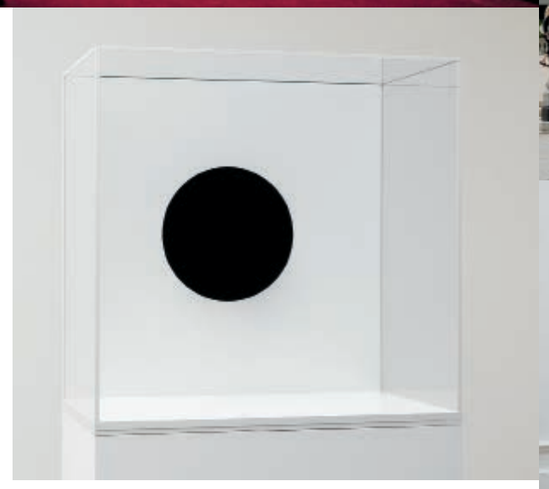
Kapoor is best known as a sculptor of monumental, abstract, perception-defying works of public art, mirrored surfaces that seem to have no beginning or end, like *Cloud Gate*, better known as "The Bean," his apparently seamless 110-ton stainless steel ellipse in Chicago's Millennium Park, and immersive forms so enormous they consume entire building interiors, like *Leviathan*, his bulbous PVC balloon installation that filled the Grand Palais in Paris in 2011.

Kapoor has had a decades-long obsession with negative space, with the void—the "non-object," he calls it—in all its permutations, cutting up museums and galleries with site-specific gashes in the walls and black holes in the floors that seem to have no end.

In 2016, he sealed a deal with British technology firm Surrey NanoSystems for the exclusive use of Vantablack, touted as the blackest substance on earth, a technological marvel developed for scientific and stealth applications and produced in a high-temperature reactor. Kapoor had to sign an agreement under the Official Secrets Act at the British Home Office before he could negotiate a lock on its artistic use.

Both Kapoor's wax and silicone works, often on canvas, led him to painting as "a logical step," he says. Many of the works in his studio remain untitled.

"In my heart, I'm still a sculptor, even if I'm making paintings," says Kapoor. "I'm making paintings, in a way, of things, and then I spend the rest of my time getting rid of things."



HOT AND COLD Clockwise from top: Visitors step inside *Leviathan*, a giant inflated structure at the Grand Palais in Paris. *Cloud Gate*, nicknamed "The Bean," remains a draw in Chicago. The wax- and oil-based *Svayambhu* moves slowly through the Royal Academy of Arts in London, leaving a sticky trail of goo. *Non-Object Black 2019* shows off Vantablack, the world's blackest substance, which Kapoor has exclusive rights to use artistically.

RAPHAEL GAILLARDE / GETTY IMAGES; DAVE MORGAN

PATRICK PYSZKA; DAVE MORGAN

A number of artists began criticizing Kapoor publicly after news broke of his monopoly on the "world's blackest black." British painter Stuart Semple responded tongue-in-cheek by unveiling what he called the "pinkest pink," offering his fluorescent hue for sale online, but requiring each buyer to first confirm "you are not Anish Kapoor, you are in no way affiliated to Anish Kapoor, you are not purchasing this item on behalf of Anish Kapoor." Kapoor replied with an image on Instagram of his middle finger drenched in Semple's "pinkest pink."

"That silly young fellow," says Kapoor of his 43-year-old faux nemesis. "I understand the impulse to say, 'How can a color be exclusive?' But it isn't a color."

Vantablack is not even "a paint," he explains, but "a highly complicated, bloody difficult, damned expensive technical process, and extremely fragile," less a color than the absence of it, absorbing light, so that a coating applied in lab conditions makes three-dimensional objects, like a sphere protruding from a cube, appear head-on to be entirely flat. "Is there an object? Is there not an object? Is it real, not real?" says Kapoor of the mystifying work he produced with the material after years of trial and error, unveiling the first pieces at an exhibition in Venice in spring 2022.

Kapoor's art often requires teams of collaborators to execute, and months—even years—to bring to fruition. Along with the technicians, fabricators and stone carvers employed by his London studio over the years, he's tapped structural engineers, architects, shipbuilders and mirror-makers, among other experts. As a respite from his laborious collaborative work, in recent years he's been embracing a more solitary focus on painting, spending hours alone working in his studios in London and Venice.

"Having this physical work that he can make immediately and by himself I think just gives him an energy, an outlet," says Greg Hilty, partner and curatorial director at Lisson, a gallery in London where Kapoor's work is regularly on exhibition, "and, also, is a counterpoint to some of the more shiny work, the sublime work. In his mind, they couldn't exist in the world without each other."

Kapoor's canvases sometimes have a three-dimensional quality, jutting out from the surface as they blur the lines between painting and sculpture. They tend to be spontaneous, visceral works, exploring messy, violent, often sexual themes, in brutal abstractions conjuring flesh ripped open exposing viscera and blood, fiery rivers of lava rushing past. A trio of large paintings hanging in the Venice studio feature the outlines of a prone figure gushing torrents of red. "It's the body, if you like, expunging its interior," says Kapoor. The piece was inspired, in part, by a late medieval painting he saw hanging in Padua depicting the death of the Madonna.

Still, this high-octane body of work is particularly jarring taken alongside the cold precision of Kapoor's conceptual sculptures.

"You know there are two sides to Anish, what I call the clean side, the polished side, and then there's the dirty side, and it was when I saw the dirty side that I understood the clean side as well," says British curator Norman Rosenthal, former exhibitions secretary of the Royal Academy of Arts in London, who helped organize Kapoor's first showing there in 2009.

Kapoor echoes the sentiment. "There's this way in which I've worked which is very pure, very clean and all that," he says, of his precise sculptural work. "But I had a feeling there's something else, which is more essential. I don't know what the word is, because they're both essential, in fact. They're not in conflict, but they are different ways of seeing the world."

"I'm interested in what I don't know and *what I haven't done*. I feel that's the real mission of the artist."

KAPOOR WAS BORN IN MUMBAI when it was still called Bombay, in 1954, to a Punjabi Hindu father and a mother of Iraqi Jewish heritage. He arrived in London for art school in 1973. Eighteen years later he won the Turner Prize, Britain's highest art accolade. In 2013, he was knighted by Elizabeth II for "services to visual arts" in her annual birthday honors.

"I've always had a very strange relationship to England and to London," he says, reflecting on his adopted country, India's former colonial ruler. "I've lived there longer than I've lived anywhere else, had my children there, got married there, built too many homes there . . . it's a complicated history with England for me—Sir-bloody-Anish, all that crap. So, in a sense you get drawn into the establishment, but at the same time I've always felt uncomfortable about it."

Now, after 50 years living in Britain, Kapoor has begun shifting his center of gravity to Venice. "What I like about being in Italy is, unequivocally, I'm a foreigner and I like that," he says.

"Venice," says Hilty, "represents in many ways historically and symbolically an opening up of Europe to the wider world, in some ways a meeting of East and West, kind of like Istanbul. And that's Anish's world, really, neither west nor east but some dynamic fusion or dialogue between them."

In 2018, Kapoor took over the Palazzo Priuli Manfrin, an abandoned Venetian landmark, with layers of history extending back to the 16th century and a grand ballroom overlooking the Cannaregio Canal, announcing his intention to establish a foundation headquarters, a future home for his archive and a new creative hub there. "In very large terms I try to think of it as a working space in which I might leave some works and maybe ask some artists to come and do something else, or use part of it," he says.

Last year, with restoration work on the building ongoing, he set up his new painting studio across town. This winter he plans to move the studio into a much larger space nearer the palazzo, in a former factory building with room enough to also produce sculpture on-site.

Kapoor has been enthralled with Venice since 1990 at least, when he was chosen to represent Britain at the 44th contemporary art Biennale. The work he showed at the British Pavilion—including *Void Field* (16 imposing sandstone blocks on the floor) and *The Healing of St. Thomas* (a red gash in the wall)—won him the Premio Duemila for artists under 35 (even though, controversially, Kapoor had turned 36 by then). "On the day of the opening, I walked into a restaurant, the whole restaurant stood up and applauded," he says. "That was so touching, wonderful."

He returned frequently to Venice over the years, showing new work during subsequent Biennales. Eventually he bought an apartment there. "I've had this very long association with Venice," he says. "I've always felt it to be good to me, and good to the work. I like that it's a village and that it's cosmopolitan. I still have my studio in London, spend roughly half my time between here and there, but I do feel more and more that it's home, Venice."

Though works on paper and canvas have always been part of his practice, they've become much more of a focus over the last ten years as he's embraced a new parallel path to his work as a sculptor. "I've watched so many colleagues do what they do and then they do what they do. It's not my road," he says. "I'm interested in what I don't know and what I haven't done. I feel that's the real mission of the artist."

These days when he's in painting mode, whether he's in

"I do a lot of blue and black and red," Kapoor says. "The whole thing of painting is giving appearance to objects. What the black things are doing is exactly the opposite of that."

London or Venice, Kapoor tries to finish a canvas a day. "I'm pretty prolific—I've got a hell of a lot of work. I probably let 10 percent out into the world on a yearly basis," he says. To store it all, recently Kapoor purchased a huge warehouse north of London. Much of the unreleased work there, he says, will be donated to the foundation eventually, so that his children won't be responsible for managing these portions of his estate after he's gone—he has a son and two daughters from two different marriages.

Even away from the studio his output is impressive. Along with homes outside London and in Venice, he has places in Harbour Island in the Bahamas and in Jodhpur, India. He produces works on paper at all of the sites, mostly colorful gouache abstractions. There are literally hundreds stashed in drawers at the London studio, categorized based on where they're made. The Jewish Museum in New York will showcase a few of them in a works-on-paper show next year.

In recent years Kapoor's paintings have become a much bigger presence in his gallery and museum shows, often presented alongside his precise machine-made sculptural objects. A whole crop of new paintings will make their public debut in November in a broad survey of his new work at the Lisson Gallery's New York outpost, opening just after Kapoor's mini-retrospective in Florence, Italy, at the Palazzo Strozzi art space.

BY NOW KAPOOR HAS begun mastering the bewildering maze of pedestrian roads and bridges that snake through the Venice canals. "I'm mostly successful in finding ways of going through the back streets where there aren't thousands of tourists," he says as we cut across town for a late lunch in August.

When he bought the sprawling Palazzo Priuli Manfrin from the local government—which lacked the funds to restore it—he had little idea what he'd do with the space. Curator Mario Codognato, a Venice native and old friend of Kapoor's from his early days as a young artist in London, first introduced him to the building.

Codognato, the former chief curator of the MADRE contemporary art museum in Naples, where he often showed Kapoor's art, has been working on the renovation ever since, after signing on as director of Kapoor's new foundation. "The project grew so organically," says Codognato, who first suggested basing the foundation in Venice. Initially, he found a smaller site for the headquarters inside an existing art foundation before hearing about the Palazzo Priuli Manfrin.

"For the first time in my life *I felt free*," he says. The school was a hotbed of radical ideas.

Over the last 20 years some of the most important palazzos in Venice, historic landmarks once occupied by the city's most powerful families, have been snapped up by deep-pocketed buyers, among them some of the world's biggest contemporary art collectors, who've opened them up to the public as private museums—showcases for their art foundations—adding bookshops, ticket offices and sleek new gallery spaces. French fashion tycoon François Pinault runs two outposts of his Pinault Collection, at the Palazzo Grassi and Punta della Dogana. The Prada Foundation also has an art space in Venice. And billionaire investor Nicolas Berggruen is finishing up work on two more foundation spaces, including the 18th-century Palazzo Diedo near Kapoor's foundation.

"The thing about all these foundation buildings, and there are more and more of them, is that they are done to the nines; they are really done. I want to do exactly the opposite," says Kapoor. "I don't want to touch it, or hardly touch it."

Kapoor scrapped early plans from a local architect, Giulia Foscari, for a bookshop and café on the ground floor, preferring to leave the whole site open-ended for now, with simple infrastructure upgrades. "There will be beautiful rooms to show works in, to make works in . . . and then we'll see," he says.

Kapoor hopes to preserve the sense of decay in the space, cleaning up the 18th-century frescoes and other decorative elements left behind over the years but not changing much else. "I don't want restoration; what I want is conservation," he says.

The palazzo was in decent shape when Codognato first found it. Kapoor, an astute student of history, says he was drawn to the building with its soaring double-height ballroom before he learned of its role in the history of art in Venice.

The first portions of the building were completed in the 16th century, when it was home to the aristocratic Priuli family, who produced three doges, the rulers of Venice. In the late 18th century, the palazzo underwent upgrades under a new owner, Girolamo Manfrin, a social-climbing tobacco merchant who burnished his reputation as a tastemaker by opening up his home, and its important collection of art, to prominent figures of the day.

"Mr. Manfrin was a great art collector. He had everything from Giorgione's *La Tempesta* to various Rembrandts, all sorts of magical stuff, which I didn't

know when we were negotiating for the building," says Kapoor.

After Manfrin's death in 1801 or 1802 (questions remain about the exact year), some of his collection wound up eventually at the Gallerie dell'Accademia, one of the most venerable art institutions in Venice. Over the years Manfrin's palazzo went into decay. Catholic nuns moved in for a time in the 1900s. The building, though, had been empty for years by the time Kapoor stepped in.

Work has gone slowly in the five years since he first saw the site. "Doing anything in Venice is a nightmare," he says of the bureaucracy. A completion date for construction still hasn't been set. "It is an artist's project," says Codognato, "so, in a way [it's] permanently in progress."

In a full-circle moment during last year's Biennale, Kapoor was invited to exhibit his own work among Manfrin's collection at the Gallerie dell'Accademia, as part of an ongoing program showcasing contemporary art. Though Manfrin's palazzo was still a work in progress, he decided to put renovations on hold so he could also show work there. "We did this folly of expanding the exhibition into this half-destroyed, half-not building," says Codognato. "The fire brigade were not enthusiastic about it. We had to do a lot of work to make them happy."

Kapoor filled the ballroom with heaps of red wax, part of a theatrical installation, *Symphony for a Beloved Sun*, he'd shown years earlier in Berlin. Concave mirror works, turning the world upside down, were displayed under an 18th-century fresco of Medusa. "Obviously, she has to have the mirror," says Kapoor, of the choice of backdrop.

Though the show closed in October of last year, there are a few remnants in the building as we tour the palazzo. *Mount Moriah at the Gate of the Ghetto*, an inverted mountain of silicone and red paint that had anchored the entry, lies partially dismantled. The piece, referencing the historic Jewish ghetto of Venice—the main entrance is just across the canal—might be reinstalled after the renovation is done.

Fractal towers of powdered pigment were removed, part of another piece from the Kapoor archive, *White Sand, Red Millet, Many Flowers*, leaving behind colored outlines on the floor. "It's the absent work," says Kapoor as we walk through the space. The piece, which dates back to 1982, is a variation on his early breakout pigment series, *1,000 Names*, which was inspired in part by the colors of India following his first return trip after art school in the late 1970s.

"I went with my parents, my brothers and my wonderful girlfriend at the time. We just traveled—architecture, temples, all that business," he says. "I saw stuff, felt connected, and then I came back from that trip and a few months later I began to make my first pigment works."

Early in his career, Kapoor (above, in 1986 with an untitled work) created whimsical sculptures coated in powdered pigments.

Kapoor, the eldest of three brothers, was born into a well-heeled Indian family six years after the country won independence from Britain. His father, a hydrographer, in charge of map-making in the Indian Navy, encouraged his sons to follow in his footsteps with professional careers. Kapoor's mother, an amateur dressmaker, cantor's daughter and "Sunday painter," was more open to her eldest son's artistic interests. She made copies of works by Henri Matisse, he says. "I would finish them for her, and go off in a different direction, start with Matisse and then go somewhere else."

When Kapoor was a teenager, his family moved to the foothills of the Himalayas, where he and one of his brothers attended one of India's most prestigious private academies, the Doon School, the country's answer to Eton, the elite British boarding school. Kapoor, who is dyslexic, says he "hated every single second of it. I was a terrible, terrible student, terrible at sports, a complete slacker."

At 16, Kapoor and his brother Roy, who is a year younger, were dispatched on their own to Israel, which was offering residency to Indian Jews. "My mother was obsessed with getting us out of India," he says. With the country struggling through a population surge and conflict with neighboring Pakistan, she hoped for a better life elsewhere.

Kapoor finished high school on a kibbutz south of Haifa and then, in a bid to make his father happy, began studying engineering at the University of the Negev (now Ben-Gurion University) in southern Israel. "I did six months . . . I just couldn't deal with it," he says. After dropping out, he returned to the kibbutz for a bit of soul-searching. "I decided, in the midst of all my inner turmoil, I was going to be an artist," he says.

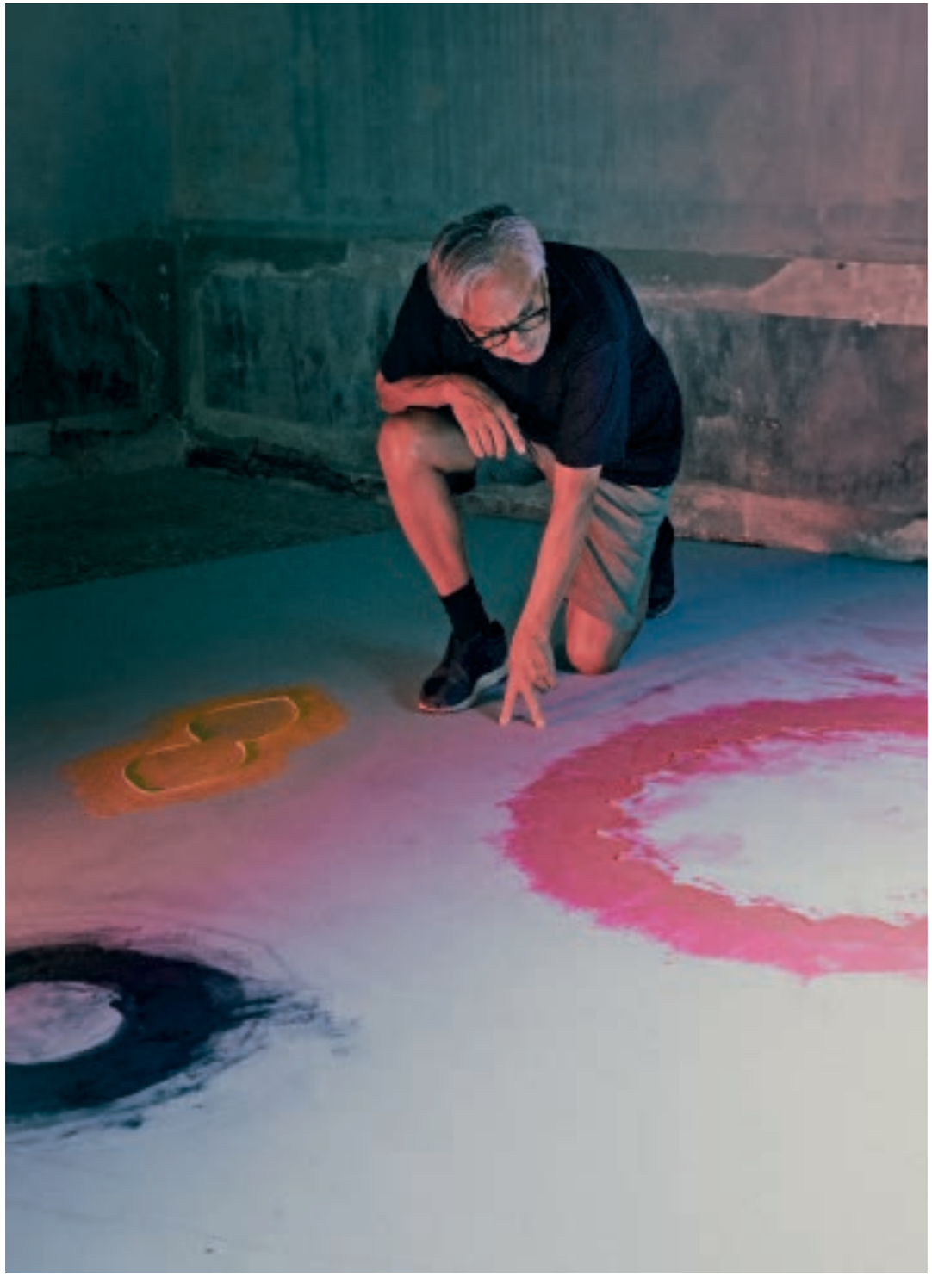
When an art school in Jerusalem rejected his application, he hitchhiked across Europe with a Swedish friend, starting in Istanbul, en route to a new life in London.

It was the early 1970s, a time of creative and political ferment in England. Kapoor enrolled at the Hornsey College of Art in London, where he found a sense of belonging. "For the first time in my life I felt free," he says.

The school was a hotbed of radical ideas and experimental art. Marina Abramović, then a pioneering young performance artist, was a visiting tutor. Artist Paul Neagu, a mentor on the faculty, encouraged Kapoor to think conceptually. "It really gave me the sense that being an artist, or being an object-maker, wasn't necessarily about the ob-

A smock, shoes and book of Hindu hymns accompany a mid-century modern chair in Kapoor's studio, "a place of experimentation, mostly of failure," he says.

LEFT: JACK MITCHELL / GETTY IMAGES



ject; it was about propositions through the object," he says. "Paul didn't use those words at all, but he worked in a way that prompted that kind of thinking for me."

After graduation, Kapoor's work quickly attracted attention. In 1982, when he was 28, he showed his first pieces in Venice, in the Aperto section of the Biennale devoted to young artists. "I showed next to Julian Schnabel, who put all his work in my space. We had an almighty brawl. It wasn't very nice, but in retrospect it's very funny," recalls Kapoor with a laugh. "We've since become friends."

But it was representing Britain at the Biennale eight years later that pushed his career into the stratosphere, opening the door to the technically challenging monumental work that followed. "Then in the art world—it's gone now—there was strongly a sense that just because it's big doesn't mean that it's good, and if it's big, it's probably crap," he says. "And I tried to jump in with both feet, to take on the idea that scale is properly, fully a tool of sculpture, that we must not be embarrassed by it."

In 1999, Kapoor beat out Jeff Koons to win the commission for a public sculpture in Chicago's Millennium Park with his proposal for *Cloud Gate*. "Everybody said a mirrored object of this scale, it's impossible, can't be done," he says. In the six years it took to complete, the budget for the 66-foot-long, 33-foot-high funhouse mirror spiraled from $8 million originally to $23 million by the time it was completed in 2005, receiving a rapturous welcome from the public as it helped usher in the selfie era as one of the first truly viral works of public art.

Known to appreciate the "non-object," Kapoor examines piles of pigment at the palazzo where a multicolored mixed-media work, *White Sand, Red Millet, Many Flowers*, once stood.

There's a prankster quality to Kapoor's more provocative work. *"I quite like being naughty…"*

"When it first opened there were thousands of people, and, as ever, I go, 'Oh no, what have I done? Disneyland, it's so popular,'" says Kapoor. "And so, I decided to go to Chicago and sit with it, and I sat with it for two or three days, and I realized something. Going back to scale, I realized it's a big object and not a big object, a big object and a small object. It has no joints at all; you can't tell how big it is. When you're near it, it's enormous, and when you step back from it, it's not that enormous. The shifting scale felt to me, in my terms at least, there's a poetic quality to it. And for me that saved it."

Kapoor's work hasn't always gotten such a warm response. In 2015, he unveiled a series of site-specific installations in the gardens of the Palace of Versailles outside Paris. *Dirty Corner*, a 200-foot-long biomorphic Corten steel funnel that seemed to erupt from the earth, was quickly maligned in the French press—the *Le Figaro* newspaper dubbed it the "queen's vagina"—and marred by vandals who covered it in antisemitic graffiti. "I think it was an inside job," says Kapoor, who met with French President François Hollande, eventually, to discuss the defacements.

Kapoor has been outspoken on many issues over the years—as a frequent fixture in the British press, he has used his stature to campaign against Brexit; rail against India's Hindu nationalist prime minister, Narendra Modi; and advocate for refugees in the global crisis. Still, he has often said his work, as an artist, has nothing to say. "I don't set out to make political message art. Agitprop is agitprop, doesn't make great art," he says. His abstractions, though, are deeply rooted in art history and in heady metaphysical notions, referencing the avant-garde ideas of early conceptual artists like Russian Kazimir Malevich and Frenchman Marcel Duchamp.

Still, there's sometimes a prankster quality to Kapoor's more provocative work. "I quite like being naughty and controversial," he says.

His 2007 piece *Svayambhu*, which in Sanskrit means "self-made," features ten tons of red wax and Vaseline paint on a track. The piece, tailored to the space where it's shown, squeezes through doorways, splattering violent red streaks on the walls as it goes. It made a proper mess of the 19th-century galleries at the Royal Academy of Arts when it was installed there in 2009, squeezing through five separate doorways.

A critic in the *Guardian*, praising the show as "exhilarating," "self-critical," "funny and uncomfortable," wrote that the piece transformed the Royal Academy galleries into "a kind of alimentary canal, an intestinal tract."

The piece, which has continued to wreak havoc on museum galleries, traveled to Florence in October for Kapoor's show at the Palazzo Strozzi before it continues on to the United States next year for a planned retrospective at the Minneapolis Institute of Art.

The work started with a simple notion of creating a form by pushing something through something else, before layers of meaning began to gel on top. "Suddenly it becomes a train, and all the associations with it, being blood—you know, blood-red—associations to everything from the Holocaust to, all kinds," says Kapoor. "I think that's the quality of the work: its ability to accumulate to itself layers of meaning." ◆

BYLINES

Jay Cheshes wrote about Anselm Kiefer's art compound for *Smithsonian* last year.

Mattia Balsamini's new photo book, *Protege Noctem*, explores how the lack of true darkness affects nature and humans.

LISSON GALLERY

The Brooklyn Rail
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THE BROOKLYN RAIL

ArtSeen

Anish Kapoor

By Raphy Sarkissian

Installation view: *Anish Kapoor*, Lisson Gallery, New York, 504 & 508 West 24th Street, 2 November – 16 December. © Anish Kapoor, courtesy Lisson Gallery.

Too elegant, too tactical, too perfect: such were the characteristics of Anish Kapoor's hyperreflective sculptures of the unforgettable and exuberant exhibition held at Lisson Gallery in New York some four years ago. With immaculately polished surfaces, those optical devices, whether immense or human in scale, appeared as matchless catalysts for arresting phenomenological inquiries into the parameters of vision and the paradoxes of visual representation. Eyesight as an aporia manifested itself unambiguously. The viewer's mobility contributed to the cinematic traits of the sculptural mirrors that appeared to be floating on the ground or had crawled up the walls. The opulent designs of those rational apparatuses were counteracted by the formlessness of irrational reflections. Proceeding to stare at our continual transfigurations, our imagery transpired, became inverted, then dissipated. The sybaritic contest between abstraction and semblance ran parallel to the dialogue between our bodies and the world around us. Order that defined forms and surfaces uncannily adumbrated our visceral organicity. Through our replication we became dilated and metamorphosed into Brunelleschi's clouds. Seduced by narcissism, engulfed in sheens, and deluged with the pleasures of spectatorship, the search for an authorial gesture was extraneous.

Astoundingly, impetuous gestural marks, agitated strokes, unbridled impasto, and luminous coloration prevail in the ten ultra-baroque paintings in Lisson Gallery's current installation at 504 West 24 Street. Exhibited alongside the architecturally fashioned *Oval Pregnant with Void* (2023), the abysmal *Rectangular Box Void* (2022), and the formless *Grave* (2019), the show encompasses pictorial representations alongside sculptural works. Running parallel to Edmund Husserl's formulation of phenomenology as an all-embracing self-investigation, the works on view recall the concluding paragraph of the philosopher's *Cartesian Meditations* (1931), in which he wants to lose the world through epoché so as to regain it through self-examination. Citing Saint Augustine, Husserl advises us, "Do not wish to go out, go back into yourself. Truth dwells in the inner man."

LISSON GALLERY

Anish Kapoor, a groundbreaker of contemporary sculpture, now reveals in New York the viscerality of living bodies through the conventional medium of oil on canvas. Quasi-human figures suspended within vast spaces or boundless crevasses occupy these bewildering paintings. Executed at once impulsively and methodically, the enigmatic imagery of Kapoor collocates our humanity with the *terribilità* of nature. Upon these arresting canvases the duality of cataclysmic pandemonium and startling concinnity of the cosmic fabric relays impressions of ferocity and sublimity.

Anish Kapoor, *God's Advice to Adam II*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 120 1/8 x 96 1/8 inches. © Anish Kapoor. Courtesy Lisson Gallery

Primordiality, the origin of the cosmos, primal scenes, the physiological body, flesh and blood: such are the existential themes of the three groups of intensely expressive paintings, lyrically titled *God's Advice to Adam*, *Dead Mother in Exile* and *Ein Sof*, all executed in 2022. Kapoor has self-reflectively stated, "My greatest difficulty is the de-schooling of myself. To unlearn what I know. The question then is, how to approach this without illustrating any problem. Because there is no problem, of course. Just the body and the body's sense that it is so easily lost in the ordinariness of the everyday." Not surprisingly, Kapoor's primeval desire to reinvent himself runs parallel to the interrogatory discourse of Maurice Merleau-Ponty: "It is at the same time true that the world is *what we see* and we must match this vision with knowledge, take possession of it, *say* what *we* and what *seeing* are, act therefore as if we knew nothing about it, as if here we still had everything to learn."

Across a forest green sky, a gold halo of light emanates from the head of an abstracted body suspended horizontally in *Dead Mother in Exile I*. Levitating within flames of volcanic red, Kapoor's apparition evokes the metaphysical thoughts of the English logician and natural philosopher Robert Grosseteste, who identified light as the first corporeal form. Evoking the expressive power of Edvard Munch's *The Scream* (1893) and the gestural vitalities of Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night* (1889), this hallucinatory painting of Kapoor enthralls us through its chromatic luminosity. Is the resurgence of this quasi-human being an allegory of painting's resurrection?

Installation view, Anish Kapoor, Lisson Gallery, New York, 2023. © Anish Kapoor. Courtesy Lisson Gallery.

The group *God's Advice to Adam* harks back to the viscera, carcasses, innards of slaughtered beings, intestines, and blood of Hermann Nitsch. For a moment, these overpowering paintings may seem to be alluding to the harsh realities of slaughterhouses. Though on the edge of abstraction, the paintings reenact the anxiety and horror that take place in abattoirs, echoing the butchered carcasses in Chaïm Soutine's *Flayed Ox* (c. 1925) and Rembrandt's *Slaughtered Ox* (1655). Gazing at haunting carcasses in shades of alizarin crimson, bright reds, pinks, and austere whites set against tenebrous spaces of obscurity, we are caught up within the dilemmas of humanity's interactions with other mammals, along with the conundrum of life and mortality. Yet to pigeonhole the content of these paintings to the brutalities of slaughterhouses might be reductive. Akin to his polyvocal sculptures, the paintings of Kapoor evade semantic closure.

Whereas the group *God's Advice to Adam* evokes aspects of interiority and the group *Mother in Exile* reveals aspects of exteriority, the group *Ein Sof* seems to have somewhat collapsed the separations of inside/outside, concealment/revelation, oblivion/recognition. The concept of Ein Sof, the Infinite God in Kabbalah, stands for the collapse of the separation between the creator of humankind and humankind's creation. *Ein Sof II*, exuding shades of vivid red and black, exemplifies Kapoor's characteristic method of erasing the boundaries between the nameable and unnameable, between figuration and abstraction. Though aspects of the human figure are somewhat legible, that legibility is overtaken by a polymorphic figuration that registers a Delphic undertone. "We say that a human being is born the moment when something that was only virtually visible within the mother's body becomes at once visible for us and for itself. The painter's vision is an ongoing birth," declares Merleau-Ponty.

The invisible, dark matter, dark energy: these are the phenomena we confront upon entering Lisson Gallery at 508 West 24 Street, where five smaller geometric sculptures in Vantablack are displayed within Perspex vitrines, while six larger black sculptures stand out through their diversity of forms and correlations to floors, walls, and ceilings of the exhibition space. Vantablack, a weld of carbon nano tubes developed by the British company Surrey NanoSystems and officially unveiled in 2014, absorbs up to 99.965 percent of light. *Non-Object Black* (2019) of Kapoor, a relief sculpture composed of Vantablack registers as a perfectly circular void when viewed frontally. Seen in profile, however, it reveals itself as a flattened cross-section of a concave cone with a horizontal central axis. This subverts our preceding visual capacity of perception. As we move around *Non-Object Black*, vision betrays itself. Our experience of the sculpture gives way to the incredulity of our optical faculty, as the absorption of light defies the visual physicality of form. Rather than casting light back, this formal strategy of Kapoor astoundingly shines back the thoughts of Merleau-Ponty on Husserl, who "spoke of the horizon of the things—of their exterior horizon, which everybody knows, and their 'interior horizon,' that darkness stuffed with visibility of which their surface is but the limit."

Looking back at the inventive output of Anish Kapoor that spans nearly five decades, the established definitions of mediums and themes have been as fortified as they have been restlessly aberrated. Kapoor has championed, reconfigured, and extended the trajectory of Modernist sculpture alongside contemporary practitioners of such currents as the Young British Sculpture movement, Minimalism, and Postminimalism. Concurrently, the untrodden paths ventured by Kapoor have manifested an entirely original practice that has revolutionized the definition of the terms "sculpture in the round" and "relief sculpture." Color, the dualities of yin-and-yang, cultural diversity, West meeting East, poetry, mythology, religions, and nonstop experimentation: these have been a few of the touchstones of Kapoor's praxis. Through his recently realized atavistic paintings, the attributes of a signature medium and signature style of an artist have been shrugged off and unreservedly reimagined. These hauntingly luminescent and mythopoetic paintings, now on view in tandem with recent revelations of pure darkness and negativities, resonate in the words of Merleau-Ponty in his essay "The Philosopher and His Shadow," an homage to Husserl: "'Negativities' also count in the sensible world, which is decidedly the universal one." As we gaze at the "negativities" of *My Dark Soul* and *Heaven* (both 2023), we partake in Anish Kapoor's veneration of the Black Stone of Kaaba in Mecca.

Monocle
December 2023

MONOCLE

THE VIEW FROM: Anish Kapoor

Just add water
Venice

Anish Kapoor is a sculptor in fine form. Monocle meets the artist at his studio in the City of Bridges to discuss his philosophy, from the outside looking in.

WRITER
Laura Ryaman

PHOTOGRAPHY
Andy Mastaccosi

Venice harbours many secrets and one of them is Anish Kapoor. While Italy's city of waterways might seem like an impractical place to live or work, the area has always held an appeal for artists (*see page 59*). Kapoor, a Turner Prize-winning sculptor, has now joined this cohort. At his studio near Campo San Polo, he tells MONOCLE why. "It's God's country on many levels," says Kapoor, who has a studio in London but now spends the better part of every year in Venice.

He still struggles with the "belonging, not belonging" feeling of his youth. The son of Punjabi and Iraqi-Jewish refugees, Kapoor grew up in India and moved to London to study art as a teenager. But in Venice, the artist is embracing the liberation of being an outsider. In 2018, Kapoor purchased the Palazzo Priuli Manfrin, a grand if crumbling 18th-century residence, where he plans to establish his own foundation, studio or repository for his works.

The palazzo's frescoed ballroom and salons are already in use, having opened to the public at the Venice Biennale in 2022 with a display of Kapoor's art. That same year, he also used it as a second location for his ground-breaking solo exhibition at the Gallerie dell'Accademia, where he debuted works covered in Vantablack coating (considered to be the world's darkest man-made substance) and a canon that shot gooey mounds of viscera-coloured wax directly onto museum walls. The artist's recent exhibition at Florence's Palazzo Strozzi in October brought together some of his most emblematic creations: a blood-coloured wax monolith on train tracks shaped by their continual movement through a doorway; curved mirrors that reflected and warped the viewers' perception; and forms that were, seemingly, made entirely of pigment.

They were sculptures that lacked solidity and distinct borders; forms that were startlingly shapeless and impossible to fully grasp. "I was trying to portray the way that real objects are not real – the way that material things are immaterial," says Kapoor. "We know that from our experience of ourselves."

Kapoor fashions the objects – or "non-objects," as per his terminology – in collaboration with a team of more than 20 assistants at his London studio. But in Venice, he paints alone. A palette mashed with globs of red paint and silicone sits on the artist's studio floor, which his dog, Tara, then prances through before walking across some works laying on the ground. Kapoor smiles at her paw trail.

Currently on display at Lisson Gallery's two New York spaces, the works that Kapoor has produced here feature elements that he has never worked with before, such as Catholic-style shrouds and aureoles. His reasoning? "The job of the artist is to follow the unknown," he says. "Do what you've never done before and risk the possibility that it's utterly idiotic." Tara, in his arms now, gives Kapoor's face a lick. "I'm talking about freeing yourself. And freeing yourself is a process." — M

The CV

1954: Born in Mumbai.
1973: Moves to the UK to attend the Hornsey College of Art and, later, the Chelsea School of Art and Design.
1978: Takes part in his first high-profile exhibition, *New Sculpture*, at the Hayward Gallery.
1991: Wins the Turner Prize.
2018: Purchases Venice's Palazzo Priuli Manfrin.
2022: Subject of an exhibition held at the Gallerie of the Academy of Venice.
2023: Kapoor's paintings are on display at Lisson Gallery's two New York locations until 20 December.

LISSON GALLERY

The New Yorker (online)
15 August 2022

THE NEW YORKER

Kapoor is best known for works that explore the interplay of mass and void, and for beguiling experiments with optics. His sculptures induce both awe and disquiet. Photographs by Alex Majoli / Magnum for The New Yorker; Art works © Anish Kapoor / ARS

PROFILES AUGUST 22, 2022 ISSUE

ANISH KAPOOR'S MATERIAL VALUES

The wildly successful sculptor, whose works incorporate everything from reflective steel to goopy wax, has turned an enormous palazzo in Venice into a showcase for his work. It's a statement of power—and a bid for his legacy.

By Rebecca Mead

August 15, 2022

The Palazzo Priuli Manfrin, in Venice, was bought four years ago by the artist Anish Kapoor. It was constructed in the sixteenth century for the aristocratic Priuli family, but it is thanks to the efforts of a later owner, Girolamo Manfrin, that the palazzo has its storied place in Venetian art history. Manfrin was an outsider from Dalmatia—born "in the midst of mud and shit," as one detractor put it—who amassed a fortune in the tobacco trade. He bought the palazzo, which featured a ballroom with a thirty-foot-high frescoed ceiling, in the late seventeen-eighties. Manfrin wanted to decorate his new home with "pictures of the highest quality," but, not being a connoisseur, he had advisers find him paintings by such masters as Mantegna, Giorgione, and Tiepolo. Manfrin boasted of acquiring masterpieces "without paying any attention to the expense involved," and his expenditures had the desired result: the palazzo became a required destination for any cultivated visitor to Venice, and remained so after his death, in 1801. Three decades later, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley wrote that "the collection is in every respect magnificent, and deserves many visits."

Manfrin's art was sold off in the late nineteenth century, with many works going to Venice's Gallerie dell'Accademia. Thereafter, the palazzo changed hands repeatedly, and eventually fell into dilapidation. By the end of the twentieth century, the building was serving as a convent for a community of nuns, who had converted its upper floors into monastic cells. By 2012, it was deserted and on the market for twenty million euros: a crumbling fixer-upper with faded frescoes and a courtyard that, if not quite filled with mud and shit, was prone to frequent flooding.

Kapoor, who was born in Mumbai in 1954, and has lived in Britain since the early seventies, is the kind of blue-chip artist who, had he been working in the eighteenth century, might have sold some pieces to Manfrin's advisers. Kapoor is best known for works that explore the interplay of mass and void, and for beguiling experiments with optics. His sculptures induce both awe and disquiet. His mirrored works—in particular, concave disks that measure several feet across and cast complex patterns of reflection—have regularly been snapped up by collectors at art fairs ever since he started making them, in the late eighties. The mirror sculptures not only create a destabilizing aura; they reflect light and sound in ways that tend to enhance whatever room they are displayed in. Museums and foundations have an equally large appetite for what Kapoor calls "non-objects"—such as twisted stainless-steel works so reflective that their shapes are hard to discern—and also for sculptures, made from natural materials like sandstone or alabaster, that are punctured with mysterious holes.

Although these signature pieces are alluring, some of Kapoor's work is alarming, even repulsive. For an exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts, in London, in 2009—the first solo show there by a living artist—he presented "Grayman Cries, Shaman Dies, Billowing Smoke, Beauty Evoked," an array of lumpy forms made from coils of concrete extruded from a 3-D printer. Kapoor's working title for this installation was "Between Shit and Architecture." In 2015, the Rijksmuseum, in Amsterdam, displayed his "Internal Object in Three Parts," a triptych of canvases thickly encrusted with red and white silicone that evoked freshly slaughtered viscera. One of his most celebrated works, "Shooting Into the Corner," consists of a cannon that fires off bucket-size cannisters of blood-colored wax at regularly timed intervals; Kapoor has spattered the walls of many a museum with his gory goop.

"We need to unite against our common enemy—checkers."

Kapoor has often embraced the challenge of working on an enormous scale. In 2002, he became the third artist to receive a commission from the Tate Modern, in London, to create an installation for the gigantic Turbine Hall, part of a former power station. In collaboration with the architect and engineer Cecil Balmond, Kapoor installed a vast red membrane—manufactured in France, by a company that usually makes coverings for sports stadiums—then stretched it over and between three giant steel rings. The work, which fully occupied the daunting space, was titled "Marsyas"—an allusion to the myth, also depicted by Titian, in which a satyr is flayed for defying Apollo. Even for those visitors for whom the reference was unfamiliar, the work still packed a wallop. "It looked like some part of the body, except you were not really sure what it was," Donna De Salvo, who curated the installation, and is now at the DIA Foundation, in New York, told me. "Anish's view of things is deeply rooted in the physical, the bodily, the psychological,

Cartoon by Liana Finck

and in how those things intersect." In 2009, in Kaipara, New Zealand, he inserted an even larger steel-and-membrane sculpture, "Dismemberment, Site I," into a hilly landscape; shaped like a double-sided trumpet, the work, which is more than eighty feet tall, resonates with the wind.

These large pieces were praised for creating in the viewer an almost terrifying sense of immersion—and an inescapable confrontation with mortality. Some of Kapoor's creations, however, can tip over into bombast. In 2010, in preparation for the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, he was commissioned to make the U.K.'s tallest public work of sculpture: the ArcelorMittal Tower, named for the steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal, who helped finance its construction. Designed in concert with Balmond, and three hundred and seventy-six feet in height, it is a swirling network of red-painted steel tubes that might, poetically, be said to resemble the arterial system of the flayed Marsyas; the sculpture was more commonly compared to a tangled hookah pipe. One wit dubbed it the Eyeful Tower. In 2015, in the gardens of the Palace of Versailles, Kapoor installed a colossal structure, resembling a funnel laid on its side, fabricated from Corten steel. He declared that the work, titled "Dirty Corner," was "very sexual"—something that could be said of much of his œuvre. The sculpture appalled rather than seduced many onlookers, though, and vandals repeatedly covered it in graffiti. The French press renamed the work "*le vagin de la reine*."

"The truth of the matter is that I sell a good bit of work each year, and that allows me to keep going with ambition, and to do stupid things like buy a bloody palazzo," Kapoor told me when we met in Venice, in early April. Bureaucracy and the pandemic had hampered efforts, initiated last fall, to ready the Palazzo Manfrin for its new incarnation: the home of the Anish Kapoor Foundation. The Omicron variant sickened various people working on the restoration, and a small earthquake had revealed the frescoes' fragility. Though the palazzo remained in a raw state, in mid-April Kapoor was planning to open it to the public for the first time in more than a century, as part of an expansive project curated by Taco Dibbits, the general director of the Rijksmuseum: an exhibition spread across two venues, with works shown at the Palazzo Manfrin and also at the Accademia, where Kapoor would be the first British artist to be honored with a solo show.

A few weeks before the exhibition was to open, the Palazzo Manfrin was mired in construction, so I met Kapoor at the Accademia. He is slight of build and light on his feet, with a boyish demeanor and smooth, unlined skin belied by silvery, swept-back hair. He wore sneakers, black pants, and a turquoise cashmere sweater. Around us, Venetian workmen were making slow progress on the exhibition. "I'm worried, because the lighting guys have got to get their bloody equipment in here," Kapoor told me, casting a wary eye up to the antiquated beams overhead. He has a sonorous voice, with the kind of English accent that echoes in the halls of private schools and in the upper reaches of the Foreign Office. When he laughs, which is quite often, he verbalizes the act: "Ha-ha-ha!" Addressing the workers, Kapoor was upbeat: "*Formidabile! Ho visto che cambia totalmente.*" Turning back to me, he confided, "I'm fearless—I'll speak any bloody language. Ha-ha-ha!"

"Shooting Into the Corner" was once again being exhibited, though without ongoing shooting into any corners: Kapoor had decided that the work should be set up with an already discharged arsenal, the cannon's barrel aimed toward a small room that was knee-deep with gloppy red deposits, as though it were Bluebeard's chamber. So indelibly is Kapoor's name associated with the wax's hue—a dark red, more purple than orange—that the Ford Motor Company offers vehicles sprayed with what it calls, without his permission, Kapoor Red. (He's suing. "Artists are continually being plagiarized by capitalism in its various forms," he said. "We must fight back at every turn.") Kapoor said that "Shooting Into the Corner" was "obviously very, very phallic, male in conversation with female," adding, "It's also throwing paint—so Pollock and Abstract Expressionism. And, obviously, it refers to Goya"—whose "The Third of May 1808," at the Prado, depicts Spanish loyalists facing a Napoleonic firing squad.

Displayed on the opposite wall was "Pregnant White Within Me," a scaled-up iteration of a groundbreaking work from 1992, "When I Am Pregnant." Approached from the side, it was evidently a large ovoid bulge that extended seamlessly from the wall, at head height. Seen from the front, the bulge was much harder to detect: it seemed to have been absorbed back into the wall. "We're in the middle of lighting it, trying to make it disappear," Kapoor explained. The walls of a neighboring gallery were hung with various oil paintings: kinetic, angry abstractions in which a few figurative elements—a severed artery?—could be discerned. Kapoor has made paintings throughout his career, though he has rarely shown them. When the Modern Art Oxford recently mounted a show of Kapoor's paintings alongside some viscera-inspired sculptural works, one visitor became so overwhelmed that he fainted.

For decades, Kapoor explained, he has been drawn to the symbolic potency of blood. "Men have no access to blood, and women do," he said. "Menstruation is the way that blood and earth connect—how do men have access to blood? War, circumcision, and hunting. Those are the only ways." He is persuaded by the conclusions of the British anthropologist Chris Knight, who thirty years ago argued that the first acts of culture—dance, song—were created by women who were isolating from men while menstruating together and smearing themselves ritually with red ochre. Kapoor said of Knight, "He's bonkers, but I love him." The paintings were concerned with sacrifice, he explained: in several of the works, a craggy form alluded to Mt. Sinai. "Moses performed the sacrifice, so to speak, on the golden calf, and then we have the dismantling of polytheism, and then we end up with this monotheistic patriarchy," he said. At the far end of the gallery, Kapoor had smeared black and red pigment up the wall, and, at the base, collected a pile of dirt and rubble in which it was possible to identify the crumpled, soiled remains of a garment. "It's another dirty corner," he said. "It's called 'Death of the Artist'—and there are my overalls. Ha-ha-ha!" The title, he added, was far from a joke. "These works are all obviously *sacrificial*, let's say," he went on. "So why not me?"

