

Anish Kapoor's twisted feat

September 19, 2016 | Bansie Vasvani

page 1 of 2

In the twisted body of works that are a continuation of his stainless-steel “non-objects” series, he explores new perceptions of concavity derived from rotating vertical geometric shapes



Anish Kapoor at his show 'Gathering Clouds'. Photo: Courtesy Kukje Gallery.

At the press preview luncheon prior to the opening of his third exhibition, *Gathering Clouds*, at the Kukje Gallery in Seoul, Korea, Anish Kapoor, the youthful-looking, 62-year-old artist held forth. With an air of casual conviviality, he discussed the large and small twisted stainless-steel sculptures in the exhibition and his pigmented disc series titled *Gathering Clouds* that were first shown during the Venice Biennale last year.

Kapoor has a fascination for geometry and concavity. In the twisted body of works that are a continuation of his stainless-steel “non-objects” series, he explores new perceptions of concavity derived from rotating vertical geometric shapes. Displayed in K3, one of Kukje’s three exhibition areas, three 2.5m-high works, referred to as *Oval Twist*, 2008, *Triangle Twist*, 2014 and *Square Twist*, 2008, occupy the space. Made from Kapoor’s trademark shiny metal, the forms as he describes them are more “technological” in the conception. Referring to his long-standing interest in geometry, he observed that “even though it is a completely known quantity”, the 90-degree twist in the sculptures takes them to a realm that “in a way they become unknowable”. What is immediately apparent is that the rotation, combined with the highly polished surfaces, challenges one’s perception of the works. For instance, in *Triangle Twist*, the sharp edges and the angles of the sculpture disappear in such a way that the depth and width of the work are not easily discernible.

But more importantly, Kapoor alters the reflectiveness of his new surfaces. Unlike his previous concave and convex series, in which one encountered a completely distorted image of oneself, the twisted works present more or less

intact but angled reflections of the viewer. Here one is taken by the scale and engineering feat of the sculptures. In a series of 12 newly-designed but smaller 60cm pieces exhibited on white pedestals in gallery K1, Kapoor's technological prowess is even more visible. Seen at eye level, contorted oval, triangle, X and W shaped sculptures dance before our eyes. Reflections get cast unexpectedly at surprising angles that collude to make the final experience a pleasurable one.

Yet the twisted series' inventive appeal is somehow less alluring than confronting one's distorted reflection in Kapoor's 2008 concave and convex stainless steel sculptures. In my experience, the disproportionate images evoked questions about one's identity and ego. Despite the beauty and scale of the large new twisted works, they are eclipsed by the concave and convex series that aspired at once to be playful and contemplative, awesome and absurd, seductive and repellent.

Kapoor's grey painted disc series, titled sequentially from *I—IV in Gathering Clouds*, 2014, engages the viewer in a different kind of spiritual experience. For Kapoor, who has worked with numerous coloured pigments, it was particularly intriguing to work with the colour grey. At the luncheon, he pointed out that if the German artist Gerhard Richter had already experimented with the colour and pronounced that, "grey is the epitome of non-statement", was it possible for Kapoor to do it again? The artist's use of different shades of grey in his wide petri dish-like shapes, each measuring 188x188x39 cm, draws one in. Never failing to deliver a promising, even thought-provoking encounter, his dark concave discs certainly become the crucible for gathering one's thoughts in a quiet moment.

Gathering Clouds is showing till 30 October at the Kukje Art Gallery, Seoul, South Korea. For details, visit Kukjegallery.com