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LISSON GALLERY

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Press Release

Anish Kapoor

20 August – 30 October 2022

Lisson Gallery 4/F, Building D7, Yard No.3, Jinhang East Road, Beijing



Installation view of Anish Kapoor, Lisson Gallery, Beijing, 20 August - 30 October 2022
© Anish Kapoor. Courtesy Lisson Gallery. Photography by Yang Hao

Lisson Gallery's first permanent space in Beijing is inaugurated by a series of new paintings by Anish Kapoor. Historically renowned as a sculptor, Kapoor has gained recent acclaim for his paintings, a part of his practice that was previously rarely seen yet an integral and longstanding element of his oeuvre. This is Kapoor's first solo exhibition with Lisson Gallery in China, marking his return to Beijing following his groundbreaking two-part solo exhibition in 2019 across the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) Museum and Taimiao Art Museum of the Imperial Ancestral Temple.

This exhibition coincides with Kapoor's much-anticipated dual site exhibition at Venice's historic Gallerie dell'Accademia and Palazzo Manfrin, taking place during this year's Venice Biennale; a presentation that powerfully reveals the full, visionary range of Kapoor's practice, his painterly sensibilities and sculptural prowess. It was preceded in 2021 with a significant painting exhibition at Modern Art Oxford in the U.K.



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The paintings in this exhibition traverse the expressionistic, the figurative and the abstract, in an intensely manifested imagery that conjures primal enactments of sacrifice, ritual and obliteration. In these paintings Kapoor extends the poetics of his sculptural language continuing his exploration of the borders between inner and outer states. Similarly embedded in these works is an exploration of colour and matter; landscape and body both merge and expunge the other within the picture plane in mark-making and hues that suggest tumultuous forces at work. Kapoor's paintings seem to conjure the sublime landscapes seen by artists of the Romantic era such as JMW Turner, though it is one in which annihilation is viscerally present – in *The Night Encloses* (2021) dense mark-making evokes the depth of the earth as it swells and erupts. Alongside this, *Inhuman* (2020) depicts a fiery volcanic landscape, and in *Oh Mother, Tell Me My Life Again* (2021), we imagine the moon rising over the peak – a symbolic narrative of a new cycle.



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Similarly indicating the subject of origin is the work titled *Blackness From Her Womb* (2021), a large-scale dark triptych that subtly radiates red, the colour of the interior that is fundamental to Kapoor's wider practice. Far from a departure from the many diverse elements of Kapoor's practice, these paintings recall some of Kapoor's most ambitious, distinguished works as seen worldwide, including *Symphony for a Beloved Sun* (2013), *Svayambhu* (2007) and *My Red Homeland* (2003).



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The exhibition also features three floor-based works that extend the bounds of the canvas further. These works are at once painting, sculpture and performance, and like Kapoor's early pigment works they invite the viewer to bear witness to the aftermath of an enactment that has been ritualistically played out. But like the paintings on canvas we sense in these works that there remain two vital forces at play – the structural and formal alongside the gestural and formless. The lumpen matter that hangs suspended on frames, staffs or standing within votive like trays, has coagulated in works that appear to present an alchemical transformation of liquid to solid, a trope not only of painting but also very the essence of the materiality of sculpture itself.



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Notes to Editors:

Anish Kapoor

Duration: 20 August – 30 October 2022

Location: 4/F, Building D7, Yard No.3, Jinhang East Road, Beijing

Press Kit

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About the artist

Anish Kapoor is considered one of the most influential artists of our time. Perhaps most famous for public sculptures that are both adventures in form and feats of engineering, Kapoor manoeuvres between vastly different scales, across numerous series of work. Immense PVC skins, stretched or deflated; concave or convex mirrors whose reflections attract and swallow the viewer; recesses carved in stone and pigmented so as to disappear: these voids and protrusions summon up deep-felt metaphysical polarities of presence and absence, concealment and revelation. Forms turn themselves inside out, womb-like, and materials are not painted but impregnated with colour, as if to negate the idea of an outer surface, inviting the viewer to the inner reaches of the imagination. Kapoor's geometric forms from the early 1980s, for example, rise up from the floor and appear to be made of pure pigment, while the viscous, blood-red wax sculptures from the last twenty years – kinetic and self-generating – ravage their own surfaces and explode the quiet of the gallery environment. There are resonances with mythologies of the ancient world – Indian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman – and with modern times.

Anish Kapoor was born in Mumbai, India in 1954 and lives and works in London. He studied at Hornsey College of Art, London, UK (1973–77) followed by postgraduate studies at Chelsea School of Art, London, UK (1977–78). Recent solo exhibitions include Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia and Palazzo Manfrin, Venice, Italy (2022); 'Painting' Modern Art Oxford, UK (2021); Museum of Contemporary Art and Urban Planning, Shenzhen, China (2021); Houghton Hall, Norfolk, UK (2020); 'HOWL', Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany (2020); 'Surge', Fundación Proa, Buenos Aires (2019); Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum and Imperial Ancestral Temple, Beijing (2019); CorpArtes, Santiago (2019); 'Works, Thought, Experiments', Serralves Museum, Porto, Portugal (2018); 'Descension', Public Art Fund, Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 1, New York, NY, USA (2017); Parque de la Memoria, Buenos Aires (2017); MAST Foundation, Bologna, Italy (2017); Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC), Mexico City (2016); Couvent de la Tourette, Evieux, France (2015); Château de Versailles, Versailles, France (2015) and The Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center, Moscow (2015). He represented Britain at the 44th Venice Biennale in 1990 with *Void Field* (1989), for which he was awarded the Premio Duemila for Best Young Artist. Kapoor won the Turner Prize in 1991. Large scale public projects include *Cloud Gate* (2004) in Millennium Park, Chicago, USA and *Orbit* (2012) in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London and *Ark Nova* (2013) the world's first inflatable concert hall in Japan.

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and promotes the work of more than 60 international artists across two spaces in London, three in New York City, and one in Shanghai, as well as forthcoming galleries in Beijing and Los Angeles. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, John Latham, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. It still works with many of these artists as well as others of that generation from Carmen Herrera to the renowned estates of Leon Polk Smith.

In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors to the public for the first time, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. Since 2000, the gallery has gone on to represent many more leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller, Tatsuo Miyajima, and Sean Scully. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Ryan Gander, Van Hanos, Hugh Hayden, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost, Pedro Reyes, Wael Shawky and Cheyney Thompson.

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