It was in Venice that Kapoor first came to international prominence. At the 1990 Biennale, when he was thirty-six, he was selected to represent Britain. Among the sculptural works that he showed were "Void Field"—a room filled with rough-hewn blocks of Northumbrian sandstone, each of which had been bored with a hole lined with Prussian-blue pigment—and "A Wing at the Heart of Things," which consisted of two massive, flattish pieces of slate that were similarly coated with blue pigment, like pieces of sky that had fallen to earth. ("A Wing at the Heart of Things" is now in the collection of the Tate.) More immediately understated, if hardly less technically complicated, was "The Healing of Saint Thomas," a bloody gash in the gallery's white wall which suggested not just the wound of Christ but also the minimalism of Lucio Fontana. (It has been reprised at the Accademia; as an experiment, Kapoor added a drip of blood from the wound, but he rejected the notion, and ten coats of paint were required to eliminate the mark.) At the Biennale, installing the sculptures demanded the costly reinforcing of not one but two floors of the British pavilion, after Kapoor changed his mind about the arrangement of his work, then changed it back. Despite the sculptures' heft, they had a numinous quality, seeming to have arisen in place almost without the artist's intervention. Photographers at the opening captured Giulio Andreotti, the Italian Prime

Minister, leaning over one of the blocks in "Void Field" and peering into the cavity.

Critics praised Kapoor's work for continuing the formal explorations of modernist sculpture while also citing his capacity for unironic spiritual suggestiveness. At a Biennale where the attention-getting gestures included pornographic sculptures in which Jeff Koons depicted himself having sex with his partner Ilona Staller, Kapoor's work won plaudits both for its weightiness and for its ethereality. "I remember a sense in 1990 of people telling me what I was doing," Kapoor recalled. "I thought that was most interesting, because it means that something I had been up to is out there, if you like, in the public psyche. So something shifted. That was perhaps most important." Kapoor received commentators' insights with equanimity: "Mostly, I thought, Yeah, I *know* what I am doing. How nice of you to recognize it." In 1991, Kapoor won the Turner Prize, the U.K.'s most prestigious honor for contemporary art. Having renounced his Indian citizenship for British citizenship—his birth nation does not recognize dual nationality, and a British passport is a more convenient document for international travel—he was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire, in 2003, and knighted, a decade later, for services to culture.

Unlike Koons—with whom Kapoor shares, if nothing else, a predilection for flawless, shiny surfaces that are devilishly complex to fabricate—Kapoor's themes are unapologetically sober, even old-school: God, man, woman, birth, death. "I do believe we are deeply religious beings," Kapoor, who has practiced Zen Buddhist meditation for decades, told me. "The profound mystery of life—it's banal to say it—is: 'What happens when I die? Where was I before I was born?' I think those are daft but actually bloody important questions." He ranges freely among religious, mythological, and intellectual traditions; his work invokes Christian, Jewish, and Hindu symbolism. Sigmund Freud is never very far away. Kapoor is impatient with what he sees as the restrictive ethic of identity politics—a framework that might deem problematic a male artist's attempt to inhabit or represent the feminine, or that might question the expression of an artist whose subject matter appears to be at odds with his own heritage or lived experience. "I have a huge problem with it," he told me. "Black art can only be made by Black artists? Phooey. *Phooey!* The whole point of being an artist is this ability, or will, to project psychically into other ways of being, seeing, thinking. The banal political correctness of, if you like, 'the origin of the author'? Oh, how tedious!"

Kapoor grew up in a prosperous neighborhood of Mumbai. He was the eldest of three boys. His father, who came from a Hindu Punjabi family, was a hydrographer in the Indian Navy. "When we were young children, he was often at sea, making maps," Kapoor told me. "There were literally lines let down to measure the depths—making the invisible visible." His mother, who painted in her spare time, also had her own business. "To say she was a clothes designer is going too far, but to call her a seamstress is too simple," he said. She had emigrated from Iraq as an infant with her parents, who were Jewish refugees; her father became a cantor in a synagogue in Mumbai. Kapoor's parents were cosmopolitan and modern. Ilan Kapoor, five years Anish's junior, who is now a professor of development studies at York University in Toronto, told me, "We always had the sense that we were outsiders." At home, the family spoke English rather than a local language, as the families of the boys' classmates tended to do. "My father absolutely hated Hinduism, and we rarely went to a synagogue," Kapoor said. In contrast, he was drawn to the diverse and ancient traditions that he saw around him. "Hinduism is deeply to do with ritual, with faith and belief," he told me. "I thought it was fascinating to go to the temple and see all these innocent and not-so-innocent Indians with awe in their faces."

In 1965, Kapoor's father was promoted to the position of the Navy's chief hydrographer, and the family moved from Mumbai to Dehradun, close to the foothills of the Himalayas. (The dry climate in Dehradun meant that map pages would not be warped by moisture, insuring more accurate renderings.) The city was the location of one of India's most élite boarding schools, the Doon School. Kapoor and his brother Roy, who is a year younger, attended as day students; Kapoor, who is dyslexic, struggled with his studies, and loathed the place. "It was all about sports and seniority," he said. "We had to get up at the crack of dawn and go and do gym, and my heart was not in one second of it. I was deeply disinterested, and not motivated. And I was, as I still am, deeply anti-authoritarian. My father, the admiral—we were at war with each other." His mother was warm and loving, but he felt underestimated by her. "My mother once said to me, 'Anish, you'd be a good deputy to someone,' " he told me. "She didn't say it nastily, but it really offended me."

When Anish was sixteen, he and Roy were sent to Israel to live on a kibbutz. Anish's job was to look after the community's ducks. "We were still children, really—naïve, innocent Indian boys," he recalled. In India, the brothers' Jewish identity had marked them as outsiders; in Israel, Anish discovered that their Indian heritage marked them as not Jewish enough. On the streets of Tel Aviv, they were subjected to racist chants. While in Israel, Anish suffered what he later recognized as a nervous breakdown. "I just became completely dysfunctional," he told me. Roy, who is now an executive at a technology company in Toronto, told me, "We would be walking along the street, and he would say he didn't know what was real and what was not real. He would gaze around, and shake, and start to cry." It was then that Kapoor first went into psychoanalysis. (He now has weekly rather than daily sessions.) But he also received help from other sources. "I had an aunt who lived in Israel, and she had these weird, shamanistic predilections," he recalled. When Kapoor's mother went to Israel to visit her sons, the aunt commanded her, "Go back to India and get some earth, come back, and put it under Anish's bed." Kapoor told me, "I could cry, honestly —my mother, bless her, went to India, got some earth, and put it under my bed. And, in a way, it's that ritual material that I have been working with ever since."

Kapoor's parents hoped that he would study to become an engineer in Israel; instead, he decided to become an artist, renting a studio and starting to make paintings. When he applied to Bezalel, the noted art school in Jerusalem, he was turned down, and he left the country in 1973, just before the Yom Kippur War. Kapoor hitchhiked across Europe, stopping in Monaco, where his parents had moved for his father's work. In the principality, he told me, "I was getting stopped by the police for being dark-skinned and having long hair every five minutes—I'm sorry, but that's just a fact." (A few years ago, he returned to Monaco to receive an honor, and took the opportunity to inform Prince Albert II about the long-ago harassment.) Kapoor ended up in London, where he enrolled at the Hornsey College of Art—an environment that was both idealistic and radically leftist. "Artists would hang out, get stoned, chill out, go to the pub, go to the studio," Kapoor recalled. "It was a completely different atmosphere, in terms of what it meant to do something in the world. It wasn't a job. It was a mission. It was a thing you filled your life with." London was cheap and increasingly cosmopolitan. Kapoor rented a studio for five pounds a month and made money, at Camden Lock Market, by selling jewelry made from bent spoons and forks.

Kapoor had imagined himself having a modest, bohemian existence, but this plan was undermined by his growing critical and commercial success. In the late seventies, he began sculpting biomorphic, convoluted forms that looked as if they were made entirely from heaps of bright-colored pigment. The series, titled "1000 Names," was partly inspired by Kapoor's first return visit to India, a decade after his departure; the sculptures' colors and textures evoked the sacks of pigments sold in Mumbai markets for ritual use, and their powdery edges were formally innovative, bringing into question the boundary between painting and sculpture. In the course of Kapoor's career, his pigment works have sometimes raised other questions: once, on the way to a show in Sicily, airport security guards briefly detained him, suspicious of his claim that the bags of white powder found in his luggage were paint.

In 1982, he was taken on by the influential Lisson Gallery, which already represented several British sculptors of his generation, including Tony Cragg and Richard Deacon. Like them, Kapoor often fabricated works from commonplace materials, such as Styrofoam and wood. But his use of powdered pigment was distinctive. Nicholas Logsdail, the gallery's founder, told me, "The form was not necessarily that original, but the way he used the form was. His use of color pigment, and this very casual way of just letting it drop to the floor, rather than making it neat and tidy—I thought this had the potential to be some sort of art-historical breakthrough." In 1984, a show of pigment works at the Gladstone Gallery, in Manhattan, sold out before it had even opened. John Russell, who reviewed the show for the *Times,* noted that Kapoor "has something of his native country in his use of deep and brilliant color," adding, "The mustard yellows, the Yves Klein blue, the bright, sharp reds and the luxurious blacks remind us at once of a country in which color comes in the form of a dye, and not out of a tube."

Critical reception of Kapoor's work often focussed on his Indian ancestry, while sometimes paying less attention to other aspects of his artistic inheritance. Homi K. Bhabha, the Harvard professor and critical theorist, who has been a close friend of Kapoor's for decades, told me, "In the nineteen-eighties and nineties, there was an obsession—a kind of cultural anxiety—to put a name and a place to a post-colonial diasporic artist's inventiveness by emphasizing the authenticity of his or her cultural provenance. Anish's work is often given an over-the-top mystical and mythological reading which doesn't engage with the more worldly tensions to which it calls attention." Post-colonial, diasporic artists, Bhabha went on, have a global provenance rather than a national identity: "They are in dialogue with Western art and artists while also being deeply in conversation with arts and artists across the global, post-colonial South."

Kapoor told me that he "refused to accept that I am an 'Indian artist,' " and went on, "In the age of the individual, creative potential is attributed to background culture. And you rob the individual of their creative contribution." His relationship with his land of origin has been further complicated by the rise of Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, of whom Kapoor has been consistently critical. Last year, he wrote in the *Guardian* that Modi's regime "bears comparison with the Taliban in Afghanistan, who also attempted to rule with ideological fervor," adding, "The fascist government in India today is doing what the British could not. Modi and his neo-colonial henchmen are forcing Hindu singularity on the country." Kapoor is no fonder of the outgoing British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, whose politics he sees as part of a dispiriting global trend rightward. (When Johnson was the mayor of London, Kapoor expressed his displeasure with him after Johnson commissioned the construction of a slide on the frame of the ArcelorMittal Tower, in order to make it a more alluring tourist attraction.)

"Are we never to find a place that doesn't have a spider?"

"You look at Brazil, India, on and on—the first thing they go for is culture," Kapoor told me. "Because they don't want freethinking, open-minded conversation, and because images matter. It's sad to see Britain go in this direction." Kapoor has leveraged his renown in England to criticize everything from Brexit to the British government's treatment of Shamima Begum—a British-born woman who was stripped of her citizenship in 2019, four years after she decided, as a fifteen-year-old, to leave London to join ISIS fighters in Syria. Now living in a refugee camp in northern Syria, Begum has borne and lost three children. "Here's a sad young woman who was trafficked, effectively," Kapoor told me. "Imagine a government that can arbitrarily remove your citizenship, if you have the wherewithal to get citizenship elsewhere, because you speak out against them. They could do the same to me tomorrow, frankly."

Cartoon by Frank Cotham

Kapoor's pigment sculptures were the beginning of his efforts to push materials to unexpected, apparently reality-defying extremes. "It is said that what you see is what you get, and I think art is exactly the opposite," Kapoor once told the curator Nicholas Baume. "For me, the illusory is more poetically truthful than the 'real.' " Greg Hilty, the curatorial director of the Lisson Gallery, told me, "There is a bit of a Wizard of Oz thing—Anish has never been afraid of fiction, and theatre."

Over the years, the materials to which Kapoor has had access, and the transformative methods at his disposal, have become more sophisticated and extreme. He enlisted workers at a shipyard in Holland to manufacture "Hive," a giant curved sculpture made from Corten steel. For "Svayambhu"—a Sanskrit word that means "self-generated"—Kapoor placed a huge, motor-propelled block of blood-colored wax on a track that passed through three identically sized doorways; the wax block squeezed through and spattered the doorways, suggesting that it had been "carved" into shape while moving back and forth. At an online roundtable last year, Nigel Schofield of MDM Props, the fabricator who helped Kapoor realize the work, said of the wax vehicle, "There's a *train* underneath that, so you need engineering skills."

An exploration of technological possibility underlies some of Kapoor's works. Sometimes the results can seem merely slick; in other cases, novel tools help him reach for the sublime. The coils of concrete in "Grayman Cries, Shaman Dies, Billowing Smoke, Beauty Evoked" were inspired by a heady conversation with Adam Lowe, the founder of Factum Arte, a Madrid studio that specializes in digitization. "Adam Lowe and I wondered if it were possible to make a machine that could generate form," Kapoor wrote in "Unconformity and Entropy," a 2009 book about the collaboration. "Once we had started making objects, a new reality began to emerge. These were objects like no others; they seemed to obscure the border between artifice and event. They are objects more akin to natural things than to those made by design." In Kapoor's studio, wet concrete was placed at predetermined coördinates via an elaborately programmed 3-D printer; in the book, Lowe describes the device as "a shit machine that farts and craps its way along its ordained path." Eventually, Kapoor decided that computerizing the creative process was unnecessary; dressed in white overalls and surgical gloves, he wielded the nozzle himself.

Other Kapoor works display such exquisite technical refinement that they seem otherworldly. These are often achieved in collaboration with the thirteen technicians who work at Kapoor's studio. Greg Hilty, of the Lisson Gallery, described the studio to me as a special atelier: many of Kapoor's employees, including administrative staff, make and show art in their own right. "He has a group of people he has worked with for a really long time," Hilty said. "And they know what he wants, and think what he thinks, to a certain degree. They have evolved with him, and they have helped him evolve his language." Even when Kapoor's works look as if they have been digitally manufactured or created with imaging software, they are often entirely analog—first sketched by Kapoor on paper or on the studio walls, then sculpted by hand, or by a variety of hands. Kapoor employs three stone carvers whose expertise can be imaginatively harnessed. Within the past two years, his studio has produced a trio of sculptures in which a wafer-thin rectangle or triangle of alabaster appears to be hovering, impossibly, in front of a rough-hewn block of the stone. In fact, each geometric figure has been painstakingly carved, by hand, from the solid block, to which it remains connected by a stem that is visible only if you peer at the sculpture from the side. Each piece in the series took between four and six months to make; conceptually, the works are on a continuum with earlier Kapoor sculptures in which forms are carved from the inside out, but the new pieces emerged from conversations with his team about the technical limits of stone carving. "They told me that you can just about get your hand in a seven-centimetre space—they could carve between the stone and the form in front," Kapoor explained to me. "Can you believe it? Seven centimetres! We found tools that can do it. They found, we found. It's a feat of patience and love and care."

Other works achieve their mysterious effect through the construction of faux walls and floors. Kapoor once set a giant chromed-bronze sinkhole into a gallery floor, like a bathtub drain of the gods. A particularly notorious work is "Descent Into Limbo," which was first displayed in 1992, and which gallerygoers have lined up to experience whenever it has been shown. It consists of a black hole on the floor of a small room to which several visitors at a time are admitted. Kapoor believes that "Descent Into Limbo" is his best work. In Venice, he told me, "It looks like a black carpet on the ground, not like a hole, but it is a space completely brimmed full of darkness." (The work is fiendishly difficult to install, and is not being shown either at the Accademia or at the Palazzo Manfrin.) "It is frightening," he continued. "Very frightening, because it's a bloody deep, dark hole, but it's also an object and not an object. 'Descent Into Limbo' is literally doing, if you like, what Apollinaire dares the artist to do—to go to the edge, fly or die." Some visitors have taken this injunction literally: a few years ago, when "Descent Into Limbo" was shown at a gallery in Portugal, a man in his sixties fell in. "Poor fellow, he must have hurt himself so badly," Kapoor said. "He spent three or four days in hospital." How deep does the hole go? "To the center of the earth!" Kapoor told me. "Ha-ha-ha!"

"Come this way!" Kapoor called out, stepping lightly along the pavement outside his vast studio, in the Camberwell district of South London. It was a morning in early March, with six weeks to go before the opening of the shows in Venice, and members of the art-world press had been invited for a preview of some works that were to be exhibited. Having at first occupied a single warehouse on the street, Kapoor's domain has extended to include all but one of the buildings on the block. Each structure is dedicated to a different fabrication process: mirrors in one, silicone works in the next. Nicholas Logsdail told me, "Each one is like a different compartment of his brain."

Kapoor told his guests, "Now, this is a huge room with a very, very big object in it—come in one by one." He opened a door to reveal a hangar-like space, the floor of which was almost entirely covered by what looked like an enormous mountain ridge formed of a material that resembled raw meat. His visitors, walking in single file along the narrow margin, stepped gingerly, like "Squid Game" contestants trying to avoid a gruesome fate. "Be careful of your backs—everything is covered in sticky red," Kapoor cried. The warning came too late for a reporter from an Italian newspaper, whose overcoat already bore gooey evidence of a too close encounter with Kapoor's œuvre.

The work had been created in less than three months. First, Kapoor made various sketches, four of which had been turned into models by his lead technician, Pablo Smidt, who has worked with him for nineteen years, and who stood by in the studio during Kapoor's presentation, his white overalls stained with gore. (One member of Kapoor's team told me that the sight of his technicians at work suggested "a production of 'Julius Caesar' after the assassination.") After Kapoor was shown the models, he selected his chosen form, which Smidt had built by hand, working solo for about six weeks to make a fibreglass substructure, then applying blocks of color. The ultimate surface, which was made of resin mixed with paint, had been applied by Kapoor. "He is not someone coming in here and giving directions and going away," Smidt told me later. "When it is the moment to work, he works like anybody else—or more."

The work was to be installed in the entryway of the Palazzo Manfrin—though there it would be positioned on the ceiling, upside down, with the mountain's peak almost touching the floor. Given the challenges of the space, which is divided by columns, Kapoor had decided that it would be more effective to attach a sculpture to the rafters than to place it on the floor. He had conceived of an upside-down mountain, thus "inverting the great Italian tradition of the painted ceiling." The mountain, Kapoor admitted, was an act of bravado—one that he was not entirely sure would work at the Venice site. "As a general rule, I say that a work should not leave the studio for at least six months after it's made," he told me. "You just sit with it, watch it, look at it, understand whether it has a voice or not." The meaty mountain would not have time to marinate, however: within a few days, it was to be sliced into thirteen more manageable blocks, which would be reassembled at the palazzo. Would it ultimately produce in its viewers the desired sense of dread and awe? "You'll tell me when we get there," he said.

In another studio was a body of work that had already made headlines without having ever been unveiled to the public: a series of objects coated with a substance called Vantablack. Several years ago, the British technology company Surrey NanoSystems announced that it had created the coating, which the company described as the darkest substance yet made by man; it is formed of very long, very narrow nanotubes of carbon that absorb virtually all the light falling on them. Although Vantablack was developed for use in space technology, hundreds of artists around the world approached Surrey NanoSystems about the coating, Kapoor among them. In 2016, Ben Jensen, the company's founder and chief technology officer, made an exclusive deal with Kapoor for its artistic use. "Anish had some amazingly grand ideas on how to deliver and execute his art," Jensen told me. "But we are governed somewhat by the capability in the laws of physics, and what we can actually do at the time. In the beginning, it was a learning process—what can Vantablack do, and how does that fit with his vision?" The deal did not further Kapoor's popularity in the artistic community. "This black is like dynamite in the art world," the artist Christian Furr said at the time. "It isn't right that it belongs to one man." Stuart Semple, a British artist whose practice includes manufacturing his own pigments, drew attention to Kapoor's monopoly by marketing a "pinkest pink" pigment. You could buy it online, but only after confirming that "you are not Anish Kapoor, you are in no way affiliated with Anish Kapoor, you are not purchasing this item on behalf of Anish Kapoor or an associate of Anish Kapoor." More than one person I spoke with about Kapoor told me that he is not "an artists' artist"—a reputation secured by the Vantablack affair.

The controversy had misrepresented the product, Kapoor wearily explained to his visitors. It was not a paint that could be squeezed from a tube or bought in a can; making Vantablack was a complex and expensive technological process. He led the group to the first of several glass cases—necessary protection, he explained, because Vantablack was both fragile and toxic. Inside the first case, mounted on a white background, was what looked at first sight like a velvety black square. The work, Kapoor explained, owed an obvious debt to Kazimir Malevich's "Black Square"—a painting that was first exhibited in 1915—but it also referred to innovations in painting developed during the Renaissance. "There were two great discoveries in the Renaissance," he said. "There's the one we all hear about—perspective, which places the human being in the center, and the whole world recedes away. The other, just as important, is the fold: all those Renaissance paintings have endless folds." He was referring to the intricately

rendered fabrics in such paintings, which deepen the illusion of three-dimensionality. "What is the fold? It is, of course, a definition of being. It says *being*. It says *person*. Now, the strange thing about this material is that you put it on a fold, and you can't see the fold." He went on, "My proposition is that this material is therefore *beyond being*."

When Kapoor's visitors moved to the side of the glass case, what had appeared to be flat materialized into a three-dimensional, diamond-shaped geometric form. In other cases, black squares mysteriously puffed up into domes, or irregular bulbous growths, or, in one case, what looked faintly like a stovepipe hat hung on a peg. "It's a trick, and it's not a trick," Kapoor said. "Isn't art always about tricks? The whole endeavor of painting is to give appearance to objects." On one of the glass cases, the side views of the object had been blocked off. "You can't see it—it is a truly invisible object," Kapoor declared, to uneasy chuckles from the onlookers. The only way the three-dimensionality of the object could be discerned—as the besmirched Italian reporter was the first to notice—was in its reflection in the glass. "There you go—using your eyes," Kapoor said. "Ha-ha-ha!"

Sheena Wagstaff, the Leonard A. Lauder Chair for Modern and Contemporary Art at the Metropolitan Museum, later told me that these works—fabricated in what the artist has renamed Kapoor Black—"go straight to the heart of the matter, of the void." She continued, "That series of work really undermines and shapes our assumptions of our own perception. The material is incredibly difficult to work with—it is literally zero sum—and he says, very candidly, 'I am still working it out.' " Wagstaff went on, "That is kind of analogous to what all of us are doing in our lives—we're all working it out. It sounds flippant, but it's actually super-profound. He touches on the uncertainty we all feel about the tangibility of our existence."

The black works were another iteration of Kapoor's long-standing investigation of what he calls "the space of painting"—a project on which he elaborated after leading his audience into another giant studio. The room was filled with the works with which he is most firmly identified: the mirrored disks of stainless steel. Sotheby's auctioned off one model, finished with copper alloy and lacquer, for upward of a million dollars. "It's something he does incessantly," Greg Hilty, of the Lisson Gallery, told me, estimating that Kapoor's studio produces perhaps thirty of the disks a year. (Kapoor later disputed this number, but he did not provide a correction, calling it "completely irrelevant.") They are fabricated off-site, steel-working being one of the few processes involved in making Kapoor's œuvre which cannot be done at his studio. Once manufactured, the mirrors are sent to the studio and painted or treated with the assistance of a technician who has worked for years with Kapoor in developing finishing techniques.

The surfaces of the mirrors on display had been treated to achieve various unusual effects. One had been gauzed with a ghostly greenish gray. Another shimmered with golden light. All of them did peculiar things to whoever or whatever was reflected in them, with the images flipping and reversing at unexpected moments. "Think about painting," Kapoor said. "The space of painting is always, without exception, from the picture frame, deep beyond." The mirrors created "a confused double space between image and concavity." He went on, "My idea is that it's deeply radical—that it looks at painting in a completely different way. Who knows? If it is, it is. If it isn't, it isn't."

Kapoor's mirrored pieces are the primary source of his considerable personal fortune. In addition to the Palazzo Manfrin, Kapoor owns an apartment in Venice; a place in the Bahamas; a fourteen-and-a-half-thousand-square-foot town house in central London, which is currently on the market for twenty-three million dollars; and a country house outside Oxford, which is where he spent most of the pandemic. (Kapoor has three children: a son and a daughter, both in their twenties, from his first marriage, to Susanne Kapoor, an art historian; and a toddler daughter with his second wife, Sophie Walker, a garden designer.)

"Artists have to be sophisticated about two things—one is so-called fame, and the other is money," Kapoor told me in Venice. "The art world is an arm of the capitalist machine. It is very, very hard for us artists, successful artists especially, to live on that fine line between what money makes possible, and not to be seduced into making works that sell." Had he ever been seduced? "I am going to be so bold as to say no, even though I have bodies of work that are extremely successful," Kapoor told me. "However, I also have these huge other bodies of work that never sell, rarely sell—that take much more commitment, that are much, much more difficult. I have always had these two sides to my practice." He sounded a bit like a Hollywood actor who alternates Marvel movies with indie dramas. Kapoor continued, "I have to be realistic about it and say, 'All right, that's what happens. I can do it, so long as I am exploring real new territory. If it is just repeating what I have done before—boring.' It is a hard line to remain clear about."

The distracting and beguiling surfaces of Kapoor's mirrors are recapitulated at bravura scale in "Cloud Gate," at Chicago's Millennium Park. Kapoor's most celebrated public work, the sculpture, which is popularly known as the Bean, cost twenty-three million dollars to make, and consists of more than a hundred tons of highly polished steel that, despite its weight, seems to hover above the ground like a drop of mercury that is about to splatter. When it débuted officially, in 2006, it was immediately acclaimed. The work predates Instagram but seems made for it: hundreds of thousands of images of it exist on the platform, many of them featuring a grinning selfie-taker. Not every critic is transported by "Cloud Gate." Hal Foster, the Princeton art historian and critic, told me, "When I walk by, I feel like one of those apes in '2001,' before the monolith—all excited, but by what, exactly?" He added, "There's no spaceship after the jump cut. It's seductive, spectacular, then poof! Nothing, except a gawking crowd."

Kapoor told me that he was initially dismayed by the crowds the Bean attracted: "I saw all these pictures with all these people, and I thought, Oh, no, bloody Disneyland! Is that what I have done?" He went to Chicago and spent several days in the orbit of the sculpture, looking at it and watching the reactions of fascinated visitors. "I wondered, What is it?" he said. "Then I realized it is something about its scale. When you are standing near it, it looks like a really big thing. When you are not so near it, it doesn't look like such a big thing at all. You don't have to be very far away, and suddenly the scale shifts." The absence of visible joints means that there is nothing by which a viewer can gauge the object's size, "so it does this strange thing of shifting scale—I thought, Phew, that saves it." Kapoor went on, "I hope it retains a certain mystery, in spite of being touched and photographed endlessly. I think that, in the end, is the key. It is worth spending your life making an object or two that are truly mysterious. *Wow!* There aren't many—even in art, there aren't many. In the universe, there are a few."

There may shortly be one more: a mini-Bean is soon to be unveiled in New York. Work started on it three years ago, but the process was delayed, in part, by pandemic restrictions—for a year and a half, a travel ban on foreign visitors prevented Kapoor's specialized technicians from entering the country. The new sculpture, which is about half the size of the Chicago version, has not been placed in a public plaza. The work has been squeezed, with not a millimetre to spare, under the awning of the so-called Jenga Tower—Herzog and de Meuron's luxury residential tower in Tribeca. It is a "Cloud Gate" for the Manhattan equivalent of a gated community.

With just two weeks before the official opening of the exhibition in Venice, the Palazzo Manfrin still resembled a construction site, and Kapoor and his team had the frantic aspect of homeowners undergoing a renovation whose contractor has informed them that the kitchen countertops will not, after all, be installed before Thanksgiving. At least the work on the façade had been completed, making it look as pristine as one of Kapoor's mirror works. But around the back, where scaffolding had been erected, a hole had been punched into a wall two stories up, to permit the installation of several large works with a crane. The only other entrance to the building was through a decrepit lavatory with stinking urinals, evoking that darker, filthier dimension of Kapoor's work: shit and architecture.

The lead architect of the renovation, Giulia Foscari, whose firm, UNA, had been responsible for the palazzo's renaissance, was circling. Kapoor's team, accustomed to working under extreme circumstances, were doing their best amid the chaos. Pablo Smidt was on a ladder in the entrance hall, attaching sections of Kapoor's inverted mountain to the ceiling, its fibreglass innards temporarily on display. The thirteen chunks of sculpture had been ferried to the palazzo by boat, under the cover of night. At 3 A.M., when one section was found to be fractionally too large to fit through the front door, Smidt reluctantly left it outside, so that a slice could be slivered off. An adjoining ground-floor room was filled with piles of dun-colored sand. Upstairs, on the *piano nobile,* Kapoor's triptych "Internal Object in Three Parts" had been mounted on the dilapidated walls of a salon overlooking the canal; the piece's silicone slabs, still wrapped in plastic, resembled prepackaged cuts of meat at a supermarket.

In the palazzo's southern wing, restoration work had been completed some weeks earlier on the frescoed ceiling, where eighteenth-century cherubs and scantily robed goddesses gallivanted on high. But the marble floors were grubby, and the installation of works that needed to be kept scrupulously dust-free had been held up by workmen, hammering and drilling. In Girolamo Manfrin's spectacular ballroom, a vast circular canvas had been elevated on a scaffold; the cloth, part of a work called "Symphony for a Beloved Sun," was yet to be covered with red paint, thus undergoing the transubstantiation from hardware to art. A team of cleaners who had been contracted to quell the mess had been struck by COVID. When Kapoor arrived at the site that day, he was horrified by the state of progress, his voice quivering with anger, all bonhomie dispelled. There was the wrong kind of dirt in all the wrong corners.

By opening day, however, the magic trick had been pulled off. When the palazzo's front door opened to its first twenty-first-century visitors, all the sweat and struggle that it had taken to put the art works in place had evaporated. Kapoor's resin mountain—now given a proper name, "Mount Moriah at the Gate of the Ghetto"—loomed ominously downward from the rafters of the entrance hall—almost, but not quite, touching the concrete floor. Only the very youngest visitor, a grade schooler brought by his parents, detected the trapdoor concealed within the inverted peak; the aperture would allow a technician to climb inside the sculpture and, if necessary, adjust its positioning.

In the neighboring gallery, the brown sand had become a desolate, blood-red landscape. Mounted on top of it was a mechanical digger that had been coated in blue pigment. The work, titled "Destierro"—Spanish for "exile"—was a metaphor for displacement that harked back to Kapoor's formative preoccupations. At the Palazzo Manfrin, it could be compared with one of his earliest works, a pigment piece from 1982 called "White Sand, Red Millet, Many Flowers." Displayed in an unrestored salon upstairs, its vivid piles of color created a thrilling contrast to the room's dingy, water-damaged walls.

The hole at the rear of the palazzo was now concealed by drywall, making it impossible to tell how "Vertigo"—a curved slice of mirrored steel from 2006—had shouldered its way into an adjacent room, which it almost entirely filled. In another room, a new work—an angled hunk, almost twenty feet in length, of what appeared to be Corten steel—looked so massive that it was hard to figure out how the floor beneath it hadn't given way. (In fact, it was made from painted fibreglass: another theatrical trick.) Its form was divided by a deep crevice shaped like a vulva, around the opening of which were gobs and smears of blood-colored silicone. The piece was titled "Split in Two Like a Fish for Drying," but it might equally have been called "When I Am on My Period."

Some of the infamous black works were on display for the first time—and, surprisingly, they were among the least arresting objects in the palazzo. They had trouble holding their own amid the dramatically decayed galleries showing the more violent and grotesque products of Kapoor's imagination. In their glass cases, the black works brought to mind the velvet busts that are displayed in a jeweller's window—but the sparkle of diamonds was missing. (At the Accademia, a chapel-like space had been dedicated to other black works, and they were arranged more powerfully there, suggesting in their mysterious depth the concentrated power of the gilded medieval icons on display elsewhere in the museum.)

The installation at the Palazzo Manfrin would remain in place for six months, after which restoration of the mansion would resume, under the eye of Mario Codognato, the Kapoor Foundation's director. A bookshop and a café were planned, alongside gallery space that could be used for temporary exhibitions. Space on the upper floors might be shared with an academic institution.

Despite having made the grand gesture of acquiring a Venetian palazzo to house a foundation in his name—an impressive answer to the question "Where do I go when I die?"—Kapoor insisted that he was not preoccupied with posterity. "Legacy is such a problematic, ego-driven thing—I've got a big-enough ego already," he told me a few days after the opening, when we met for coffee at a café in Venice's ghetto. An artist's work has to fight its own space, he argued: "It has to go out in the world and survive whatever it is—criticism, adoration, whatever else. I don't believe that artists can falsely make that happen. So that's the problem with projects like this"—he gestured in the direction of his palazzo, across the canal. What did give him satisfaction, he acknowledged, was the irrefutable statement that his possession of the Palazzo Manfrin made about his cultural power in the present. "I think it's important to say, if you like, that an artist of nonwhite origin can do something as bold as this," he said. "Whether it's legacy, or not legacy, who cares?"

In the grand ballroom where Girolamo Manfrin had once entertained the cream of Venetian society, the looming, elevated disk had finally been colored red. The floor beneath it was ankle-deep in yet more gory lumps of blood-colored wax. In a corner, incongruous amid the faux carnage, stood a battered Madonna painted in plaster. When Kapoor showed me around the palazzo, he explained that the statue had formerly been displayed on a pedestal between the ballroom's grand windows, having been set there by the nuns who inherited the space after the Palazzo Manfrin's guests had departed forever.

Stroking the Madonna's chipped hand, Kapoor told me that the statue had been retrieved from storage and put in place only a few days earlier. Her presence, he felt, completed the show. The Madonna's face was serene and haloed by a ring of stars, like the perfect circle of one of Kapoor's celestial mirrors. But Kapoor directed my attention, instead, to her feet. She appeared to be balanced atop a globe, with one bare foot positioned on the neck of a snake with gaping red jaws. "Here she is, the lady of benevolence, if you like, standing on the neck of—squeezing to death—the old world, the world of the shaman, the creature from the earth," he said. "Which is what all these works are about. A snake! What else? Ha-ha-ha!" ♦

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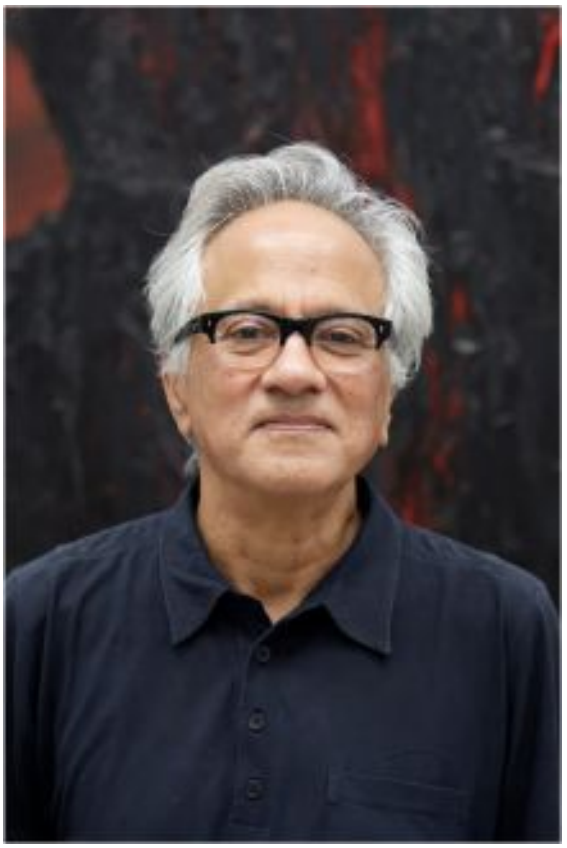
VOGUE ITALIA

BIENNALE ARTE 2022

Anish Kapoor, in mostra a Venezia, ci racconta le sue opere "piene di sangue, di buio" (e di bellezza)

Il significato delle installazioni svelato dall'artista, attraverso le sue radici indiane. La sua duplice esposizione, a Palazzo Manfrin e alle Gallerie dell'Accademia, è la più visitata di Venezia con una sessantina di opere che raccontano in modo esaustivo la sua estetica

DI GIUSEPPE FANTASIA
29 aprile 2022



Anish Kapoor: l'intervista di Vogue

«Amo Venezia e tutto ciò che questa città rappresenta: è un villaggio cosmopolita che racchiude un vero spirito internazionale al suo interno e la Biennale è il simbolo e la realizzazione delle culture che si uniscono. È molto importante che ci sia, è un gran segnale di ripartenza».

Quando ci parla, ad Anish Kapoor si illuminano gli occhi e **il suo sorriso «non è mai una pura formalità»** – tiene a precisare – «ma la manifestazione coerente di un insieme di emozioni» che sta provando in questi giorni. Il merito è proprio della città lagunare, la sua preferita in Italia, quella dove ha deciso di acquistare un palazzo - Palazzo Manfrin - e di trasformarlo nella **sede della sua Fondazione**. Lì, a Sestriere Cannaregio, è ospitata, inoltre, una delle due mostre a lui dedicata e aperta nei giorni frenetici della 59esima Biennale d'Arte.

L'altra è alle Gallerie dell'Accademia, a Sestriere Dorsoduro, che fa registrare quotidianamente lunghe file all'ingresso che arrivano fino al ponte che Eugenio Miozzi progettò nel 1933 in legno (e non in pietra), pensando fosse provvisorio, ma che invece oggi è ancora lì, in perfetto stato dopo un attento restauro. Sono circa una sessantina le opere che troverete nelle due mostre visitabili fino al 9 ottobre prossimo, "opere che potrebbero sembrare attuali - aggiunge l'artista, tra i più importanti, richiesti e quotati della sua generazione - ma in realtà **sono state quasi tutte realizzate una quindicina di anni** fa e già esposte". Ad esempio *White Sand Red Millet Many Flowers* (1982) - con le sue eteree geometrie, perfette e algide, ricavate nei grandi massi di alabastro bianco - o l'altrettanto iconico *Shotting into the corner* (2008-2009), protagonista alle Gallerie e già visto alla Royal Academy of Arts di Londra, impressionante con quel gigantesco cannone che sui muri spara micidiali pallottole di cera rossa.

Shotting into the corner Attilio Maranzano

«Quello che mi auguro è che siano atte ad essere reinterpretate anche oggi, facendoci interrogare su questioni quotidiane. Non sono opere realizzate per questo tempo, ma in qualche maniera, lo condizionano. Del resto, ciò accade anche nella cultura che è importantissima oggi come lo era in passato».

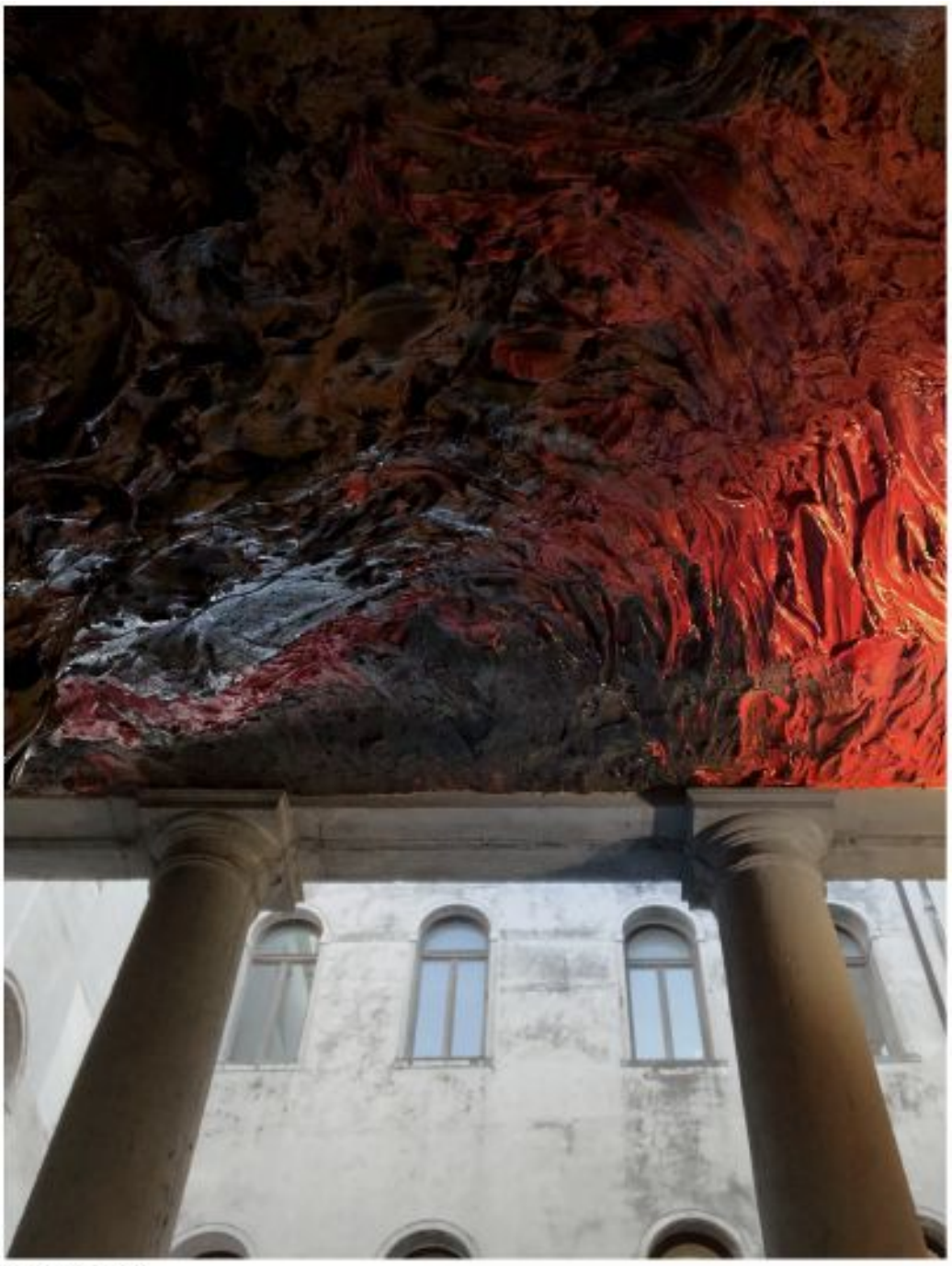
«Oggi viviamo in tempi e spazi strani - continua - ci troviamo nel mezzo, tra quello che c'è stato e quello che ci potrà essere. È **uno spazio di confusione**, non c'è dubbio, e la pandemia l'ha dimostrato. Eravamo tutti molto confusi e impreparati. Lo siamo ancora oggi, visto che non possiamo sapere cosa ci attenderà in futuro. La guerra in Ucraina ci mette di nuovo davanti a situazioni di questo tipo. L'arte e la cultura in particolare ci ricordano quanto la nostra umanità sia di dimensioni ridotte e quali siano le divisioni che ci sono fra noi, questioni fondamentali a mio parere. In questi tempi viviamo e subiamo **etno-nazionalismi che non vedevamo dagli anni Trenta** del secolo scorso e dalla Seconda Guerra Mondiale. C'è un neo fascismo che pervade tutto ed è preoccupante. **La cultura può aiutarci a colmare queste differenze**, ma dobbiamo essere anche noi a volerlo e credere in un divenire in cui nulla è scontato».

Attilio Maranzano

Sono l'esempio perfetto di un divenire continuo le sue opere di cui lo spettatore è reso partecipe, una generazione e de-generazione in cui l'evoluzione stessa e il tempo sono sì in mostra, ma soprattutto in atto, visto che si realizzano nel momento stesso in cui le osserviamo e, quindi, le sperimentiamo.

David Levene

"La maggior parte di questi lavori - continua l'artista nato a Bombay nel 1954 da padre indù del Punjab e da madre ebrea irachena – sono **pieni di sangue e di buio** e a dominare sono il rosso e il nero". Il cosiddetto *Kapoor Black*, un colore "altro" e un rosso, "che si caratterizza per la sua nerezza". A 17 anni andai a studiare Ingegneria Elettrica in Israele ed ebbi un esaurimento nervoso", ci racconta. Vivevo con una zia che era una sorta di sciamana e fu proprio lei a chiamare mia madre dicendole che sarebbe dovuta andare in India per prendere una terra da mettere sotto il mio letto. Da quel momento, le disse, **Anish potrà sognare bene grazie a quel materiale**. E così andò. Se ci penso, mi viene la pelle d'oca".



Attilio Maranzano

Quella terra era di colore rosso ed è anche questo uno dei motivi per cui adora quel colore. Quando decise di fare l'artista e di tornare in India, prima di trasferirsi definitivamente a Londra, le prime opere degne di nota sono stati **i cumuli di pigmento incandescente** che richiamano in maniera entusiasta le bancarelle di Mumbai e le loro offerte rituali.

Attilio Maranzano

"Riequilibrano a loro modo un'equazione, perché sottolineano le mie radici indù e richiamano estaticamente **il potere del colore**". Con il suo nero, invece, esplora quello che definisce "il non oggetto", l'oggetto cioè – come ci spiega il curatore Taco Dibbits, autore anche del prezioso catalogo pubblicato da Marsilio – "che è fisico e non fisico, i cui confini non possono contenerne l'interno".

David Levene

Il suo nero però, è più complesso: "è un'innovazione tecnologica, è **un nero che assorbe il 99,9 per cento della luce** permettendo di modificare la natura degli oggetti che non diventano completamente reali, lasciando quel senso di irrealtà che attrae e conquista". Il rosso diventa quasi un suo 'sottoposto' anche se gode di vita propria, ma si fonde con il nero come la violenza insita in queste opere che va ad intrecciarsi con una bellezza capace di creare, in quel mélange, un qualcosa di sublime e di terrificante insieme. Il nero è quindi un *limen*, una vera e propria soglia da cui affacciarsi sull'abisso del non senso. Che è poi (anche) il senso dell'arte, che abita questa sottile linea di frontiera e mira a metterci in contatto con il vuoto, senza però farci precipitare in esso e rendendoci così più liberi.

