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LISSON GALLERY

Press Release

Anish Kapoor
Drawings

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2/F, 27 Huqiu Road, Shanghai

For his first solo exhibition with Lisson Shanghai, Anish Kapoor presents a series of recent gouache drawings on paper. Known for his rigorous experimentation with materials and his ability to conjure uncanny sensory experiences, Kapoor's practice defies genres by seamlessly blending sculptural and painterly approaches. A cornerstone in the history of British and global contemporary art, his works distort physical space and interrogate the allusive processes of visual perception. This new body of work features rich, vibrant colours – from deep purples and blues to lavish, fiery layers of yellow, orange and red – where unknown forces appear to emerge from a mysterious darkness.

The recent drawings in this exhibition focus on the void – a central motif for Kapoor – and the tensions between light and dark, inside and outside permeate these works. Kapoor's forms turn themselves inside out with brushstrokes that richly and energetically impregnate each drawing with vibrant hues, as if to negate the idea of an outer surface, inviting the viewer to contemplate their inner depths. In these drawings, his unique sense of colour as visceral substance, reverberates through biological and architectural form, as openings, cracks, windows and passages fade into impenetrable oblivion. The works are saturated with raw, emotional intensity, yet at their core, they evoke a transcendent light, a luminous dawn emerging amidst the forms.

The energetic application of pigment elicits a sense of movement and raw elemental force, typical of Kapoor's exploration of light, depth, and emotion. Much of Kapoor's oeuvre draws the viewer into an introspective engagement with colour, form, and space; here we see energetic compositions dominated by a central dark void, embedded in a glowing landscape, or reversely a glowing void within dark mountainous form. The intense interplay between the background, foreground, and interiority suggests an infinite depth that pulls the viewer inward. The surrounding hues of blue, earthy green and red strokes evoke organic vitality, as if the void is emerging from, or dissolving into, a landscape.

In one work, a bold stroke of black penetrates a vivid red interior, grounding the composition with a dramatic contrast that recalls a void, shadow, or abyss. The swirling lines and layered textures suggest both chaos and energy, a reflection of Kapoor's fascination with the elemental forces of nature and the dichotomy of light and darkness, creation and destruction.

This presentation follows the artist's major solo exhibition in Beijing at the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) Museum and Taimiao Art Museum of the Imperial Ancestral Temple, by the walls of the Forbidden City in Beijing (2019). This exhibition presented some of the artist's most significant and celebrated works, featuring powerful, self-generated installations and geometrical sculptures. It also follows a solo presentation at Shenzhen Museum of Contemporary Art and Urban Planning (MoCAUP) in 2021, which spanned the full breadth of his practice and presented some of the most celebrated works of the last thirty-five years, from his iconic wax sculptures, paintings and mirror works, to his models for past and potential architectural works.

About Anish Kapoor

Anish Kapoor is considered one of the most influential artists working today. Renowned for public sculptures that are both adventures in form and feats of engineering, Kapoor manoeuvres between vastly different scales, across numerous bodies 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. 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 started in the early 2000s – 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 and Venice, Italy. He studied at Hornsey College of Art, London (1973–77) followed by postgraduate studies at Chelsea School of Art, London (1977–78). Recent solo exhibitions include Cidade Matarazzo, São Paulo, Brazil (2024); Liverpool Cathedral, UK (2024); ARKEN Museum of Contemporary Art, Ishøj, Denmark (2024); Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, Italy (2023-24); Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia and Palazzo Manfrin, Venice, Italy (2022); Modern Art Oxford, UK (2021); Museum of Contemporary Art and Urban Planning, Shenzhen, China (2021); Houghton Hall, Norfolk, UK (2020); Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany (2020); 'Surge' at Fundación Proa, Buenos Aires (2019); Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum and Imperial Ancestral Temple, Beijing (2019); CorpArtes, Santiago (2019); Pitzhanger Manor and Gallery, London (2019); Serralves Museum, Porto, Portugal (2018); *Descension* at 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, Eveux, 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 and won the Turner Prize in 1991. Large scale public projects include *Cloud Gate* (2004) in Millennium Park, Chicago, USA; Dismemberment Site I (2003–2009) Kaipara Bay, New Zealand and *Ark Nova* (2013) the world's first inflatable concert hall in Japan. Anish Kapoor was awarded a CBE in 2003 and a Knighthood in 2013 for services to visual arts.

Drawing has remained an integral medium throughout Kapoor's art practice since the late 70s. His works on paper have a selected exhibition history, including a major show at the Tate, London (1990-1991) and at Kunsternes Hus, Oslo, (1986), and more recently in the group show 'Pushing paper: contemporary drawing from 1970 to now' at the British Museum, London (2019–2020). Kapoor's drawing are held in numerous prestigious Public Collections including the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia; British Council Collection, London, UK; De Pont Foundation, Tilburg, Netherlands; Tate Collection, London, UK; Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK; Fine Art Museum of San Francisco, California, USA; Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA; National Gallery of Ottawa, Canada; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, USA; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania, USA; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA amongst others.

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 70 international artists across spaces in London, New York, Los Angeles, Shanghai and Beijing. 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 and others of that generation, from Carmen Herrera and Olga de Amaral to Hélio Oiticica and Lee Ufan. 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, Liu Xiaodong, Otobong Nkanga, Pedro Reyes, Sean Scully, Hiroshi Sugimoto and Wael Shawky. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists including Dana Awartani, Cory Arcangel, Garrett Bradley, Ryan Gander, Josh Kline, Hugh Hayden, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost and Cheyney Thompson.

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