



Ⓜ 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.

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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

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 Galleries of the Academy of Venice.
- 2023:** Kapoor's paintings are on display at Lisson Gallery's two New York locations until 20 December.

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." — Ⓜ