Artnet news
21 April 2022

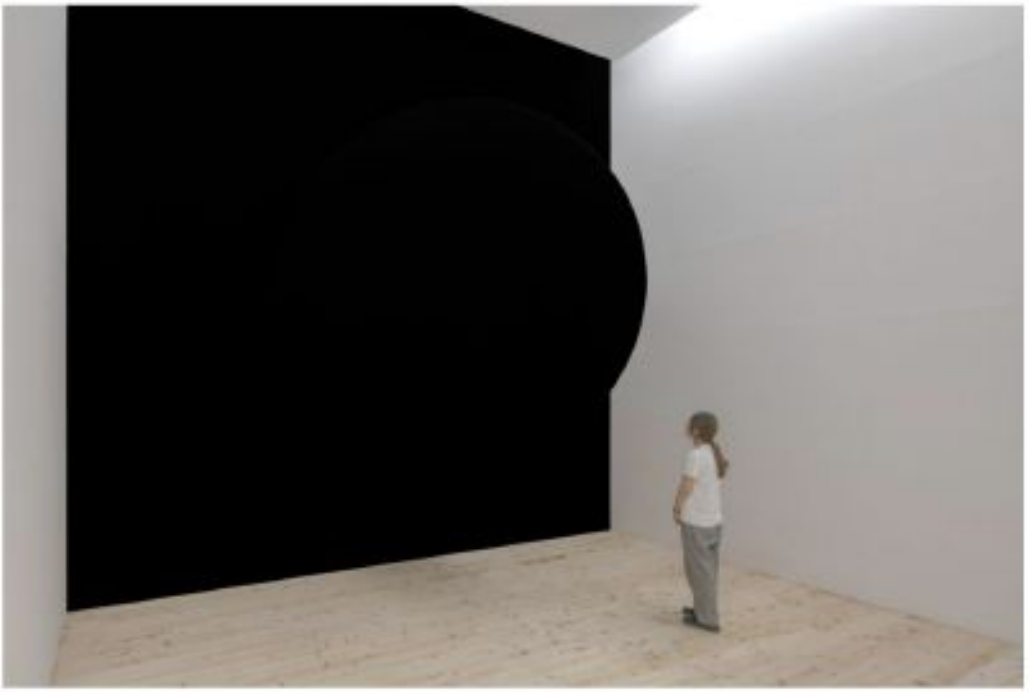
artnet news

Shows & Exhibitions

Into the Void: Anish Kapoor Reveals His First Works Using Vantablack, the World's Darkest Color, in Venice

The highly anticipated works are on view in two historic locations.

Dorian Batycka, April 21, 2022



Anish Kapoor, *Void Pavilion V* (2018). Photo: Nobutada Omote. ©Anish Kapoor. All rights reserved SIAE, 2021.

What do you get when you combine the Baroque interior of a Venetian palazzo with the bottomless void of the blackest material in the world?

Ask Anish Kapoor, the British-Indian artist who is unveiling the first sculptures he has made using Vantablack, casting an illustrious shadow across this year's Venice Biennale.

The material in question, which Kapoor has called more of a technology than a paint, was initially developed by the U.K.-based Surrey NanoSystems for military-grade stealth weaponry. The coating, which refracts light and transforms it into heat, consists of millions of carbon nanotubes, which are "grown" in a chamber under powerful lamps.

Now, Vantablack's first aesthetic applications are on display in an exhibition that unfurls across two venues—the Gallerie dell'Accademia, one of Venice's most iconic venues for experiencing the art of Old Masters—and a palazzo acquired by Kapoor himself.

Installation view of Anish Kapoor's exhibition at the Palazzo Manfrin, Venice. Photo: © David Levene.

Swallowing 99.8 percent of visible light, Vantablack is akin to a void of darkness or a black hole, and Kapoor has produced several circular-shaped objects clad in the coating. The works are finally coming to proverbial light after a long and public feud with artist Stuart Semple, who openly criticized Kapoor's studio being given exclusive license to use it.

"There's been this ridiculous controversy about me having control over the color," Kapoor told Wallpaper. He added, "It's perfectly straightforward: it's not a color. It's a technology. And it's extremely complicated and sophisticated."

Installation view of Anish Kapoor's exhibition at the Palazzo Manfrin, Venice. Photo: © David Levene.

The debut of the artist's Vantablack works also marks the first phase of the establishment of the Anish Kapoor Foundation in the Palazzo Manfrin Venier. Previously a popular gallery among 19th-century literati—including Lord Bryon and Édouard Manet—with many of its original paintings now housed in the the Accademia's collection, the 18th-century mansion in Cannaregio had in recent decades fallen into disrepair. Upon completion of a full renovation, the palazzo will become the artist's headquarters and consist of an exhibition venue, studio, and archive for his previous works. "I feel a deep commitment to Venice, its architecture and its support for the contemporary arts," the artist said in a statement.

Installation view Gallerie dell'Accademia © Anish Kapoor. Photo: © Attilio Maranzano.

The dual-venue exhibition, on view through October 9 and curated by Rijksmuseum director Taco Dibbits, also features a selection of Kapoor's other iconic works beyond Vantablack. Dibbits said in a statement: "All artists, however cutting edge and contemporary, are in debate with those who have gone before. The Gallerie dell'Accademia is the perfect site for a modern master to explore the themes that have always engaged sculptors and painters. Kapoor's latest works, using the most advanced nanotechnology, promise to be a revelation."

The Guardian
21 April 2022

The Guardian

Interview

Venice in Vantablack: Anish Kapoor's disappearing act

Charlotte Higgins in Venice

Anish Kapoor at the Accademia in Venice, which is hosting a major exhibition of his works. Photograph: David Levene/The Guardian

The artist learned of the technology that absorbs nearly all visible light in the Guardian. As two shows featuring it open, he talks of a 'stupid' spat, his new foundation and dismay with England

"This fucking *place*!" The voice of the artist rang out through the elegant halls of the Accademia, Venice's most important gallery, home of masterpieces by Titian, Veronese and Giorgione. Frustrated, Anish Kapoor gathered up a bucket and other detritus left over from the technicians' last-minute adjustments and tidied them away.

He was nervous, he said, as he apologised for his outburst. Kapoor – perhaps best known internationally for his wildly popular reflective sculpture in Chicago's Millennium Park, Cloud Gate – had reason for a little anxiety: he was preparing to open not one but two major exhibitions.

Aside from the show at the Accademia, there is the small matter of an exhibition in the palazzo that he has bought on Venice's Canale di Cannaregio – the Palazzo Manfrin, a vast space with a particularly grandiose, double-height, frescoed ballroom, currently filled with the red wax-and-steel of his installation Symphony for a Beloved Sun. The palazzo, which is partway through extensive renovation works, is intended to open fully in 2024 as the headquarters of the Anish Kapoor Foundation.

Mount Moriah at the Gate of the Ghetto (2022) in the Palazzo Manfrin. Photograph: David Levene/The Guardian

But now, in both venues, Kapoor is debuting a body of sculptural work coated in what has been called "Kapoor black".

Vantablack, as it is officially known, is a nanotechnology that absorbs 99.96% of visible light - the world's most intense black, as it has been described. It is produced by a British company, Surrey NanoSystems, with which the artist has working since he read about it and its founder, Ben Jensen, in the Guardian eight years ago. "I wrote to him asking if we could work together. He said Vantablack had been developed for the defence industry." Nevertheless, Jensen agreed.

"Painting is the giving of appearance to objects. I've been giving objects disappearance

The effect of the light-absorbing coating is uncanny. Seen head on, the blacker-than-black sculptures appear two-dimensional. Then, when the angle of view is changed, they reveal themselves to be solid shapes.

"It is a material sprayed on a surface at a nano scale," explained Kapoor, "then put in a reactor - they won't tell me precisely what this reactor is - but anyway, it is raised to a very high temperature. The particles are raised upright and the light get trapped between them."

Aside from the new black works, both exhibitions are currently filled with Kapoor's instantly recognisable works: enormous heaps of bright pigment; rooms choked with enormous globs of scarlet wax; chambers in which are hung his strange, distorting mirror-sculptures; ceilings appearing to drip or ooze with scarlet, fleshy innards.

Mirror Mirror (2017) in the Palazzo Manfrin, Venice, Italy. Photograph: David Levene/The Guardian

Asked if the foundation was the means of securing his legacy - as is generally the way with artists' foundations - Kapoor, who is 68, replied: "Fucking legacy! Who gives a shit? The work will do what it does. Securing a legacy? That's daft. It's somewhere for me to play. That's how I see it."

The story of Kapoor's adventures in black has not been without controversy in the art world. the artist Stuart Semple, for example, poked fun at the fact that Kapoor was exclusively licensed to use the Vantablack technology by declaring that he would make available the world's "pinkest pink" to anyone who could definitively prove they were not Anish Kapoor.

In return, Kapoor got hold of some anyway, dunked his middle finger in it, and posted an image online with the caption, "Up yours #pink".

Mother as a Mountain (1985). Part of the Accademia retrospective of Anish Kapoor's work. Photograph: David Levene/The Guardian

"It's too stupid for words," said Kapoor of the spat. "This is not something that comes out of a tube. It's incredibly complicated. I've been working for seven or eight years on it and made 10 to 12 works."

Kapoor said that the use of the intense black continues his long-term interest in the idea of being and non-being. Referring to the great collection of the Accademia, he said: "In the Renaissance there were two great discoveries: perspective and the fold." Both them gave the illusion of depth, and the fold - in depictions of fabric, and as a characteristic of human flesh - gives the illusion of life, or of being. Using "Kapoor black" technology removes the fold, the crease, any hint of 3D, or of "being".

"Painting is the giving of appearance to objects," he said. "I've been giving objects disappearance."

"England has changed from being inclusive to being exclusive. It makes me terribly sad

Asked why he had decided to set up his foundation in Venice rather than the UK or the US, the artist said that he had always loved the city - in which he represented Great Britain at the 1990 Biennale. He was magnetised by this water-filled place where Stravinsky stipulated he must be buried, with its intimations of death and darkness via Thomas Mann and Luchino Visconti.

"I'm dismayed with England," said the artist, who was born in Mumbai and moved to London to study at art school. "I've lived there for 40-something years, and it's not just the politics and Brexit, it's what's happened to our spirit. We've changed from being inclusive to being exclusive. It makes me terribly sad."

● The exhibitions at the Accademia and Palazzo Manfrin are open to the public until 9 October.

The Telegraph
19 April 2022

The Telegraph

Anish Kapoor leaves art rivals seeing red over 'world's blackest black'

Turner Prize winner unveils first artworks made with new light-absorbing material, but his monopoly on its use has stoked controversy

By Anita Singh, ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR
19 April 2022 • 6:22pm

Anish Kapoor's work titled Descent into Limbo

When art prompts controversy, it is usually on account of the subject matter. In the case of Anish Kapoor's latest works, it is all to do with the colour.

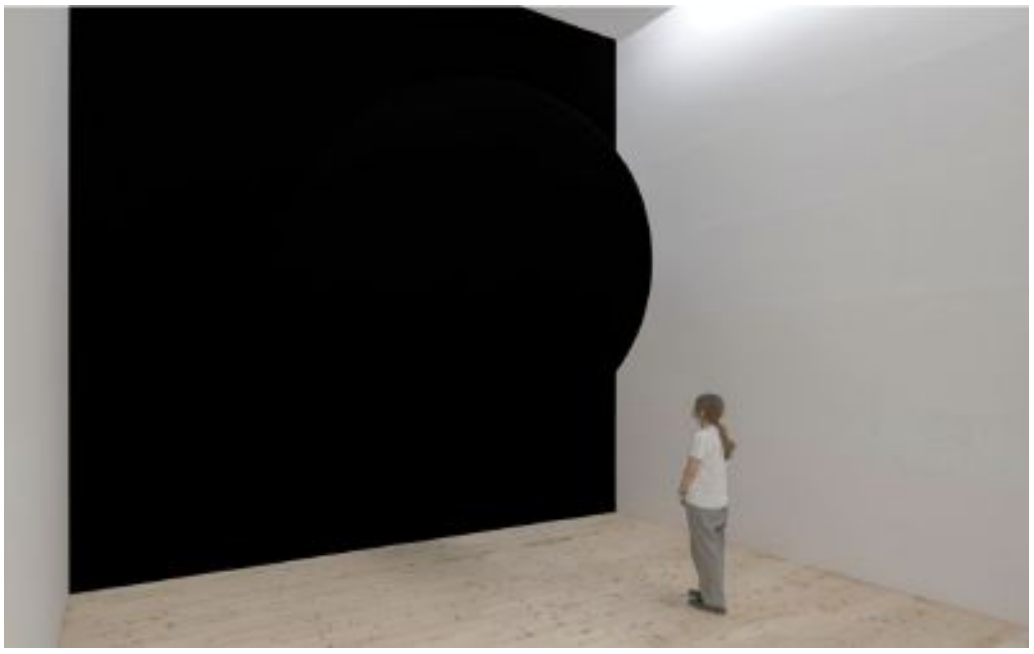
Kapoor has unveiled a series of sculptures coated in the world's blackest black. The Turner Prize winner caused uproar when he signed an exclusive deal for its use, barring other artists from getting their hands on it.

The material - known as Vantablack - is said to be blacker than a black hole, absorbing 99.96 per cent of light.

It was developed in a Surrey laboratory for scientific purposes, but Kapoor secured a contract with its creators to be the only artist allowed to use it.

Six years on, Kapoor has unveiled the results at the Venice Biennale, where the colour is referred to as "Kapoor Black".

Anish Kapoor has unveiled the results of his sculptures made using Vantablack at the Venice Biennale



Anish Kapoor's artwork contains paint which absorbs 99.96 per cent of light

It is not a paint, but a material made of carbon nanotubes - Kapoor's particular version is sprayable - that allows for no shadows or demarcations. According to its creators, if a watch were coated in Vantablack, it would appear as a black hole on one's wrist.

"If you put it on a fold, you can't see the fold. So my proposition is that this material is therefore beyond being," Kapoor told Wallpaper magazine.

He also dismissed the row over its use as a "ridiculous controversy".

However, it was a controversy that Kapoor seemed to delight in stoking.

Kapoor accused of monopolising the material

The creator of London's ArcelorMittal Orbit and the "Bean" in Chicago enraged his fellow artists when he signed his exclusive deal in 2016.

Christian Furr, a British painter, said at the time: "I've never heard of an artist monopolising a material. This black is like dynamite in the art world.

"We should be able to use it. It isn't right that it belongs to one man."

Another British artist, Stuart Semple, went further. Likening Kapoor to "kids at school who wouldn't share their colouring pencils, but then they ended up on their own with no friends", he brought out a pigment that he described as "the world's pinkest pink".

It was available for sale online, priced at just £3.99, with buyers required to tick a box confirming that they were not Anish Kapoor or his affiliate, and "to the best of your knowledge, information and belief this paint will not make its way into the hands of Anish Kapoor".

Kapoor then took the playground spat to another level by getting hold of the pink, posting a picture on Instagram of his middle finger dipped into the pigment, and captioning it: "Up yours."

Semple responded by bringing out his own "blacker than black" acrylic paint, the latest version of which he sells for £99.99 per litre.

Vantablack was developed by Ben Jensen of Surrey Nanosystems. Scientists at Nasa were trying to create their own version, but Jensen beat them to the punch.

Kapoor Symphony for a Beloved Sun, which is being installed in a Venetian palazzo

The dramatic artwork titled Shooting Into the Corner

The material's ability to absorb light means that it can be used in only select circumstances. "People email in saying, 'Can you coat my supercar?'" Jensen told GQ magazine. "And we always say, 'Well, it's possible, but when you're driving and the sun comes out, it's going to get incredibly hot, and people don't generally want to cook themselves'."

Jensen has also defended the Kapoor deal, explaining: "We can't work with hundreds of artists. We don't have that scale. Our business is to create engineering components for satellites. It's not to create works of art.

"So we took the decision internally that to do this justice we'll work with one person because we had enough time to make that work."

Kapoor's exhibition is being held in two Venice locations: the Accademia and the Palazzo Manfrin. The latter is a dilapidated 18th-century mansion which the Anish Kapoor Foundation is converting into his new headquarters, and was once a gallery visited by Lord Byron and Edouard Manet.

The Palazzo Manfrin, an 18th-century mansion being turned into Kapoor's headquarters

The artist said he decided to buy the palazzo because he is drawn to Venice's "dark, maternal waters".

Corriere Della Sera
15 April 2022

CORRIERE DELLA SERA

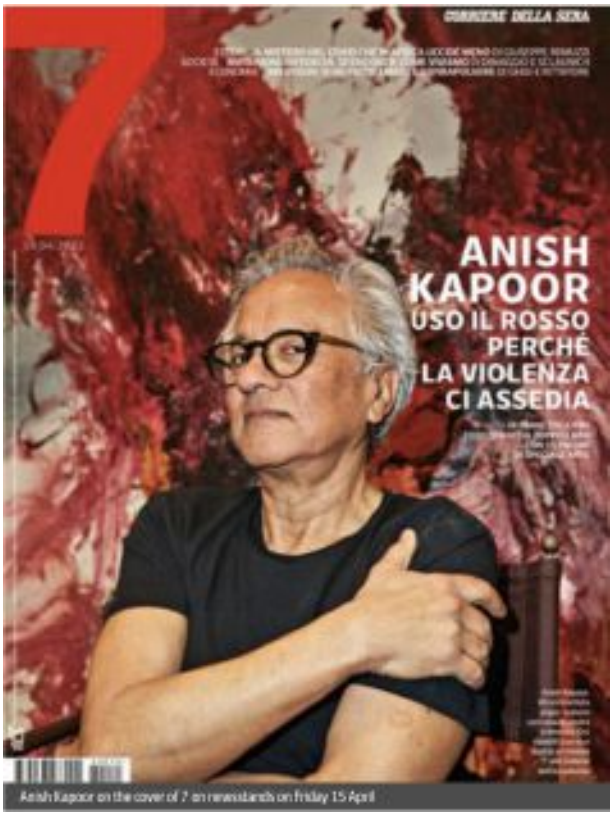
Anish Kapoor: «Creating is not like procreating. This is why I envy motherhood "

by Francesca Pini

In love with the lagoon city, the 68-year-old Anglo-Indian artist lives between London and Venice: here he bought a historic building in Cannaregio, to make it the seat of his foundation. Here he spent part of the lockdown and here he returned for the Biennale, with a solo exhibition at the Gallerie dell'Accademia

Anish Kapoor, Anglo-Indian sculptor born in Bombay in 1954, inside the room where red wax is fired from a cannon. The work is called Shooting into the corner, 2009 (photo Mattia Zoppellaro)

The fruit and vegetable barge has been anchored there in Dorsoduro for years, the natives go there to shop and not the strangers. And so, when Anish Kapoor is in Venice, he passes by there to buy castraore, the violet artichokes from the island of Sant'Erasmo. This is what is normal for this great Anglo-Indian artist, 68 years old, celebrated in the world, who has a home in London and San Polo, **seduced by the maternal and stepmother water of Venice. Putting the foundations of his foundation right here, he bought the eighteenth-century Palazzo Manfrin in Cannaregio** (which belonged to the count of the same name, entrepreneur and collector), the subject of an imposing renovation, with frescoed ceilings and a spectacular ten-meter high music hall, which **it will host some of his monumental sculptures as if it were the Turbine Hall of the Tate**.



Anish Kapoor on the cover of 7 on newsstands on Friday 15 April

A great event that enhances the Accademia Galleries

«Palazzo Manfrin I don't know exactly what it will become, I hope there will be an interaction with the university. Certainly it is also madness. I love Venice, I love her for that maternally dark side of her, for these waters of her. I was here for a while also during the lockdown ». To then return now, during the Biennale, with a great event (curated by Taco Dibbits, from 20 April to 9 October, organized by Marsilio Arte, his catalog), at the Gallerie dell'Accademia, an important museum for Venetian art. and Venetian directed by Giulio Manieri Elia, with a unique collection in the world of Giovanni Bellini paintings. And then Titian, Veronese, about fifteen of Tiepolo. The museum began the dialogue with contemporaneity years earlier with Mario Merz, then with Philip Guston and Georg Baselitz. And now, together with Kapoor, he prepares this one**personal, with new and other historical works, such as the one in which he uses a cannon to shoot red wax into a room. For the artist a symbol of fertility** . "It's very phallic, it bombards color. Here in a room, but originally in a corner. Here is also the principle of the masculine and the feminine. The idea of violence and painting. **Think of Jackson Pollock: he put the canvas on the floor covering it with colors as if they were bodily fluids** . Then he hung these canvases making a fundamental gesture for their transformation. By saying that the earth became the sky. And I see, in this, the struggle of the body in its transformation ».

"PREGNANT WOMEN ARE VERY POWERFUL. I WOULD LIKE TO BE PREGNANT. I BELIEVE IT IS A FUNDAMENTAL STATE "

Anish Kapoor, 68, Anglo-Indian artist

In his practice, the use of red has been a constant for at least thirty years, but in recent weeks we have seen a lot of blood flow on the snow in Ukraine, in the battered Mariupol and Bucha, mass graves, carnage ...

«It breaks your heart , breaks your heart. It is very revealing when art coincides with real life. Violence is always around us, even if we pretend that it does not exist, and it is the task of culture to make us think that it exists. Now we see it concentrated in the horror perpetrated by this Putin ».

With your new sculpture, *The Unremembered,* presented for the first time here at the Gallerie dell'Accademia, you seem to have entered the incandescent magma of Etna.

"I've never been there though! In the last three or four years I have tried to return to a richer, very physical practice and if we think about rituality it always has a lot to do with the body. Then there is the more transcendent part of what the body is and what it becomes, not only from the point of view of Catholic culture. And obviously the sacrifice is one of the most significant acts. So a way of seeing inside the body. This piece is like an anvil. It is made with very thick paint and silicone. Here it is as if everything collapses, and it is also what happens inside our organism. For years, years and years I have always looked inside things, and surprisingly the inside is bigger than the outside. It is a psychic reality, but we do not have this perception ».

The titles of his works sometimes have a romantic touch.

«I love poetry very much. But I don't write it. The words are important and the title is another part of the work, and contextualizes it. We do not observe anything innocently. And words can influence us to see ».

You say that sometimes, when a work is finished, observing it you wonder "what have I done?". Does a work always correspond to your initial creative idea or does it always have a life of its own in the end?

«A work always has a life of its own, always. And that has to do with a strange process. First, what I do is set up a situation, I built this sort of anvil with a crack in it. This took drawings and months of work, a very conscious process. Then, I develop another next idea, thinking about certain volumes, certain bodily references, color, and this process instead lasts two, three hours, no more. Very fast. Then I come back maybe days later, I look very intensely at the work, and this is the real work. I never show a creation until at least six months have passed before. And I ask myself: what is his life? If I explain something about it, she understands it and it all ends there. But the interesting is what happens despite the saying. Art is something that confuses, it is a conversation between sense and nonsense. This happens not only with my works but, for example, with one of my favorite paintings like *The Punishment of Marsyas* by Titian. The greatness of a work does not lie in what it expresses. Tiziano plays with matter, with history, with what he is hidden, he is not illustrating. There is something mysterious about it and something happens while looking at the painting, the observer is part of the work. And every time I scrutinize her to realize how Tiziano managed to do certain things. And it is always new in my eyes ».

The project of an installation that will be set up at Palazzo Manfrin, the headquarters of the Anish Kapoor foundation, which will open in 2024. Manfrin Project is directed by the curator Mario Codognato. There will be a preview for the Biennale

This bulging wall appears as a reminder of the feminine. You hear a lot about the theme of motherhood, you have also done two specific jobs.
"What you see is a form not a form, there is internal and external tension. I have two adult males, and a small girl. I have followed the transformation of the body of my companions closely. Pregnant women are very powerful. Man cannot be. I would like to be pregnant, I think it is a very fundamental state. I've spent my entire life creating works, giving birth to them, but generating a living being, wow, that would be fantastic. As a man, I participated only in half of this process, while the woman is in totality. But I witnessed the birth: really something very, very physical, with a lot of blood too. But very beautiful ».

Artists do not limit themselves to using colors on the market, they often invent and patent them: so did Yves Klein in the 60s with his typical blue. While Kapoor is obsessed with the deepest black. The use of pigments characterizes Kapoor's work, but for some time he has gone beyond this material, he has fallen in love with Vantablack (a particular material composed of carbon nanotubes) of which he has acquired the rights, and with nanotechnologies. The peculiarity of this material, sometimes mistaken for a pigment, lies in its ability to absorb 99.96% light. And it is so absorbent that the object on which it is applied disappears.

Here on display we see a flat black square from the front, but as soon as we move to the side a protruding cone magically appears.
«For a long time I have been working on the concept of the non-object, of its negation. Reading a paragraph in a newspaper I discovered that a man named Ben Jensen invented the blackest matter in the universe. So I wrote to him and he immediately told me: "This is technology that has nothing to do with art"! But then we talked, he initially could only develop small pieces of 2 cm square. Then, together, for seven years, we did a lot of research. It is not a paint, nor a tube from which to squeeze the color. Working with this material is a nightmare, it is toxic, you have to wear special masks, which is why the black object is unfortunately exhibited inside a glass case ".

So with this nanotechnological procedure she makes the object disappear without completely denying the plasticity, on which the sculptor's gesture is based.

"In the Renaissance there were at least two great discoveries: the perspective, which places the man at the center, and the drapery of the fabric, which reveals the essence of the body of a human being. Now if Vantablack, this black material, is put on the folds of a fabric, they disappear, so my proposal is that this material, applied in the right context, pushes the object beyond itself. Malevich's black square is an icon, but he has always spoken of this as a fundamental object, we knew the three dimensions and the fourth is Suprematism, to go beyond form, beyond everything. For me it's a bit the same, the object goes beyond its physical being. This research also reminds me of Robert Fludd, an alchemist who made beautiful, small works with black squares. Some are in the British Library.

And now not even the pigments you have been using for decades are more sustainable as they are extracted from minerals ....

"Yes, I know, it's a disaster. Each of us must play a role towards the world, towards the people, towards the political system. Putin may be a bad man, but so is Boris Johnson. I am not joking. It's the same stupid system that put Putin in that place and that idiot Johnson too. A system that gives one individual a ridiculous amount of power. We have a real idiot running England and I'm sorry to be so clear, but that's what I think. And I would like to go even further, talk about how we educate our children. Our society marginalizes all those people it does not love. You are a bad boy, you are a bad girl, stand on the corner. Don't do this, don't do that. All those parts that are indomitable, dark, uncontrolled, must be purged, and this is really the worst. Being an artist means doing exactly the opposite of what one expects ».

> **«ONE OF THE GREATEST EVILS OF ART IS ITS CONSTANT LINK WITH GLOBAL CAPITALISM. NFT IS STILL ANOTHER TRADING, IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ART "**

What did you base your children's education on then?

"I taught them the freedom to do whatever they want (my wife doesn't really agree, but oh well). This educational aspect, while it doesn't seem like it, has a lot to do with global warming. We have banished everything that was wild on this Earth, turning everything into a beautiful little garden. Instead we must allow ourselves to experience this wild side, and our children are not economic tools made of flesh, they are beautiful creative human beings. Global capitalism is the worst of evils ».

And are NFTs art or a financial tool? She had an NFT work proposed on the OpenSea platform picked up, made without her knowledge, it was one of those Star Wars helmets customized by famous artists, including her.

"I'm old school, and I do physical things, why do them on a screen? One of the greatest evils of art is its constant link with global capitalism. NFT is yet another trading, it has nothing to do with art. This relationship between art and money is truly strange. Intrinsically the art object is completely useless, it is something psychic, mythological. While I work here at the Gallerie dell'Accademia, it is fantastic to linger in the rooms, see for example *La Vecchia* di Giorgione and of course his *Tempesta* ., which is so wonderfully mysterious. In the cosmos there are objects that we do not understand, but in our world everything we observe we understand because it has a name, but only in art are there true mysteries, it is an intellectual, emotional, visual game ».

Venice is also the city of the skies of Tiepolo, of Canaletto, of which we find admirable works in the Gallerie dell'Accademia. She never uses these light blues, but she still captures the sky with mirroring works such as Cloud Gate from 2004 or C Curve from 2009.

«The sky is very important. And that's why I try to work on transcendence, but the only one we know of is the one up there where my finger points. The Earth and the Sky are opposite but also in dialogue. I did some work using red for the sky like in At the Edge of the World. A very dark sky ».

What is his psyche processing now?

"Ah what an impossible question. But yes, many things. I have a very regular life, I get up early in the morning, at 6.30. I always eat the same things for breakfast. And this repetition gives me the freedom, once I'm in the studio, to be regular, very focused. I work until 6 / 6.30pm. But sometimes there is even a nap in between. I'm just like an employee. And the reason for being so regular is to open a space within the psyche. I try every day to do at least one work or even more than one. And then there is not once that I have set limits, I always go, always forward. To see what can happen. It is a psychoanalytic method of dealing with things. This is a constant concern, otherwise you are an amateur ».

LISSON GALLERY

The Art Newspaper
24 January 2022

THE ART NEWSPAPER

Anish Kapoor: 'A population invested in the arts is the last thing a right-wing government wants'

The UK government's sinister dismantling of its creative sector is slowly but surely unfolding through cuts in funding and increased political control

Anish Kapoor

24 January 2022

British-Indian artist Anish Kapoor

Britain it seems no longer sees any merit in what the humanities have to offer. Art, music, poetry, literature and history come after—no, a very long way after—science and maths. The Victorian education forced on our children looks only to their ability to participate in the global capitalist machine. It no longer looks at the Sensible in the child. The idea that the arts and the humanities *are* an education is long lost.

The arts may give voice to our deeper selves but the current UK government's sinister and systematic attempt to dismantle the Keynesian project which set up "arts for all" through organisations like the Arts Council, is slowly but surely unfolding through cuts in funding and political control. The overarching aim it seems is so-called economic ability, or the imagined future earning capacity of our children. This is to wilfully forget the £10bn that the arts currently contribute to the UK economy on a yearly basis. This politically motivated idiocy does our society a criminal disservice. The arts have been removed from the core curriculum in schools. The humanities are under assault in all our universities. Funding for the humanities is being cut and even subjects like history are now under assault—because they don't show easy economic results?

The true effect of this will mean the belittling of our young people to roles of servitude to those at the top of the economy—as if economics is the only measure of value.

In a post-information age, which we must accept is upon us, what is the need to train hundreds of thousands to slave at facts and figures when the technologies we have invented do it so much better? A population invested in the arts is dangerous, likely to be less willing to tow the party line. A population that can think and perhaps even think with feeling is the last thing a right-wing government wants.

Giving voice to the unspoken

There is a strange truth about the arts and the humanities—they are the first to come under pressure when governments want tighter control. Recent history shows this well: Russia, Iran, Brazil—under its current government—India, China etc.

The arts give voice to the unspoken, known or half known in us. This is sometimes uncomfortable but also necessary. Free societies have until recently celebrated this. Is it that by articulating something of this human turmoil or human unresolvedness the arts can touch what is least governable in us? Are controlling governments afraid of this? Are they afraid of self-esteem and the will to look hard

at society and history and revise its hitherto accepted norms. Why else would they attempt to ban peaceful protest or make it illegal to touch public objects?

There is no question that the arts and an education in the arts is deeply connected to human rights, to Black Lives Matter and equal opportunity for all, irrespective of race or colour, and then, of course, the tragedy of global warming and the 80 million refugees in our world today. The government knowingly undermines the humanities while it is also in the business of excluding refugees at any cost. It pays lip service to Black Lives Matter while it remains secure that *all* its institutions are kept within the status quo of male white supremacy. It feeds nationalism by insisting that even the content of our airwaves, the BBC, Channel 4 and public radio, have 80% so-called "British" programming. It shamelessly disregards the arms-length principle and appoints right-wing apologists to sit as the head of the boards of museums across the land. It has decimated an organisation like the British Council with total disregard to the great work it has done for the arts and the humanities here and abroad.

This drift to small-nation, small-minded nationalism cannot be seen as separate from the assault on the arts in the school curriculum. It is a programmatic agenda set out to leave less space for those who disagree. It is reminiscent of fascistic governments of recent times who attempted to control our imagined inner selves.

To exclude our young from the ability to participate in the sometimes-problematic human discourse that the arts prefigure is nothing short of criminal. It is not an exaggeration to wonder how a civilised society can find a meaningful future when it has been deprived of the fragile imaginative underbelly that are the arts and the humanities.

• ***Anish Kapoor*** *will the first British artist to have a major exhibition at Gallerie dell' Accademia in Venice (20 April-9 October)*

Financial Times
25 February 2022

FINANCIAL TIMES

Louis Wise. Photography by Julian Broad FEBRUARY 25 2022

The studio of Anish Kapoor occupies a long stretch of an anodyne south London road. The British-Indian artist started with one space 25 years ago and, as his fame and wealth have accrued, so have his workrooms, each door allowing access to a different aspect of his oeuvre – and possibly his mind. In one large high-ceilinged hall, you can't move for ginormous red splodgy paintings, fervent excrescences that remind you of hell, or someone's guts. In the next, more confined, some of Kapoor's assistants (more than 20 people work here) execute more technical work.

The one after that privileges another Kapoor signature, his mirror pieces, large concave glasses that discombobulate you as you peer into them. Then there's a chamber devoted to all things black (red is Kapoor's longstanding love, but black is his big crush) before finally, through an entrance stacked with hundreds of canvases, we reach a moment of calm: a vast space at least 40ft tall, with high windows letting in crisp winter light. Down below are 10 or so large pictures, and a wide wooden desk absolutely submerged in paint.

Works in progress in Kapoor's south London studio © Julian Broad © Anish Kapoor. All rights reserved DACS, 2022

Kapoor in his studio © Julian Broad © Anish Kapoor. All rights reserved DACS, 2022

"Here is my easel," says Kapoor, now 67, with a trademark chuckle that betrays both good humour and occasional nerves. He is a small, slight figure clad in black jeans and an aggressively frayed turquoise jumper; his trainers, white a long time ago, are similarly caked in oils. At the other end of the complex, a meeting room containing neat art books and *objets* is the antithesis of here. But then these are the two poles – precision and mess – between which Kapoor has been swinging for the past 50 years; decades of the slick and monumental jostling with the weird and chaotic, reflecting his interest in endlessness, ritual and sex. In the smaller room, he had been detailing his ongoing fascination with sacrifice. I look over the desk. Is this a place for sacrifice, then? "Indeed it is," sighs Kapoor. "Yikes!"

There's a certain scale to everything Anish Kapoor does. He can't help it, he says – things grow and expand without him even realising. It was like that with this studio – "it just happened to me!" – and it's been the same with much of his career, an extraordinary trajectory that has seen him show in pretty much every great establishment in the world; his 2009 retrospective at the Royal Academy (the first time an Academician took over the whole of the main galleries), attracted more than 250,000 visitors. According to Sir Charles Saumarez Smith, secretary and chief executive of the RA at the time, the show, with an exploding wax cannon, a small train buzzing around and various other bravura pieces, was a game-changer: "Now people are used to exhibitions that are experiential – but at the time I don't think people had seen work that was so theatrical, and adventurous, and had an aspect of danger to it."

Kapoor's public commissions, meanwhile, have seen him serve up *Cloud Gate* in Chicago (aka The Bean), *Marsyas* in Tate Modern's Turbine Hall and the ArcelorMittal Orbit, a huge intestinal swirl commissioned for London's 2012 Olympics. But it is definitely, he swears, the same haphazard and surprising process that has led to his latest project, a takeover of Venice this spring, a centrepiece of this year's Biennale that sees him not only showing at the city's prestigious Gallerie dell'Accademia but also exhibiting works in what he calls several times "my mad, mad project!" Two years ago Kapoor bought the Palazzo Manfrin, an 18th-century edifice that reports describe charitably as "crumbling"; he is doing it up and turning it into... well, that's still to be decided.

"It isn't, you know, all that 'Fondazione Kapoor' bullshit," he tuts, almost embarrassed. The palazzo, its renovation still unfinished, will show some of his works this year, but will open officially in 2024. He doesn't want it only to be about his art, he says – he's looking at other ways of using, even sharing, the mansion. "I'm wary of ego projects," he claims. "My ego is plenty big enough!"

Kapoor's own paint-spattered shoes © Julian Broad

Kapoor is in a tricky phase – somewhere between assessing the past, but still bidding for renewal. He's now in his late 60s, and has new life right by his side; with his second wife, Sophie Walker, he has a three-year-old daughter. (He has two children in their 20s from a previous marriage.) "She's cute! As cute as can be." He didn't expect to be a father so late; it's "exhausting, but fabulous", he smiles. "I guess I'm more aware of death than I ever was, if that's a measure of anything... But I'm also, in some ways, more relaxed about who I am." He then edits himself. "Meaning who I am as an artist. As a man, I'm pretty confused. Always will be!"

If Kapoor grapples with the big themes, he is desperate not to let things be too grand. He has to be positively cajoled into admitting that he'll "eventually" be able to stay in the Manfrin, adding to a portfolio of homes in London, the Cotswolds, the Bahamas and Jodhpur. He has been Sir Anish since 2013, but mention of it provokes a retching sound. "Eurgh! Fuck that!" he cries. Do you ever use it? "No." A naughty pause. "British Airways!" He is actually fine with state honours – "I have a Légion d'Honneur, the Padma Bhushan from India, the Japanese one" – but he doesn't like the knighthood because it changes your name, "and there's something wrong with that. I probably shouldn't have accepted it. But anyway – too late."

Works in progress using black pigment, one of Kapoor's great recent obsessions. © Julian Broad © Anish Kapoor. All rights reserved DACS, 2021

Venice, though. To any outsider, it seems like a surefire way of embedding oneself in art history. But not to Kapoor – he still wants to be radical, dangerous even. "Artists seem to be bothered about what happens when they're dead or whatever – who gives a shit, honestly?" And yet – can one really be a world-famous artist in one's 60s and buy a Venetian palazzo and *not* call it a legacy project? He lets out a high laugh. "Good point. Fair! Fair, fair, fair. *Hate* it, but fair."

He was first alerted to the potential of the palace by his friend Mario Codognato (of the esteemed Venetian jeweller family), who will act as director of the Foundation when it launches. Codognato is a bit less modest about the Foundation's ambitions. He thinks the choice of venue is perfect. For one thing, Kapoor successfully showed for the British Pavilion there back in 1990, a huge success: "It's a place that has brought him luck." What's more, "it's a city that has always bridged east and west, and so it also makes sense in terms of Anish's biography." Kapoor was born in Mumbai to a Punjabi Hindu father and an Iraqi Jewish mother; he moved to Britain nearly 50 years ago to study art. "He is a cosmopolitan artist," says Codognato, "and you can see that also in the work: there's an eastern sensibility combined with a modernist, western tradition."

Tubes of paint in Kapoor's studio © Adam Broad

In Venice, Kapoor will finally show his "Kapoor Black" works for the first time. These sculptures are each encased in a box (there's no other way; the colour is so fragile and toxic) and showcase a dazzling, eye-tricking blackness – apparently, the deepest blackness in the world. Kapoor bought the exclusive rights to this pigment – formerly Vantablack – in 2016, and has been developing it ever since. When it was first announced, he got into a spat with the artist Stuart Semple, who was indignant that Kapoor was keeping the colour to himself and trolled him; Kapoor tit-for-tatted at the time, but is now eager to forget it.

"There was *no* controversy!" he insists. "It's silly! Silly!" He clearly feels a little misunderstood. Yet that drama seems breezy stuff compared to the paintings he has been working on for much of the last year. Kapoor has been painting "like an absolutely insane person", though the textural, blobby nature of many of them still makes them akin to sculpture. A maquette in the studio shows how the entrance hall of the Manfrin looks set to be dominated by a vast upside-down iceberg painted in this angry scarlet.

The ascent of Anish

Descent into Limbo, 1992 © Anish Kapoor. All rights reserved DACS, 2022/Artimage 2022. Photograph: Filipe Braga

Marsyas, Tate Modern, 2003 © John Riddy

Cloud Gate, Chicago, 2006 © Raymond Boyd/Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

Shooting into the Corner, 2009 © Oli Scarff/Getty Images

ArcelorMittal Orbit, London, 2012 © Anish Kapoor. All rights reserved DACS, 2012/Artimage 2022

Palazzo Manfrin, Venice, 2006 © Luca Zanon

"I'm in a *hyper* messy stage," he tells me. Why? "This is very hard. I mean, I've always had these two poles. They've been there a long, long time... I expect I'm more relaxed about it. I'm more at ease with it – both sexuality and viscerality are, at least, in my recent work, much more present." Kapoor's works can often seem monumental, inscrutable, even cold (Saumarez Smith calls him "an aesthetic artist" and "anti-autobiographical"), but today he cites two works as being especially personal: *Descent into Limbo*, a big black hole in the floor that viewers are begged not to fall into (recently, one foolish man in Porto did so); second, *Shooting into the Corner*, a highlight of his RA show, which saw a cannon shoot a wax-paint mix into a corner of the room. From these we can deduce two things: that he's fascinated by the abyss, but also, still wants to have a laugh.

Kapoor was born into comfortable privilege, the son of a hydrographer in the Indian navy; he went to The Doon School, often called India's Eton. In returning to painting, he seems to be returning to childhood too: his mother was very creative, "but oddly she would never finish her paintings. So I would finish them for her, shamelessly!"

On a kibbutz in Israel in his late teens, he had a nervous breakdown and also decided to become an artist. Asked if he ever dreamt of becoming the Anish Kapoor we know now, he gasps. "Ahh, no!" When he moved to London in 1973 to study art, only "a handful" of artists made a living from their art – Henry Moore, Francis Bacon – and the rest all had to teach. This changed radically in the 1980s, and he benefited from it, he acknowledges. "But there was no idea, no thought that one could even *live* from selling one's work. Never mind bloody palazzos in Venice." When he became very wealthy, did it change how he made art? "No, no." You've stayed the same? "Well... I don't know!"

Kapoor's conversation switches between strong opinions and deep doubt: things are often "tricky", "complicated", "difficult". Things came to a head again a few years later after his first hit show in New York in 1984. The works sold out in hours and he was fêted across the Big Apple; but he returned home to a huge existential crisis and stopped making any work for nearly two years. It took a meeting with fellow artist Bruce Nauman to set him right. "We had a cup of tea together," he smiles. "Nick Serota [former director of Tate] introduced us. Bruce was really gentle, really smart. I let him know I was going through this terrible crisis. And he patted me on the shoulder and said, 'Come on, Anish. Is there an artist who hasn't had this? It's what it means to be an artist.'"

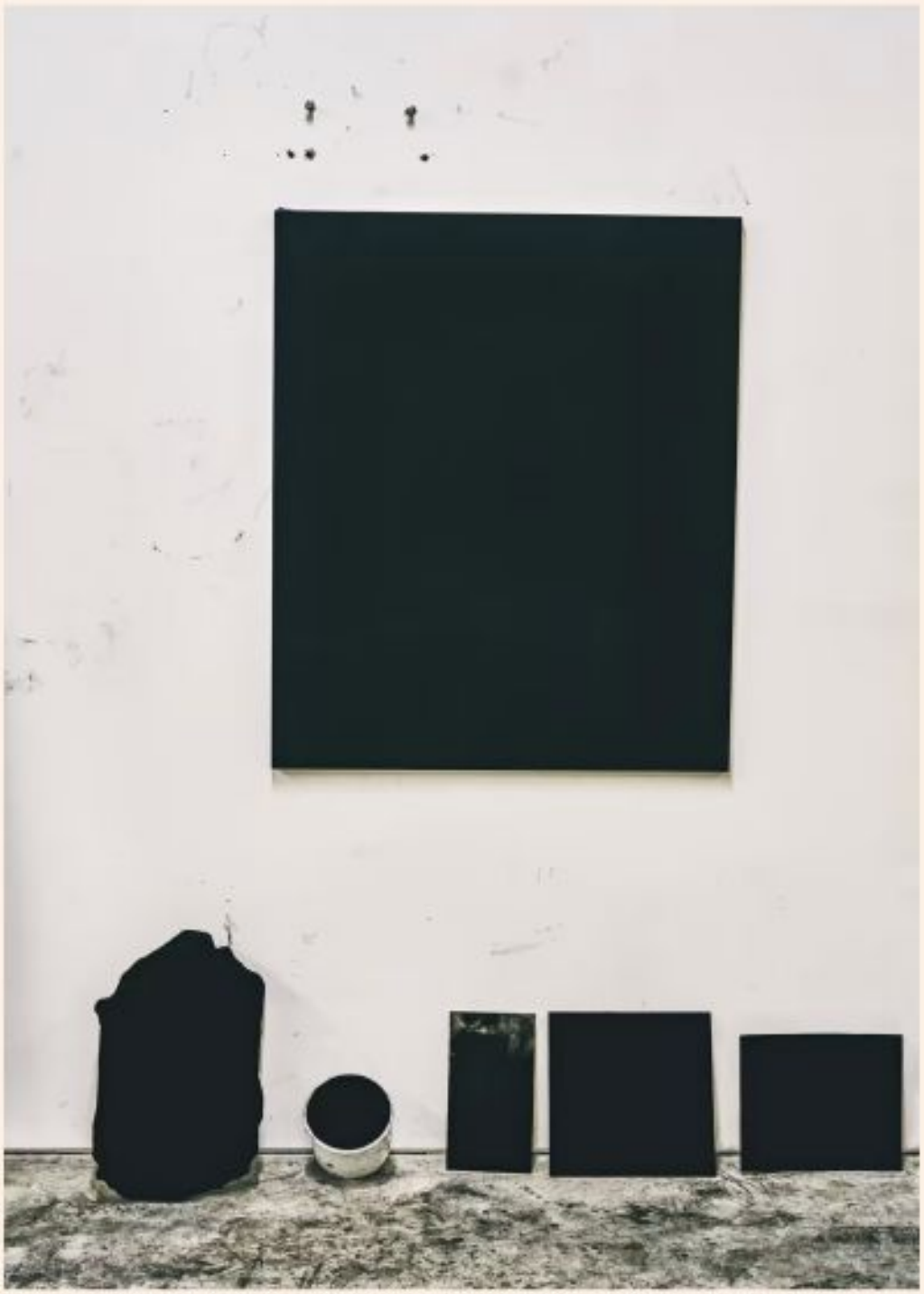
Looking back, he says "it was a big lesson in how not to take your own bullshit and how to be sophisticated about money... if you make good work, people will buy it. And you just have to go 'OK' and manage it." Again, though, he is aware of a certain polarisation. "No one's ever bought a wax work," he shrugs. "Too difficult. No one's ever bought *Descent into Limbo* – too difficult." What do collectors buy, then? "They buy the stainless-steel works, mirror works. Fine! That's fine."

He is also pretty sanguine about how his works are no longer his when they go out into the world. Take The Bean. "When it was first there, I thought: 'Oh, no! It's so bloody popular, I can't bear it!'" But then he went and "sat with it", and quickly came to terms. "I was hearing some time ago that it has had 200 or 250 million visits, and that, they tell me, is equivalent to 500 or 600 million selfies. Christ almighty!" How does that feel? "It's weird."

Artist's assistant John Almazan at work in the studio © Julian Broad © Anish Kapoor. All rights reserved DACS, 2022

As for the ArcelorMittal Orbit, Kapoor was commissioned to do it by Boris Johnson when he was mayor of London, and even then it was decried as a Boris folly. "It certainly was," says Kapoor acidly. And how do you feel about that? "Awful!" he cries. "It was there to be done, and if it wasn't me, it would have been someone else," he shrugs. "And I didn't get paid to do it, by the way – not one penny. And I'm not saying this out of bitterness – I'm saying it because it's true." Things got worse when Johnson called him one Sunday morning a few years later and tried to strong-arm him into turning the Orbit into a public attraction ("whatever that is"). The exchange still rankles. "So aggressive! I presume that's how he does everything."

He is more nuanced about the state of contemporary art. He thinks that we're in a "very confusing" time as to what constitutes actual innovation these days; he feels that the rush by galleries and museums to be more diverse in their rosters is still a little crude. "I don't care who made it. I don't care where it was made. The question is, is it poetically resonant?" He squirms at shipping in work from Africa without acknowledging that it was made with a completely different notion of beauty to most western art. "What's the African concept of the sublime? Do you have any idea? Do I have any idea? Almost none. It turns into some exotic view." Connoisseurship is required, "and I don't believe museums are anywhere near it." Spare a thought, though, for today's museum curators who will be grilled if they don't try to do something. He sighs sympathetically, but says: "Tokenism is tokenism."



Another work in progress using Kapoor Black pigment © Julian Broad © Anish Kapoor. All rights reserved DACS, 2022

Since we're discussing the pitfalls of identity politics, do the labels of Indian and Jewish mean anything to Kapoor? "Weirdly, they matter a lot. There was a period of time where I said, 'Ech, who cares?' – but actually as I get older they matter more." He cites Picasso as an example: he lived in France for decades, and yet he remained a quintessentially Spanish artist. "Similarly, I must say, I realised that so much of what I do has a deep Indianness to it. And it's a weird counter that I'm also living that [out] through my Jewish background [too]... I keep recognising things and going: 'Oh my god, that's what it's about, really.'" Take his obsession with red. "The Chinese idea of red is a glorious celebration. The red I'm talking about is the red that is black, that is dark – that is interior and somewhat terrifying."

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This sense of terror is much clearer when you look around his studio. The mirrors, if you stare long enough, give you a headache; the room stocked with paintings has an almost overwhelming smell of old toffee. The Kapoor Black works, meanwhile, are dizzyingly black – essentially high-end optical illusions, they will surely have the Venetian visitors gawping. He isn't happy, though, with some other works next door which are a slightly lighter shade. We stand in front of a vast dark slit and he peers in, dissatisfied. What's the matter? "Oh, I hate the idea that you can see *anything*," he says. Typical Kapoor: how can you perfect a chasm? Clearly, though, he'll never stop trying.

LISSON GALLERY

BBC Newsnight
9 September 2021

Anish Kapoor: 'It is our mission to save' art from Afghanistan's museums

Sir Anish Kapoor holds the rare status of an artist both revered by critics and enjoyed by the rest of us.

He came to the UK from Mumbai in the early 1970s and since then he's won the Turner Prize, represented Britain at the Venice Biennale and was the first living artist to take over the Royal Academy, with a record-breaking blockbuster show.

Primarily known for his sculpture - whether it's 'Orbit', erected in 2012 and towering over London's Olympic Park, or Cloud Gate, affectionately known as the Bean, in Chicago - Kapoor says he's always been a painter.

Now, he's launching a series of paintings, created before and during the coronavirus pandemic, at London's Lisson Gallery.

Newsnight's Katie Razzall met with Sir Anish Kapoor at his studio in south London.

09 September 2021
6 minutes

The Independent
20 September 2021

INDEPENDENT

INTERVIEW

Anish Kapoor: 'The government is damn dangerous and a bunch of f***ing liars'

Ahead of a new retrospective, the globally famous British artist talks to **Sarah Crompton** about art-world capitalism, Emma Raducanu, and whether Tory attempts to control universities, museums and the BBC is a warning sign of neo-fascism

Monday 20 September 2021 15:47 | comments

Anish Kapoor: 'The sad truth is that, if there was an election tomorrow, Boris Johnson would be elected' (Shutterstock)

It's a sign of the artist Anish Kapoor's world-embracing fame that when British teenager Emma Raducanu was playing a tournament in Chicago, in the weeks before winning the US Open tennis championship, she found time to visit his *Cloud Gate* sculpture, the huge reflective "bean" that has become a tourist attraction as well as an acclaimed work of art.

"I love that," he says, smiling broadly, throwing back his head to emphasise his words. "It was wonderful. It says something about how a work, or a body of work, can come to have a voice of its own. It's nothing to do with me any more. It's out there in the world and it's doing its own thing. Of course, I love that."

We are talking in a quiet white room at the Lisson Gallery in London, just as Kapoor is about to unveil an exhibition of his paintings. Made over the past year or so, they represent a new direction in his work, because although he has often used paint and pigment in his pieces – most memorably in the huge cannon that fired paint at the wall in his astonishing solo exhibition at the Royal Academy in 2009 – he is always described as a sculptor. A further and more extensive retrospective of his paintings opens at Modern Art Oxford on 2 October.

Ever since he first emerged as a major artist in the early 1990s – representing Britain at the Venice Biennale in 1990 and winning the Turner Prize in 1991 – Kapoor has attracted both artistic credibility and huge crowds. Popularity is something that has arrived without his entirely expecting it. "There's no accounting for it," he says. "You can't either make it happen or not. It's just there."

I wonder whether he has deliberately courted success; whether he likes the sense of being feted. "I've had the opposite," he says, after a long pause. "Which is, 'Oh God, they like it so much there must be something wrong with it. It's too popular. It's too whatever.'"

He explains by talking about his reaction when *Cloud Gate*, made of highly reflective stainless steel, first went on show in the Millennium Park in 2006. "It was just on the cusp of the selfie, and it had thousands and thousands of people around it all the time. I thought, 'What is this? Disneyland, here I come... It filled me with a kind of disappointment.

"But I went to Chicago and sat with it for three or four days to try to understand what was going on. Something occurred to me, which surprised me. It was a very simple thing, which was that this object has an indeterminate scale. When you're near it, it's enormous, but you don't have to walk 10 metres away from it, and suddenly it becomes not so big. It has this mysterious jumping scale. Jumping scale is, I think, deeply poetic."

Kapoor believes that this saved the piece – gave it serious intent. "There will be those who will get it and those who don't," he adds. "But I think holding on to these sometimes very ephemeral qualities is the real key to a work. We live in a world of objects, that are all known. We name them all. Only in art, and perhaps in the cosmos, are there a few that remain mysterious. And it seems to me that that's a quality that might be intriguing and popular."

This power of art to suggest something – a presence, or an absence – beyond itself, runs through all Kapoor's work since the start, unifying his early works, in pigment and plaster, with his monumental public sculptures, his sky mirrors that reflect and distort the world around them, and now with the paintings. He completed them during lockdown, working in his studio at his Oxfordshire home and in his larger premises at a former factory in south London.

The world turned upside down: Kapoor with his mirror sculptures in 2019
(Nils Jorgensen/Shutterstock)

He has always painted – going so far, at one point, as to describe himself as a "painter working as a sculptor" – and sees the oils that now line the walls as part and parcel of his sculptural work. "I made pigment works years and years ago, which use colour that has both a material physical presence and an ethereal something else. That is what I am really interested in, this relationship between what is present and what isn't.

"If one was to take a – forgive me for this, but I am going to jump in there – if one was to take a philosophical position on it, one might say that in the moment of living there's a consciousness of some death, of some ephemeral beyond. Maybe it's because I'm Indian, but maybe it's because I'm interested in Heidegger, or maybe it's all sorts of things, that this is constantly a point of reference – maybe more overtly in these paintings than before."

This is how Kapoor talks, in his deep, highly educated voice, rolling his words around as if he's about to give a lecture, constantly checking himself, daring himself to take the plunge to say something. He laughs a lot and speaks as if he is always smiling, even when he doesn't agree with what you are saying.

Which he doesn't when I suggest that maybe these rich, swirling oils, in reds and deep purples, tempered sometimes with shocks of lighter yellow and mauve, are products of the time of Covid, when everyone has been forced to face mortality every day. They look like landscapes, but also like the innards of bodies; of something pulled from beneath.

One is never fully independent of what's happening in the world. It's going to enter the scene somehow

Anish Kapoor

"I slightly resist the pandemic illustration," he says, benign but firm. "I'm suspicious of quotidian commentary. I feel generally it doesn't lead to good art. While I feel huge political, passionate anger, I don't feel it is the job of art to act as agitprop in whatever way. Maybe the job of artists, but not of art. On the other hand, one is never fully independent of what's happening in the world. It is there. It's going to enter the scene somehow."

What he does acknowledge is that, at 67, he thinks more about the passing of time. This consciousness is all the stronger because he has a three-year-old daughter, Habiba, with his second wife Sophie Walker, as well as two older children, Ishan and Alba, from his first marriage.

"I was always involved with my children," he says – a claim backed up by a warm and loving phone call with Ishan that briefly interrupts our chat. "But this renewed involvement [with Habiba] is the most fabulous, delicious thing that could ever be. I'm also aware of turning into an old bugger. And if I'm sensitive to myself I have to be open to the notion that I have a young child, and god knows how much of her life I'll see and all that stuff.

"It brings with it a sense of pathos. Have I changed?" He laughs. "Yes, inevitably. But I think at another level I might say I'm much less afraid. I think that's one of the things that perhaps one can grow into as an artist: to say look, I don't care any more what the art world or anybody thinks. I have to do what I have to do. And it will make of it what it does. It's not for me to measure."

It seems strange to think of Kapoor being afraid of anything or anyone; he exudes a confidence, a gleam of certainty. But he insists the doubts are there. "I think these are battles one has to fight with oneself," he says. "Self-censorship is a real, real, real thing. And one has to open the way for oneself continually."

The paintings in this sense represent a leap of faith. "My generation at art school were never taught to paint, or draw. It was never part of the scene. But I've had a journey over the past four or five years. I feel my inner voice, whatever that is, has made me accept the possibility of the image. What I've done in many ways is to resist it. We are supposedly free spirits, us artists. But not so. We are educated like everybody else into modes of practice. De-educating myself is the hardest job of all. To say, not only is it possible, but I have to dare to."

He paints alone, in silence, without music: "It's the only way." When a work is completed, he looks at it, for a long time. "I'm a bloody workaholic and a half. So I work every single day. And I love making paintings. But making them is one part. The second part is to watch them, look at them – never show a work that's less than six months old. I don't believe in it. I've learnt over the years that you have to watch it, whether it's a painting or a sculpture, to see whether it can hold authority."

Kapoor's 'Cloud Gate' sculpture, which he describes as having 'indeterminate scale'
(Reuters)

More or less at the same time as making these works, teaching himself the techniques of oil painting, he has been exploring pieces that use Vantablack, the blackest of black paints, which absorbs 99.9 per cent of all light and renders three-dimensional objects flat. "If painting technique brings the image into being with the use of paint, then this black stuff takes it away," he says. "If you put it on a fold, you wouldn't be able to see the fold. This thing of being and non-being is very important to me."

His artistic experiments, because they are on a smaller scale than his more public-facing work, are likely to make him even more collectable, I suggest. He groans and covers his face. His relationship with the art market is a complex one; he despises the way that every piece of art is now "chained to the market… We artists have to fight this battle and it's not a straightforward one," he says. Has he ever thought about simply walking away?

"I've often thought about it," he says, smiling wryly. "And maybe one day I'll have the courage to do it. I love making things, and after years and years of psychoanalysis, [I know] that it is a conversation I have with myself that is vital to me. I'm not that interested in the object. I'm more interested in the conversation.

"It's absolutely part of this strange place that culture finds itself in, at the moment, me included. It doesn't matter what area of culture, other than perhaps poetry. The commercial, the capitalist world, has entered and we struggle to find an alternative."

For this reason, he is full of admiration for the five collectives currently nominated for the Turner Prize for their work, which is by and large socially committed. "Bless them," he says. "I hope they can find a way, or point a way at least. They speak of a different agenda. Their work is not about objects. I warn against agitprop, because art is, in the end – in its best and purest forms – unknowable. And yet we live in a time when right-wing social entrenchment is so enormous, encouraged by government, that I fully sympathise with artists who feel that social change is necessary."

> ***I am saddened by the xenophobia that Brexit has awakened***
>
> *Anish Kapoor*

His own campaigning finds outlets outside his art. He is outspoken on matters close to his heart. He loathes Brexit – "I am saddened by the xenophobia that it's awakened" – and has no hesitation in calling the government "a bunch of f***ing liars". I say I imagine him shouting at the television a lot during lockdown. He smiles again. "The sad truth is that if there was an election tomorrow, Boris Johnson would be elected. He declared fairly early on that he would be hard on culture and soft on the economy, and that's what they're doing. So, you know, bash the BBC, bash the universities, take hold of all the museums by putting their people on the boards. Is that not a form of neo-fascism? Isn't it a way of taking control of the mind of the nation while feeding relatively liberal economic solutions to all sorts of things? Bloody clever, but damn dangerous, it seems to me."

He has lived in England since the 1970s, when he moved here as a student. But what is going on in India, where he was born, terrifies him even more: the death toll caused by poverty and neglect; the rise of violent anti-Muslim sentiment encouraged by the Hindu nationalist government of Narendra Modi. "It's gone absolutely insane," he says. "I've been very vocal about my opposition to both the Hindu agenda and the BJP government. I describe them as the Hindu Taliban. That's how they behave. It's a return to a kind of medievalism that's pointed at exclusion. That's horrid."

Kapoor is also sowing his own seeds of hope. Next year, at the Venice Biennale, he is mounting an exhibition at the Accademia, where his sculptural experiments with blackness will be shown for the first time. Simultaneously, he has agreed to renovate the crumbling Palazzo Manfrin, using it as a base for his foundation, a gallery for some of his works, and opening it up as a studio space for young artists. "It is madness!" he says, with a huge grin. "It's quite a complicated restoration project, but I hope we can give it proper life. It felt the right thing to do. Jump in. See what happens!" Which seems to be his current motto for life.

Anish Kapoor: Painting is at Modern Art Oxford, 2 October - 13 February 2022. Tickets: modernartoxford.org.uk

The Telegraph
1 October 2021

The Telegraph

Anish Kapoor: Painting review: blood-soaked show that's worth a butcher's

★★★★☆ 4/5

The British artist demonstrates his skill with a paint brush in a visceral new show at Modern Art Oxford

By Alastair Smart
1 October 2021 • 5:00am

Installation view of Anish Kapoor's exhibition at Modern Art Oxford | CREDIT: Benjamin Westoby

In a career spanning five decades, Anish Kapoor has pretty much ticked every box for a successful British artist. Turner Prize win, tick (1991). Invitation to represent Britain at the Venice Biennale, tick (1990). Retrospective at a major London institution, tick (2009, at the Royal Academy). For good measure, in 2013 he was knighted. One thing he has never done, though, is put on a significant exhibition of paintings – until now, that is, at Modern Art Oxford, where he's showing 26 works, almost all of them new.

Kapoor is famous for his sculptures (he broke through in the early 1980s, alongside Tony Cragg and Richard Deacon, as part of the so-called New British Sculpture group). How does he fare with brush in hand? The answer is very well indeed.

These paintings are big, bold and largely abstract, albeit with just a hint of the representational, which teases viewers into thinking they might actually be seeing a subject. A handful of works, such as The Dark (2021), call to mind volcanic eruptions beneath a dark sky – that's what they called to my mind, anyway. Others may see something completely different.

Occasionally, Kapoor's titles help steer us towards a certain interpretation. In Orpheus Looks Back (2020), for instance, we're invited to view its red passages of paint – loosely three upright rectangles – as depicting Orpheus, his beloved Persephone and the god Hades, from Greek myth.

The eponymous hero infamously broke his vow not to check if Persephone was walking behind him as they emerged from the Underworld. However, even here, there is no straightforward reading of the painting, since there's no straightforward reading of the story either: the morals of which range from the value of patience to the self-destructive power of love.

What unites every work on show is the colour red. A deep dark red, most readily associated with blood. As he has throughout his career, Kapoor operates within a narrow palette that also features white, black, yellow and blue, but there's no doubt which colour dominates.

The violent way he applies his paint to canvas – and builds it up in thick, swirling impasto – may suggest to some viewers the flagellation of martyrs or the beheading of saints in Renaissance imagery. If there's one artist whose spectre hangs over this show, however, it's Francis Bacon, for whom the human body was just a carcass. He managed to evoke – and, through his paint, imitate – entrails, mucus and gore. Kapoor achieves something similar in many of his paintings, though goes deeper beneath the skin and therefore to areas of greater abstraction. The end-result (if you'll forgive a word over-used by art critics) is visceral.

Installation view of Anish Kapoor: Painting

Again, it's worth saying that not everyone will look at these works and see innards. However, it's insightful that the gallery feels the need to offer the following warning on tickets: "This exhibition contains abstract depictions of the human body that some visitors may find graphic and unsettling".

My emphasis earlier on the difference between Kapoor's sculptures and paintings is perhaps unhelpful. Pretty much every artist nowadays is multi-disciplinary, and let's not forget that Kapoor has used pigment in numerous works over the years: Adam (1988-9) in the Tate collection, for example, is a sandstone block with a cavity carved out of it that's coated blue.

The boundary between the two mediums is blurred even further in the Oxford exhibition. Not just through the three-dimensional nature of Kapoor's impasto, but also because the show includes eight works that he refers to as "paintings on the floor".

You and I would just call them sculptures. In fairness, they do deploy canvases or wooden panels as a starting point: these are overlaid with some combination of silicone, resin, oils and steel and exhibited on the ground. Look at Me (2020), which bears semblance to a splayed animal carcass, drips copious blood-like liquid into a tray beneath it – leaving the viewer in fear of spillage and getting his or her shoes soaked.

Modern Art Oxford has come to resemble a butcher's shop more than a gallery. This show is bloody good.

Sat Oct 2 to Feb 13 2022; modernartoxford.org.uk

The Guardian
30 September 2021

The Guardian

Interview

Anish Kapoor on vaginas, recovering from breakdown and his violent new work: 'Freud would have a field day'

Jonathan Jones

'I can't sit here and psychoanalyse them. I don't know how to' ... Kapoor with a new work at his studio. Photographs: Sarah Lee/The Guardian

Why has the artist painted scenes of bloodletting, decapitation and a woman with 10,000 breasts? He's scared to talk about it – but he can explain his fascination with vaginas and the world's blackest black

At 67, Anish Kapoor, with a knighthood, a Turner prize and a retrospective due at the Venice Biennale next year, appears determined to strip away his own artistic skin. Like Marsyas – the satyr flayed alive by Apollo, whose gory fate Kapoor once commemorated in a 150m-long, 10-storey-high sculpture – the artist is exposing his innards. That's the only way to describe his latest works. One of the world's most renowned sculptors is about to go public as, well, a painter. Yet it is the content of the works he's about to unveil that may disconcert. "They're very, very violent," he confesses. "And I just wonder what the hell that has to do with what's in me. I can't sit here and psychoanalyse them. I don't know how to. But I recognise that it's there."

The works, about to go on display at Modern Art Oxford, are beautifully painted yet brutal: full of images of bloodletting, decapitation and disembowelling. Kapoor seems to have taught himself to paint the human figure in order to desecrate it. At his London studio, there are stacks of these blood-soaked canvases depicting huge wounded bits of bodies and purple organs spattered on the walls.

"Yikes," he says. "I'm not doing it intellectually. I just wanted to make a many-breasted quasi-female figure and see what happened. Could I unwrap her pristine exterior and look at her problematic interior, full of blood and guts and breasts and bits and pieces, and all that? Fuck knows. Freud would have a field day."

▲ Seeing red ... Kapoor's The world trembles when I retrieve from my ancient past what I need to live in the depths of myself. Photograph: ©Anish Kapoor. All rights reserved DACS, 2021

Kapoor isn't exactly an inhibited conversationalist. We meet twice, at his gallery, then his studio. On the weekend in between, he gives a speech to Index on Censorship in which he warns against "self-censorship". And the flow of images and ideas in our discussion is certainly a masterclass in how to not censor yourself. Throwing out provocations and theories, he tries to explain what he's up to.

"I'm doing what I've always done, which is to look to some primal ritual act. If one takes that to its logical conclusion, the primal ritual act has to be murder or sacrifice. In Freud's Moses and Monotheism he talks initially about Moses having not been a Jew but an Egyptian - which I quite like - but from there on, it's all about the idea that Moses was murdered. Moses was sacrificed."

> **I read a book called Blood Relations that said the first culture was made by women – and it came from menstruation**

In case anyone misses the point, the paintings are accompanied by sculptures of enigmatic doorways and stepped buildings like Aztec pyramids, over big metal trays flowing with great painterly globs of red matter. Human sacrifice has played a part in many cultures. For Kapoor, it is a part of what religion is: "Its purpose has to be to ask ridiculous questions like, 'Where do I go after I die?' Or, 'Where was I before I was born?' Public display of the victim, public sacrifice, somehow helps us, even though it's completely counterintuitive. We think the energy of civilisation is in a different direction. But apparently not so."

These are unusual ideas and impulses to put on public display. At the gallery of his London dealer, we stop in front of a triptych of three big canvases that depict what at first look like florid, sensual blooms. Then you notice a headless neck bursting with blood, and the flowers turn out to be exposed anatomies. What's going on? "The Diana of Ephesus who has 10,000 breasts ... she's there. So I think what was in my mind was the sacrifice of Diana, the opening up, the revealing, of what's inside her body. You'll see that the only remaining bit, in a way, is her vagina. All the rest is opened up."

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▲ Leaning in ... Kapoor with one of the exhibits for his show at Modern Art Oxford. Photograph: Sarah Lee/The Guardian

The vagina has become quite a theme for Kapoor. There was a row in France over his Versailles sculpture, Dirty Corner, which was nicknamed '"the queen's vagina". So what's with the vaginas? Kapoor answers, unexpectedly, in terms of Marxist anthropology. "There's an anthropologist I'm really interested in who's weird," he says. "A man called Chris Knight who wrote a book called Blood Relations, in which he speculates that the first culture was made by women and that it came from menstruation. That women who lived together, especially in small groups, menstruated together, and that they used red ochre to cover their bodies so as to hide their menstruations. He speculates that the first acts of culture were to do with this act of solidarity."

The earliest artistic material known is indeed red ochre, which was used at Blombos Cave in South Africa up to 80,000 years ago. It makes a strong red pigment - hand prints and animal images in red ochre survive in cave art. Kapoor can't get enough of it either. "I have an obsession with red. My favourite colour of all, the one I use by the ton, is Alizirin crimson. It's a very dark bloody Bordeaux wine red. What's interesting about red is that it links to black so unbelievably easily. Red makes great darkness. And of course one might say red is fully a colour of the interior."

So Kapoor's paintings are not so far from his sculpture after all. Since the 1980s, he has used colour to release the cosmic and the inward - from early works, in which he scattered raw pigment on small objects, to Descent into Limbo, a 2.5m deep hole painted with a black so dark the drop seems infinite (and into which one gallerygoer fell). "Colour is deeply illusionistic," he says. "Deep space is something I'm constantly in conversation with - the way colour affects deep space, in ways that are indescribable with words."

In his studio, among the bloody canvases, is a black lozenge on a white background, encased in a glass tank. He asks me what I think it is. One thing I am sure of - it's flat. Then he gets me to look from the side. It's not flat at all: it bulges out into space, a solid diamond form. The optical illusion is mind-blowing. "So this is one of these new works made in the blackest material in the universe," he says. "It's in a case because the material is highly toxic and it's incredibly fragile, especially to saliva, so you can't talk in front of it. It's a nano material. And what happens is the light enters and basically it's trapped and doesn't escape."

▲ The drop seems infinite ... Descent Into Limbo, made with 'the universe's blackest black'. Photograph: ART on FILE/Getty Images

It traps 98.8% of light - "blacker than a black hole". When Kapoor got exclusive artistic rights to this material a few years ago, there was a bit of a hoo-ha. You can even buy a "blackest black" acrylic paint, created by self-styled rival Stuart Semple, with the warning that by ordering it, "you confirm that you are not Anish Kapoor, you are in no way affiliated to Anish Kapoor, you are not purchasing this item on behalf of Anish Kapoor or an associate of Anish Kapoor."

"After my breakdown, my mother went to India, got some earth and put it under my bed - so I could dream myself well

The entire row is daft, for Kapoor's actual black nano material is dangerous, difficult to use and has taken years to develop into artworks. He shows me 19 more of these freaky spatial illusions in an upper room of his studio. Next year they will be unveiled at the Venice Accademia show. They take a lifetime's colour research to a sublime extreme. Is it a cliche to ask if this fascination with colour was influenced by his childhood in India? "I think some of my relationship to colour has to be cultural. This propensity for red has to have something of that. I think of Picasso and his relation to his Spanish roots. They were with him always - the dark mythological forces playing away".

In fact, when I push him to explain how his gory canvases reflect his own psyche, as opposed to anthropological ideas, he comes out with a moving story about India, displacement and the healing power of ritual. "I grew up in India," he says. "I was there until I was 17, 18. My mother was Jewish, so my brother and I then went to Israel. And I had the most awful, terrible nervous breakdown. I could hardly walk. I had an aunt who lived in Israel and my mother came to visit me. And my aunt, who had a kind of shamanistic predilection, said to my mother, 'You must go back to India and you must bring some earth and you must put it under Anish's bed.' Sorry Jonathan, this sometimes makes me want to cry. But anyway, I'll tell you it. And so my mother, bless her, went to India and got some earth and put it under my bed, and my aunt said further, 'He will be able to dream himself well from this matter.' Wow! You know it took me years to recognise the power of this thing. It gives me goosebumps. Sorry, but it does give me goosebumps."

Kapoor is an artist who takes you to the edge. He can make you contemplate the biggest questions. His new paintings are not so much a departure as a key to everything he has ever done, ransacking religion and myth to ask why human beings have always been driven to ponder the mystery of being. "I've been in Buddhist practice for a long, long time," he says. "Zen practice. It matters to me. I do really believe that we are religious beings. Where do I come from? Who am I? What am I? Where do I go? Those are questions that puzzle us all."

Anish Kapoor: Painting is at Modern Art Oxford from 2 October to 13 February. His show at Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia opens April 2022.

ARTnews
2 August 2021

ARTnews

Anish Kapoor to Convert 18th-Century Venetian Palazzo into Exhibition Space

BY SHANTI ESCALANTE-DE MATTEI August 2, 2021 2:46pm

Indian born British artist Anish Kapoor answers reporters in front of his artwork entitled Leviathan, on the eve of the opening of an exhibition of his work at the Grand Palais in Paris, Tuesday May 10, 2011.
AP PHOTO/REMY DE LA MAUVINIERE

The Anish Kapoor Foundation has bought and will be renovating the 18th-century Palazzo Manfrin into a gallery, artist studio, and archival deposit, according to the *Art Newspaper*. Mario Codognato, Venice native and current director of the Anish Kapoor Foundation, will be leading the new project.

Kapoor has previously raised concerns about the state of Venice as a city. This past June, Kapoor and 21 other artists signed a letter urging Venetian officials to consider the negative impacts of tourism on the city.

The Palazzo Marin will host rotating exhibitions in a ground-floor gallery. Its second and third floors will display works from the foundation's collection, and there will also be room for an archive and a workshop intended to support artists and scholars working in the fields of history, technology, and art.

Palazzo Manfrin was built in the 1500s for the aristocratic Priuli family. The Venetian palazzo was reconstructed during the 1720s, and was further modified in the late 1780s.

Until recent years, the building served as a school and has since fallen into disrepair. Kapoor tapped the architecture firms FWR Associati and UNA studio, based in Venice and Hamburg, respectively, to spearhead this major project.

The *Art Newspaper* reported that Kapoor's foundation is expected to open at the Palazzo Manfrin in 2023. But it is not the only forthcoming Kapoor project headed to the city, however. In 2022, the Gallerie dell'Accademia will host a major exhibition of Kapoor's sculptures coated in Vantablack, which is believed to be the darkest shade of black in the world.

The Art Newspaper
30 July 2021

INTERNATIONAL EDITION
THE ART NEWSPAPER

Anish Kapoor is converting a vast, crumbling Venetian palace into his permanent exhibition space and workshop

The 18th-century Palazzo Manfrin will house a collection of the British-Indian sculptor's work

NABIH JHALA
30th July 2021 10:40 BST

Palazzo Manfrin has been empty for several years

The foundation of the British-Indian sculptor Anish Kapoor has begun renovating a palazzo in Venice that will eventually become the organisation's headquarters.

Earlier this year, the Venice city council green-lit construction plans for the Anish Kapoor Foundation to convert the dilapidated 18th-century Palazzo

Priuli Manfrin into an exhibition venue, artist studio and repository for a number of Kapoor's most significant works.

Facing onto the Cannaregio Canal, the Palazzo Priuli Manfrin was established in the 16th century and largely rebuilt in the 1700s. It first served as the seat of the Priulis, a prominent Italian aristocratic family which claim among their ranks several Doges of Venice. During the 19th century the palace housed a collection of paintings that acted as a predecessor to the Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia where, incidentally, Kapoor will debut his much anticipated VantaBlack sculptures coated in the world's "blackest" pigment next year (20 April-9 October 2022).

The building's ground floor will be turned into a gallery that will host a programme of temporary exhibitions and a bookshop overlooking the canal, as well as educational and recreational spaces, according to the Venice city council. The first and second floors will house exhibition spaces for the "most significant" works from the foundation's collection. Above these will be workshops, an archive and a collection deposit. Several ancient decorative structures in the east wing of the building will be conserved as part of the redevelopment.

Anish Kapoor Courtesy of Lisson Gallery

According to a statement from the Anish Kapoor Foundation, the programme will include: "Conferences and workshops for scholars and artists interested in the history, technologies and developments of sculpture as an art form, creating initiatives with experts in different cultural and scientific fields to contribute to a better understanding of contemporary art and culture."

The foundation adds that it intends to "work closely with the museums and cultural institutions of the city of Venice, with universities and research centres, as well as with organisations that deal with the future of the environment".

The project will be led by the Venetian architecture studio FWR Associati and UNA studio, based in Hamburg. "Palazzo Priuli Manfrin presents an architecture virtually unique in Venice. Its double-height hall is of typical Palladian design and its facade, without ornament, make this building the prototype of the Neoclassical style that is rarely found elsewhere in the city," say UNA's lead architects Giulia Foscari and Antonio Foscari in a statement released by the Venice city council.

Although the building once served as a school, it now stands empty and decaying like many of Venice's grand palazzos. Construction will take "a few years" and is unlikely to be completed until at least 2023. The exact budget for the project is not yet known, although the site requires major structural renovations.

"Thanks to this important acquisition, another palace in the city of Venice will once again show all its beauty and magnificence, and have a function worthy of its past," says Venice's mayor Luigi Brugnaro in a statement. "An operation that is fully part of the path that we are carrying out as an administration for cultural relaunch, also attracting artists of international level." In the past three years a number of notable arts foundations have set up base in the Italian lagoon city such as those of the collector Francesca Thyssen-Bornemisza and the US-based billionaire philanthropist Nicolas Berggruen.

The new space will be helmed by the Anish Kapoor Foundation's director—and the artist's long-time friend—Mario Codognato, formerly the chief curator of Belvedere 21 in Venice. He returns to his home city after 35 years away. The Anish Kapoor Foundation was founded as a charity in 2017 and is currently registered at Old Brompton Road in West London.

"London was the most obvious place for this, as [Kapoor] has lived there most of his life, and I have lived there too. But one day I was coming back to Venice on the plane with the director general of the Cini Foundation, the most important foundation here in Venice, who talked to me about a building they had where they were looking for someone who wanted to set up a foundation. I talked to Anish about it, and because people from all over the world come to Venice to see the Biennale we started to think that Venice would be the place," Codognato told the Italian journalist Alain Elkann in an interview earlier this year.

Kapoor has long been inspired by Venice. He recently told the art management company SpeakArt of his upcoming show at Gallerie dell'Academia: "I have come to love this city and its painters, sculptors and architects. I hope I can add something to the vocabulary of colour and shape that was Venice's gift to the world."

Earlier this year Kapoor was one of 21 prominent cultural figures to sign an open letter imploring Italy's leaders to safeguard Venice from over-tourism as it emerges from lockdown.

Vogue India
23 April 2021

VOGUE

Anish Kapoor talks about his vision and the role of artists in today's world

BY SHAHNAZ SIGANPORIA

APR 23, 2021 | 17:59:21 IST

What makes Anish Kapoor one of the greats? It isn't his list of accolades, which includes being awarded a knighthood (2013), winning the Turner Prize (1991) and becoming the first living artist to be given a solo at the Royal Academy of Arts in London (2009). It isn't because he has created multiple landmarks across the world—whether Cloud Gate (nicknamed 'The Bean') in Chicago or Britain's largest work of public art, the ArcelorMittal Orbit sculpture and observation tower in London—and it definitely isn't the fact that he holds the exclusive licence to the blackest black pigment known to the world. What makes Kapoor great is that whether you love him or hate him, his work evokes and provokes—it cannot be ignored. He's the master of the void, a maverick of form who plays his sleight of hand by never informing his works with answers but instead infusing them with all the right questions.

The 67-year-old artist refuses to explain himself or his work. As the lockdowns waned last year, Kapoor launched his largest outdoor exhibit ever at Houghton Hall in Norfolk. Ask him why and he quips, "Houghton Hall is beautiful and it is a great place for art outdoors." Earlier this year, while in conversation with Homi K Bhabha at the virtual Jaipur Literature Festival, he shared, "The object has no status; the non-object becomes real, it's a fiction, a poetic gesture, a possibility." Kapoor uses his work to make you uncomfortable and forces you to confront perceived reality. But most of all, he creates mythologies of his own.

As he continues his abstract-ish storytelling, he goes on to scale heights and blur boundaries as the radical voice of the contemporary. He's currently prepping for his upcoming retrospective at the Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia, where he will become the first British artist to be honoured with a major exhibition at the museum, during the Venice International Art Biennale in 2022. And rumour has it that he's also working on a project in India that will be made public soon, but little else is known about it as yet and Kapoor isn't spilling, but he is talking about his artistic vision even as he advises his fellow creatives on how to disrupt the status quo.

How do you understand the role of the artist today?

Artists are like everyone else, but we make a decision somewhere, somehow to have an inner life and to take it seriously. Out of the ordinary, every day, sometimes something apart occurs and it is our job to recognise this and work with it. Artists make mythological propositions. Artists do not make objects for the wealthy. It is the job of the artist to be radical. The art market today turns everything we do into a commodity. We must resist and disrupt what is expected of us. If we are not radical, what are we? Disobey, disrupt and disagree.

In turn, how do you understand your gaze as an artist?

My gaze is eager to recognise real art. Most art made now has too much to say. I am not interested in art that has a message. Great art sits between life and death, between meaning and no meaning. The viewer is then implicated in the act of looking and the gaze is an active part of the artwork. Between something and nothing, the gaze is drawn into poetic possibility.

Has the pandemic changed you as an artist?

I have nothing to say as an artist, therefore COVID-19 has no direct effect on what I do. But of course I am sure that the psychic space of global uncertainty has an effect on me and, as a consequence, on my work.

The last year has also led to a louder conversation around representation. You have warned against tokenism in the art world. What is the way forward for a truly diverse art world?

The Western museums, MoMA in New York, Tate Modern and Tate Britain in London, and many others all over the world follow fashion and collect and show what they call 'world art'. What crap! Because while they do this, they also maintain the fiction that the great canon of art is still white and male. We artists have to disavow this fiction and force these Luddite institutions to reconstruct the canon of art. Without a doubt, today's great artists are not white or male. The modern artist is not asking for cultural relativism, we demand a new kind of connoisseurship. Curators need to learn to look with their eyes and feel with their hearts or stomachs and stop looking with their ears and feeling with their backsides.

In an age of increased censorship, you still speak your mind. How does the artist community defend itself?

The diversity of our country and its tolerance have always been its power and its magical and magnificent mystery. Are we going to allow goons to silence us and stop us from being who and what we are and have always been? The most direct effect of state terror is self-censorship. We keep

our mouths shut and keep our art away from troublesome issues. This gives them victory, and when it's too late we lament what we have lost. Artists, dear friends, shout now. Your freedom is teetering...

LISSON GALLERY

Financial Times
17 July 2020

FT FINANCIAL TIMES

Arts

The mirrors and the light

Sculpture | Anish Kapoor's art dazzles among the grand vistas of Houghton Hall, writes Jim Dalley

Above: 'Sky Mirror' at Houghton Hall in Norfolk. 'It's as if someone has ripped a piece off an Old Master canvas and suspended it, insanely, in the long garden vista'

Left: 'Spanish and Pagan Gold to Magenta' in the Stone Hall

i
13 July 2020

65p

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In i every day - Games&Puzzles - 4-page pull-out

'I feel so betrayed. They are making people worse'

Ian Birrell on the dark side of the NHS P17

PLUS: THE 'INEVITABLE' MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS - P6

SPORT

Spurs win bragging rights in derby

Pubs and cafés face al-fresco smoking ban plea

- Peers to challenge ministers to stop outdoor smoking in return for permission to serve 'pavement drinks'
- Bid to boost Covid-hit hospitality sector 'must not be at expense of public health', campaigners warn
- No 10 hopes more people will head to work today after PM urged employees to help boost economic recovery
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Our throwback diets

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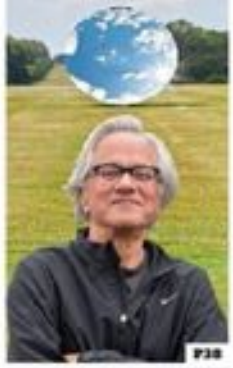
Reflections on Anish Kapoor's new show



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Reflecting on magnificence

Sir Anish Kapoor's long-awaited exhibition at Houghton Hall explores and deconstructs the miracle of perfected forms, and raises questions about our desire to tame and improve the work of nature By **Hettie Judah**

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Kapoor steps up to the scale of Houghton, and engages with the history and landscape

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What I'm...
watching
What We Do in the Shadows

LISSON GALLERY

The Times
10 July 2020

THE TIMES

visual art

As maddening as it is mesmerising

Anish Kapoor's Norfolk show has one special jewel, reports Rachel Campbell-Johnston

Has the Marquess of Cholmondeley taken up a new hobby? What appears to be a massive satellite dish has been set down slap bang in the middle of his magnificent lawned vista. Is he scanning the Norfolk skies for signs of extraterrestrial life?

A first glimpse of Anish Kapoor's 2018 *Sky Mirror*, gleaming amid the formal green expanses of Houghton Hall's immaculately kept grounds, might lead you to wonder if Britain's finest Palladian mansion is now, with its latest art show, launching itself into the world of sci-fi. If so, you might find that you are not so far wrong.

Sky Mirror is the star piece in an exhibition, *Anish Kapoor at Houghton Hall*, that was originally scheduled for March, but was postponed by lockdown and only now reopens (with all the requisite safety measures, including mandatory pre-booking) on July 12.

It features nine big outdoor sculptures, most carved from stone, which have been positioned throughout the formal gardens. On the lawns directly in front of, but completely dwarfed by, the building's towering façade are huge rectangular hunks of carved marble. They play with the idea of, among other things, openings and obstructions. They make windows and frames and occlusions.

Follow a pleached lime walkway and then wind down a path through the greenery, and you find, in a clearing, a strange pink object. A polished chunk of marble puckers into what can only be compared to an anal orifice.

Anish Kapoor's polished stainless steel Sky Mirror is a mesmerising experience, especially on a sunny day

Anish Kapoor
Houghton Hall, Norfolk
★★★★☆

The exhibition is at Houghton Hall, Norfolk, from July 12 to November 1. Advance booking only: houghtonhall.com

Other works are displayed indoors. A series of circular mirrors shimmer like oil slicks amid the stark grandeur of the building's Stone Hall. Their reflections flip the ornate plasterwork of its painted ceiling on to the floor, send the ornamental putti tumbling, turn the dangling chandelier into a growing tree. No wonder the Roman emperors, deposed from their pedestals to be replaced by these glimmering rainbow discs, look a little disconcerted.

These 2018-19 *Mirror Works* are the most recent in the show. In the small south wing gallery you will find the show's earliest dated pieces: 1990s sculptures that revel in the rich sensuality of colour. A selection of working drawings, swoops and swirls and plotted geometries on plyboard, are also included. They have never been shown before. Little wonder: even though they could hardly be shown to more advantage than in the curved stone gallery of the north wing colonnade, they are hardly fascinating.

Sky Mirror, however, is the show's obvious highlight. It stands there, a massive ellipse of highly polished steel, scanning the skies for reflections of infinity. On the day I visit it is dull. I feel as if a grey Tupperware box has been plonked right over the park, sealing me into a drab world of windless drizzle. And even then, this sculpture is beautiful. I stare entranced at the subtlest shifts in the light, at the faint drift and gentle disintegration of cloud masses, at the bedraggled crow that, disturbed from its roost, lugs its sodden black reflection across the luminous sheen. Imagine how lovely it will look on a bright day when puffs of white cloud, bustled along by sea breezes, scud over the surfaces, magnifying heavenly dramas.

It's a mesmerising experience. And that probably makes it the best place to start. This compact little survey does not catch Kapoor at his most entertainingly dramatic. You are being offered something far less obviously exciting, but at its best more subtle. If you want to get much out of it you must linger. Slow to a stop and let your eyes and mind drift. What is land and what is sky? What is solid and what is space? What is inside and what is outside? Kapoor strongly resists proffering any definitive answers. He just keeps playing his games with perception.

Works that for the most part look supremely simple can tie your mind up in a tangle of knots. I can't help thinking of the great medieval philosopher Meister Eckhart, who, understanding that words could not capture the spiritual, resorted instead to paradox. The unpindownable essence of the mystic, he believed, could somehow be conjured up in contrary clashes. And is it this sense of the transcendent that Kapoor is searching for as he angles his vast satellite dish towards the infinite skies?

LISSON GALLERY

The Telegraph
23 May 2020

The Telegraph

ART SPECIAL
ANISH KAPOOR

'It's hard to be radical if everything's for sale'

Anish Kapoor tells ***Chris Harvey*** *about making art from 'the universe's blackest material' – and saying no to Boris Johnson*

At eight o'clock one Sunday morning in 2015, Anish Kapoor received a telephone call from Boris Johnson. Kapoor is the celebrated British-Indian artist behind the nation's tallest sculpture, the *ArcelorMittal Orbit* in the Olympic Park; Johnson was then the Mayor of London. "I don't know how he had my number, but he had," Kapoor tells me before slipping into an amusing impression of the Prime Minister: "'Anish. I want to put a slide on Orbit. You should design it.'" He groans as he remembers the conversation. "'Oh dear, Boris, are you joking? I'm not going to design a bloody slide.'"

For an artist whose work is sometimes accused of being too big, too attention-grabbing, too populist, it was an encounter with a character even-more-so. In the end, though, Johnson's "bad idea" worked out. Kapoor talked to Carsten Höller, the artist who turned the Turbine Hall of Tate Modern into a tubular theme park in 2006, and Höller wrapped a slide around the Orbit, giving the work an unexpected twist of his own, and making it the visitor attraction that Johnson desired. "I think it's an elegant way of dealing with it," says Kapoor, although something in his tone suggests that the 376ft tower may no longer be among the most beloved of his own artworks.

He believes that is part of being an artist. "Making the work is half the problem. The other half is looking at it. Interrogating it. And being willing to say, it's rubbish," he tells me. Kapoor is not a man afraid to question himself. His booming officer-class laugh bespeaks the assurance instilled by an education at the Doon School – the "Eton of India" – but ask him about a topic that he has clearly wrestled with before, and his fingers reach up to massage a troubled forehead: "Difficult, difficult, difficult, difficult," he'll sigh. He does it when I question him on the ethical dimension of art today – should artists show work in Saudi Arabia, for instance? But more of that later.

Awarded the 1991 Turner Prize, Kapoor's work has a global reach. His shining *Cloud Gate* sculpture in Chicago, for instance – "The Bean" as it is affectionately known – is as certain to be appreciated by visitors to the city as the Eiffel Tower in Paris, or the Statue of Liberty in New York. But to define him by monumental public sculptures alone would be to underestimate his range, and his willingness to experiment.

We're in his enormous six-room studio, a former factory in south London, where Kapoor works with 11 studio assistants, most artists themselves. It's early March, two weeks before Britain will go into lockdown, and one day before Kapoor's 66th birthday. Around the room are giant wooden trays, into which thick rivers of paint have been poured. One, containing an upright rectangular box, suggests a coffin spewing blood and viscera. "We contain in ourselves all this liquid stuff, which is hidden from us," Kapoor says. "I am interested in pointing to end, death, and its relation, weirdly, to the beginning."

Does he think about his own mortality? "I do," he says. "Science is good at lots of things. But it's not that good at questions around consciousness. It has singularly failed to answer, 'Where was I before I was born? And where do I go when I die?' Art can at least speculate on death – what is it? What happens to me when I die? And how do end and beginning reach into each other? That may be my Indian psyche speaking," he adds.

The beginning is very present for him right now. Kapoor recently became a father for the third time. He has two older children, Isham and Alba (with his first wife, Susanne Spicale) and now, with his second wife, Sophie Walker, an 18-month-old daughter, Ishbita, named after his Iraqi Jewish mother. "It is a gift," he says, "exhausting – my wife does most of the work, bless her – but it's a joy." (At 34, Walker is 32 years his junior.) He has tried to continue working as normal despite the inevitable disruption. "I had a good night's sleep last night, but the night before was a disaster."

'I PLAY THE GAME'
Anish Kapoor in front of a mirror work; below, Chicago's *Cloud Gate*, 2006; right, *Descent into Limbo*, 1992

Kapoor has been working on other new wonders. The large upstairs room contains a set of works that up to now he has kept secret. As you step into the room, the eye at once picks up something that feels futuristic and almost frightening. It's as if Darth Vader had invited you into his private gallery. These are the works that Kapoor has created from Vantablack – "the blackest material in the universe," as Kapoor describes it, a nano-substance invented for the defence industry which he read about several years ago and decided he wanted to use in his art.

Vantablack absorbs 99.8 per cent of all light, is invisible to radar, and had been developed to conceal objects such as satellites in space. Its maker initially repelled Kapoor's approach, but eventually agreed to work with him, although he still needed permission from the Ministry of Defence.

"It's not a paint that comes out of a tube," he explains. "It's sprayed on to a surface and put into a reactor at a very high temperature, which makes the particles stand up, like a kind of velvet." What results is an impossibly tall forest of tiny particles from which light cannot escape. "The material is very fragile, highly toxic." Kapoor says. Coating larger objects was a technical challenge, but those in the room are about twice the size of a human head, and Kapoor

hopes to go bigger still.

What is frightening about them? You are staring into a bounded formless dark. Many of them are inspired by Russian artist Kazimir Malevitch's seminal painting *Black Square* (1915). From the front, these Vantablacks appear as depthless squares. Viewed from the side, however, they reveal sculptural forms that stand up to 18in proud. The effect is mind-boggling. They will surely be a sensation when they are exhibited, although it's uncertain when exactly that will be, given that Kapoor was intending to take them to the Venice Biennale, which has just been pushed back to 2022.

"Even in art there are very, very few truly mysterious things," he says later. "Almost everything we see is knowable and nameable." He thinks by contrast the *Mona Lisa* is mysterious. "It's some fiction about her smile... something unnameable. And yet there's always a queue 10 deep... I've stood in the queue. It's fabulous. How many objects are there like that?" He mentions Marcel Duchamp's urinal – *Fountain* (1917) – as another. He sees it as part of the way that artists create "mythologies, not objects".

"You see a Picasso and you know, for argument's sake, that it's worth £50million. Part of what you're looking at is £50million, and that's mythological... How can a bit of paint on a canvas be manipulated in such a way as to turn into this gold thing worth £50million. And yet it is. It's completely useless. And yet it is."

Art and money is a vexed issue, though, for Kapoor: "I think part of what's happened in the art world in the last 20 years is that artists, me included, play the game. We're part of this big, active, $65billion market of which contemporary art does more than half. Are we makers of luxury goods? Is that what it is? Does Louis Vuitton do it better? I'm old enough to know that in the 1960s and 1970s art was radical. That's hard now. If everything's for sale."

"Of course, I play the game," he adds. "And my work's not cheap at all. At all." Kapoor's pieces have long been in the million-plus bracket: in 2008, one of his untitled alabaster sculptures from 1989 sold for $2.84million (£2.3m).

DOWNWARD SPIRAL *Arcelormittal Orbit* (2014) with added slide, as requested by Boris Johnson

'Are we makers of luxury goods? Is that what it is? Does Louis Vuitton do it better?'

What did he think of Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan's banana taped to the wall, which sold for $120,000 at Art Basel Miami last year? "I think he's a wonderful, naughty boy," laughs Kapoor. "But he's a much more serious artist than that work displays."

Sponsorship, too, increasingly causes concern in the art world, especially from the major oil companies. "Big business uses artists for its own ends," says Kapoor. How does he feel about the activist-shaming of institutions such as the British Museum? "Good on 'em. I think it's great," he says. "I think it's absolutely essential that we remain hyper-aware of the way that objects are used to further political motivations."

He brings up India. "Here we have an extreme, I'd say fascist, right-wing government under [Narendra] Modi. And culture, science and everything else is used to further the Hindu agenda, to pretend that 600 years of Muslim rule in India never happened, that Muslims are not Indian."

In October last year, Kapoor had his first solo exhibition in China. This was the "difficult, difficult" question mentioned earlier. Is it OK to show in China, where there is widespread state control of art and culture? He took the view that there was a conversation to be had with artists working in China, but still he interrogates himself.

"Did we do the show hoping to make sales in China? Vaguely. Did it realise anything? Not much at all. Does it matter? Not at all." Part of the show was held in Beijing's Central Academy of Fine Arts, part in the Imperial Ancestral Temple, by the walls of the Forbidden City. "It's a hundred yards away from Tiananmen Square [where hundreds were killed when student protests were brutally suppressed in 1989]... highly sensitive. Everything was vetted very carefully. Even though I don't make obviously political work, they were very clear that anything too bloody wasn't allowed.

"I did it in the end, but had to negotiate with them. I thought to myself at one time, shall I pull out of this show? I refuse to be vetted... but the invitation itself came from Chinese artists. So, one has to, you know, jolly oneself along into a process that I know is not totally free."

Kapoor has a strong political voice that he tries to keep out of his work "because I think it makes less good art". He's withering when I ask him about the return of anti-Semitism in the UK. "I actually don't believe in this story of the return of anti-Semitism," he says. "Not to say that anti-Semitism doesn't exist. But I think you can be anti-Zionist and not anti-Semitic. It's as if Jewish people have become so highly over-sensitive about the smallest kind of criticism of Israel. Look, Israeli politics are disgusting. And one can have a progressive view on this subject. I'm not Zionist, I don't believe in it. And yet I'm not anti-Semitic. I'm Jewish, after all."

I want to know how he thinks Britain has changed since the 1970s. When he first arrived, to study at Hornsey College of Art, the country was in "deep, deep crisis", he says, recalling the three-day week. It was also "very much divided into white and non-white society. And, frankly, it was pretty damn racist. But in the subsequent 20, 30 years, the atmosphere changed. Britain became exemplary in its integration of people from other places... more secure in its fully postcolonial reality. And then we've seen a terrible, sad return to a fantasy colonial Britain."

He's talking about Brexit. "Growing up in just post-independence India, I was very aware of this image that we carry of the good British, the sense that in the end, whatever injustice there might be, goodness prevailed. And I see that eroded in ways that truly terrify me. It really makes me sad to see a return to them and us, to the foreigner, the outsider."

***Anish Kapoor at Houghton Hall* is due to open this summer. For details, see houghtonhall.com**

POEM OF THE WEEK
CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Every portrait is a self-portrait. Looking into a pair of painted eyes, we might for a moment feel we've seen the living subject, when really what we've seen is the version that caught the artist's imagination. The real thing is out of reach. Christina Rossetti was well aware of the complex relationship between artist and model, having sat for her brother, the pre-Raphaelite Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

This poem was not published in her lifetime. Its form – a Petrarchan sonnet – suggests a love poem, and for the first eight lines it describes a besotted artist's transformation of his muse into "a saint, an angel" in a way that could be read as a pure expression of his devotion. But from this point, the sonnet's twist or *volta*, it takes an unsettling turn.

Critics have seen something vampiric in this portrait of the artist at work: "He feeds upon her face by day and night." It is worth remembering that Rossetti's uncle was Lord Byron's doctor, John Polidori, the author of the first modern vampire story, *The Vampyre*.

The "face" in this artist's paintings shows his model "not as she is, but was when hope shone bright". What is the hope that has faltered and left her "wan with waiting"? The long-deferred hope that he might put down his paintbrush and propose to her, perhaps?

According to William Rossetti, another brother of Christina's, this poem "apparently refers to [Dante Gabriel's] studio, and to his constantly repeated heads of the lady whom he afterwards married, Miss Siddal".

Elizabeth Siddal, herself a poet and artist, had been a sought-after model for years by the time Christina wrote this poem, in 1856, four years before she married Dante. Modelling could be arduous work: in 1852, Siddal fell ill – possibly with pneumonia – after being made to float in a cold bath while another artist painted her as a drowned Shakespearean heroine. Next time you marvel at Millais's *Ophelia*, spare a thought for Siddal shivering in the tub.
Tristram Fane Saunders

IN AN ARTIST'S STUDIO

One face looks out from all his canvases,
One selfsame figure sits or walks or leans:
We found her hidden just behind those screens,
That mirror gave back all her loveliness.
A queen in opal or in ruby dress,
A nameless girl in freshest summer greens,
A saint, an angel – every canvas means
The same one meaning, neither more or less.
He feeds upon her face by day and night,
And she with true kind eyes looks back on him,
Fair as the moon and joyful as the light:
Not wan with waiting, not with sorrow dim;
Not as she is, but was when hope shone bright;
Not as she is, but as she fills his dream.

The Times
28 March 2020

THE TIMES

my culture fix

The artist lets us into his cultural life

Anish Kapoor

My favourite author or book

It has to be Paul Celan, the poet — specifically in translation by Michael Hamburger. Celan's poems remain mysterious and I'm a great believer in art that doesn't reveal itself.

The book I'm reading

Jacqueline Bhabha's Can We Solve the Migration Crisis? It's a deep and insightful study into human tolerance. It proposes that as long as we maintain global inequality in discourses about us "and the other", there's little space for connection. Also it very clearly puts across the idea that the world population has gone from three billion to eight billion in 50 years, in the context of world institutions having changed very little.

The box set I'm hooked on

I'm watching El Chapo on Netflix, the story of the Mexican drug lord. I love it. There's something about how nasty we can be to each other that is deeply compelling. I'm sad to say.

BARBED Anatoly Solonitsyn in Tarkovsky's mystical sci-fi film Stalker

My favourite film

The Godfather and *The Godfather Part II*, the latter of which I've watched at least 25 times. It's my twisted love of crime again.

The book I wish I had written

A throwaway answer: Yagtra: *A Re-education*, by Lynn Enright.

The book I couldn't finish

The works of Sigmund Freud, the deepest intervener and greatest thinker of the 20th century. There are so many parts to his books and they always seem to be interesting than others. I come back to them all the time and I'm still reading them.

The poem that saved me

Eastern War Time by the American poet Adrienne Rich, one of the most moving poems I've read. It's a melancholic reflection on what it means to be in need, to be an outsider, to be truly forlorn. An excerpt: "I'm a family dispersed between night and fog/ I'm an immigrant tailor who says 'A coat is not a piece of cloth only'/ I once in the footsteps of the master-mystics/ I have dreamed of Zion/ I've dreamed of world revolution/ I have dreamed my children could live at last like others." It's truly beautiful.

My favourite piece of music

A morning raga, sung by Pandit Jasraj, who is an Indian classical singer. A morning raga is not descriptive of mornings, but it is deeply contemplative and has very long slow guttural sounds of resurgence or awakening. The one I'm thinking about has this very dark interior.

The last programme that made me cry

I cried recently in my car on the way home listening to a man on Radio 4 talk about losing his son in the bombing at London Bridge; to hear this heroic story of the way that he came into the knowledge that his son, an innocent passer-by, had been caught in the horror, and his involuntary emotion — the emotion that just emerged out of him almost — in his voice and I have attempt to just tell the story.

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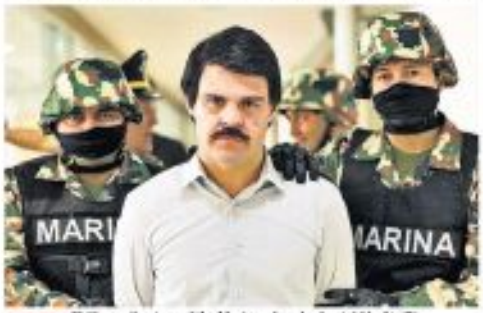
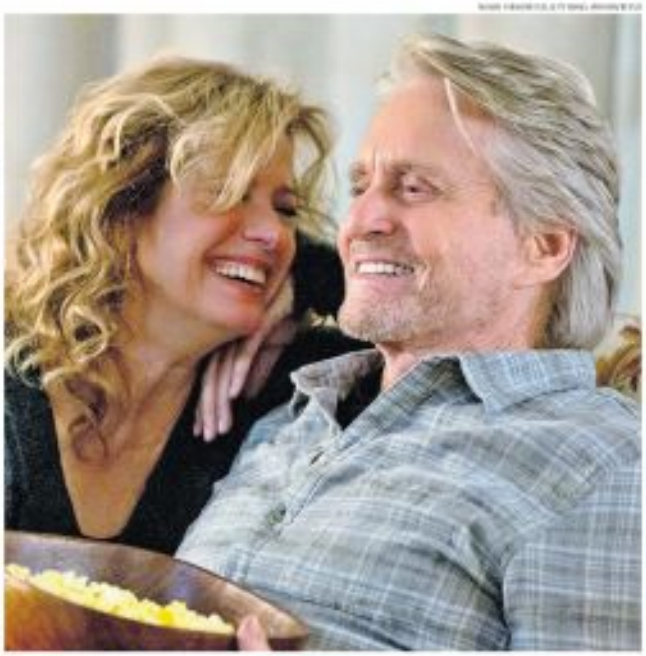


ADDICTIVE El Chapo, the story of the Mexican drug lord as told by Netflix



POPCORN VIEWING Nancy Travis and Michael Douglas in The Kominsky Method. Below: Yo-Yo Ma. Left: Fats Waller with Lena Horne

Your guiltiest cultural pleasure

I try not to do anything that embarrasses me — my radar is rather acute on that subject.

The instrument I wish I'd learnt

I'd love to have played the violin. My daughter is a rather good violinist and I always wish I could play like her.

The music that cheers me up

Bach, strangely enough. I love what Yo-Yo Ma has been doing with his performances of the cello suites. I've heard him play them twice now, once in Bombay and it's just absolutely extraordinary how mathematical precision can lead to such emotional depth.

If I could own one painting...

Gustave Courbet's *The Origin of the World*. Now in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, it used to be owned by the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, who kept it hidden behind a curtain in his drawing room — a weird thing for someone who's so overt in his writing. I'd put it on full display.

The place I feel happiest

Two different kinds of happiness. One, in India, specifically in a small house we have in Jodhpur in Rajasthan. And then in an even smaller house that I have on the beach in the Bahamas, on a little island where I go often.

I'm having a fantasy dinner party. I'll invite those artists and authors...

My dear friend Homi K Bhabha (a scholar and theorist), the writers Orhan Pamuk and Salman Rushdie, the artist Richard Serra, and Julia Kristeva, a great thinker of our time. I can invite dead people? Barnett Newman, then — an artist who conceptualised the world and was able to turn it into virtual monochrome. He probably wouldn't have much to say, but so what?

...and I'll put on this music...

Fats Waller will perform a beautiful and tragic song, *I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter*, in which he sings about a letter he wrote to himself hoping and wishing it had been a letter from his beloved. It might prompt a rather marvellous conversation...

I wasted an evening watching/listening to...

Michael Douglas in his TV comedy *The Kominsky Method*. It's just stupid and a total waste of time.

Have you ever walked out of a play at the interval — and if so what was it?

I haven't. I've always loved Andrei Tarkovsky. In his films, events just went on and on and on, but somehow one believed that it was possible that something would occur. Most often nothing much did occur, but it says something about our ability as an audience to tolerate that art is slow, and I rather like that. Since the mobile phone, our whole sense of time has changed so radically that we can't do this any more. It's not that I don't get bored, but I don't believe in walking out. I believe one has to stay the course and see what comes.

Anish Kapoor at Houghton Hall opens later in spring (www.houghton hall.com). Two new books by him are available for order (prestel.de)

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The Observer

Q AND A

Anish Kapoor
Artist, 66

The artist on working with the world's blackest substance, the troubled legacy of his Olympic sculpture and the state of the art world today

Anish Kapoor at his studio in south London last week. Photograph by Sophia Evans for the Observer New Review

British-Indian artist Anish Kapoor is mounting his largest-ever UK exhibition of outdoor sculpture at Houghton Hall in Norfolk from late March, including his famous Sky Mirror, a five-metre stainless steel disc that turns the world around it upside down.

What kind of things did you want to show at Houghton Hall?
It's one of the great houses of England, with a great history, and extensive grounds. I decided the stone works that I've made over the past 15 years, and I've never shown in the UK before, would sit quite well there. Then it felt right to put in some mirror works, and put the Sky Mirror in the grounds.

What are you investigating with the stone sculptures?
Most stone carving, over the last centuries, has been to have a block of stone, and then carve, like Michelangelo did, from outside in. What I've been doing, perversely, is to carve the interior. The block stays as it was quarried, and then I've been working on the inner form.

Do you have a sense of yourself when you mount a retrospective exhibition?
Yes, inevitably. I don't like retrospectives, really. I'm looking to bring to life bodies of work that I hope make sense together. I seem to have a disjointed practice, because on the one hand I'm making these very geometric, very pure objects, and on the other my work is messy and all over the place – whether it's a great pile of wax or these ritualistic paintings that I am making for an exhibition at the Modern Art Oxford gallery in September. Yet they are one practice – and they are, in a way, very similar to each other.

What's your overarching description of what you do?
Oh God, I've no idea! [Laughs] I really do feel very strongly that I have nothing to say. I have no message to give the world and nor do I want to give the world a message. What I'm looking to do is to make objects that question the nature of objects – stones that are empty; heavy that's not heavy; black objects that veil themselves...

The black objects you are making with Vantablack, the world's darkest black substance, will be shown for the first time in the Academician Venice next year. They are thrilling...
I'm very excited by them. The material is, in a way, mythological. Imagine being able to describe a material as the blackest in the universe – including black holes. That's kind of daft, isn't it?

How do you think it is now for young artists?
Incredibly difficult. I think the art world is in severe difficulty. At one level, it's booming. But what does that mean for artists? We are not makers of luxury goods.

I am part of that system too, so I'm not speaking as an outsider. But if everything's for sale, how is it possible to find anything that's radical? It's so hard to maintain one's distance from the commodification of the object.

And for young artists today, it's impossibly hard to find space in London. It's so goddamn expensive. When I first had a studio in east London in the early 80s it cost £5 a week...

What advice would you give to someone starting out?
It's taking your matter as an artist thoroughly, absolutely, totally seriously. It's not a part-time activity... it is what we do all the time.

Artists are not makers of luxury goods. If everything is for sale, how can we find anything radical?

Do you still work every day?
Oh yes, I have a practice. I think Mae West once said: "I'm so tired of being admired." I'm so tired of being inspired. Inspiration is marvellous, but it's not really about that. I work a very normal day, 8.30am to 7pm, five days a week – I don't work on a weekend. And it's through the practice of working that things occur. It doesn't matter what you do. Just do it.

You were vocally opposed to Brexit. What's your feeling now?
It continues to be a disaster. Psychically it's about where we are and how we see ourselves. This idea that Britain can do special deals and play a big nation... I think it's a fantasy. An isolationist, sad fantasy. Yet political discourse has almost ceased on the subject. I hope it will return.

Would it make you think about leaving?
I've had serious thoughts about leaving. And sad thoughts, because I've been here 40 years.

You've recently managed to stop the National Rifle Association of America using an image of your Chicago sculpture Cloud Gates one of their films...
Yes, I did. They put out a vile little film using public objects as images of the so-called liberal invasion of traditional American space. I thought the whole way it was done was revolting, so I decided to fight on the basis of copyright. A group of American lawyers took it on pro bono, and I agreed to pay their expenses. They say it was the first action to cause the NRA to retreat from a position, and they've been retreating ever since. Yay!

On the subject of public sculpture. The Orbit, which you designed for the Olympic Park in east London, is apparently losing a lot of money...
It was made as a public sculpture, then Boris Johnson, in his previous incarnation [as mayor of London], turned it into a – what do they call it? – a visitor attraction. Oh, Jesus!

I could have had a war with him, but I didn't want to. But it always was a bad idea, according to me. Either you do something as a public object, or it's a commercial enterprise. To ride the two up is confusion. It doesn't work.

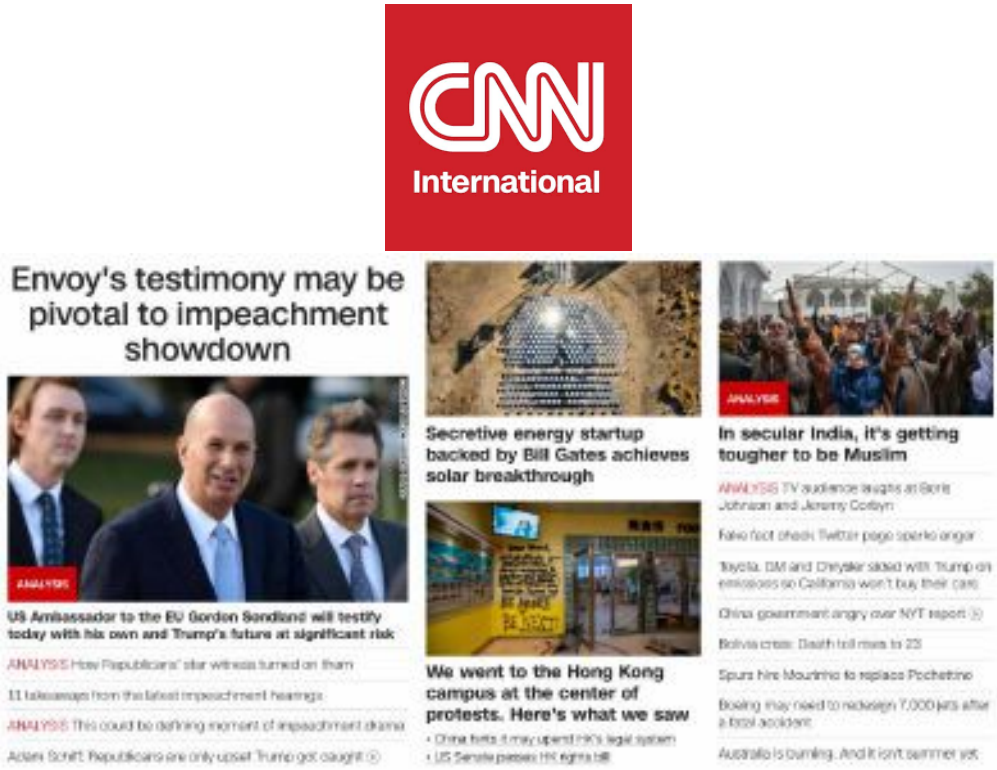
Generally, you always seem extraordinarily enthusiastic and curious. Is that true?
I'm an idiot, you know. Just deeply engaged in what I'm doing. I'm not interested in doing what I know how to do. I've just had my 66th birthday and I hope I can work with the same kind of idiotic enthusiasm that I had when I was 20.

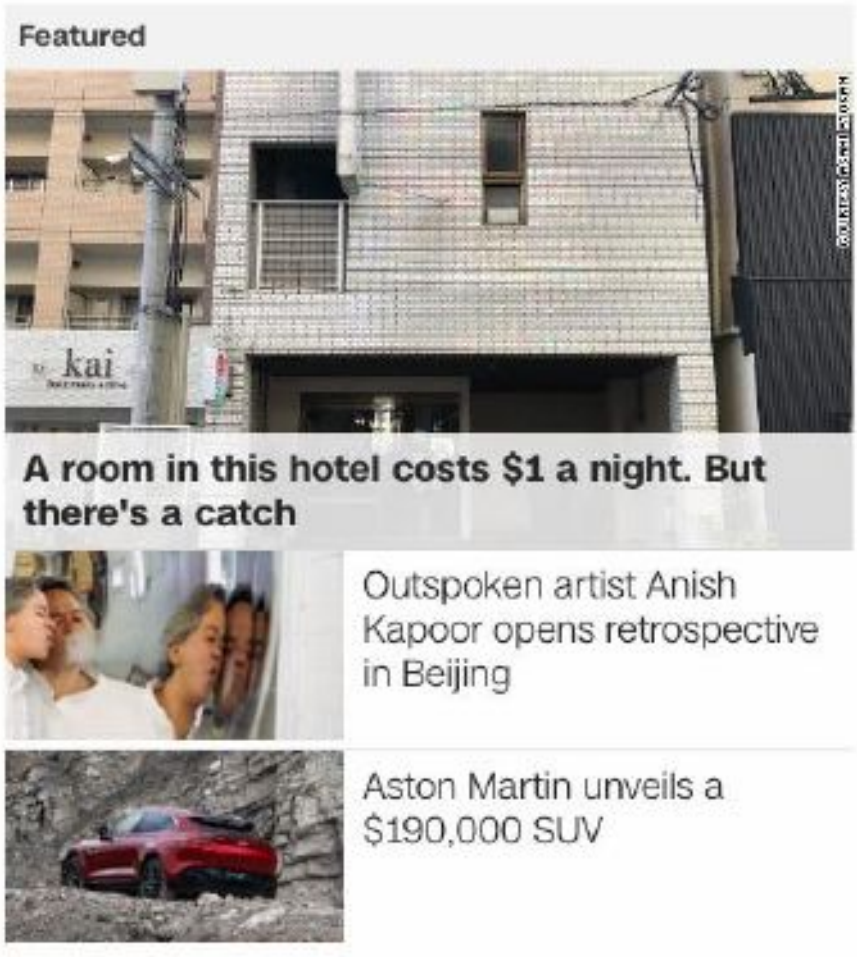
Interview by Sarah Crompton

Anish Kapoor at Houghton Hall runs from 29 March to 27 September

LISSON GALLERY

CNN International
20 November 2019





LISSON GALLERY

CNN Style
20 November 2019

CNN style

CNN style

Arts

'Part of the conversation': Outspoken artist Anish Kapoor opens retrospective in Beijing

Updated 20th November 2019

LISSON GALLERY

Wallpaper
November & December 2019

HALO EFFECT

艺术家并非造物者

“我没有话要说”是Anish Kapoor一直以来的态度。他将自己投入“做”的行为之中，并让“行为”成为认知形成的初始迹象。

摄影：林墨杰 撰文：李湘妮

在10月25日与11月10日，Anish Kapoor首次大型中国个展于中央美术学院美术馆与北京太庙美术馆联合开幕。展览涵及这位享誉国际的印度裔英国艺术家在不同时期创作的多形态作品，纵览Kapoor长久以来对物质与能量超然性的专注探索。他的雕塑以独特材质所形成的奇观景象而著称。从作品的终态来看，他的创作探索着形而上学的二元性：物质与隐匿、形成与虚无、表面与深度、抽象与图形、反射与吸收间的转化呼之欲出。每当我们深入他构建的景象之中——虚无的空洞、深邃极致的黑色空腔、凹面镜所反射的光景、下沉的深渊以及鼓起的角落深处——方才能够体察他的意图。而艺术家本人也摒弃创作中的构图与结构，摒弃万物所带一的叙述性与时间性，且排除作品被物质性赋予意义的可能。他的构造牵引我们陷入了未知，无以名状却引发深处共鸣的世界，指引我们在象征着仪式的奇观中骤然接近所探索的主体——这是世间万物所蕴藏的自发生长力，带着事物发展的征兆与自然规律的启迪。

此次展览的两座场馆虽然截然不同，却蕴藏着相通的凝聚力和承载力。太庙美术馆与故宫博物院和天安门一墙之隔，其前身为明清帝王敬天法祖之地，后立为劳动人民文化宫，成为实践集体文化意识的文艺活动场所。相对地，由日本建筑师矶崎新建造的中央美术学院美术馆则具有崇高艺术学府的象征，构成了更加具有广泛性与实践性的艺术学术场域。无论是经历历史演变的前者，还是直陈学院系统的后者，在它们如此浩渺的空间之中，Kapoor的创造都能破壁展厅空间的物理限域，唤起超越性的体验与想象。

此前，Kapoor的作品曾几次来到中国参与群体展出。在北京红砖博物馆举行的展览“仪式·兆与变”（Rituals of Signs and Metamorphosis，2018年11月3日至2019年4月7日）中，装置《下沉》（Descension，2018）构造了一个看似散发着未知吸引力的黑色旋涡深渊，无时无刻不在吞没观众的感官体验。在2016年，历经诸多风波，他于同年创作的蜡制雕塑《无题》最终未到展川双年展所在的广阔大地上，红色蜡制的钢铁结构被渐渐从中撕裂，在破坏中寻求稳定。

通过这些在中国办展的经历，Kapoor深知在作品进入展览举办之地的独特环境时，环境会激发作品所释放的潜在能量。“太庙身处紫禁城外沿，与天安门广场为邻，这本身便赋予这个空间强大而复杂的力量。随即，我所面临的问题便是如何让作品在融入环境的同时引发感知与现象。”Kapoor说道，“来到北京，我希望能够进入文化性的对话，在时间与空间的支撑下，为作品开启带有自发性的触动和进化。”

他透露，在太庙美术馆的展示中会展示一些早期的颜料作品以及不锈钢与镜面雕塑。1980年代初，他开始创造一系列由浓墨重彩的原始颜料打造的雕塑结构。在《As if to Celebrate I Discovered a Mountain Blooming with Red Flowers》（1981）中，鲜红与明黄色的粉状色素凝固成山峰和丘陵般的神秘景观，有机却非自然，却也同时通过层叠散落的粉末提醒着我们眼前景象海市蜃楼般的本质。随后，从1990年至今，Kapoor对不锈钢材质抛光后表面的反射性展开探索，通过操纵镜面，艺术家试图捕捉被反射物以及环境之间的关系，令一个个非物质、非现实却存在于世的景象乍然而现。在《Her Blood》（1998）中，艺术家在展厅设有三面巨大的凹面镜，他将一面“红色镜”置于展厅中央，在它的投射下，两侧的“透明镜”在视线中已然被染成赤红色。在千禧年之后，Kapoor更将凹面镜与造物引入不同地域的户外环境中，创造出如“云镜”系列（Sky Mirror）等能够倒映实景并投射向天空的装置作品，这些凹型镜面逐渐衍生为独立的立体镜面作品，其中一例便是Kapoor最为人津津乐道的作品之一《云门》（Cloud Gate，2004）。这座巨型公共雕塑坐落在芝加哥世纪公园中央，在豌豆状结构体的笼罩下，于本体结构上反射着光怪陆离的光、鳞次栉比的建筑与流动的人群。作品中看似包罗万象的景象实则圈内存在于物质和能量内核中无尽的虚空。“我想，将这些具有仪式意味的非物质体置入太庙——这个为信仰与仪式而筑建的神圣古建筑——是再合适不过的。”

相较艺术家对太庙环境的“吸收”与“反射”，在央美美术馆内，艺术家则能够更加自由与流动地与空间形成相互作用。“在这个复杂而通透的弧形空间中，我将展出五个大规模的场域特定作品，其中一件近10m高。”Kapoor分享道，“从象征意义来讲，中央美术学院美术馆是完全不同的建筑。在此，重要的中国艺术家扮演着不可或缺的角色，我希望能够参与对话并形成交流。”

在央美美术馆中，Kapoor为数件作品赋予了具有特殊意义的深红色。红色，这个对中华文化至关重要的颜色在Kapoor的创造中同样有着极强的寓意。“当然，几个世纪以来在中国，红色被赋予了不同形式的力量。我的作品也使用了大量的红色，红色暗含着某种神秘而原始的特征，如身体、如魔鬼、如故乡、如大地，甚至如女性。而在仪式的凝结下，这些力量混杂在一起，这使我着迷。”Kapoor说道，“红色与世间万物内部的最深处息息相关，无论在心理上或是物理层面上，它都散发着强烈的深邃感，甚至比黑色更加黑暗。”

回顾他过往的作品，红色隐喻着存在的本体，是他对单色绘画的调整。《Shooting into the Corner》（2009-2013）是Kapoor作品中少见的、结合人为参与的雕塑装置，数十公斤的蜡在加农炮的气动压缩下射向房间一角，炸裂后只见一片虚空下的红色血腥残局。在名为《Svayambh》（2007）的装置中，艺术家用红蜡勾勒出展厅建筑的拱门轮廓，并用同材料视觉化拱门轮廓内的巨型形态，好似一辆现已消失的红色列车曾经驶过，并在所经之处留下无法抹去的痕迹。又如在Kapoor为Tate Modern内Turbine Hall

对页：艺术家Anish Kapoor立在一个镜面创作前。

所作的场域特定装置《Marsyas》(2002)，作品轻薄的PVC表面因受到旋转扭曲的不锈钢圈拉伸而形成一个鲜红色的管状物，其庞大的体量令观众无论从什么角度欣赏，都无法窥探它的全貌。

由此，通过探索物理界外的超然现象，Kapoor始终强调艺术家并非造物者，他塑造的是一种具有神话性的非物质真相，将尚未显现的力量加以释放，唤起人们自身存在中最深处的体验。"对于此次展览，我认为最重要的部分是如何触发那些不可言喻的体验，而属于中国观者的体验也注定会不同于印度或者美国观者的感受。"他重申："作为一名艺术家，我没有什么要说，我希望我的作品指向的是一种构造意义的可能性，而不是意义本身。"换言之，Kapoor的雕塑需要我们为观看行为本身制造意义——观众是参与者，不是旁观者。

展览开幕在即时，我们应邀探访Kapoor位于伦敦南部Camberwell区的工作室。Kapoor工作室的前身为奶制品工厂，在此街区驻扎的30余年中，Kapoor委任Caseyfierro Architects将旧工厂扩展至整条街区，构成一组拥有不同体量、光线、风格和空间高度的半开放式综合空间，并以功能性分割为六个工作室：用于置放"待观察"作品的展示空间、用于打造玻璃纤维模型的材料实验室、用于创作不锈钢材质作品的大型空间、用于制造与打磨不锈钢镜面的空间、为纳米级黑色涂料所设有的展示空间，以及数个基础绘画创作空间。其中，一间只有Kapoor才能进入的"白立方"是他创作时的安全屋，墙壁上画作之间的潦草标记、堆叠着原料、容器以及刷具的桌面已然化作一个大型调色盘，一旁的椅子上摆放着杜邦纸工作服，下方摆放着两双染满猩红色颜料的鞋，整个环境似乎将艺术家的身体与精神向外延展，布满整个物理空间。

成为艺术使徒的四十年来，Kapoor始终是一名坚定的实践者。他相信，工作室乃是艺术家构筑思想和创造的绝对空间。他坚持每天创作一幅作品的习惯，总是穿着相似的衣服，食用相同的早餐和午餐，每天早上九点至晚上六点将自己封在工作室创作。访问当天，刚从威尼斯度假回来的Kapoor从行李箱中拿出一套油彩画。显然，他并没有专心度假。

"我来到这里，周而复始地作出同样的行为，是希望这样的规律能涌现一些新的意义。这并不是因为我做了什么不同的尝试，而是在这过程中，像奇迹一样，意义将将诞生。"然而，同时作为艺术创造的主体与媒介，艺术家如何在自身思想、身体和精神之间进行追溯与调解？Kapoor讲述道："我非常具有批判性，尤其针对我自己。这当然会令人痛苦，但这才是我。"他又娓娓道来："在实践中，雕塑是个漫长的过程，通常要花费数月的时间才能形成。这当中的转折点是如何解决当下所面临的问题。我的方式是不去刻意实现，而是让事物自发地诞生。"

因此，在这个过程中，留白显得更加至关重要。Kapoor的工作室四处放置了形态各异的作品，而除了那些摆放在特定材质空间中的作品，其余的创作并无明显的时间或主体分类，令外界几乎无从得知哪些作品已经完成、正在等待运输或刚刚结束展览，哪些又是尚无定数的作品。"我认为创作过程中极为重要的一部分就是等待未知的发生。在这期间，我试图观察一件作品并逐渐接受它。"然而，如此等待的界限为何？在艺术家看来，特别是在雕塑中，很多时候这种界限是十分明显的。制造雕塑有一个既定的过程，当过程完成时，作品便宣告达成。但在其他情况下，艺术家则必须在象征着结束前的边缘停止，只因创作中最大的风险便是做得过多。对于Kapoor而言，作品的完成与否夹杂反射着艺术家在不同时刻带有的、具有微妙差异的心理认知。因此，他选择用行为的"伫足"指引感召的"发生"。"如果我做过多干预，所有空间就都被封闭上了，作品也不再有生命力。" Kapoor如是说。

Kapoor的雕塑尽管带着艺术家意志的深刻烙印，却似乎抹去了人为创作的痕迹。他慎重地移除了作品中"手"的显现，由此隐匿自我，这与画家抹去笔触或雕刻所弱化痕迹大相径庭。因为Kapoor的雕塑蕴藏了更加宏大的人体意识——这是一种寻找女性自我的意识。"在我最初成为艺术家的两年间，每当有人

"我希望我的作品指向一种构造意义的可能性，而不是意义本身。"

舞者描述作品，他们总会将我称呼为女性。对此，我并不介意，甚至还感到喜欢。"在他看来，雕塑本身便是一种带有雌雄同体意味的创造。"一直以来，我们生活在一个布满雄性物体的世界中，但即便如此，我个人对世间的感知是向内深入的。尽管这可能看似黑暗，但是有关起源与孕育的事物，我几乎确信是具有女性特质的。"

在他的雕塑与绘画中，人们或许能够轻易地联想到女性的形态：不论是洞穴、裂口、缝隙以及通道的意象，还是红色与身体、经血和分娩的关系。然而，Kapoor对具象的表达并无兴趣，他关心的是从女性特征（Femininity）衍生的起源与孕育的力量——这既是强烈的，也是阴郁的。在《Mother as a Ship》（1989）与《Mother as a Void》（1988）两件作品中，Kapoor营造了向内凹入的蓝色椭圆体，并令椭圆体所形成的凹面具有吸收声音与力量的功能。在《When I'm Pregnant》（1992）这一作品中，艺术家直接在白色墙面上打造了一个看似简单的白色弧形凸起，令人不禁想起女性怀孕时的肚腹。这种对女性自我意识的寻求与

本页由上至下：在Vantablack纳米涂材覆盖墙体表面下，尽显雕塑本体的虚空形态。Anish Kapoor为本期卷宗Wallpaper*创作的特别版封面。
对页：Kapoor工作室中收藏家具与较小型创作的空间，桌面布满了艺术家在自由时间的持续创作。

Kapoor的成长背景息息相关。艺术家曾经在一次研讨会中分享，他的家庭由犹太裔母亲与印度裔父亲构成，但即便在印度生活，他们也保持着犹太家庭的种种特征。十七岁时，他移居以色列却被看作是局外人。于是，他的母亲从印度带来土壤放于他的床下。母亲所做的这项仪式减轻了Kapoor的焦虑，或许从那时开始，他便感知到来自于母亲以及某种起源仪式的力量。

正如仪式依赖日常生活中约定俗成的行为却意在搭建与超然领域的交流，尽管Kapoor擅长于塑造形状，他所做的大部分工作却是在想象中寻找不存在的状态，物体的中空、颜色的深度、生命中的虚无都是他的素材。他坚信若要创造新的艺术，就需要创造新的空间，这种空间既是物理的，也是心理的。由此，他曾经用"Proto-Object"（原始物体）一词阐述他的造物原理——即事物是先于语言、美学、思考与逻辑的存在。正是秉承着这样的观念，他一再重申："我没有什么要说。" Kapoor追寻的是自然，也是超然。★

Anish Kapoor个展，2019年10月25日至2020年1月1日于中央美术学院美术馆，2019年11月10日至1月28日于太庙艺术馆

LISSON GALLERY

VOGUE
January 2020

安尼施·卡普尔：观宇宙之大

就像是古代洞穴中的壁画，抑或是埃及的图坦卡蒙，当代艺术家安尼施·卡普尔（ANISH KAPOOR）创作出了超越时间、文化和语言的艺术，以巨大的体量镌刻时代，首次在中国举办大型个展的卡普尔同时进入太庙与中央美术学院美术馆，在他标志性的不锈钢之折射与色粉之弥散中，完成对于空间的占领。这也是太庙首次展出当代艺术个展。

摄影：董林 撰文：李德雄 GERALD LI、汪之奕 BILL 编辑：朱凡 JUVAN ZHU

BODY MYTH AND UNIVERSE

卡普尔创作于1981年和2015年的三件装置作品：
1.Anish Kapoor, 1000 Names, 1981, Mixed media and pigment, 200×100×30cm 41×78×28cm 15×20×68cm 25×78×28cm 10×56×56cm, ©Anish Kapoor
2.Anish Kapoor, Sectional Body preparing for Monadic Singularity, 2015, PVC and steel, 730×730×730cm, ©Anish Kapoor
3.Anish Kapoor, Sectional Body preparing for Monadic Singularity, 2015, PVC and steel, 730×730×730cm, ©Anish Kapoor

迷惑之成长

卡普尔于1954年出生在印度孟买，他的母亲是一位犹太人，父亲是印度海军的水文学家。卡普尔的童年时期，父亲大部分时间都是在海洋上收集数据并绘制海图。在这个国际化的精英家庭里，卡普尔被送到了一所声望很高的全男生寄宿学校，在那里，男孩们对欧洲的了解和对印度的了解一样多。由于接受了这种独特的教育，加上家庭内部的多样性和前瞻性思维，卡普尔童年时的感觉就像是局外人，无法确定自己在印度社会中的身份。十几岁时，他的不归属感演变成深刻的内心动荡。"我被深深地钳制了，内心充满了冲突，我不知道该如何解决。"

卡普尔小时候很喜欢整理母亲的画，但他无意成为一名画家。17岁时，他和他的兄弟用免费机票去了以色列，在那里他体验了集体制的生活和工作。这个带有空想乌托邦色彩的生活经历，对年轻的卡普尔来说是一次极大的解放，他打算留在以色列学习成为一名工程师。但是，三年后他意识到自己并不擅长数学，开始认真考虑要成为一名艺术家。他决心要为自己的职业生涯开辟新的道路，在欧洲搭便车，他于1973年在伦敦定居，就读霍恩西艺术学院，动荡不安的心此时安静下来，他意识到自己正在做自己真正喜欢的事情。

进入切尔西艺术学院攻读研究生，一年后卡普尔退学，他不确定自己的艺术事业会走向何方，决定回不那么熟悉的印度去看看，那是在1979年，他回忆说："我突然意识到我在学校里做的所有事情都与我在印度看到的东西有联系。"而这次的回访让他对出生地有了新的观点：在印度的传统市场里，商贩们会把各种颜色的色粉在盘子里堆砌成一个个小山，这启发了卡普尔创作出自己的第一个重要的艺术作品，用饱和的颜料色粉和几何形状创建了极为简单的雕塑组合《1000个名字》，这些物体似乎是从地面或墙壁中出来的，粉末定义了表面，暗示着在表面之下有一些东西，就像一座冰山从潜意识里戳出来，操纵观众对空间和形式的感知。

人们最初认为卡普尔是一位女性画家。尽管存在这种困惑，他还是迅速在国际艺术界获得认可。虽然是在当代艺术长期失语的国度里出生，卡普尔仍然将东方的遗产与西方的影响相结合，形成了真正的国际艺术。在1990年的威尼斯双年展上，卡普尔代表英国展出了《虚空场》，由粗糙的砂岩块组成的网格，每块的顶部表面都有一个神秘的黑洞。次年，他获得了极富声望的特纳奖。

生命与神话

从90年代中期开始，卡普尔扩大了对材料的使用范围，包括抛光的不锈钢，后来的红蜡和水。看起来卡普尔是在向极简主义的信念致敬，包括轻巧的体积、抽象、特定的材料、饱和的色彩和简单的形式，同时还探索了不同材料的视觉效果。然而，卡普尔的许多雕塑在材料和意义上都显得很沉重，与年轻的英国艺术家在90年代以震撼人心的艺术风靡一时不同，卡普尔更喜欢采用一种温和的方法，用不那么丑闻但仍引人注目的形式吸引观众。

《天镜》由一个20英尺宽的凹碟组成，该凹碟朝着天空向上倾斜。卡普尔把世界颠倒了，牢固地种植在地面上的抛光不锈钢表面提供了一个舷窗，可以观看不断变化和经过的云层，通过远离颜料和石头，转

而使用镜面表面来制作作品，卡普尔更加明显地希望他的观众反思自己周围的环境和自己。卡普尔本人称此作品为"非物体"，因为其反射面使雕塑在周围环境中消失。

真正让卡普尔声名鹊起的，是他在近二十年里巨大的场域定制作品。他在伦敦泰特现代美术馆的雕塑被认为是他最著名的艺术品，也是卡普尔最早的大型雕塑作品之一。《马西亚斯》，以古希腊的西里诺斯犬命名，后者是乐器阿夫洛斯管的专家，而这种乐器常用于崇拜酒神的仪式。所以整部作品由红色PVC帆布覆盖在钢框架上构成一个巨大的双喇叭形结构。当聆听音乐引起人沉思时，卡普尔试图使用视觉刺激来模仿相同的效果。喇叭是最类似于扩音器的乐器，好像会宣布要引起注意。此外，它还像一个漏斗，在本质上又似乎对身体和生命的诞生充满着隐喻。观看者会被作品引入深邃的神话与日常的丰富经验之中。《马西亚斯》恰好位于泰特涡轮大厅的巨大空间范围内，其大小和位置使观看者无法从任何地方看到整个作品。卡普尔不再像过去那样巧妙地操纵空间，填满一切的《马西亚斯》迸发出的震撼力使它获得了巨大的成功。而对于它的大小，卡普尔解释说："每个雕塑都有其规模。《马西亚斯》如果是现在规模的三分之一，那将无法成立。金字塔之所以备受瞩目也是因为它们的大小，规模是一个工具，雕刻的工具。"

4.Anish Kapoor中央美术学院美术馆展览现场。©Anish Kapoor

巨大与黑色

艺术需要极巨化吗？当讨论还未停止，卡普尔继续利用反光表面和大比例尺，在芝加哥千禧公园创作了《云门》，33英尺高66英尺长的雕塑，灵感来自液态水银的外表和浓稠的黏度，被昵称为"豆子"。它由168块抛光不锈钢面板无缝焊接在一起构成一种奇异物体的错觉，鼓励游客在雕塑周围走来走去，观察雕塑扭曲反射的方式。像所有艺术家的大型雕塑一样，《云门》造价昂贵且制造技术上具有挑战性，负责雕塑创作的工程师首先认为不可能进行设计，而预计600万美元的成本在项目完成后最终接近2,300万美元。保安人员每天24小时在场，以防止任何事情发生在昂贵的物品上，从而增加高昂的成本，并在金钱变得千丝万缕地缠结在一起时引发了关于艺术品"价值"的进一步辩论。"在艺术家行为和经济之间有个很复杂的关系。我承认大型金属雕塑确实需要许多的金钱去制作，但是，从古至今艺术家始终需要金钱支持，从16世纪米开朗基罗在西斯廷礼拜堂的穹顶上作画，到泰国的大型寺庙使用大量的黄金，还包括西方的大教堂，艺术一直需要金钱的支持。为了成就一件作品，我同时需要信仰和经济的援助。"

除了痴情的空间和尺度的概念，红色曾一直作为卡普尔的标志性色彩，伴随着他的艺术生涯。2014年，卡普尔获得了Vantablack的独家使用权，使他成为唯一可以使用这种世界上最"黑"的黑色进行绘画的人。围绕颜色的排他性概念似乎很荒谬，引起了一部分艺术家的愤慨，但黑色的比例正在卡普尔的作品中增加。作品《下沉》由一个巨大的圆形水漩涡组成，漩涡在漩涡中旋转，似乎坍塌成无底的中心。卡普尔继续扩大他的虚空概念，用黑色染料处理了旋涡状的水，从而产生了黑洞的错觉，该作品以一种非同寻常的方式处理了普通材料，这表明卡普尔有能力破坏对自然世界的先入之见。

与中国共振

当抛光的不锈钢巨型雕塑不再反射太阳的光芒，太庙室内的阴翳为卡普尔的作品增添了黑暗与内敛。2019年11月，太庙艺术馆展出了卡普尔著名的镜面作品及早期的颜料雕塑，《S曲线》（2006）和《C曲线》（2007）将被放置在太庙的正殿。《S曲线》是两片大型不锈钢无缝连接形成的"S"形雕塑，而《C曲线》则是一整片巨大的弧形不锈钢。人像随着观众与作品的距离而变化，颠倒、放大与缩小，被拉长的镜像和眩晕感仿佛要被吸入另一个空间。后退一些，太庙里的编钟、屋顶上的装饰再一次出现，在镜面的边缘，真实和幻象以不易被发觉的方式相连。作为第一位在这里举办展览的当代艺术家，卡普尔非常惊喜于镜面作品在室内的表现力。"当一个人看到镜子，会联想到反射光线。但是在这样的环境里，到处都是黑暗，我的作品处在这样的环境里，凹陷处基本呈现黑色的状态让整个作品更有一种绘画的形态，像是一种传统的荷兰绘画，充满了黑暗和专注，不同于之前反射室外的光线和天空，有了不同的意义。"

中国同样是与红色渊源颇深的国度。他在北京的同名个展亦在中央美术学院美术馆开幕。"中国红不是一种纯粹的红色，而是带着一些橘色，是一种独特的红色。"我作品中经常使用的红色比中国红更深一点，但是色彩上的差距不会给感性意义带去变化。"在中央美术学院美术馆里展出的四件作品，是他今年来巨大化的作品的最新展示，标题都充满诗意的语汇：《献给亲爱太阳的交响乐》《远行》《将成为奇特单细胞的截面体》《我的红色家乡》，其中，《我的红色家乡》通过"旋转"的机械结构，让物体自行旋转生成艺术作品。《献给亲爱太阳的交响乐》则由两条朝向天空的传送带，将血红色的蜡块输送到中庭，然后像内脏一样倾泻而下。"红色是我作品的核心颜色，我们人类身体的一部分就是红色的，人类总是随身携带着红色。而在中国的语境下，红色自身的意义会让作品引申出不同的含义。"

卡普尔曾说，世界上的物品都是象征式的，只有三种形式，凸出的、扁平的和凹陷的。在中国的传统文化中，两极化的概念也很常见，白天和晚上，好的和坏的，男的和女的。"我认为，两极化或者说是正反对立化是我们在看待事物的时候的一个标准。"卡普尔说，"当一个人坐着火箭前往外太空，按照这个角度来看，这个人正在离开地球，但是从我的角度来看，这个人离开了光明坠入了黑暗。当我们看待女性化的时候也应该用这样的观点来看，这是一个内化的感受。人类是脆弱的，我们是复杂的，人生不总是向前走，也是关于往回走向死亡，是一个向内的过程。"

LISSON GALLERY

Yitiao
14 December 2019

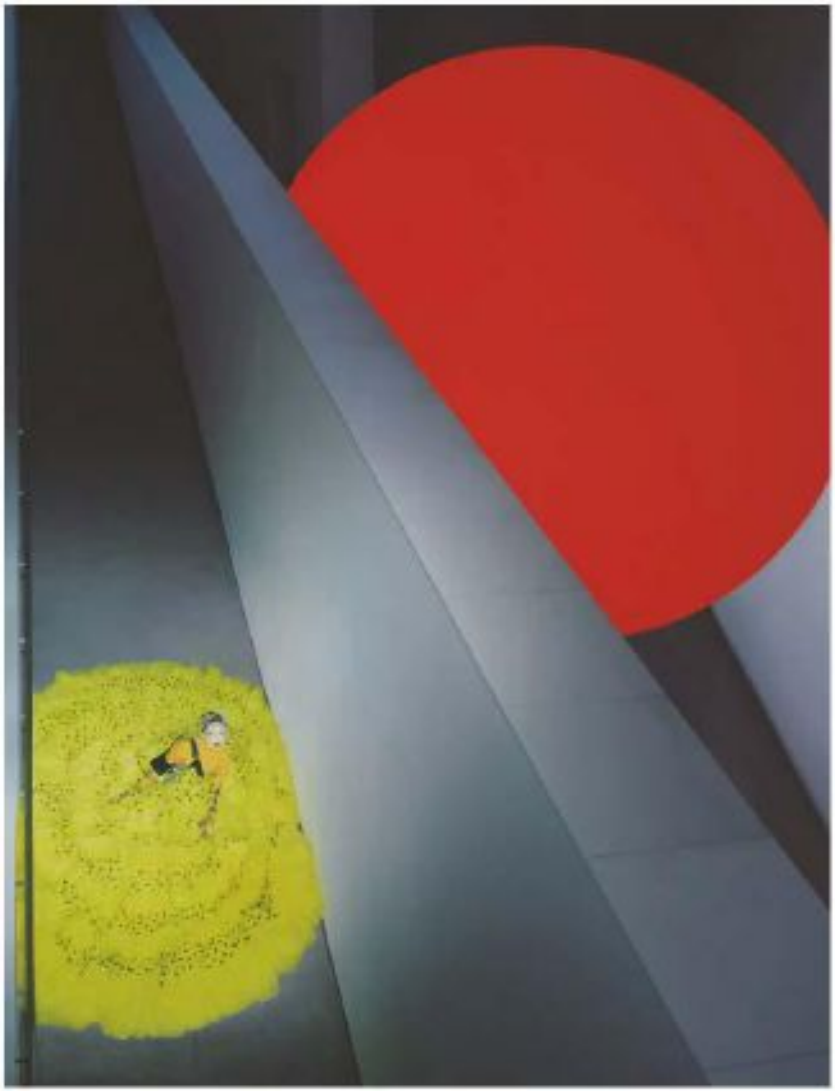
全球公认超敢说的男人来了，屡次挑战女性道德底线，女生却排队去看

原创：点击右边星标 一条 2019-12-14

可能是2019年最后一个重磅展览——
安尼施·卡普尔的中国首次个展。
这位国际艺术明星，
带着过去35年的代表作品，来到了北京。

卡普尔作品在太庙展出

作品在中央美术学院美术馆和太庙艺术馆，
两馆同时展出，
于10月底和11月初先后开幕，
“适足了声势”。



周迅与卡普尔的作品

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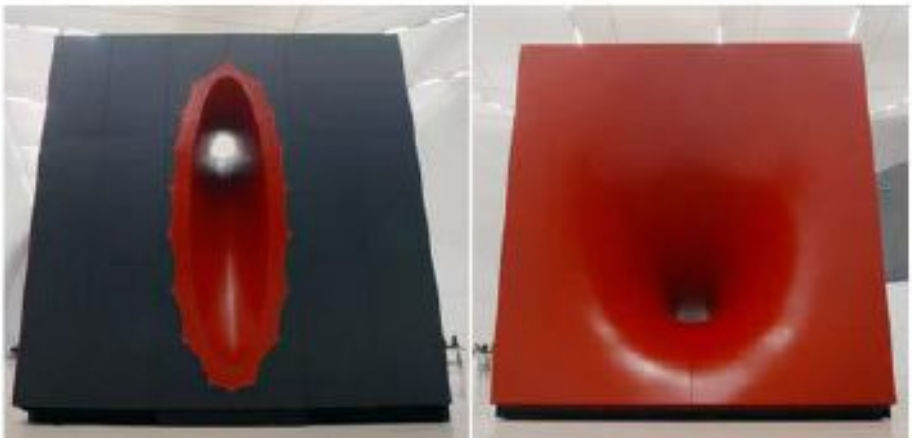
开展后红遍全网，
"视觉盛宴，不够看！"
"就等这个展了，一定得去打卡！"
周迅的最新时装大片，
也选择了在他的作品前拍摄。



作品《将成为香特莱跑的截面体》在夫兰展出

卡普尔在印度长大，于英国成名，
今年65岁，是全球最敢说敢做的艺术家之一。
卡普尔认为所有雕塑都与身体有关，
他的许多作品，都有性隐喻。
最疯狂的一件，是在法国凡尔赛宫正中央摆放的
名叫《肮脏的角落》的巨型雕塑，
有人曾私下将它暗指"皇后的阴道"。

同时，他也是全球最负盛名的艺术家之一，
在芝加哥的户外公共雕塑《云门》，
曾有2亿5千万人看过。
今年11月，一条在太庙对他进行了专访。

撰文 | 逯伊白　自述 | 安尼施·卡普尔

Anish Kapoor in China

安尼施·卡普尔在中国

今年11月初，卡普尔来到北京，为个展做准备。初见这位65岁的印度大爷，头发灰白，在太庙大厅检查不锈钢镜面作品，拿着毛巾擦拭几滴不起眼的污渍。

在开幕之前，一坐对他进行了专访。与作品的"极端"不同，卡普尔本人给人感觉温和，语速也不快。他个头不高，一米七上下，却若迷于做巨型的公共雕塑，"公共空间的力量是很强大的，比如现在我们坐在天安门广场旁边，就能感受到它的气韵扑面而来。"

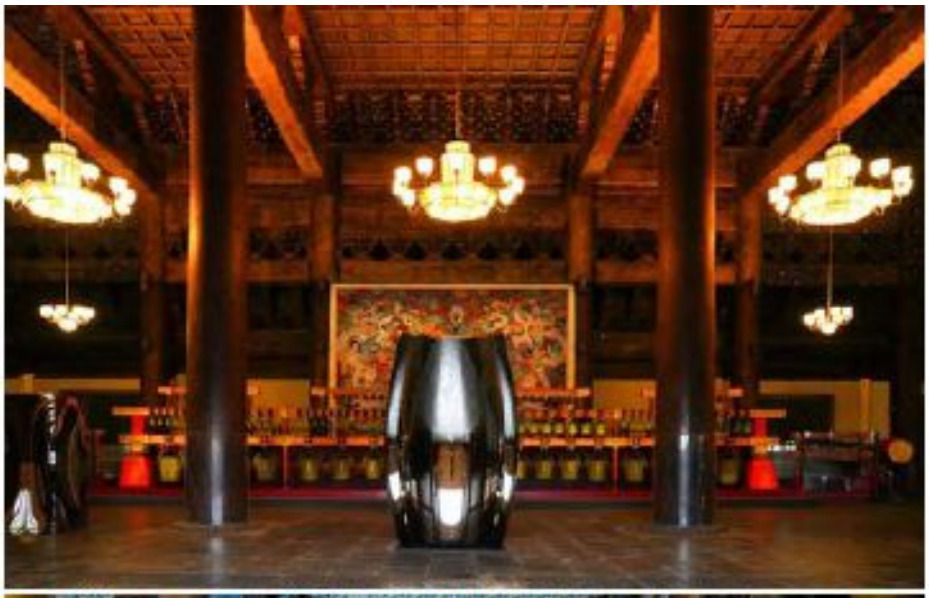
这次个展体量巨大、备受关注，他35年来的73组重要作品，被分成了两个部分同时展出。

太庙个展：与皇家建筑的碰撞

故宫东侧的太庙，本是明清皇帝祭祖的去处，在这里坐落着卡普尔的13件抽象的大雕塑，与传统的太庙建筑形成一种对立，古老又科幻。

在中间的享殿大厅，摆着六件不锈钢装置。工作人员原计划在每件作品下垫一个基座，但卡普尔希望它们直接触碰地面——有着600年历史的金砖地板。

殿内屋顶的金箔、梁柱上的彩绘，全都投射到不锈钢凹镜面上。



从90年代末以来，他一直在跟这种材料打交道，最感兴趣的是凹面镜，"因为它能把世界弄得天翻地覆。"它就像一个视觉的"吸盘"，随着人走近走远，镜子里的景象变得虚幻缥渺，甚至从某些角度根本看不到镜子里的自己。

他希望这些"镜面"能与太庙碰撞出火花，"它们不应该像异国的外来物，而是应属于这个地方。"

但也有观众觉得这和太庙格格不入："无论色彩与形状都与恢宏厚重的太庙不搭，笔直的沉香木和金丝楠木，在镜面作品中被反射折射，模糊扭曲。"

《1000个名字》 1981

在东西配殿中，是一系列"色粉"作品，他较为早期的创作，常常会使用彩色粉末。当时他还是个到美国学习艺术的印度学生，假期回到印度，看到传统市场里小贩常常堆成一个个小山的色粉堆，唤起了内心深处对家乡的敏感。

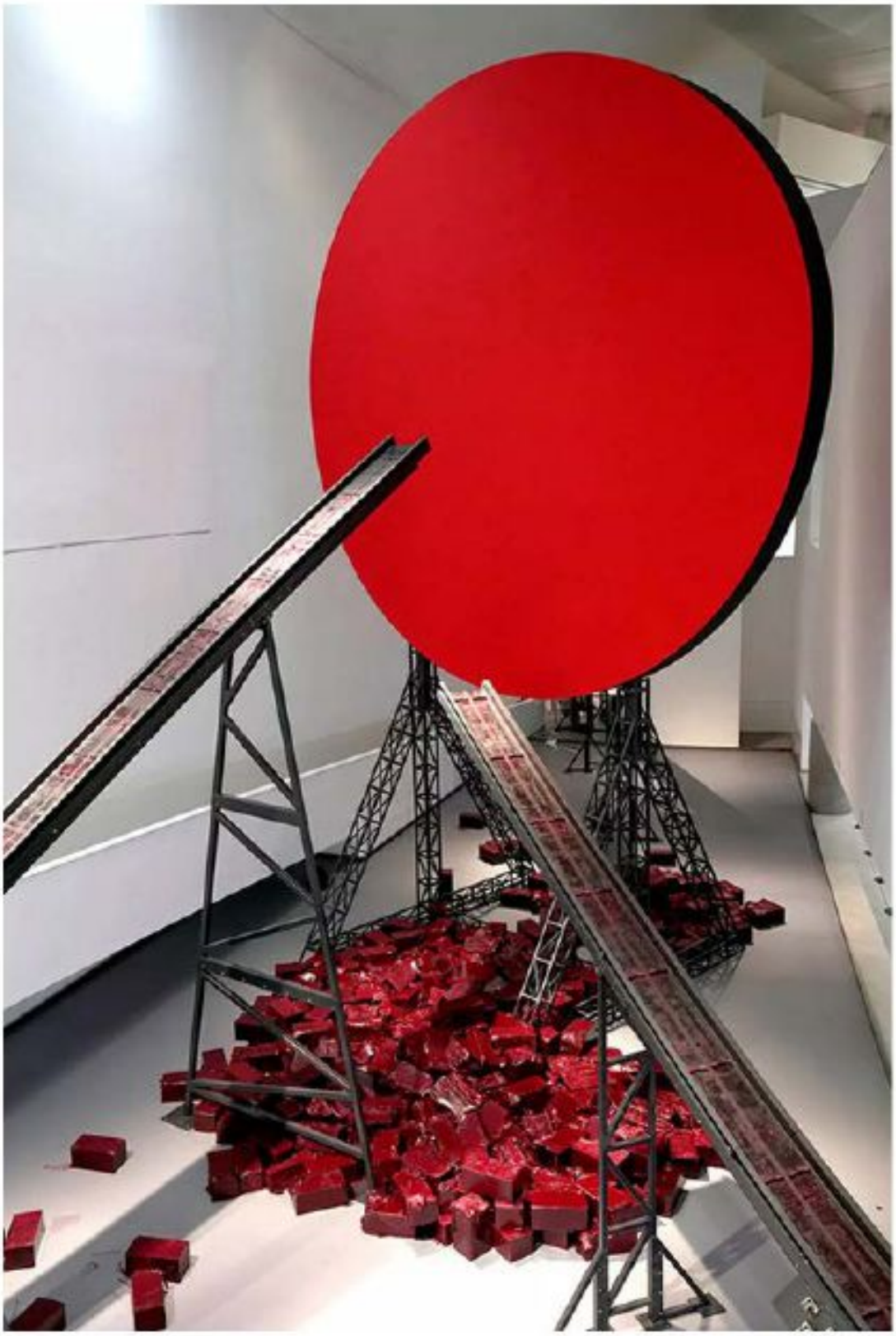
《云门》芝加哥

安尼施·卡普尔，1954年出生于印度，现生活在英国伦敦，是当代最受争议的艺术家、雕塑家之一。他以大型公共装置闻名，但著名的作品都免不了被一顿议论：

伦敦的《阿塞洛米塔尔轨道》，被说丑；
巴黎的《肮脏的角落》，被说粗俗；
芝加哥的《云门》，被说苹批……

但他享誉国际，拿的奖也没几个人能与之匹敌：
36岁，卡普尔代表英国参加威尼斯双年展；
37岁，摘得英国特纳奖——欧洲最重要、最有威信的视觉艺术大奖；
55岁，成为第一个在英国皇家艺术学院举办个展的在世艺术家；
2013年，被英国女王授予骑士爵位……

对非艺术专业的观众来说，卡普尔的作品"十分当代"，不好理解。但展览依然足够吸引人，成为北京新晋网红打卡地。



《献给心爱太阳的交响曲》 2013

央美个展：中国红

距离太庙10公里开外的中央美术学院美术馆内，卡普尔的作品占据了整个一到四层，三楼的白墙上印着他的一句话——"作为艺术家，我要使我的每一件作品不只是物体，而且是思想（大部分是东方思想）的呈现。"

四件大型装置刺激眼球，以"红"为主。

一进入，首先看到的是高达四层楼的主作品《献给心爱太阳的交响曲》。

它的中心是巨大的红色圆盘，像一个太阳，旁边的轨道在不断往上输送血红色的碎块，但在终点总会坠落在地上的碎块堆里，一遍遍循环往复。

卡普尔的初衷"这是一个带有悲剧色彩的作品"，不过它也让人能往温暖的方向解读，有观众说这场景就像海子的诗一样：你来人间一趟，你要看看太阳。

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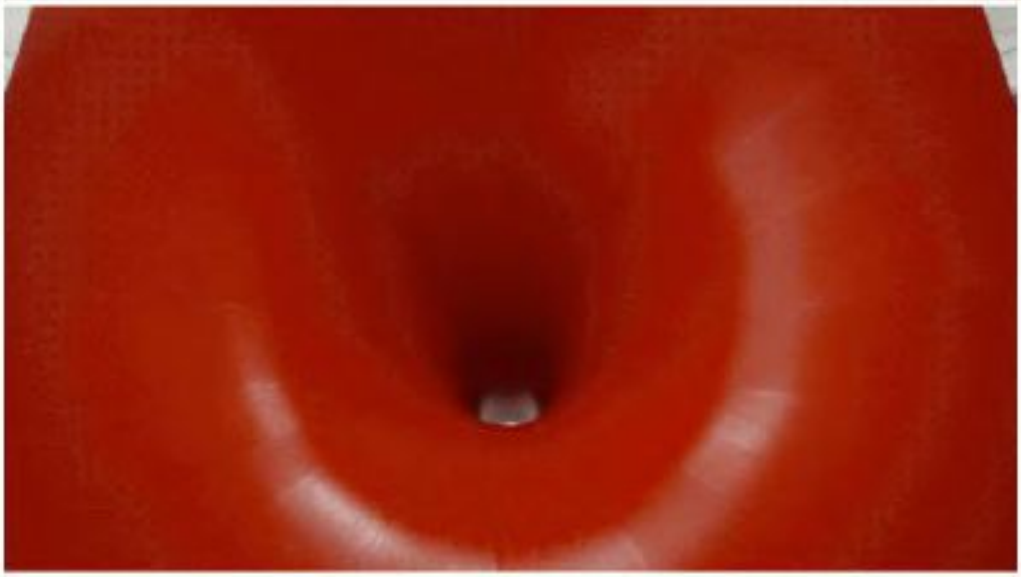
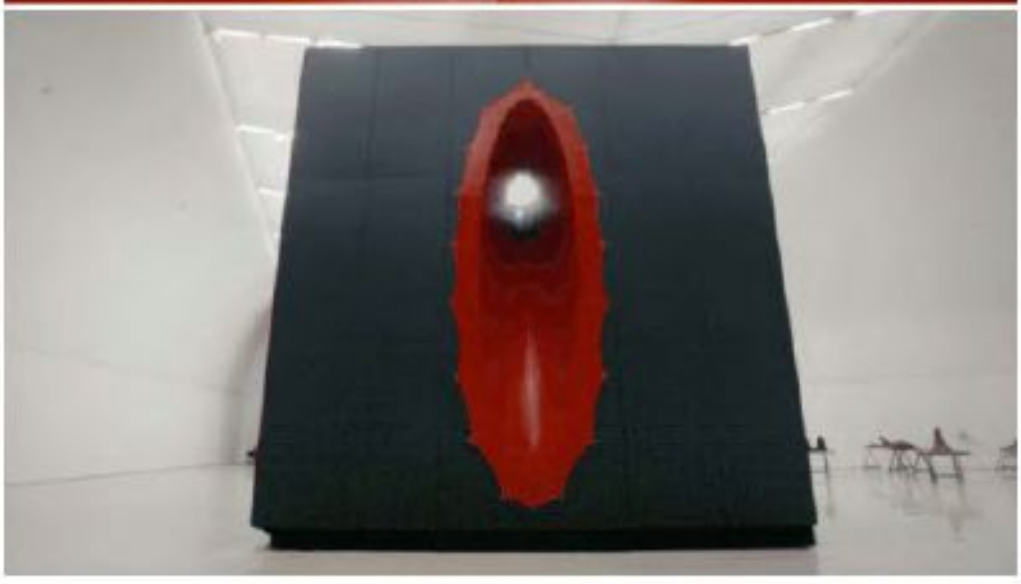
周迅的最新时装大片拍摄地也在这里，她不禁感触："当它们动起来的时候，在那声'咚'之后，你才能体会到作品的真正奇妙之处。"

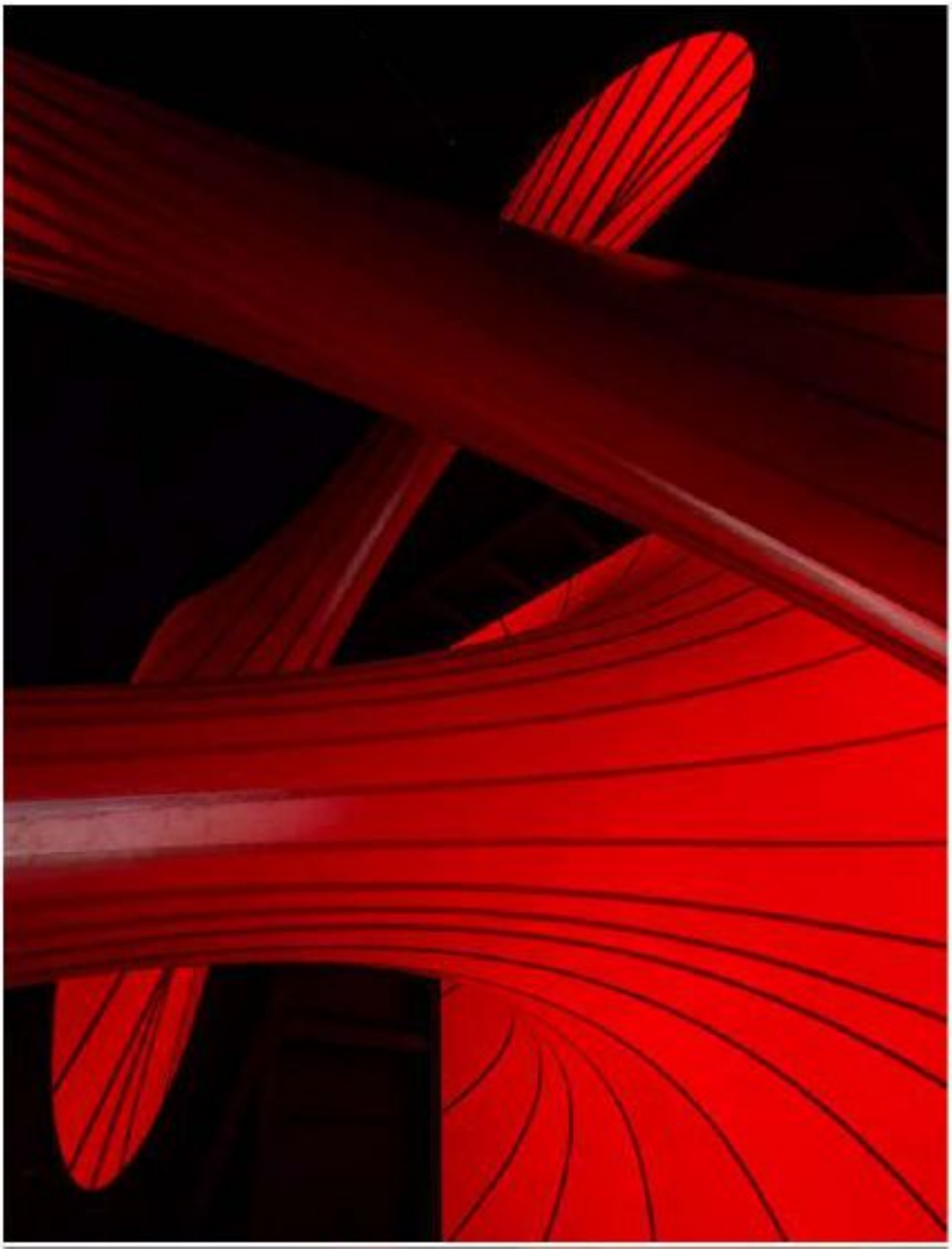




《将成为奇特单细胞的截面体》 2015

在卡普尔看来，所有的雕塑都与身体有关。“身体是一种非常私密、又有公共性的东西，甚至充满性隐喻。”

《将成为奇特单细胞的截面体》是一个方块体，有四面通道，“就像我们的身体一样。”



观众可以走进它的内部，看看里面像血管又像纤维的结构，“太浪漫了，愿每次与你折叠进同一个虫洞相伴。”有观众这样感叹。

《我的红色家乡》 2003

再往里走，还是一片红色。

《我的红色家乡》，20吨混合了凡士林的红色颜料形似红貔，堆在一个直径12米的圆台上，中间一个像大铁锤的金属块伸出长杆，缓缓地推移貔堆。

“这些红色，象征动物内脏，包括人，我们的肉身、血液、五脏六腑都是红色的。”卡晋尔说，红色的另一层含义，是东方、是家乡、是一切的起源。“中国和印度一样，都是一片红色的土地。”

《远行》 2017

《远行》像一个景观，曾经只在2017年于阿根廷纪念公园展出，这次搬来了室内。一辆饱和度极高的蓝色挖掘机，爬伏在几百吨红色土壤上。

颜色完全占据了你的视野，好像整个人都要被眼前的蓝色或红色吞没，包裹着你，让你身临其境。

Anish Kapoor

一个印度男孩的国际艺术之路

15年的精神治疗

1954年，卡普尔出生在印度孟买的一个优渥家庭。父亲是印度人——一名海军物理学家，母亲是犹太人，外祖父是犹太教堂的牧师。他从小在宗教氛围浓厚、民族成分复杂的家庭长大。

杜恩中学校园

青少年时，卡普尔就读于印度首屈一指的精英高校——杜恩中学（Doon School），这是一所男校，学校历史上曾教育了印度无数的王公和亿万富翁的子女，相当于印度的"伊顿公学"。但卡普尔受不了这种教育，甚至"憎恨"这段日子，他想逃离。

1971年，卡普尔和他的兄弟搬到以色列，学习电子工程。但六个月后他就放弃了，"我很庆幸自己在很小的时候，就明确了想当艺术家的愿望。"

1973年，他前往英国，先后在霍恩西艺术学院（Hornsey College of Art）和切尔西艺术与设计学院（Chelsea School of Art and Design）学习。但留学之路并不轻松。

他从上学期间，一直到结婚生子前，接受了长达15年的精神治疗。卡普尔回忆说，对于一个在东方文化中长大、又在西方教育里被"里塑"的印度男孩来说，"居无定所"是他最大的心理障碍。

于是他每天都去工作室，"无论如何，今天一定要创作点什么出来。"这对他来说就是一种冥想和自愈的过程，直到现在65岁了，依旧坚持每天去工作室，工作10小时，每天最少要创作一件作品，有时甚至一天两三件。这也是为什么，他能成为当代艺术界最高产的艺术家之一。

《云门》 2004

两亿五千万人看过它

卡普尔最为人所知的作品，是芝加哥的《云门》。它竖立在芝加哥的千禧公园里12年了，是这个城市最出名的地标和"打卡点"。

这个豆形的不锈钢雕塑，长约25米、高15米、宽10米，体量超大，却没有任何焊接点。它表面光滑，能把周围的景色和城市都"收入囊中"。

听说有两亿五千万人看过它，有五亿张自拍是和它一起的。但卡普尔说，他并不喜欢这种作品与人的互动方式。

《天空之镜》 2006

"虽然一个雕塑做完了摆在那里，它的命运就不是我能控制的了，但我认为作品要保持一定的严肃性。"他觉得人们拍拍照就走了，打个卡，没有什么意义，"它毕竟不是迪士尼乐园里的一项游乐设施。"

卡普尔也因"敢说敢做"背负了不少骂名，比如被放在巴黎凡尔赛宫的一件作品，就让他被骂惨了。

《肮脏的角落》 2015

"皇后的阴道"

2015年6月，卡普尔受邀在巴黎的凡尔赛宫举办个展，共展示了六件作品，其中一件大型装置《肮脏的角落》引起了轩然大波——有人将它戏称为"皇后的阴道"，并嘲指路易十六皇后。

观众在作品上泼漆，涂鸦，以示抗议

这激怒了一大批人，开展没几天就被人泼油漆，清理后不到三个月又一次遭涂鸦破坏。

把一件叫做"肮脏的角落"的作品放在皇宫中央，他说早就知道这肯定有争议。之所以还这样做，部分原因"就是想看看在我们认为的自由的欧洲、自由的巴黎，能发生什么？"

卡普尔的工作人员在遭破坏的作品部分贴上金色的叶子

大众认为它充满性隐喻。“可我们生活在一个充满男性性象征的世界里，那么多高耸的像男性生殖器的雕塑、物件，为什么我在地上平放一件可能有女性象征的东西，大家就突然被冒犯了？这就很有问题了！”

那段时间也是难民大量涌进法国的时候，他们被看作入侵者，而对卡普尔作品的讨论也掉入这个范围。它被认为是在挑战法国皇权，在引发种族歧视。凡尔赛镇上的议员以引发种族仇恨为由，起诉了卡普尔和凡尔赛宫馆长。

《坠入地狱》 1992

为了一个颜色拼得你死我活

卡普尔本人也很喜欢“挑事儿”，曾经和另外一名艺术家有过一场关于颜色的大战。

卡普尔一直以来都对专利痴迷。2014年，和他合作的一个英国实验室，研发出一种“最黑的物质”，起名叫Vantablack。这种超黑涂层黑到极致，可以吸收 99.965%的可见光，人眼本来能看到的褶皱、形状和轮廓都丢失了，只留下一个看起来像黑洞的物体。

由于开发成本昂贵，英国政府不仅对Vantablack的配方进行保密，还严格限制售卖。结果卡普尔买断了Vantablack的版权，大声宣扬："只有我能用！"

另一位艺术家斯图尔特·森波（Stuart Semple）不爽了，研发出了一种粉色叫PINK——史上最粉的粉色，并扬言谁都可以使用和购买，但是就不卖给卡普尔。

最戏剧化的一幕出现，卡普尔不知如何买到了PINK，并在社交媒体上炫耀，两人的骂战至今还没看到大结局。

《直射角膏》 2008

《考古学与生物学》 2007

卡普尔说自己的作品和埃菲尔铁塔"拥有相同的命运"。在埃菲尔铁塔刚被建成时，遭到了大量巴黎人的蔑视和批评，后来，铁塔却成为当代最伟大的一件艺术品、一个国家的象征。

卡普尔说："我认为雕塑并不需要以取悦为目的，它被觉得尴尬、被骂，都没关系，我愿意给大众时间，慢慢来不用急。"

"在我们的生活里，几乎所有东西都能被命名和定义，只有在艺术世界里，存在不能被明确定义的东西。"卡普尔在无数次的采访中里申他的观点，他的目的是"play a game with the viewer（与观众做游戏）。"

他的梦想听起来也很异类："我这一生能创作出一件作品，它浑身上下都带着问号，'那是什么？我怎么看不懂呢？'如果能做到这一点，我就大大地满足了。"

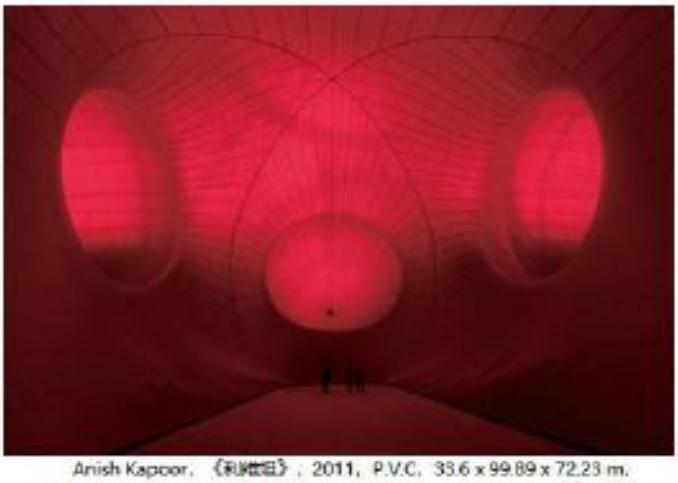
部分图片提供：里森画廊

LISSON GALLERY

Modern Weekly
November 29. 2019

周末 MODERN WEEKLY 画报

安尼施·卡普尔，作为当代艺术领域最著名的艺术家之一，他的名字从千禧年之后便越发为大众所熟悉。区别于其他有海外经历的当代艺术家，他们的作品中往往带有鲜明的“地域”标签或主题，然而这部分“流行”特质却从未出现在他的作品中。今年十月，受中央美术学院美术馆的邀请，安尼施·卡普尔带着他的4件大型装置作品及56件曾在世界各地展出过的公共项目的模型，在中国举办他的首次大型个人展览。



Anish Kapoor，《利维坦》，2011，P.V.C.，33.6 x 99.89 x 72.23 m.
2011年“纪念碑”艺术项目展出现场（大皇宫，巴黎），摄影：戴夫摩根。

Written by
Oscar Holland, CNN
Yong Xiong, CNN
Beijing, China

Outspoken, politically opinionated and a longtime friend of Ai Weiwei -- artist Anish Kapoor may not have expected to be high on Beijing's invite list.

Yet the sculptor's first solo show in China could hardly be closer to the heart of the country's establishment: a career retrospective at a temple in between the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square.

This only tells part of the story, however.

A stainless steel artwork, "Slave," on display at the Imperial Ancestral Temple. Credit: Anish Kapoor / Lisson Gallery

For one thing, just a portion of Kapoor's landmark exhibition is showing at the 15th-century Imperial Ancestral Temple. The rest is on display 10 kilometers away at Beijing's Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), a prestigious school that has produced multiple generations of leading Chinese artists since its founding a century ago.

Related:
NRA settles legal battle with artist Anish Kapoor over 'abhorrent' video

For another, the Mumbai-born British sculptor doesn't consider a collaboration with a respected Chinese arts institution as somehow incompatible with his activism. After threatening to pull out of the 2016 Yinchuan Biennale over its exclusion of Ai Weiwei's work, and turning down opportunities to exhibit in China over the dissident artist's treatment, Kapoor now says it is time to be "part of the conversation."

"I understand your question about being politically outspoken -- about standing up, as I have done, against, if you like, oppression," he says during an interview at the CAFA Art Museum. "I have to mediate (this) in relation to showing in China. And (I) take the view that culture has a voice, and a cultural conversation is a conversation about joining up, not one about separating."

In "Destierro," Kapoor transforms part of the CAFA Art Museum into a surreal red landscape. Credit: Anish Kapoor / Lisson Gallery

Though clearly opinionated, Kapoor, who turned 65 this year, has never let politics overshadow his art. Rather, he has always been more concerned with confronting dualities through his work -- bold, challenging creations that are at once smooth and textured, convex and concave, reflective and absorbent.

These contrasts are widely explored in his Beijing retrospective. Bringing together some of his most celebrated sculptures and installations, it's a body of work that spans 35 years -- a time in which Kapoor has been knighted, won the coveted Turner Prize and represented the UK at the Venice Biennale.

The most ambitious artworks are set across three floors of CAFA's on-campus museum. Chief among them is "Destierro," an entire room transformed into a surreal red landscape, and "My Red Homeland," a circular mass of wax almost 40 feet across around which a steel block, propelled by a motorized arm, slowly rotates.

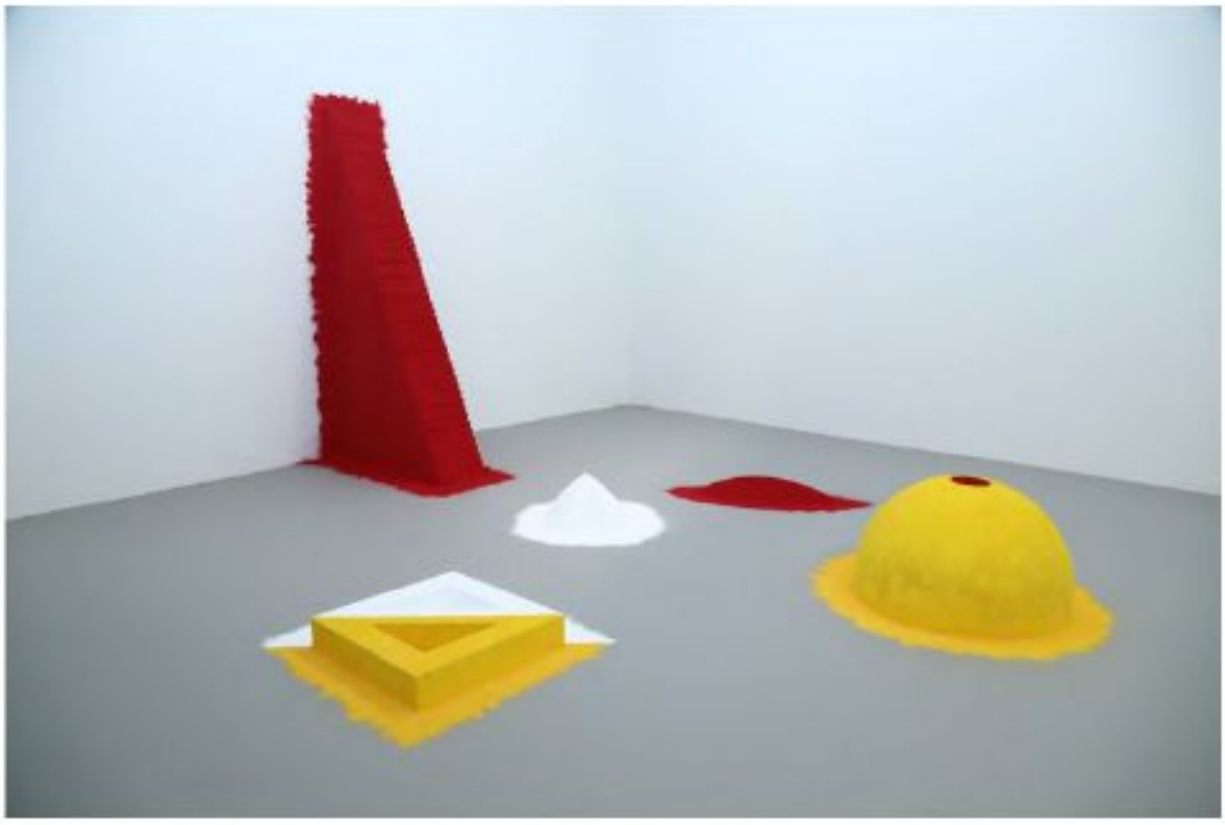
A motorized arm at the center of "My Red Homeland" circles at a rate of one rotation per hour. Credit: Anish Kapoor / Lisson Gallery

At the temple, meanwhile, a selection of more understated sculptures is spread across three of the complex's buildings. It is here that visitors find Kapoor's curvilinear experimentation with stainless steel, alongside abstract objects that seem to emerge from -- or disappear into -- the the floor beneath them.

Related:
The phenomenal rise of Chinese contemporary art

"Of course, it's true to the work that I've made, but it has some relation with the site," Kapoor said of the decision to exhibit in this unusual setting, adding that he likes "the idea of this non-art space."

"So one building has a group of pigment works from late '70s to the early '80s, (and) one building has the big work called "Angel," which is a series of pigment stones, kind of floating in the space."



Made between 1979 and 1980, "1000 Names" is one of the earliest works included in Kapoor's retrospective. Credit: Anish Kapoor / Lisson Gallery

"Sectional Body preparing for Monadic Singularity" (2015) by Anish Kapoor. Credit: Anish Kapoor / Lisson Gallery

In China, red is a color that carries connotations of good fortune, patriotism and even revolution. So while Kapoor stresses that his latest exhibition isn't specifically designed for Chinese audiences, he is acutely aware that his work may be received differently.

Related:
The new generation of Chinese collectors shaking up the art world

"China, as we all know, has a very long deep history of (the) color red itself. And I think that makes (the art a) kind of strange bridge ... which I hope engages something in the Chinese context, in the Chinese psyche. It's the color that you walk into the space and the color grabs (you)."

"So, celebration ... but also, blood, death and decay," he adds. "Whether you are Chinese or not Chinese, we all have red inside our bodies."

"Anish Kapoor," is showing at the Taimiao Art Museum at the Imperial Ancestral Temple until Dec. 28, 2019, and the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) Art Museum until Jan. 1, 2020.

CNN's Mun Ng and Karsten Hohmann contributed to the video.

LISSON GALLERY

South China Morning Post
15 November 2019

South China Morning Post

Arts & Culture

Artist Anish Kapoor plays with reality in his debut solo show in China, which brings his mirror sculptures indoors for the first time

Topic | Art

Elaine Yau
Published: 8:00pm, 15 Nov, 2019

British artist Anish Kapoor's debut solo exhibition in China creates the illusion he has transformed a temple. Stainless steel works in the form of a concave mirror "turn the world upside down" at the Imperial Ancestral Temple, just outside the Forbidden City in Beijing, the artist says.

"[They] are hard to understand as objects, and kind of play a game with the viewer. The real project is this question about the status of the object, whether the object is a real thing or an illusory thing. We know that paintings are illusions of reality. A sculpture is supposed to be a real thing. But the question I am asking is ….is it a real thing? It is kind of in between."

Kapoor, 65, says of the temple site: "It's something that I understand has great weight. I hope … there will be other artists who follow me to show [their works] in these incredible buildings. They are really very powerful and are full of all kinds of psychic memory."

More than a dozen of the Indian-born artist's most significant works were unveiled this week in Beijing, at the temple and the Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum. The former houses some of his earlier works and the latter more recent ones.

Anish Kapoor's 2007 work C-Curve at the Imperial Ancestral Temple in Beijing.

Known for public sculptures that are considered by many as feats of engineering, his outdoor works often invite viewers to go on a visual and spatial adventure that is both stimulating and stretches conventions.

At the temple, his works are installed in three buildings. "I tried to think about the temples as places of history, ancestors and memory," he says.

Kapoor's Non-Object (Spire) (2007) on display at the temple in Beijing.

His sculpture *Cloud Gate* (2004-2006), also known as "the Bean" for its shape, is seen by thousands of visitors to Chicago's Millennium Park on a daily basis. Made up of 168 stainless steel plates welded together, the immense sculpture with a mirror surface reflects and distorts the city's skyline. Those walking around and under its 3.7-metre-high arch will get a warped sense of the city.

Visitors to the ancestral temple will have a similar experience as they stroll past works including *Stave* (2013), *C-Curve* (2007) and *S-Curve* (2006). The magisterial wooden beams, columns and roofs, and ancient copper bells lining the temple all look distorted in the reflections.

Kapoor says showing his mirror sculptures indoors at the ancestral temple strays from his usual practice.

Kapoor's 1989 work Void at the Imperial Ancestral Temple.

"I have shown them outdoors many times. There's the sky and light. This is a complete reversal of that ... In this [new] situation, [the mirror works] are full of darkness because they are concave ... even though one thinks of a mirror as reflecting the light ... I really like [the darkness].

"[Like] the *C-Curve*, which sits on the ground. It's like a Dutch painting [of a scene with people sitting around]. Dutch paintings of the 16th and 17th centuries are full of blackness. I like that," the artist says.

Kapoor says he wants to bring physical sensations to Chinese audiences.

Kapoor's My Red Homeland, on display in Beijing.

Models of Anish Kapoor installations on display at the Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum in Beijing.

"The works are open enough to allow for multiple interpretations," he says. "They don't have some very direct narratives. They are not trying to tell you something. It's [a presentation] of a situation, a group of objects, a colour, or no colour, or a reflection. So it's these physical sensations that I feel are translatable into many [different] kinds of languages."

Red – the most popular colour in China, representing good fortune, happiness and communism – runs through many of Kapoor's works. It is the dominant colour in several of those shown in Beijing, including *To Reflect an Intimate Part of the Red* (1981), *Dimensions Variable* (2017), *My Red Homeland* (2003) and *Sectional Body Preparing for Monadic Singularity* (2015). Kapoor says the colour red has very deep significance in the Chinese context.

"The inner part of our bodies is red. So we all carry red with us," says Kapoor. "Chinese red is slightly more orange red. It's sort of fun ... My instinct tells me that the Chinese red is triumphant. It is the colour that hits you. It's not like blue which retreats ...

Kapoor's Sectional Body preparing for Monadic Singularity, on display in Beijing.

"The red I have used most is darker than that. These subtle differences make big differences [in] the emotional meaning of a colour. ... I'm interested in these little differences between different sorts of red and what their significance could be."

"Anish Kapoor" runs at the Imperial Ancestral Temple until December 28, and at the Central

interested in these little differences between different sorts of red and what their significance could be."

"Anish Kapoor" runs at the Imperial Ancestral Temple until December 28, and at the Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum until January 1, 2020.

This article appeared in the South China Morning Post print edition as: Artist plays with reality in debut solo exhibition in China

Art | Chinese history | Chinese culture | Tourism

LISSON GALLERY

CGTN (China Global Television Network)
12 November 2019

CGTN

Art 10:40, 12 Nov 2019

Anish Kapoor opens solo exhibit in Imperial Ancestral Temple

By Li Qiong

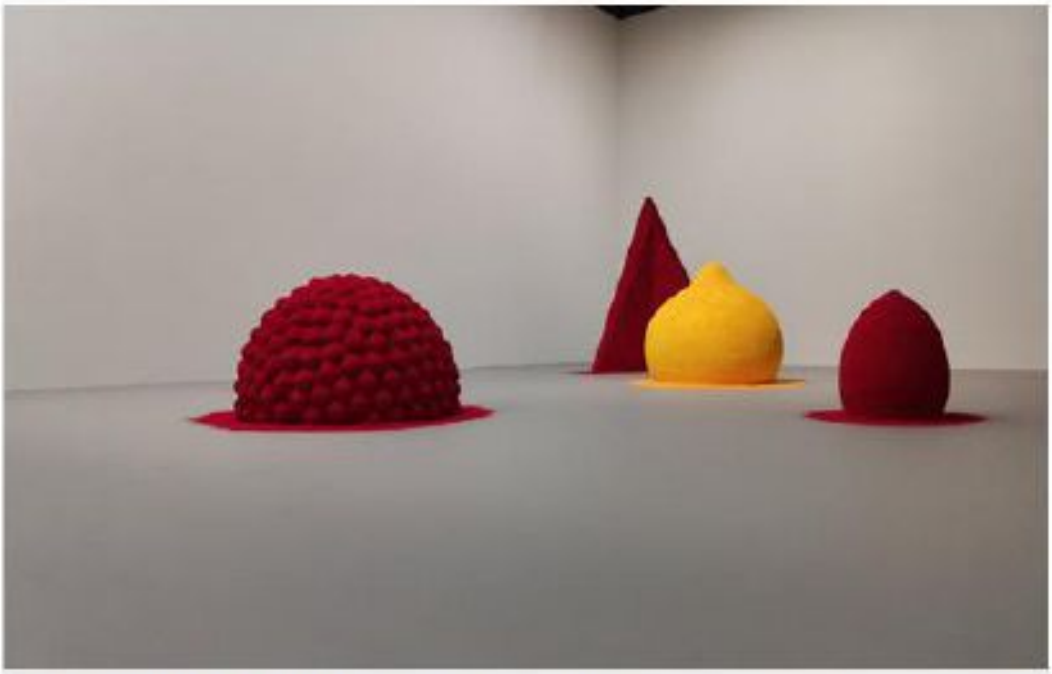
Indian-born British artist Anish Kapoor has brought many of his important pieces to the Imperial Ancestral Temple, opening the second half of his solo exhibition in the Chinese capital.

Taimiao, or the Imperial Ancestral Temple, is said to be the largest ancient palatial structure in the world. Kapoor's stainless steel and pigment sculptures give a nod to the architectural and spiritual history of the site.

'S-Curve' by Anish Kapoor. /CGTN photo

Some of Kapoor's mirrored steel works are displayed in the central atrium of the Imperial Ancestral Temple, like the S-Curve and C-Curve.

Visitors are also challenged to view their surroundings – and themselves – in the installation, which tries to turn the world upside down by bending and twisting everything in front of them. Ancient and contemporary art reflect each other and become part of each other in this exhibit.



'To Reflect an Intimate Part of the Red' by Anish Kapoor. /CGTN photo

In the two galleries flanking the central Temple, Kapoor displays a seminal series of pigment sculptures emerging from the wall and floor, rendered in intense, alluring colors that deceive the eye through their forms and protrusions.

This is the first solo exhibition Kapoor's held in China. Quite a number of his works are exhibited in another ongoing exhibition in the Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum in Beijing.

The artist invites viewers inside the structure through an inconspicuous door. It opens into a network of glowing red orifices, intravenously connected, and conjures powerful metaphors about the body, existence and spirituality.

The exhibition in the CAFA Art Museum runs through January 1, 2020. And the one at the Art Museum of the Imperial Ancestral Temple will last till the end of this year.

LISSON GALLERY

CGTN (China Global Television Network)
11 November 2019

Anish Kapoor is a famous British sculptor – a specialist in installation art and conception art who has been putting "spectacular" artworks in the public domain for 40 years. He was the first living artist to be given an entire galley to display his work by the Royal Academy. For the first time, he is holding a public exhibition in China. In CGTN's Icon, host Ji Xiaojun sits down with Kapoor to find out why he thinks his work receives so much public attention.

"Symphony for a Beloved Sun" reveals a landscape, activated by a machine that's calmly processing masses of aggregating material. This system – watched over by a vast, red sun that hovers above the scene – takes place with no evident human interactions. It allows the viewer an opportunity to commune directly with the mysterious entity.

"To Anish Kapoor, the color red is like a symbolic icon," said curator Wang Chunchen. "He was born in India, where red is largely applied in religious rituals. It represents communication between human beings and god, as well as energy, passion and vitality."

'Sectional Body Preparing for Monadic Singularity' by Anish Kapoor. / CGTN photo

The themes of some pieces are not obvious from their looks, like the "Sectional Body preparing for Monadic Singularity." It's a very important piece of Anish Kapoor. The artist invites viewers inside the structure through an inconspicuous door. It opens into a network of glowing red orifices, intravenously connected, and conjures powerful metaphors about the body, existence and spirituality. The construction explores the relationship between the interior and exterior, not only of the work but of the body and space itself.

'Cloud Gate' by Anish Kapoor. /CGTN photo

Red is not the only symbol of Kapoor. The application of mirror reflection is another. At the exhibition hall, visitors are presented with various miniatures of Kapoor's acclaimed public art displays.

"Cloud Gate" is one of them, better known as "The Bean." Displayed at Millennium Park in Chicago, it is one of the world's largest permanent outdoor art installations. The mirror-like surface reflects the activity and lights of the park and city skyline. Visitors could also see their images reflected from different perspectives. "This art piece is a symbolic contemporary one. It has a simple shape, which goes well with urban life, but actually looks different in different weather, at different times. Meanwhile, the mirror fully enables the public installation to communicate with people," Wang said.

The exhibition in the CAFA Art Museum runs through January 1, 2020. And many of his other important works will be on display at the Taimiao Art Museum of the Imperial Ancestral Temple next month.

LISSON GALLERY

T Magazine
October issue, 2019

今年10月底到明年1月，
Anish Kapoor的中国首次大型双个展
将在北京央美美术馆和太庙艺术馆同时举行。
他说："我和中国都对红色产生共鸣，
我想这是一件好事。"图为Kapoor在
2015年创作的《奇异单细胞生物的截面体》。

Sectional Body Preparing for Monadic Singularity, 2015

BEING AND NOTHINGNESS 存在与虚无背后的深意

当参与感泛滥却又乏善可陈时，
Anish Kapoor如何坚守他严肃的艺术阵地？

撰文：窦俊杰

伦敦南部的坎伯韦尔区是城中名不见经传的艺术街区，紧邻伦敦艺术学院分校和蓝象剧场，氛围静谧却不失活泼。位于这里的Anish Kapoor工作室从外观上看，更像是一座当代艺术画廊，面积之大几乎占据了一整条街。9月的伦敦秋高气爽，更胜春日。街对面是一所小学，不时传来孩子们嬉戏的声音。Kapoor工作室的前身是一座牛奶工厂，为了不影响Kapoor的创作，Caseyfierro建筑事务所耗时五年才将内部全面翻新。与其说是厂房，Kapoor更愿意把这里看作一个激动人心的实验室，他的助理告诉我，在他创意灵感迸发的日子，这里几乎每天都能输出一件作品，而某些雕塑的打磨则会耗时数月乃至数年。但无论如何，这里的每一件作品都倾注了Kapoor的大量心力。

或许是他的作品趋于克制和审慎，我很难将眼前这个身材瘦削的长者与那些宏伟的公共雕塑联系在一起：洗白的衬衫上依稀可见淡淡的红色墨点，交谈间，现年65岁的他不时发出洪亮笑声。

无论是雾面粉末颜料、粗糙蜡质树脂，还是平滑镜面，Kapoor的作品总能激发出观者一种难以名状的情绪。而虚无与现实之间的临界点，正是Kapoor反复推敲并努力达到的境界，他邀请公众直面作品背后更为深层的含义："不同于娱乐圈，作为艺术家，我们的职责比娱乐更加复杂。"这种职责，是带领人们探寻一种经过冥想而产生的现实："没有哪种黑暗会比内心的黑暗更为深刻，没有哪种空间比内心的空间更值得探索。"正如存在主义创始人Martin Heidegger所提倡的哲学使命——带领人们停止絮叨逃避现实的无关话题（Das Gerede），更加直观地理解瞬息变幻的存在（Das Sein），并从混沌的意识中觉醒，以更为理性系统的态度来直面虚无（Das Nichts）。这种使命与中国道家思想中的"有和无"不谋而合。白昼和深夜，男人和女人，Kapoor相信一切事物皆有黑白正反和阴阳两性，他热衷探索物质和非物质、存在与消逝、空间和非空间等之间的关联。

作为同时期最具影响力的当代艺术家，Kapoor的创作理念与道家的"无为"不尽相同。"创作的根本不在于灵感，而在于千锤百炼。这意味着我每天都要来工作室反复练习，并且常年置身其中，身体力行做该做的事。创作雕塑的好处在于，它要经历很多工序，最终水到渠成。就在反复练习的过程中，作品应运而生，并且在完成以后，它仍是一个流动的，不断变化的存在。" Kapoor认为好的作品并不是坐在那里想象出来的，"成功的作品总是洞悉人心的，总会与内心深处呼应，背后也饱含工艺。当然激发灵感的事物必然存在，蓝天或是深海，以及其他很多东西，但关键还是在于行动，在于永不停息进行创造的过程本身。"

什么是他最满意的作品？Kapoor不假思索地点名是《坠入地狱》（Descent into Limbo）。去年夏天，他的葡萄牙首展在波尔图的塞拉维斯基金会当代艺术博物馆举办，观众需要沿着一条小道进入一个20平方米的独立展厅内观赏这件雕塑作品，它是一口仅8英尺（2.4米）深的圆形孔洞，内部被涂成黑色而制造出令人目眩神迷的视幻觉。谁曾想，展出时一名年过八旬的意大利游客突然不慎跌入了这口"黑洞"，导致展出被迫临时关闭，这部作品也迅速登上了网络热搜。

虽然偶尔才在社交媒体上发声，但Kapoor却是一个地地道道的"话题人物"。如去年在凡尔赛宫门口的大型雕塑《肮脏的角落》（Dirty Corner），它是一根60米长的喇叭状钢管，这件雕塑备受争议的外形和名称诠释令众人浮想联翩，加之他在一次媒体发布会上不经意把它备注成"女王的阴道"更是引发了轩然大波，以凡尔赛市长为代表的法国权威因此受到了严重的侵犯，女权主义组织也表示深受威胁。最糟糕的是，作品反复遭到街头涂鸦者的破坏，然而Kapoor并没有洗掉这些秽语涂鸦，而是在其上刷了一层金色油漆，并故意保留了一部分痕迹。"艺术就是需要参与对话的，否则它的存在就不再重要"。

Kapoor着迷于色彩，但他并没有简单地将颜料拿来用于绘画，虽然伦敦的里森画廊今年春夏陈列了一些女性主题的绘画作品，但绘画却不是他色彩创作的重点。"色彩吸引我的地方在于，它是一种确实存在的物质但又抽象而神秘莫测，是存在和虚无、真实与幻影的交叠。当它作为一堆蓝色的颜料粉而存在的时候，本分又安静，色彩所创造出来的感觉令人身临其境，但从视觉的角度看，又亦真亦幻，几乎是人间的一剂万灵解药。" Kapoor喜欢借助一些特殊的材质来呈现色彩，继而挖掘出存在于背后的深意，他曾将硅树脂和颜料画结合，制造出血与肉以假乱真——《内部结构》（Internal Objects，2013-2015）；也曾从中国河床下挖出一些巨石，并在其表面涂上宝蓝色颜料，令这些成吨的巨石看起来瞬间变得轻盈优雅。

受印度教庙宇里宗教仪式的启发，以及Malevich的至上主义和Paul Klee的抽象表现主义影响，Kapoor又将颜料粉末堆成一座座小丘陈列——《白色的沙，红色的谷粒，和很多花》（White Sand，Red Millet，Many Flowers，1982），并称其为"冰山的一角"，缤纷的外表下隐藏着深层潜意识。此类显露主题的作品似乎在告诉人们：唯有唤醒自我意识才是正解。Kapoor擅长使用高饱和度的单一纯色填满整个空间，营造出的沉浸式体验充满能量，时而像瀑布一般喷泻而出，时而如湖底般沉静启发冥想。

2016年，英国萨里纳米系统公司研发出了一种名为纳米碳管黑体（Vantablack）的涂层，堪称当时"世界上最黑的物质"，比宇宙中的黑洞更黑。这种比头发丝还要细数倍的高密度碳钠米管可吸收大约99.96%光——这意味着无论将它喷涂在哪种物体的表面，都可屏蔽其维度。不久后，Kapoor买断了碳纳米管黑体的使用权，成为世界上唯一一个可以使用这款颜色的艺术家。此举遭到了行业内外诸多的非议，也为他贴上了"高冷"的标签。艺术界一方面打着正义与公平的旗号摒弃他，一方面又对他的下一部黑色作品充满好奇。

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除了神秘莫测的超级黑，Kapoor也很擅用明快的色彩，如带有浓郁印度特色的明黄和他常提起的克莱因蓝（Ives Klein Blue），而在所有高度饱和的色彩当中，最受Kapoor宠爱的色彩莫过于红色：那些蜡制作品——《我红色的祖国》（My Red Homeland，2003）、《斯维岩》（Svayambh，2007）和巴黎大皇宫内的深红色巨型圆球《利维坦》（Leviathan，2011），还有《奇异单细胞生物的截面体》（Sectional Body Preparing for Monadic Singularity，2015）无不证明了这一点。他还乐呵呵地向我展示了自己的红色手机外壳，足见其对红色的痴迷。参观工作室期间，他的助理展示了一件安放在工作室中近十年的雕塑，形似一堆叠在一起的豆袋，原本无色的光滑混凝土表面最近也被他漆成了鲜艳的红色。

本页：红色是最受Kapoor宠爱的色彩，譬如
他在2003年创作的蜡制作品《我红色的祖国》。
对页由上至下：《坠入地狱》是Kapoor迄今为止
最为满意的作品；2014年的作品《沉降》是
一轮不停旋转的神秘漩涡，代表了Kapoor对流动
和空间的诠释，寓意对生命永无止尽的探索以及
如黑洞一般不断吞噬下沉的宇宙。

本页：My Red Homeland，2003，蜡、油性涂料、钢臂和电机，Michel Zabe摄影，承蒙Lisson 画廊提供对页由上至下：Descent into Limbo，1992，混凝土和灰泥，承蒙Lisson 画廊提供；Descension，2014，Ela Bialkowska 摄影，承蒙艺术家本人和Galleria Continua提供

今年秋季，Kapoor即将在中国举办他的首次个展。从华美的紫禁城太庙艺术馆，延伸至中央美术学院美术馆，Kapoor将向国人开放展示他倾力的经典大作。"我和中国都对红色产生共鸣，我想这是一件好事。"悠久历史和深厚文化是Kapoor前往中国布展的驱动力，同时他也很期待与中国的当代艺术家和音乐家进行一场深刻的文化交流。"北京的画廊氛围很好，市民可以接触到来自世界各地的艺术作品。我希望最终彼此思想和观点都能融合在一起。"

Kapoor 1954年出生于孟买，在群山环绕的北印度长大，母亲是犹太移民，父亲在他整个童年时期都在为印度海军做水道测量。父母二人眼界宽广，思维前瞻，将他和弟弟送到了印度最为精良的寄宿男校Doon读书，优越却遗世独立，长成少年后，兄弟俩又移居到了以色列的基布兹。Kapoor多次对媒体坦言，他不喜欢寄宿校园的生活，因此童年在印度长期缺失的归属感和身份认同感成为了他后来投身艺术创作的推力。

20世纪70年代，Kapoor来到伦敦求学，先后在伦敦弘赛艺术学院和切尔西艺术学院就读本科及硕士。1990年，他代表英国参加第44届威尼斯双年展，翌年成为欧洲视觉艺术最高荣誉透纳奖获得者。2009年，Kapoor成为首个在英国皇家美术学院举办个展的艺术家。伦敦是Kapoor的长居城市和工作室所在地，这里的市民也常常可以观赏和体验到他的作品。2012年，Kapoor在伦敦奥林匹克公园内竖立起114米高的螺旋铁塔——轨道（ArcelorMittal Orbit），堪称

全英国的最高公共雕塑，也被称为“伦敦的埃菲尔铁塔”。奥运闭幕后，时任伦敦市长的Boris Johnson提议将这座雕塑与世界上最长的滑梯——另一名公共雕塑艺术家Carsten Höller所创造的作品合二为一。Höller与Kapoor同为在伦敦泰特当代美术馆涡轮大厅（Tate Turbine Hall）中装置过巨作的艺术家，分别为《试验场》（Test Site，2006）和《马西亚斯》（Marsyas，2002）。二人合作修建的这座螺旋塔滑梯如今是东伦敦必去的景点之一，游客可顺着半透明管道从80米高的滑梯滑下，吸引着极限运动爱好者前往体验疯狂。

Kapoor擅长通过大型雕塑与公众互动，他的作品遍布巴黎、伦敦和纽约等大都市，其中最为人称叹的当数芝加哥千禧公园的《云门》（Cloud Gate），也被当地人亲切地称作“豆子”。作品由多块不锈钢板焊接而成，重达80多吨，经过高度抛光的，拥有流线型弧度的外表光滑明亮，映照着周围的城市地标和人群，构成一幅妙不可言的互动图景。和《云门》同样具有倒映效果的公共雕塑还有《天空镜》（Sky Mirror）——一面倾斜放置、面向天空的凹形抛光不锈钢圆盘，这件35英尺宽的雕塑被放置于纽约洛克菲勒中心门口。此外，该作品的小型版本也曾出现在伦敦泰晤士河南岸、肯辛顿花园、布赖顿皇家行宫草坪和英国诺丁汉惠灵顿广场购场门前。Kapoor娴力探源着当代艺术的手法，将作品气势磅礴的体积与柔美的流线型弧度进行相得益彰地结合，变换的几何凹凸镜面绘制出流动画面：城市灯光、原野云彩、花鸟鱼虫、极简迷幻画意昧深远，亲近神秘又充满诗意，很多看客会被Kapoor的展出吸引入神，许久不离开，仿佛消失在作品当中，走入了天人合一的境界。

对于当代艺术，有句人尽皆知的评价是：“这个我也会做！”而Kapoor向来以一种开放的心态静待公众对他作品的回应：“艺术家抛出一个观点，观者去践行并亲临体验，并以各自独有的视角和深意去解读。当他们看到我的作品说，‘这就一那什么！’我觉得这样很好，至于是不是和我想的一样没有关系，也并不重要。当然受众很重要，我想做出至少是大众喜闻乐见的作品。”他的大部分作品都是一种安定的存在，悄声地试探着众人感官，营造愉悦的沉浸式体验，试图激发观众的集体共鸣。这种感官体验也绝不仅限于视觉，他的创作也不乏听觉体验。今年夏天，伦敦新开的皮特香格庄园盛大开馆，邀请Kapoor展出他的凹形幻彩镜面——《由红到蓝》（Red to Blue，2016）。这些镜面不仅能反射出让来宾们目眩神迷的倒影，还包括声音，看展的两个人相隔一定距离地站在作品的不同角度，也能实现在彼此耳边私语的效果。与北京天坛祠音壁有着异曲同工之妙。作品《升腾》（Ascension，2011）是一股徐徐上升的烟雾，在纽约古根海姆博物馆展出时变身羽化升仙般的一抹红色，气流声之间洋溢着魔幻主义色彩；与之相对的作品《沉降》（Descension，2017）则是一轮不停旋转的神秘漩涡，代表了他对流动和空间的诠释，寓意对生命永无止尽的探索以及如黑洞一般不断吞噬下沉的宇宙。当《沉降》出现在纽约布鲁克林大桥公园1号码头等诸多公众视野中时，旋转震荡所发出的轰隆声响，更为原本神秘的水流漩涡增添了戏剧化氛围。

本页：Kapoor位于伦敦南部联饶韦尔区的工作室里每众多处于未完成状态的雕塑，对页由上至下：Kapoor在自己的作品前；他擅长通过大型雕塑与公众互动，图如这件公共雕塑《天空镜》是一面倾斜放置、面向天空的凹形抛光不锈钢圆盘。

上升、下沉，抬头仰望星空，俯首坠入地狱，Kapoor一直在虚无和黑洞中问寻找生命的意义，不断发现拓展领悟与提升的空间。他还热衷于引用女性与母体的形象追溯生命的起源，作品反复出现洞穴、孕育、经期和女性身体等元素。在女性议题和政治正确趋向于白热化的环境下，作为一名男性艺术家，他笔不掩饰地大胆展示自己理解中的那是“肮脏的角落”，或是视不经心地在一个空荡的展厅墙上画出一道口子，在虚无的现实当中，Kapoor并不认为艺术有义务做出任何解释和交代，或去明辨是非、真相和谎言。他从不拘泥于任何限定的格局与形式，哪怕这种形式会显得突兀、暴力甚至血肉模糊；他根据创作和表达的需要，将空间扭曲、合并或赋予明暗色彩，并且收放自如。“体积是一种神秘的变量，也是雕塑的助力，我喜欢规模宏大的作品。作品的关键是一定要不忘初衷，表达出背后的意义，或是其他一些本质的东西。”

当年在准备皇家艺术学院的展览时，Kapoor就对BBC说：“艺术作品一方面需要营造出参与感，另一方面又要令人肃然起敬。”十年后，我们的生活进入了一个愈加充斥着喜业利益和炮制“参与感内容”的时代，而Kapoor依然坚守他的艺术阵地——“严肃艺术是一个永恒的话题，它既不是一场游戏，也不是迪士尼乐园。当今世界参与感泛滥却又乏善可陈，因为这一切几乎都是发生在这糟糕的手机屏幕上，哪怕在中国亦如是。”在他眼里，资本和名利剧剧了生命意义。“说到底是谁的荣耀？我的，他们的，国家的，谁的？这中间的问题就在于自我意识过分强烈。”Kapoor鼓励人们来亲身体验艺术，感受真实世界中的存在。“如今一切都可以用钱买到，就连爱都可以拿来变卖。但人类最深层的话题是不可以被销售的——我出生前源自哪里？死后又会去哪？——唯独这两个问题是千金不换的。”

LISSON GALLERY

Modern Weekly
July 6, 2019


卡普尔的镜与境

LISSON GALLERY

The Art Newspaper
14 May 2019

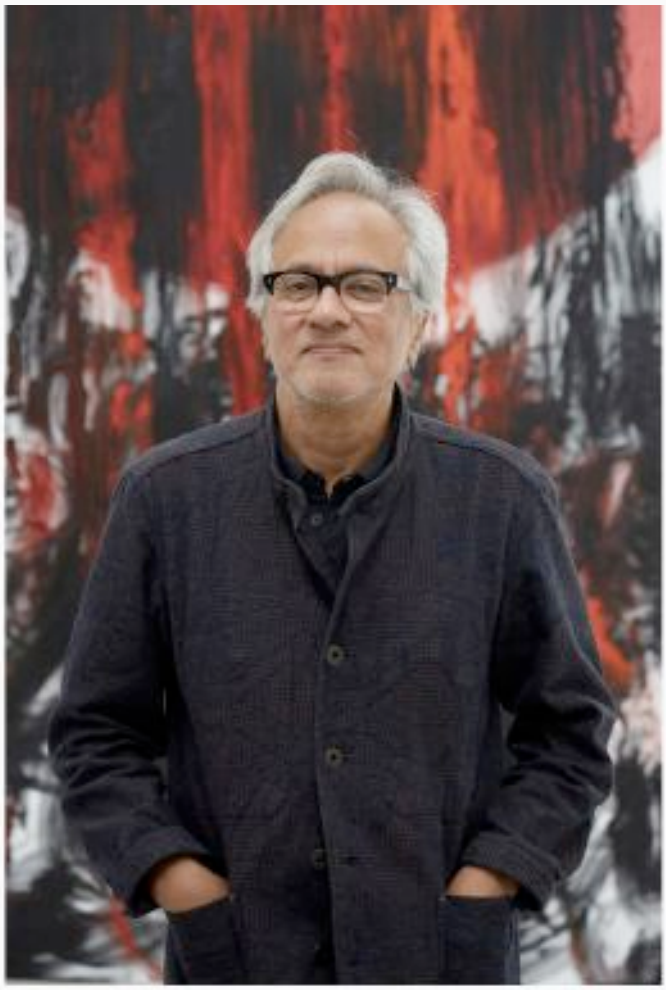
THE ART NEWSPAPER

NEWS → ART MARKET

Anish Kapoor unveils new paintings that evoke menstruation

British artist says men should be able "to deal with women's questions", as first major solo show in China is announced

ANNY SHAW
14th May 2019 16:35 BST



The British artist Anish Kapoor today unveiled a new series of paintings, depicting blood streaming from wounds, or, it would seem, vaginas.

His fascination, he says, stems from blood as "ritual matter", but also its association with "the abject, with death, with the impure". He adds: "It's so strange that both are a place of origin and a place of dirt, or other matter, menstrual [blood]."

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Kapoor says that the "whole point" of artistic practice is that "reality can be borrowed, to be shared, envisioned, imagined". He argues that it is a "kind of purity [to say] you can only do it if you are really black, or really Indian or if you are really a man. The point is to measure the work, not in terms of whether a man is allowed to do it or not, but in terms of whether it's any good or not".

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Kapoor went heavy on the red paint for his new series of works Courtesy of Lisson Gallery and the artist

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Kapoor's relationship with China has not always been plain sailing, however. In 2015, he criticised the country's stance on copyright after an uncannily similar version of Cloud Gate, his bulbous monument in Chicago known as the bean, appeared in the town of Karamay in the Xinjiang region of China.

Kapoor today described the situation as complicated. "I did at first try quite robustly to fight a plagiarism case but things take so long," he says. "It's going, but very slowly. We'll see, copyright in china is very complicated."

The Jewish Chronicle
17 May 2019

THE JC

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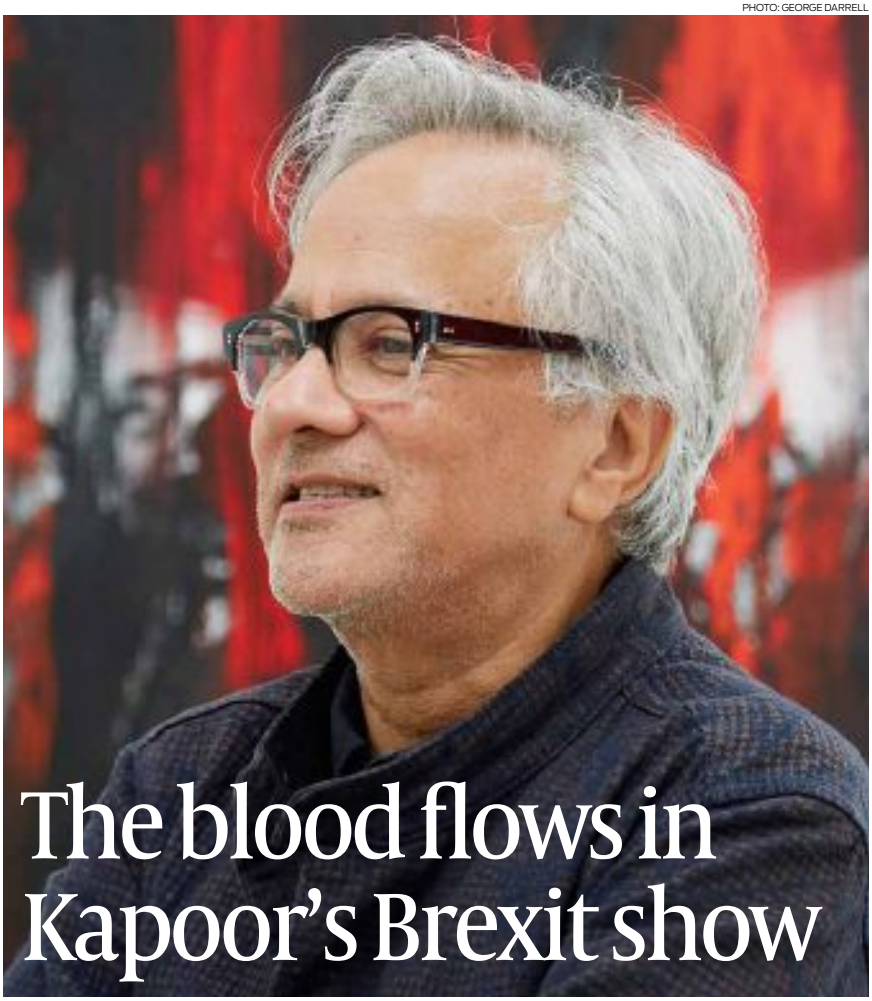
ART

PHOTO: GEORGE DARRELL



The blood flows in Kapoor's Brexit show

KEREN DAVID INTERVIEWS SIR ANISH KAPOOR

ANISH KAPOOR'S latest exhibition may not seem immediately attractive to those still recovering from this week's *Game of Thrones*. Torrents of blood flow on to giant canvasses; the stuff of life, death, dirt and shame splashing and dripping with an exuberance that suggests that one of our best-known sculptors has very much enjoyed a move to painting in oils.

It's curious, this joyful undertone, because his intent could hardly be more serious, a stark warning against the politics of hate and separation which stain so much of the world today. Brexit is very much part of that: "Our obsession with purity is very much what Brexit has come to be about," he says.

His starting point is menstrual blood, and the purification rituals of his dual heritage — the Judaism of his Iranian mother and the Hinduism of his Indian father.

The "ancient practice" of treating menstruating women as impure, different, and separate and the cleansing ritual that takes place in a mikveh, is, he says an act which "affects everything else, our points of view, our sense of who's in the tribe and who isn't."

Treating menstruating women as impure is the beginning of tribal affiliation, he says. "The question we have to ask is whether that's good for us? In the 21st century, it seems the world is going that way more and more and more, which is hugely dangerous, I believe. We need to do, in a way, the opposite."

So, while the history of Western art is distinctly phallic, Kapoor focuses on the womb. His paintings conjure up organs and tubes, openings and interiors, too abstract to be gynaecological, but not for the squeamish either. The predominate colours are red and black, but there are pinks and orange, too, and in some a fiery yellow. Some evoke fear and shame, or hint at violence. They are, nonetheless, full of beauty.

Alongside the paintings are the sculptures . In the Lisson Gallery's courtyard, there are two vast mirrors, inviting us to consider the world and ourselves from a different perspective.

Then there are two works — one outside and one in the gallery — in which vast pieces of stone are carved to give the impression of rectangular boxes, containing ovoid forms. One is carved from a monumental piece of Iranian pink onyx to resemble a bath — or mikveh, or vessel — containing two egg-shaped objects, a deeper pink than the rougher outside. The way that the hard stone evokes softness and the idea of being held, alongside other ideas of purification and cleansing, is memorable.

Standing by this work, introducing the exhibition, Kapoor ponders whether a man "can deal with women's questions — is a man allowed to?"

Later, when we grab ten minutes to talk, we return to this question. "I'm deeply into political correctness, because to not be is too right wing an agenda.

"But this other question about whether a man is allowed to make women's things… whether a white person is allowed to do a black person's thing, or whether a black person is allowed to do a white person's thing or a woman's allowed to do whatever… give me a break!"

The idea of cultural appropriation is "rubbish" he says. "Each one of us can claim what enters our consciousness without regard to whether you're allowed to do it or not. That's the freedom that artists have to insist on, it's one of the things that being an artist is about."

I ask about the undercurrent of fun that accompanies the paintings, that reminded me just a little of the finger paintings that young children make. He laughs, "They are finger paintings! I use a stick but mostly my hands and my body.

"I feel that one of the things we are doing as artists, it's serious play. And if it isn't joyful and playful, it won't go anywhere…

"I think artists can dare — even if we just fumble around — to go there. What is my interior, what is this space inside of me, why is this space inside of me so much bigger than me? All those existential questions — very simple questions at one level — they are, if you like, the working matter of this serious play."

The tallest part of the exhibition towers above us, a vaguely Christmas-tree shaped heap of welded metallic shards. It looks angry, I say, and he agrees. "Very, very angry, unwilling to be resolved and full of connections. It's 'male', and yet aspects hint at the female as well," he says. There are spaces and voids and curves in the structure. Perhaps a genderquake future, where boundaries between male and female are increasingly blurred will affect his work.

PHOTOS: ©ANISH KAPOOR

His ideas about separation and its dangers are very much part of his Jewish identity. He is not a "practising Jew" he says, he never was, although his maternal grandfather was the chazen of shuls in India. But he is "hugely conscious of my Jewishness, it matters to me massively."

Born in Mumbai in 1954, he moved to a kibbutz in Israel as a teenager, later studying electrical engineering. It was in Israel that he decided to be an artist, and moved to London where he has lived ever since.

His warnings about boundaries extend to the Jewish community, and argues that patrilineal descent should be accepted. If we did that, he says, we could double the number of Jews in the world. Inclusivity is all. "Instead of who we exclude, why do we exclude them, and who decides? And is it a matter of the colour of your skin, the place you come from?"

Jews, he says, come in all sorts and that should be celebrated. And that includes anti-Zionist Jews, "because you can be anti-Zionist and pro-Palestinian and be very Jewish and not antisemitic.

"To conflate those things is a huge mistake, and we must remember, it is our tradition.

"All the major writers of the left, from Marx onwards were Jewish," he points out. In fact Judaism, with its emphasis on community is intrinsically leftist. "I implore our Jewish sisters and brothers to not be taken in by the right-wing press…" Including the *JC*? "Yes!"

Our wish to protect ourselves, he says, should not go so far as to endanger us. "Really we have to get this in some perspective. These are all ways of isolating ourselves and we mustn't do it."

Anish Kapoor is at the Lisson Gallery May 15 to June 22.

PHOTOS: ©ANISH KAPOOR

Anish Kapoor (above) with works from the exhibition

> Don't be taken in by the right wing press'

LISSON GALLERY

Sky News
15 May 2019

LISSON GALLERY

The Economist
14 May 2019

The Economist

The body and the blood

Anish Kapoor's menstrual art and the vexed question of appropriation

"Can a man deal with women's issues?" the British artist wonders. "Is a man allowed to?"

Prospero ›
May 14th 2019 | by A.D.M.

BLOOD LEAKS and gushes from the art in Anish Kapoor's new show at the Lisson Gallery in London. Almost literally in the case of his silicone and fibreglass reliefs: the gauze dangling beneath them is spattered with scarlet. In his oil paintings, meanwhile, blood-red spurts emanate from corporeal pinks and black cavities and orifices. Black is deathly, says Mr Kapoor, but also, like red, a colour of earth.

Mr Kapoor, a British artist who was born in Mumbai, is best known for his monumental sculptures (including a gigantic tubular installation in the Turbine Hall of the Tate Modern in 2002). His new series of paintings contemplate the idea of ritual, and the meaning of blood—which, as he puts it, is "associated with the abject and impure". In particular, the paintings evoke menstrual blood. That motif raises another question, a version of which these days confronts artists in every genre and form. "Can a man deal with women's issues?" Mr Kapoor muses. "Is a man allowed to?"

Would that anxiety have occurred to him, say, 20 years ago? "We live in times of political correctness," he responds, adding: "I am for it." All the same, Mr Kapoor insists, "we have to manage it rather carefully"—in other words, being sure to safeguard artistic freedom. "Give me a break! What crap is that?" he asks of the notion that, for instance, a white artist should not explore a black person's experience. Such leaps are the purpose of what he calls "the artistic imagination". The only real question, he thinks, is whether the resulting work of art is good or bad.

Some of the shapes in his paintings—"partial objects", Mr Kapoor calls them—are distinctly female, but the bodily references of others are more ambiguous. His white canvases suggest purity, and contamination, but also an androgynous disembodiment. In fact, while these paintings trespass on a particular "taboo" in their concern with menstruation, the curves and concavities of much of Mr Kapoor's previous work likewise convey a preoccupation with bodies and sexuality. In his telling, the turn towards characteristically female forms goes well beyond him: he reckons that the entire history of art since Freud has involved a reorientation from phallic forms to the inward kind. In another of Mr Kapoor's metaphors, instead of peering from the mouth of the cave up into the sky, artists have instead turned back into the shadows.

The layout at the Lisson Gallery reinforces the theme of ritual. Several of the canvases hang around a pink onyx sculpture, in which twin ovoid shapes are encased in a sarcophagus or urn. As Mr Kapoor sees it, the blood in his paintings is pouring into the recesses of the stone, which to him resembles a *mikveh* or Jewish ritual bath (he is Jewish, but also describes himself as a practising Buddhist). To this reviewer's eye, the sculpture evokes a receptacle for the blood of a sacrifice; Mr Kapoor accepts that interpretation, too. Purity and defilement, sacrifice and cleansing: in art, as in life, contradictory things are often bound together.

"Anish Kapoor" is showing at the Lisson Gallery, London, until June 22nd

LISSON GALLERY

The Art Newspaper
14 May 2019

THE ART NEWSPAPER

NEWS → ART MARKET

Anish Kapoor unveils new paintings that evoke menstruation

British artist says men should be able "to deal with women's questions", as first major solo show in China is announced

ANNY SHAW
14th May 2019 16:35 BST

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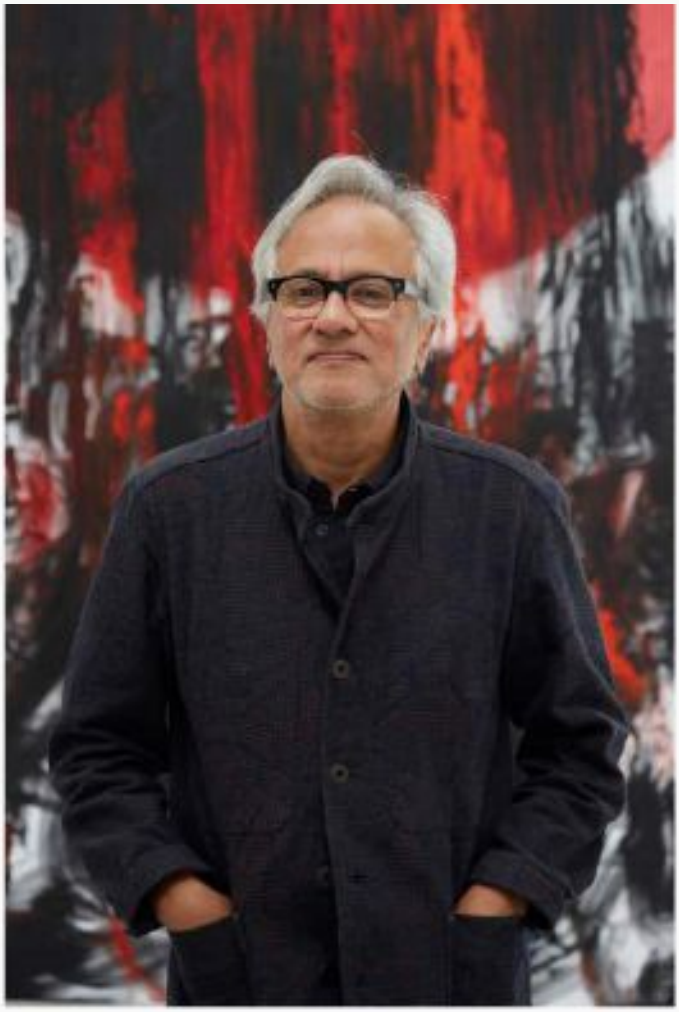

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Kapoor went heavy on the red paint for his new series of works Courtesy of Lisson Gallery and the artist

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London Live
14 May 2019

Anish Kapoor at the Lisson Gallery

Helena Wadia
14th May 2019

He is known around the world for his sculptures, but the latest exhibition from Sir Anish Kapoor also focuses on his works on canvas. Rarely shown in public, his paintings often relate closely to his works with stone and mirror.
The new collection, at the Lisson Gallery, is accompanied by three standing stones, placed outside the building.
Anish Kapoor is showing at the Lisson Gallery from 15 May - 22 June 2019

Arts, Design, News, News, London

The Guardian
03 April 2019

The Guardian

Anish Kapoor

Anish Kapoor's Brexit artwork: Britain on the edge of the abyss

Jonathan Jones

Wed 3 Apr 2019 01.00 EDT

▲ Echoes of the trenches ... Kapoor's work, titled A Brexit, A Broxit, We All Fall Down. Photograph: Anish Kapoor

Frightening rift tearing the UK apart – or gateway to a new land? Our critic explores the artist's response to Brexit, created for Guardian readers

Anish Kapoor has exposed a bottomless void at the heart of Britain. You could topple in there and never stop falling. In fact, that is exactly what we have done – and solid ground still seems to be nowhere in sight.

This artwork, which Kapoor has created for the Guardian, is his response to our current predicament and the new Britain that appeared after the leave vote. Although the Mumbai-born artist has given it a title – A Brexit, A Broxit, We All Fall Down – he does not wish to make any further comment about the piece, preferring to let it speak for itself.

The use of colour to suggest infinite voids is one of Kapoor's most mind-bending abilities as an artist – as a visitor to an exhibition in Portugal recently discovered. The man actually fell into one work, a black hole in the floor of the gallery. The artist's use of the world's blackest paint, which is actually called Kapoor Black, made it impossible to gauge the hole's depth. When the man fell in, it turned out to be a lot shallower than it looked, luckily for him.

This wound, however, is anything but shallow. Britain has inflicted a dreadful injury on itself: a gory rip stretching from Glasgow to the south coast. Our fellow Europeans are watching aghast from across the water as we near the abyss of a no-deal Brexit. Kapoor suggests the damage is even visible from space. His artwork might serve as a warning to any passing flying saucers: avoid this riven nightmare of a nation.

▲ Beyond simple slogans ... Anish Kapoor in his studio in London. Photograph: David Levene/The Guardian

While he wants this image to speak for itself, Kapoor has been a consistent and vocal opponent of Brexit since the 2016 referendum. He recently characterised our political paralysis as a descent into strange mental territory. "We've allowed ourselves as a nation to enter a space of unknowing," he told the i newspaper. "I can't help but see it in terms of a depressive self." He compared it to "self-harm".

Like a black hole of melancholy, something about this bottomless pit is alluring. Part of you wants to fall in

And here is the result of that self-harm. This is a surrealist work, one that seeks to let the unconscious out. But instead of his own demons, Kapoor lets out the shadows in the nation's psyche: yours, mine and Jacob Rees-Mogg's. For, like a black hole of melancholy, something about this bottomless pit is alluring. Part of you wants to fall in.

So this work goes well beyond simple sloganising. It is not another protest. It is an attempt to psychoanalyse the British. Is there something about us that wants to fall into shadow? There may be fear down there, but there's mystery too. What if, like that man in Portugal, we jumped? Britain's domestic history is remarkably middle of the road - a story of reform and stability - and yet there are moments when things go haywire and we find ourselves in a trench of blood.

Kapoor has captured our morbid obsession with the futile chasm of Brexit, the perverse character of a nation that wants, in some sad corner of itself, to be back in the trenches. A bigger trench this time, where meaning ends and reality dissolves.

● *Anish Kapoor's latest exhibition is at Pitzhanger Manor, London, until 18 August.*

i News
18 March 2019

i News

Anish Kapoor: 'Brexit is like what teenagers do when they self harm'

Glossy mirrors vs dirty orifices: as he opens two new exhibitions, Hettie Judah asks who is the real Anish Kapoor?

Anish Kapoor: 'An artist's job is to try and uncover what's unknown.' Photo: Jean-Philippe Ksiazek/ AFP/Getty

I did not realise, until I sat down to write, that Anish Kapoor had turned 65 the day before our interview. Had he, in retrospect, been a little dishevelled, a touch morning-after? Sure, there was paint on his quilted jacket – scraps of the hot reds, oranges and pinks that lick across his works on paper – but I had assumed that was part of a studied pose.

These days, the sculptor responsible for Chicago's massive *Cloud Gate* (aka The Bean) and London's even more massive ArcelorMittal Orbit is rather a snappy dresser. Knighted in 2013, he rolls with an international art elite more given to Gucci and Prada than battered Uniqlo.

Thus his choice of attire for a high-profile press conference seemed calculated to communicate hands-on involvement in the world of making. I thought Sir Anish was serving Jackson Pollock realness, but maybe he just woke up late after his birthday party and grabbed the first thing to hand?

'I've always been very interested in exotic materials'

The first of two Kapoor shows opening in London this spring, this is the inaugural exhibition in the gallery adjacent to the freshly restored Pitzhanger Manor in Ealing. A gorgeous little jewel-box of a building, it was Sir John Soane's country house from 1800 to 1810 and is full of the great architect's luscious flourishes: delicious proportions, domes, mirrors, painted ceilings and coloured glass.

You can see immediately why they chose Kapoor to open the gallery: he shares Soane's fascination with perceptual trickery. Concavities, concentric forms, framed views, eccentric perspectives and the desire to give intense pleasure in the act of looking are shared concerns for artist and architect alike.

Installation view of Anish Kapoor at Pitzhangar Manor & Gallery. Photo: Dave Morgan, Artwork © Anish Kapoor, courtesy Lisson Gallery

"I've known of Soane a long time. It's good to recognise, from my perspective, that many of these things that I've been playing with over the years were played with before in a different way," says Kapoor. "There are a lots of overlaps. What's interesting about Soane is that it's very playful."

We're sitting in Pitzhanger Manor's small dining room, and the sculptor nods approvingly at the blood-red walls: Soane was not shy of bold colour. Red, too, is something of a Kapoor signature, he has "made hundreds of red works" in materials ranging from powdered pigment to aluminium to silicone to wax ("I've always been very interested in exotic materials").

The exhibition in the adjacent gallery includes a red, mirrored work – *Glisten Eclipse* (2018) – concealing a classic Kapoor illusion. Two red convex mirrors jointed like a clamshell are shown in a corner – except that as you walk past the colour drains off one mirror in a sudden flash, revealing the colour as perfect reflection.

"For many years I've worked with concave mirror forms of all types; concavity of course invites interiority which is why I'm interested in it. It turns the world upside down."

The theme of concavity runs through Kapoor's exhibition at Pitzhanger, which is entrancing, despite its apparent simplicity. On paper, it's a small array of convex mirrors, and hollow, mirror-polished metal balls, but all perform subtly different tricks. Working out where exterior surface ends and interior begins, and vice versa, engages you in a constant game of wits.

The newly restored Pitzhanger Manor in Ealing, 2018. Photo: © Andy Stagg

The modest scale of this space with its glass ceiling domes allows circular reflections to zip around the room between the various objects, creating vistas of overlapping geometry that recall Soane's echoing archways in the main house.

"Geometry when taken to perfect extremes is also mysterious," says Kapoor "Geometry is a mind thing, it's not a body thing, it's completely made of mathematics and precision. Yet it can have this unknowable quality and that I think is another weird relationship with Soane – geometry does something that is less than graspable when given free rein."

Ah, the mind/ body thing. This show is all about ethereal pleasures and perfection: when I last sat down with Kapoor, exactly two years ago, he was unveiling an exhibition of rather different work at the Lisson Gallery.

'We've allowed ourselves as a nation to enter a space of unknowing, and that we let it linger and linger. And it's not just our leaders, it's all of us'

The sculptures in that show resembled vast, bloodied, festering bones bound with gauze. Works on paper looked like he'd been sketching the corrosive flames of hell. Many featured orifice-like forms that recalled his monumental trumpet-like sculpture *Dirty Corner* seen head on (which is a roundabout way of saying they look a bit vaginal.)

At the time, the artist was vocally incensed about the racism, xenophobia and intolerance whipped up by UKIP and the Leave campaign. The exhibition seemed a visceral response. How's he feeling now, I wonder? I mention Brexit, and there is some cathartic swearing.

Anish Kapoor: 'It's just two aspects of the idiot I am.' Photo: Philippe Chancel

"It's very interesting, isn't it, that psychically we've allowed ourselves as a nation to enter a space of unknowing, and that we let it linger and linger. And it's not just our leaders, it's all of us," he ponders.

"Nations don't do that, so why are we doing it? Is it some un-nameable spirit in us? I've been in psychoanalysis for more than 30 years, and I can't help but see it in terms of a depressive self. It's like what teenagers do when they self harm."

Read more: **Can Martin Parr's jolly exhibition cheer up Brexit Britain? Maybe**

In May, he has a new exhibition at Lisson Gallery. It's largely of paintings, and they're picking up where that last, visceral show left off. Are his thoughts about the psychic state of the nation feeding into these paintings? He thinks it's inescapable.

"An artist's job is to try and uncover what's unknown, otherwise it's not worth doing. What is not known in the deeper self. Making paintings is about trying to uncover something I didn't know before. The zeitgeist of course affects that – it's bound to."

Anish Kapoor, Glisten Eclipse, 2018. © Anish Kapoor, courtesy Lisson Gallery

These two Anish Kapoors – the artist of the mind and the artist of the body, if you like – have coexisted for a while. The red wax sculpture *Svayambh* (meaning self-generated) was first installed in 2007. Running on rails it left scraped traces of itself as it passed through doorways, messing up the immaculate whiteness of the art gallery.

The canon-like *Shooting into the Corner*, installed at the Royal Academy in 2009, fired red wax, building up an oozing messy heap over the course of his exhibition. Both seemed deliberate, wilful transgressions: a kind of acting out by an artist that had attained a status that put him beyond reprimand.

Read more: **The best exhibitions to visit in 2019, from Van Gogh to Bridget Riley**

There's no question that he's more drawn to this visceral, bodily side at the moment, and has been "for the last few years." How does all this dirt relate to the polish: how does the Anish that wants to please with perfection relate to the Anish who wants to disgust and horrify?

"I ask myself all the time – how do I reconcile these two things? And I've given up. I can't reconcile them. They are just two aspects of the stupid idiot that I am," he says, flashing a winning smile and shrugging his shoulders within that delicately paint-besmeared jacket.

Anish Kapoor, Pitzhanger Manor and Gallery, London, to 18 August (07756 866739); Anish Kapoor, Lisson Gallery, London, 15 May to 22 June (020 7724 2739)

The Daily Telegraph
13 March 2019

John Soane's Pitzhanger Manor, review: a brilliant addition to London's art scene

★★★★★

The Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery reopens in Ealing, west London CREDIT: JULIAN CALVERLEY

By **Mark Hudson**, ART CRITIC
13 MARCH 2019 • 4:00PM

It's a magnificent mansion, designed and lived in by the visionary neo-classical architect Sir John Soane (1753-1837), with a gallery alongside, set on the edge of a handsome park in Ealing, a mere tube hop from the centre of London. So how come you've probably never heard of it?

Substantially this is because Pitzhanger Manor spent much of the past century in the ownership of Ealing Council, functioning as a public library and little-visited gallery, and acquiring so many coats of municipal emulsion, the hand of Soane was barely visible.

Four years ago, however, the council closed Pitzhanger, forming a trust to restore the house and turn the adjoining library, built in the Thirties on top of Soane's demolished kitchens, into an art gallery.

The superb restoration, which opens on Saturday, returns the building as far as can be imagined to its original condition, while providing fascinating insights into Soane's creatively fertile, but ultimately troubled time here.

An Oxfordshire builder's son, who worked his way up to become architect of the Bank of England and President of the Royal Academy, Soane bought this plot, then in deepest rural Middlesex, as a weekend retreat, laying out extensive gardens – now Walpole Park – where he enjoyed fishing with his close friend, the painter J.M.W. Turner.

Upper Drawing Room at The Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery CREDIT: JULIAN SIMMONDS

The house, with its row of Grecian maidens atop ionic columns, appears a typically eccentric Soanean classical fantasy, a style familiar from his Dulwich Picture Gallery and his other more famous London residence in Lincoln's Inn Fields, now the Soane Museum. Stepping inside, you enter the theatrical world of Soane's imagination, the lower walls painted in sepulchral grey, while muted amber light filters eerily from a dim space overhead – actually from inner windows in the children's bedrooms. With a statue of Minerva standing over the oval sky-lit staircase, it's like being in a Roman tomb that also functions as a family house.

The staircase at Pitzhanger Manor CREDIT: JULIAN SIMMONDS

Soane retained two floors of an earlier building on the site designed by his mentor, George Dance the Younger, and a comparison of the two architects is revealing: where Dance's airy reception rooms, including a beautifully restored "Chinese" room with hand-painted wall-paper, have a typically neo-classical light and clarity, Soane obsessively plays with space, using mirrors, curving ceilings, arches and looming gaps between doorways to create a sense of ambiguous monumentality. You soon lose track of how big the house actually is. It feels grand, but is actually pretty tiny.

In the immaculately restored breakfast room, the circular ceiling, with its trompe l'oeil painted sky, seems to float in the curving "canopied" vaulting. Such a preoccupation with bending space, and Soane's use of infinite mirrors (in the library) and ambiguous illusion, means he could hardly have found a better contemporary foil than the sculptor Anish Kapoor, whose mirrored spheres look superb here, apparently floating against the white walls of the new gallery.

Anish Kapoor with his extraordinary Red to Blue (2016) CREDIT: JULIAN SIMMONDS

Kapoor's sculptures are all recent, with one, the extraordinary Red to Blue (2016), seen here for the first time: three enormous rainbow-tinted discs that seem to swell out from the wall. The reflected room swivels alarmingly in the burnished surfaces, which reveal themselves as shallow concave dishes as you approach.

But the most Soanean of Kapoor's works, in which you can feel a real meeting of minds between architect and sculptor over two and a half centuries is the square, Untitled (2018), in which the entire space is reflected, with you the viewer walking upside down across the ceiling.

Soane's time here didn't end well. Disappointed by his children's lack of interest in architecture and his wife's boredom with country weekends, he sold up after only ten years. This sympathetic restoration, however, with inspired use of modern art in the gallery, makes both a perfect introduction to Soane's unique architectural vision and a brilliant addition to London's art scene.

(Kapoor exhibition) Until Aug 18; 07756 866739; pitzhanger.org.uk

The Guardian
13 March 2019

The Guardian

Interview

Anish Kapoor: 'If I was a young Muslim, would I feel angry enough to join Isis? I would at least think about it'

Stuart Jeffries

Britain has gone through the looking glass and the artist's new show follows it into the abyss. He talks about the upsurge in racism, fighting for Shamima Begum – and his clash with France's president

At 7.30 on the morning after Britain voted to leave the European Union, Anish Kapoor left his London flat for an appointment with his analyst. On the street, he heard two men talking. "Bet he doesn't even speak English," said one. "I turned around and they were talking about me. I was so furious."

Sir Anish Mikhail Kapoor, CBE, RA, the 65-year-old, Turner prize-winning, Mumbai-born British-Indian artist, who has lived in London since the early 1970s and (though this is hardly the point) speaks better English than most of his countrymen, had woken up in a new land. "Since then permission has been given for difference, rather than being celebrated, to be undermined."

Kapoor's latest exhibition, a suite of mirrors and other discombobulating reflective sculptures, some inspired by Lewis Carroll, opens on Saturday at Pitzhanger Manor in London. Like Alice, Britain has gone through the looking glass, splintered its image and emerged in darkness.

Last year, a visitor to the Serralves museum in Porto jumped with Kierkegaardian heedlessness, into another of Kapoor's works, a 2.5-metre circular hole called Descent Into Limbo, fell eight feet and had to be taken to hospital. Perhaps that's an unwitting allegory too: Britain is broken, and is now stuck in the eternal limbo of Theresa May's Brexit strategy.

▲ 'I felt from the start this was an inside job' ... antisemitic graffiti daubed on Kapoor's vagina sculpture. Photograph: Francois Guillot/AFP/Getty Images

The sense of being diminished for the colour of his skin in a resurgently racist Britain is one reason Kapoor has decided to campaign for Shamima Begum, the young Londoner who joined Isis in Syria aged 15 and has since had three children die there, most recently her three-week-old son, Jarrah. "One of the good things about Britain is that people from all over the world lived here, reasonably tolerantly with different views," says Kapoor. "Increasingly that's less likely to be the case. We're seeing a kind of enforced normality where you have to prove you're a real Brit in some way that fits the populist agenda. Come on! Britons are better than that."

Kapoor is not Muslim, but Jewish (he was born to a Jewish mother of Iraqi ancestry and a Hindu father). Nevertheless, Begum's case resonates with him. "There's this real sense for me of who's next? There's an atmosphere of vilifying Muslims for having extreme views. If I was a young Muslim, would I feel angry enough to have joined Isis? I would at least think about it."

Kapoor has experience of being vilified as an artist. In 2015 he installed Dirty Corner, a vast steel funnel made for the gardens of Versailles, a sculpture he described as "the vagina of the queen". He intended it to disrupt landscape gardener André Le Nôtre's perfect geometric perspectives. "Before it opened I did an interview with the psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva in which I said I wanted to create some unease in this ordered space. It worked beyond my wildest dreams. Within two weeks it was covered with graffiti, which we cleaned off. We'd hardly finished when antisemitic graffiti appeared on it."

“I asked the French president to speak out against the destruction of culture. He said you must do it. Pathetic shit

The sculpture and surrounding rocks were sprayed with such phrases as “SS blood sacrifice” and “the second RAPE of the nation by DEVIANT JEWISH activism”. Kapoor decided not to erase them, but to display the ugliness manifested, the return of the repressed.

“I felt from the start this was an inside job. They have cameras everywhere, but when we asked the police to open an investigation they found nothing. I say phooey to that.” Then a councillor took Kapoor to court, bizarrely accusing the artist of displaying antisemitic material. He was invited for an audience at the Élysée Palace with then President François Hollande.

“It was around the time Isis bombed Palmyra” – the ruins of an ancient city that for 1,500 years had been one of the best preserved sites from antiquity. “So I said, ‘Mr President, the thing to do is call on people in France to speak out against the destruction of culture.’ And he replied, ‘*C’est vous qui devriez le faire.*’ It’s you who must do it. I thought, ‘Pathetic shit.’ Then he asked me to remove the graffiti. He said, ‘From a pedagogic point of view I understand what you are doing, but as a citizen I cannot agree.’ Complete waste of time!”

In the end Kapoor covered the bits of graffiti that were prominent with gold leaf - gold leaf being Louis XIV’s go-to decorative material. Just enough not to land him in jail.

▲ Dark reflections… Red to Blue, 2016. Photograph: © Anish Kapoor, courtesy Lisson Gallery

What about antisemitism this side of the Channel – does Kapoor have compunctions about Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn? “No. I’m Jewish and I believe he has done his best on this. He’s an anti-Zionist. And you can be anti-Zionist and pro-Palestinian without being antisemitic.” Kapoor suspects this is a distraction from a bigger political issue. “What this all misses is that we have probably the most rightwing government in Europe. If Corbyn comes to power he will be the first prime minister since Thatcher to believe people matter more than or as much as business. Blair was just a continuation of Thatcher. And that matters because the biggest polluters of our world are all big businesses.”

Sporting a hazmat suit, Kapoor guides me through his vast warehouse complex near the Oval cricket ground in London. Masked assistants, like a dozen Jesse Pinkmans to his Walter White, are cooking up not crystal meth, but carefully buffed painted mirrors, blood-red resin sculptures that look like placentas, and a work consisting of what Kapoor calls a hair of metal shards overlaying a dark conic space.

We pause before a large sculpture consisting of fabric folded in on itself on a mesh carapace. The fabric is curled up like a bouquet of roses, dark spaces between each petal. It's an unsettling variation on a theme that increasingly obsessed Kapoor in recent years: the negative space opened up by folds in fabric, paper, any material. While early folded works, such as the 2016 etching Fold IV, were riffs on open books (or just possibly variants on his Versailles vagina, but certainly not at all phallic) this piece is a symphony of holes that contain more than you'd think.

▲ 'I am the luckiest man alive' ... Kapoor in his London studio. Photograph: David Levene/The Guardian

"The story we were told at art school is that the Renaissance's great discovery was perspective. But there's another aspect, which is the fold. Being is represented in the involuted fold. The body of the Madonna is represented by the fold of her cloak."

We should, Kapoor tells me, look into the spaces between. "We live in a world of phallic objects. It's as if Brancusi's modernism led to the rocket, the forward-thrusting. I'm anti-phallic. Plato wanted to lead us out of the cave into the light. But what about the back of the cave, the upside down which is dark, perhaps even menacing and abject?" His is the art of stranger things, with Kapoor as sculpture's answer to Joyce Byers excavating voids into uncanny realms.

"I am the luckiest man alive," he says, as we stroll through the studios. "In the 60s there were perhaps five artists - Francis Bacon, Henry Moore and a few others - who could live by making art. Now the art world is huge and everything is for sale. I expected to spend my life teaching art rather than being able to be an artist."

But you're an artist making commodities even though you despise neoliberal commodification. "It's a system I've benefited from, no question. We risk becoming further cogs in the wheel of production. Only poetry and the more serious classical music seem able to resist becoming commodities. There's a sense that art has been eroded by the market. The world that Steve Bannon wants is here. And it's our fault." Whose? "Liberal lefties like me. I'm going to dare the art world is a part of it." Part of what? "The ruin of art's ability to stand opposed to the order of things."

It is as if art had fallen, bewitched by its own reflection, into Narcissus's pool. Which brings us back to Pitzhanger Manor. It's a brilliant coup to get the modern master of mirrors to do the first show at architect Sir John Soane's former country house after its lottery-funded refurbishment. Soane's spaces, after all, involve a play of mirrors "to infer a multitude of elsewheres", as artist Mark Pimlott puts it in his essay for the show.

▲ Brilliant coup ... Pitzhanger Manor. Photograph: Andy Stagg Photography/© Andy Stagg

Kapoor's mirrors are mostly concave, Soane's convex or flat. Where Soane's mirrors point beyond or back, Kapoor's point within. It's Nietzschean: we look into the abyss, and the abyss stares back.

Kapoor likes that idea. "Perhaps that is the mission of the artist - to make something that isn't knowable, that bears long looking, that's a dangerous thing, a deep space full of darkness." Such is his best art: mirrors that trap, voids that eat you up, bloody wall hangings that menace.

Kapoor thinks once more of the Portuguese man who fell into a hole. "Bless him, poor soul, he thought it was an illusion, even though he'd been given a piece of paper to tell him it was eight feet deep. And then he jumped in as if to prove it wasn't. In a way I was 100% successful. Art had taken him somewhere unexpected."

artnet News
12 March 2018

artnet news

Politics

The NRA Used Anish Kapoor's Most Famous Work in a Political Ad. Now the Artist Is Blasting Back.

The artist behind 'The Bean' stands off against the NRA's 'Clenched Fist of Truth.'

Eileen Kinsella, March 12, 2018

Anish Kapoor. Courtesy of Adam Berry/Getty Images.

Artist Anish Kapoor today blasted the National Rifle Association in an open letter in collaboration with the gun control advocacy group Everytown for Gun Safety. Specifically, he slammed the NRA for appropriating the image of his famed Chicago sculpture *Cloud Gate*, affectionately dubbed "The Bean," that sits in Millennium Park, where it was installed in 2004.

Anish Kapoor *Cloud Gate* (2006). Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Kapoor said the NRA used an image of the work—which shows the bean and a surrounding crowd in the plaza—without his consent in a "politicised advertisement" called the "The Clenched Fist of Truth." In his letter, Kapoor says the ad "plays to the basest and most primal impulses of paranoia, conflict and violence, and uses them in an effort to create a schism to justify its most regressive attitudes." The artist added that he was "disgusted" to see his work used by the NRA "to promote their vile message."

In the wake of recent shootings in Florida, Las Vegas, and Texas, Kapoor said that it is "more urgent than ever that this organization is held to account for its ongoing campaign of fear and hate in American society."

The advertisement in question is a one-minute video available on the NRA website, featuring national spokesperson Dana Loesch. As Loesch speaks, images flash across the screen in black-and-white showing crowds in time-lapsed movement. One of these is Kapoor's 'Cloud Gate' with people shown in stop-motion moving around it. Another shows the Hollywood sign, as Loesch speaks about an unidentified "They," who, she says, "use their media to assassinate real news," "use their schools to teach children that their president is another Hitler," "use their movie stars and singers and comedy shows and award shows to repeat their narrative over and over again," and "use their ex-president to endorse the Resistance."

Loesch ends by stating: "I'm the NRA," and calling the gun lobbying organization "Freedom's safest place."

Kapoor begs to differ, writing that the NRA video "gives voice to xenophobic anxiety, and a further call to 'arm' the population against a fictional enemy."

The complete letter is below:

Last year an image of my work Cloud Gate (in Millennium Park Chicago) was used without my consent in a politicised advertisement for the National Rifle Association (NRA), entitled The Clenched Fist of Truth. The NRA's 'advertisement' -as they describe the video on their own website – seeks to whip up fear and hate. It plays to the basest and most primal impulses of paranoia, conflict and violence, and uses them in an effort to create a schism to justify its most regressive attitudes. Hidden here is a need to believe in a threatening 'Other' different from ourselves. I am disgusted to see my work – in truth the sculpture of the people of Chicago – used by the NRA to promote their vile message. Recent shootings in Florida, Las Vegas, Texas, and a number of other towns and cities, make it more urgent than ever that this organization is held to account for its ongoing campaign of fear and hate in American society.

Cloud Gate reflects the space around it, the city of Chicago. People visit the sculpture to get married, to meet friends, to take selfies, to dance, to jump, to engage in communal experience. Its mirrored form is engulfing and intimate. It gathers the viewer into itself. This experience, judging by the number of people that visit it every day (two-hundred million to date), still seems to carry the potential to communicate a sense of wonder. A mirror of self and other, both private and collective, Cloud Gate – or the 'Bean' as it often affectionately referred to -is an inclusive work that engages public participation. Its success has little to do with me, but rather with the thousands of residents and visitors who have adopted it and embraced it as their 'Bean'. Cloud Gate has become a democratic object in a space that is free and open to all.

In the NRA's vile and dishonest video, Cloud Gate appears as part of a montage of iconic buildings that purport to represent 'Liberal America' in which the 'public object' is the focus of communal exchange. Art seeks new form, it is by its nature a dynamic force in society. The NRA in it's nationalist rhetoric uses Cloud Gate to suggest that these ideas constitute a 'foreign object' in our midst. The NRA's video gives voice to xenophobic anxiety, and a further call to 'arm' the population against a fictional enemy.

The NRA's nightmarish, intolerant, divisive vision perverts everything that Cloud Gate – and America – stands for. Art must stand clear in its mission to recognise the dignity and humanity of all, irrespective of creed or racial origin.

Gun violence in the United States affects every citizen of your country-all religions, all cultures, all ages. The NRA's continued defence of the gun industry makes them complicit in compromising the safety of the many in favour of corporate profit. I support Everytown for Gun Safety and their efforts to build safer communities for everyone across the United States.

Anish Kapoor
Artist

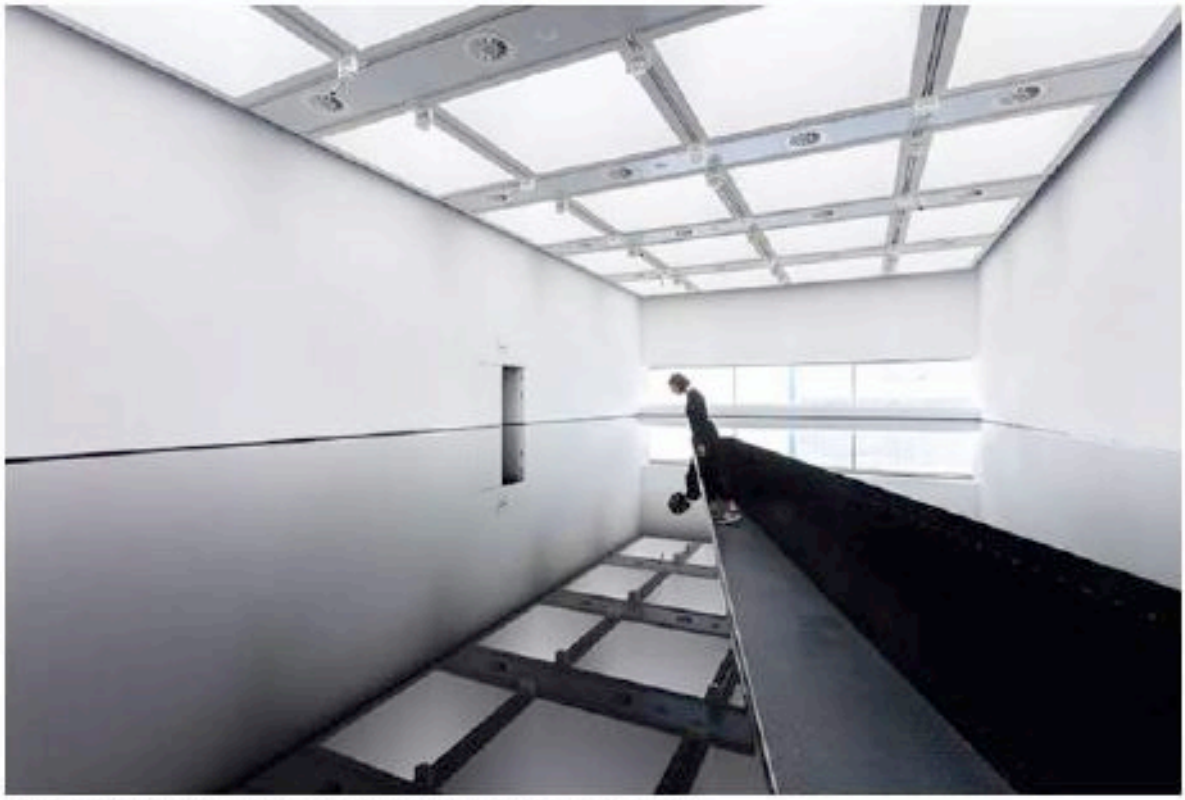
The Spectator
18 September 2018

THE SPECTATOR

There's almost nothing in this Hayward show – and that's the point

Shape Shifters at the Hayward Gallery is intriguing, elusive, contains at least one masterpiece and is full of menace

Martin Gayford



Black mirror: '20:50', 1987, by Richard Wilson at the Hayward Gallery

Space Shifters
Hayward Gallery, until 6 January 2019

A reflection on still water was perhaps the first picture that Homo sapiens ever encountered. The importance of mirrors in the history of art has been underestimated. Alberti, Vasari and Leonardo recommended them as a tool for painters. Van Eyck delighted in them. Caravaggio had one in his studio. And they haven't stopped fascinating artists. *Shape Shifters*, the new exhibition at the Hayward Gallery, might as well have been entitled 'Modern Art through the Looking Glass'.

Consequently, you see yourself all over the show, generally in surprising forms and positions. Early on, for example, you come across Anish Kapoor's 'Non-Object (Door)' (2008), a rectangular block of highly polished stainless steel, each side of which is curved and convex. The result is that, as you approach it, your reflected image — and the surroundings — swirl and fly around. Meanwhile, the work itself, which is, after all, a large metallic object, effectively disappears.

Dematerialisation is, you might think, an unexpected effect for a sculptor to aim at. After all, traditionally, sculpture has been about form, mass and weight. But making solid objects melt away is one of Kapoor's constant preoccupations. His 'Sky Mirror, Blue' (2016), installed on one of the rooftop courts at the Hayward, scoops up the skyline of London, and the clouds above, turns them upside-down and colours them a steely cobalt. Viewed at a distance, from inside the gallery, this is a strangely compelling sight: a cool, contemporary equivalent to the celebrated black obsidian mirror in which the Elizabethan magus Dr John Dee claimed to see spirits.

Reflections can do two intriguing things. They can make what's really there disappear and, perhaps simultaneously, create a new setting that doesn't actually exist at all. Richard Wilson's celebrated piece '20: 50' (1987) does both of these tricks, which adds an undertone of existential threat — and perfectly rational anxiety.

It consists of a huge tank of black recycled engine oil (the title refers to the grade of its viscosity, a particularly thick and glutinous one). You advance into this along a gangway that gets progressively narrower, so that at the end you are standing almost completely surrounded by this dense liquid. You can't really see it, but — and this is the sinister part — you can certainly smell it.

What you actually see is the top part of the room, reflected in the perfectly smooth surface — a black mirror much better than Dr Dee's. Like most contemporary art fans, I've experienced this piece many times in various iterations of the Saatchi Gallery over the years. Nonetheless, for a second the illusion fooled me. I was visiting the show before the installation was quite complete, and briefly wondered whether the oil had been pumped in yet. Then I realised that what I had assumed was some space below the gallery floor was in fact a vast and faultless reflection of the ceiling.

This work by Wilson — a masterpiece — is sui generis in its injection of a hint of menace (a worry about the consequences if a trailing cuff or scarf were to dip into the art). Most of the pieces on show are more serene, though there is a subtly disquieting quality to Yayoi Kusama's 'Narcissus Garden' (1966–2018). This is another room-filling installation, but rather than thick, inky oil she has covered the floor with shiny metal globes the size of bowling balls. Each of these, the title suggests, is like a tiny mini-you, mirroring the spectator in almost but — because the angle changes — not quite the same way as all the others.

Several of the artists included in the show were based in California in the 1960s and afterwards, and represent a movement or tendency that hasn't yet been given a satisfactory name. Various tags have been suggested: 'light and space', 'West Coast minimalism' and, slightly desperately, the 'LA look'. But none caught on in the way that, say, 'pop art' did.

In a way, it's appropriate that this group, if it was a group, should be nameless, since the works on show by Larry Bell and Robert Irwin are exceptionally elusive. Irwin's 'Untitled (Acrylic Column)', 1969–2011, is close to not being there at all. It's a long, thin, transparent prism suspended in front of you. The artist calls it an 'optical instrument'.

When you look through it, what you see is inflected. Only slightly, but enough to suggest that everything we look at is illusory — or is at least created by our sense organs and brains, working together, on the basis of evidence that is always partial and sometimes wrong.

This is also the message of the exhibition. You might complain that there's almost nothing in the Hayward — just a lot of mirrors and reflections — leaning against the wall, on the floor, in mirror glass mazes, and even carried around by live performers. But that is also the point.

LISSON GALLERY

Art Asia Pacific
18 April 2017

Portrait of Anish Kapoor. Photo by Ned Carter Miles for *ArtAsiaPacific*.

APR 18 2017

INDIA | UNITED KINGDOM

ALL FORM IS GOOD: INTERVIEW WITH ANISH KAPOOR

BY NED CARTER MILES

Anish Kapoor first exhibited at London's Lisson gallery in 1982. In the 35 years since then, he has used a wide variety of materials, including pigment, stone, mirrors and wax to extend his artistic enquiry in both private shows and high-profile public commissions.

Now, in Lisson's 50th year since owner Nicholas Logsdail founded the gallery, Kapoor is exhibiting there for the 16th time with an unusually eclectic selection of works. Among them are painted three-dimensional silicon objects wrapped in gauze, mirror pieces and a collection of "drawings" that more closely resemble traditional paintings. *ArtAsiaPacific* caught up with Kapoor at the show's preview to talk about the spaces he creates, the problem of the artist's hand with which he has struggled throughout his career, and the development of mythology in both art and life.

You've spoken about developing languages in your practice—a "pigment" language, a "void" language, a "mirror" language—how would you describe the language here?

It's confusing. I don't have a phrase for it yet, but I think what I'm trying to get at is that the object includes its shadow. One of the things the gauze does is include a space within the space of the object. It's only half-physical.

Would you call the space a heterotopia?

Yes, something like that. I haven't made enough of them yet and I haven't fully formed it, but it's happening there somewhere . . .

ANISH KAPOOR, *Shade*, 2016. silicone, fiberglass and gauze, 230 × 325 × 225 cm. Copyright the artist. Courtesy Lisson Gallery, London.

Do you believe there's such a thing as an ideal language?

I don't believe there's an ideal language at all. Some of them have been geometric and, if you like, utopic; others have been entropic and acknowledge decay. I don't see entropy as not being mathematical; it's just a different kind of geometry, even though it doesn't appear to be so at a first reading. A normal flow of art history would tell us that artists work in that way or that way. For some reason, I need both sides.

What does it mean to you then to have both entropic and geometric "languages" under the same roof?

In my first studio I wrote on a wall: "There is no hierarchy of form. All form is good." And I've stuck with it. I guess they both acknowledge psychic reality. One is a pursuit for an absolute or a purity, while the other is uncertain, and I'm more interested right now in uncertainty than I am in purity, especially as purity seems vulgar in this political moment.

There's something very fleshy and visceral about these silicon paintings. They seem to suggest violence, but also a kind of genesis. What is this doing?

Those two words you've used, one is beginning and one is the end. All our ideas about the universe seem to suggest a big bang, a blow-up beginning and a blow-up end, and one wonders to what extent those things are mythological, even in physics. One of the real pursuits of art —perhaps more so of abstract art—is consciousness. Science on the whole hasn't been so good at talking about this. I think it's legitimate to ponder what is a beginning, what is consciousness. It necessarily implicates things like meaning, that moment when a non-thing becomes a something, and, in the conversation between a viewer and a thing being viewed, where and how meaning arises and recedes. I think that to-and-fro is essential, and has something to do with both consciousness and, weirdly, with beginning and end. It's not fully logical, but it has something to it.

ANISH KAPOOR. *Tongue*, 2016, gouache on paper. 50.6 × 67.2 cm. Copyright the artist. Courtesy Lisson Gallery, London

In your drawings, there seems to be clear cosmological imagery. You've got your crescent moons and supernovas and nebulae . . .

Definitely! Definitely! I think it's definitely there. Some parts of it are conscious of course, but some parts are to do with scale. When you have a sun and moon, you make the space bigger. I'm really interested in that. Enlarging the space isn't simply making a big space and putting a thing in it. Does the so-called "voiding" of a thing or a space—either by painting it black or all the other things I've tried to do over the years—merely paint it black, or does it do what is more poetically poignant to my mind, which is to make more space? Is it possible to make more space than there was when you started out? I think that's an ambition worth pursuing, and weirdly kind of possible.

You veil these silicon objects with translucent gauze, while also describing them as paintings. Does this gauze function like a picture plane?

I'm glad you put it like that because that's exactly right. Exactly right. It's the thing through which you need to look. It mediates the interior. The first ones I made weren't painted. Curiously, painting it black makes it most transparent—the opposite of what you think it would be. When I first did it I naively thought painting it black would make it darker. I've been playing with that: levels of transparency.

You've always tried to remove the artist's hand from your work. Here you have both two-dimensional and three-dimensional works, the former of which can't really escape the "hand" . . .

Correct! Correct!

ANISH KAPOOR, *First Site*, 2016, gouache on paper, 51 × 67.1 cm. Copyright the artist. Courtesy Lisson Gallery, London.

. . . And when you have both together, as here, it reveals this developmental process, and thus even more of the "hand." How do you feel about this? Is it something you're more at peace with here?

I've made the decision to put the drawings in. I think it's the first time I've ever put drawings in the same space as objects, and drawings—they're more like little paintings really—are clearly of the "hand." I'd love them not to be, but there they are. I hope it's not fetishized as an idiosyncratic kind of thing. It's also to do, in this particular group of works, not so much with line but with color. So, as you say, the "hand" is there, there's no denying it!

You once said artists don't make objects, but rather mythologies. There's a certain sense of history around this show, how do you see your own mythology?

First of all—50 years—Nicholas is unbelievable. I have to say big *chapeau* to him for this way of really working with artists. I'm really proud of him for that. I've tried to be associated with Lisson and what it stands for in that respect.

The first time I realized that mythology mattered was when I did the Venice Biennale [in 1990]. I was a young artist. It was one of my first fully international shows and, extraordinarily to me, people were telling me what my work was about. They were telling me the stuff I'd been saying for the last few years. I thought, "Wow, that's so weird."

That's pretty much what we've been doing here in our conversation!

Exactly. And it works! Objects represent an evolving mythological process. Who knows where it goes? I'm convinced that's the reason it takes more than a lifetime for art to have a real effect. With truly great artists like Yves Klein, for example, it's taken 40 to 50 years for us to see him in a particular way and be able to say that color is mythologized, that blue is a part of his image, his hand. It's a hell of a process . . .

Anish Kapoor's latest eponymous exhibition at Lisson Gallery, London, is on view until May 6, 2017.

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Guardian Guide
15 April 2017

the guardian guide

exhibitions

◀ Part of Anish Kapoor's new installation

◀ *(Far left, top)* Erik van Lieshout, Janus (2012)

◀ *(Far left, bottom)* Rachel Kneebone, 399 Days (2012-13)

DAVE MORGAN

Five of the best

1 Anish Kapoor
One of our greatest artists, this modern Rubens continues the exploration of colour and its emotional power that started with his early experiments in bright-hued sculptural forms in the 1980s. In his latest works, he plays with the idea of painting in the same way a child might play with a doll - by pulling it apart. Spectacular, intensely vivid, somehow erotic wall works deliberately confuse two dimensions with three and voluptuously celebrate the power of art.
Lisson Gallery, NW1, to 6 May

2 Graham MacIndoe
It's Trainspotting, only real. Scottish photographer MacIndoe, who lives in New York, took the brutal self-portraits in this exhibition when he was trying to overcome an addiction to heroin. Later, once recovered, the artist rediscovered his unflinching pictures; they preserve a story that is both unsettling and matter-of-fact. There is no sentiment or self-pity here, only real life.
Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh, to 5 Nov

3 Rachel Kneebone
Fantastical porcelain sculptures that create fountains of body parts, white grottos of surreal desire and tottering towers of pale flesh. Kneebone has something in common with Turner-nominated sculptor Rebecca Warren as well as being consciously inspired by Rodin's Gates of Hell. Her exuberant sensuality is eerily undercut by the icy coldness of her works' bright glazed surfaces - it is as if a witch has frozen a decadent court.
V&A, SW7, to 14 Jan

4 Marlene Dumas: Oscar Wilde and Bosie
Two portraits of the joyously provocative late Victorian dandy and the young man he began a relationship with in 1891. Lord Alfred "Bosie" Douglas was the son of the Marquess of Queenberry, whose court battle with Wilde led to the writer's downfall. These portraits haunt in their overtly decadent colours and sensual expressiveness. Dumas brings a dark eroticism and sense of doom.
National Portrait Gallery, WC2, to 30 Oct

5 Erik van Lieshout
Cats that live in the cellars of the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg are among the stars of Van Lieshout's videos, which also feature his family and a mysterious dead man called Janus. These blackly comic meditations on modern life are shown in an immersive installation by this Dutch artist, whose anthropological eye offers ironic reportage on the social world, from spontaneous portrait drawings to doc-style interviews.
South London Gallery, SE5, to 11 Jun

Jonathan Jones

Financial Times
5 May 2012

FINANCIAL TIMES

Lunch with the FT: Anish Kapoor

Over a fusion takeaway feast at his London studio, the artist talks to the FT's Jackie Wullschlager about sex, psychobiography and the 'madness' of his towering new sculpture at London's Olympic Park

Jackie Wullschlager MAY 5, 2012

2

Although I have the address, it is impossible to pinpoint the entrance to Anish Kapoor's studio in Camberwell. It turns out that the artist owns all the buildings in the street – a low-rise row of former rollerblind factories that line one side of the road. On the other side is a construction site, piles of rubbish and an abandoned Routemaster bus – nothing to do with Kapoor. All around are the tower blocks of south London.

"I've been here for 25 years," says Kapoor, a trim, small figure with floppy silver hair and matching grey glasses, when he emerges at the end of the terrace. This is where, a few months ago, the last factory was converted into a huge, glass-walled, white-painted box, the atelier where he works alone, undisturbed by the 20-strong technical and office staff on the rest of his site. "Life's gone pretty well and I've been able to get the whole street," Kapoor explains, speaking softly but precisely, with a slight Indian accent – he was born in Mumbai in 1954. "I hope it's not just megalomania – well, a certain amount of it is, of course! – that drives all this."

Dressed in jeans, open-necked shirt and dark jacket, he is relaxed and immediately friendly, taking my arm to negotiate the muddy puddles on the pavement as we begin a tour. One of Britain's most acclaimed sculptors, he has made an estimated fortune of £80m from his art and won the Turner Prize. But this summer his work, which is abstract and depends on formal contrasts of light and dark, surface and depth, inside and outside, will reach a vast new public with " Orbit", at 115 metres the largest public sculpture in the UK. Commissioned for London's Olympic Park after a competition in which Kapoor was chosen ahead of other celebrated names, including his keen rival Antony Gormley ("He did make a bit of a scene about it"), "Orbit" was completed days ago and launches next week.

Kapoor first suggested meeting at La Petite Maison in Mayfair but a last-minute visit to the Olympic Park in the East End of town left him short of time, so we relocate for a studio lunch, beginning in his serene working space. Walking past walls lined with his characteristic concave mirror pieces and yellow, purple, pink discs which look solid but are radiant voids – "Monochrome is incredible, isn't it?" – we arrive at a model of the rollercoaster steel coils and giant canopy of "Orbit".

"It's a bit of madness," Kapoor laughs. "The canopy is dark and menacing. I'm interested in this journey from dark to light – you go into this dark heavy object, then up the lift and you're tipped out into an observation platform with two concave mirrors, so you're in a kind of instrument for looking. You're inside a telescope ...I've been looking at this for two years and it still looks uncomfortable. That's the point. I can make long, sleek elegant things, but this object needed to be the opposite.

"There's so much in the tradition of the tower that's about symmetry but even though 'Orbit''s bolted steel is a 19th-century method, it's a 21st-century result, it's asymmetrical, it's tipping, a mess of a knot, the elbows sticking out. I hope Cecil [Balmond, the structural engineer, Kapoor's collaborator] and I get away with it! It has the language of sculpture, but also archaic architecture – the Tower of Babel, an ant's nest, people storming, climbing all over an object. It's the idea of participation, performing, you act it out, you go up."

I think "Orbit" (or "ArcelorMittal Orbit" to give it its full title, after the company that contributed £19.6m towards its cost) manages to combine a mythic quality with the inventiveness, humour and subversions of history that are a mark of 21st-century sculpture. But it is also the most extravagant example yet of how, in the past two decades, sculpture has become spectacle, performance, architecture – from Gormley's "Angel of the North" (1998) to installations in Tate Modern's Turbine Hall Unilever Series such as Rachel Whiteread's mountain of 14,000 white boxes in " Embankment" (2005) and Carsten Höller's giant slides "Test Site" (2006). With this gigantism, sculpture has won wider popular engagement; but has it also suffered losses – of seriousness, of innovation and experimentation?

"Public sculpture is problematic because it always becomes an emblem," Kapoor says. "I've tried to avoid it being a logo. I'm interested in scale because it's a genuine, actual tool of sculpture. We live in a world where there are lots of big things but few have scale. That jaw-dropping moment – when you say, 'Can it really be?' – there are only a few of those: like in a cathedral, when your body is thrown into it, and it brings all kinds of emotional repercussions. That's what I'm aiming for."

At this rather hubristic instant, there is a loud, resounding bang: a mirror piece crashes down from the wall, shattering into fragments. Kapoor strolls over, phones a technician and shrugs: "Stuff happens." But he hurries from that studio into another, packed with a cement mixer and a work-in-progress of piled-up cement turds, then invites me into a long pristine room with oak floors, white walls, two white chairs and a white table set with salads and platters of fish. Kapoor's studio manager, Lucy, offers drinks: he chooses Coke, I request mineral water.

The food has been ordered from the fashionable delicatessen Ottolenghi. Its rich western/Middle Eastern/Asian mix of colours and flavours offsets the streamlined purist interior in a way that almost parodies Kapoor's aesthetic of late-minimalist abstraction revitalised by brilliant hues and sensuous textures. The artist, however, surveys the luscious offerings mournfully, presumably thinking of what might have been. "Have you been to La Petite Maison?" he inquires. "You must go, Jackie! It's superb, Provençal food done so well – and owned by an Indian!"

Nevertheless, he tucks in readily. We begin with chargrilled tuna steaks with chilli, on which Kapoor heaps miso yoghurt. "I love food!" he announces, adding some salad – a spoonful of mixed green beans, shaved asparagus with spinach, chilli, garlic and chervil; another of cucumber, celery and radish with coriander, mint and nigella seeds. I follow suit and, wondering whether these dishes share something of the fusion cuisine of his childhood – Kapoor's maternal family came from Baghdad, emigrating to India where his grandfather was cantor of the Pune synagogue – I question him about his mother.

"My mother? Oh God, don't ask! God knows!" he answers hastily, adding without enthusiasm, "It was a great childhood." The oldest of three brothers, Kapoor left India at 17 for Israel: "My parents were very cosmopolitan, we grew up with Judaism as a cultural reality, a family reality, rather than a religious one – which is right, I believe in that."

Initially, he lived on a kibbutz, then studied engineering before realising "it really wasn't for me, it was too tight. I went back to the kibbutz and decided I had to be an artist. I got myself a little studio and made some really bad paintings. My parents weren't over the moon. I was so young and so naive. I'd hardly looked at any art, hardly ever seen a painting. Then I came to art school [Hornsey College of Art] in London and felt utterly liberated. They were very difficult years emotionally, but in a way I'm grateful for them. It took me many years of psychoanalysis to get over it."

Was the problem a standard coming-of-age neurosis? Kapoor looks vaguely amused at this understatement. "Er, no. It was much, much, much more than that. It was a sense of disorientation, not culturally, but with myself, which I needed to live with, understand, be less afraid of. Perhaps I was also coming to terms with an idea that I wanted to do something. No – wait, it's difficult to find the right words – a sensation that I had something to do, but I didn't know how to do it and didn't know if I could allow myself to do it.

"The first years when I was making art, I felt as if I didn't exist if I didn't work. Now I don't. The work got better when I didn't feel that. Now I've allowed the work to be the work, I can be me, and somehow we can live together." He quit psychoanalysis around the time he married medieval art historian Susanne Spicale in 1995; the couple have a daughter, Alba, 16, and son Ishan, 15.

We move on to grilled salmon served with avocado, coriander, chilli onion and mustard seed salsa, helping ourselves to further salads: baby potatoes with parsley pesto, courgettes, walnuts, radicchio and watercress; roasted squash with green olive and yoghurt sauce, red onion, capers, mint and sumac. Everything is fresh, robust and tastes less complicated than it sounds.

"The psychoanalytic method is somewhat the studio method," Kapoor expands. "The speculative process, the space between analyst and patient where there's a third object, the fantasy object – that's very much like sculpture. In a post-Freudian world, it's not very interesting if you don't speculate. After the idea that human motivation is complex, that there is Jewish guilt and taboos, that there is anxiety in all projects, there's no such thing as an innocent eye. All looking is done with envy, hate, love.

"That's a problem for the maker of things, this question of the anxiety of the viewer and therefore the anxiety of the object. [Marcel] Duchamp came to the idea that the viewer needed to look with a particular stance. 'The Large Glass' ('The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even') is divided into male and female – looking is divided, it's about desire, stripping something bare."

I say that I often ask artists whether creativity and sex come from the same place. "Definitely, yes! Does any artist ever say 'No'? It's pretty bloody obvious, isn't it? A fundamental thing of the world is that it's made up of male and female, night and day, up and down, all opposites, from the moment we are born until we die, life and death. It's almost silly to say it. One of the riches of abstract language is that it can point to these bits of deeper content."

Kapoor's earliest powdered pigment pieces in the 1980s featured thrusting red stalactites and rounded lemon-orange breasts. Tate Modern's popular "Ishi's Light" (2003, named for his son) is an incomplete egg with a distorting mirrored red lacquer interior that you enter through a slit. In "Shooting into the Corner", an installation at his 2008 Royal Academy show, a gun of red paint was fired across a gallery ("Corners are crucial to sculpture. A corner has all kinds of implications – sexual, architectural, the secret part of the room, womb-like"). This was a parody of masculinity – as is the curving, looping "Orbit", which can be read as a feminised, circular, open-ended version of the phallic tower form.

Why has Kapoor so relentlessly explored abstract forms of sexual polarity? "Look, Henry Moore spent his whole career making women in a landscape. I think he didn't acknowledge fully the sexuality – they were almost asexual presences. I have always been interested in involuted form, which is often vaginal, female. It would be dishonest not to recognise that it's blatantly sexual. You can't be coy about it. Art is good at intimacy: it can say, 'Come here, be part of this', beckoning. It's a tool of intimacy."

Is his art, then, autobiographical? "No! No, but yes. You can't avoid your psychobiography. In psychoanalysis, you go into the room with a problem, lie on the couch, and something else emerges, which has repercussions way more interesting than anything you might have gone in with. Similarly when you go into the studio, you get unexpected connections. If I had a great message to deliver, god how boring it would be. Boring for me above all. Not knowing, yet daring – that's the métier!"

Lucy comes in to offer coffee – "Oh I'd love one!" he exclaims. "No I wouldn't, I've already had too much" – and pudding: chocolate fondant cake and lemon mascarpone tart. We both declare that we are full, yet the cake, moist and flavoured with coffee and rum, is irresistible. "I can't help it," says Kapoor.

"I love poetry, I read a lot," he continues, as we each slowly slice wedges off the cake until we have finished it all. "Rilke was a great constructor. And Twombly, a bit of paint and he scribbles something on canvas, how does he get away with it, the fucker – conveying a whole passionate universe with the smallest of means!

"That's what poetry is about – condensing experience into a meaningful few words, gestures. 'Vir Heroicus Sublimus' by Barnett Newman, it's a big red painting with a strip in, and yet it isn't – it's something mysterious. Newman is one of my favourite artists. Duchamp is another – 'The Large Glass', there are very few objects in the world that remain mysterious like that. And the third artist for me is Joseph Beuys: if Duchamp's idea was that all objects are art, Beuys' was that all objects have mythological potential.

"It's compelling, a deeply serious idea but also playful. I hope with increasing confidence that I'm being playful ...You know, who cares? I have the guts to do it."

Jackie Wullschlager is the FT's chief visual arts critic

The Telegraph
21 September 2009

The Telegraph

Anish Kapoor at the Royal Academy, review

Anish Kapoor's retrospective at the Royal Academy is an awe-inspiring riot of the senses. Rating: * * * * *

Anish Kapoor's 'Shooting Into the Corner' at the Royal Academy Photo: WOLFGANG WOESSNER

By Richard Dorment
6:26PM BST 21 Sep 2009

SOMETHING and nothing, form and formlessness, concave and convex, hard and soft, rough and smooth, inside and outside, slow and fast, presence and absence, colour and non-colour, reflection and absorption, surface and depth, clean and dirty, big and small, movement and stasis, austerity and excess, illusion and reality, creation and destruction: Anish Kapoor's joyful mid-career retrospective at the Royal Academy is a like an inventory of the possibilities of sculpture.

The show begins with pieces made from wood covered in gesso and powdered pigments such as you see sold in neat conical piles in Indian street markets for use in dyes, cosmetics and at Hindu festivals. Small in scale, they sit on the gallery floor, spiky red stalactites, orange-yellow breasts, a lemon wedge of pure yellow, a miniature mountain range of intense blue. By turns sensual and cruel, they look so fragile that you fear a sudden gust of wind could blow them away.

Looking though the door leading into the next gallery, we see what looks like a veil of saturated yellow floating in front of the wall. In fact, it is a six-square-metre disc made from fibreglass and covered in 12 coats of yellow paint which, when seen from a distance, fills our field of vision.

Only when you approach it do you understand that the wall is not flat but concave, and that what looked solid is actually a void. Drawn into its inviting nothingness, we are suffused with pleasure even as our sense of self feels diminished by its enveloping radiance. The last time I felt something similar, it was in front of another giant disc – Olafur Eliasson 's famous mirrored sun in Tate Modern's turbine hall.

Elsewhere Kapoor shows free-standing stainless-steel sculptures and hanging discs, in whose polished curves we expect to see our own reflections, as in the sculptures of Michelangelo Pistoletto. But Kapoor's surfaces are concave, so that when you see yourself in them, you and your surroundings are either upside down or grotesquely distorted in a way that makes you feel that what is important to Kapoor is not the object, but the animated gallery space around and behind you. More worryingly, in a vertical statue entitled *Non-Object (Pole)*, from certain angles and distances you can't see yourself at all.

Almost the opposite sensory experiences occur in Kapoor's new series of sculptures, where concrete shapes that look like slugs, turds or phalluses, are piled up to make dozens of mounds of different shapes and sizes. Some look organic, like worm casts or piles of dung, while others feel architectural, like the crumbling ruins of a forgotten civilisation. Whereas in the first galleries Kapoor seduced with light, colour and sleek, inviting shapes, here he repels by using a material that absorbs the light and evokes things that either disgust us or feel ancient, damaged, decayed.

So far, you could say that for all his innovation, Kapoor is at least working with the materials and techniques of traditional sculpture. But in two other works in the show, he moves decisively into the realms of performance art. Not since the days when J M W Turner arrived at the Royal Academy on varnishing days to work in public with brush and palette knife on pictures he had submitted as mere dabs of colour, has Burlington House seen anything what remotely like what will go on in those galleries this autumn.

Kapoor is using a powerful cannon to shoot heavy pellets of crimson wax from one gallery onto the wall of another. By the end of the show's run, 20 tons of wax will have built up on the gallery floor and spattered the walls.

But the essence of the art work is not on the walls, but in the performance. Every 20 minutes, an attendant in black enacts a carefully choreographed ritual, and I defy you not to feel a shiver of fear and excitement when he loads the cannon and the gallery explodes with the sound of the shot.

Shooting into the Corner has been discussed in terms of its Freudian symbolism, but I think it is closer to Kapoor's intention to see it as following on from the famous sculpture Richard Serra made in 1968 by flinging molten lead against a gallery wall.

The other never-to-be-forgotten performance Kapoor is staging for this show takes the form of a 40-ton block of red wax, paint and Vaseline that moves on tracks through five galleries at the RA. So high and so broad that it only just fits through each archway, the huge object leaves a splattered residue of crimson gunge on the walls and floors as it passes, like the great juggernaut that is dragged by devotees of the Hindu god Jagannatha at the festival of Rathayatra and which is said to crush everything in its path. The silent presence travels so slowly that it takes an hour and a half to complete its journey. It's like a dream in which all the paint in all the paintings ever shown at the Royal Academy has somehow returned in the form of a giant brushstroke slapping paint back and forth, back and forth, all over the galleries.

No other contemporary British artist has Kapoor's range of imagination and no one else routinely works on this scale. Over the years, he's become more of a public than a private artist – or at least one whose most effective works are intended not for private contemplation, but to inspire awe in large numbers of people.

In the courtyard of the RA, there's a giddy example of Kapoor at his most grandiose and light-hearted, a new sculpture in the form of a column of large polished, stainless-steel spheres that appear to rise up from the ground weightlessly like giant bubbles in a bottle of champagne, and look so precariously balanced that they could come tumbling down with a gentle push.

Stop to look and what you'll see in the mirror-like silver surface of each sphere are reflections of the buildings surrounding the courtyard and the people walking among them. It's like an animated version of Brancusi's *Endless Column*, reflecting the whole world, in fact, in constant change.