

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

Ida Panicelli, "New York Reviews: Anish Kapoor," *Artforum*, September 2016

## ARTFORUM

### New York Reviews

#### Anish Kapoor

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View of "Anish Kapoor," 2016. From left: *First Milk*, 2015; *Today You Will Be in Paradise*, 2016. Photo: David Regen.

"Today You Will Be in Paradise," Anish Kapoor's exhibition at Gladstone Gallery this past spring, embarked on a visceral journey through the body, displaying sculptures that emulate its muscle fibers, fat, and intestines in a profusion of blood-red fluids, drippings, blobs, and creepy organic matter. Fearlessly, his senses fibrillating, Kapoor burrowed into the world of flesh. Kapoor's chief material, silicone, is significant: It is a substance associated with plastic surgery, most notably with breast implants, and here it conveys

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the body's materiality with intensity and luminosity. While the distorting mirrored surfaces of his earlier sculptures give back images that verge on dreams, these works transport us, with no chance of escape, into an emphatically physical world. Nothing is dreamy here; we hover between repugnance and curiosity. Kapoor seems to be provocatively asking, "Does this overload of realness repel you?" Well, if it does, that's *your* problem, because this is what lies beneath the skin—everyone's skin. This is what allows your body to be healthy and beautiful. Without that heap of fiber, blood vessels, and intestinal loops we simply would not exist.

At the gallery's Twenty-Fourth Street location, works such as *Fetish Body Inside Out* and *Unborn*, both 2016, evoked a kind of Quentin Tarantino-grade gore, showing us bodies consumed by fire, shredded by explosions, transformed into mounds of dark and clotted material. Others, such as *Internal Object in Three Parts*, 2013–15, and *Today You Will Be In Paradise*, 2016, were bewitchingly matter-of-fact, oases of stillness amid the violence and chaos. Here, Kapoor points us toward that dark, disturbing place that is our mortality, allowing us to marvel at the vulnerability of the human body. He opens up an inner space of empathy, of intimacy, displaying the finitude of every sentient body.

The works in the show also nodded to art history, most obviously to the pictorial tradition of the *vanitas*. Yet there were other references too: The triptych *Internal Objects*, 2013–15, exhibited earlier this year at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (in a room adjacent to Rembrandt's *The Night*

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*Watch*, 1642), declares its classical roots, a lineage that goes from Titian's *Flaying of Marsyas*, ca. 1570–76, to Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, 1632, up to the animal carcasses of Chaim Soutine and Francis Bacon, and the works of Hermann Nitsch.

*She Wolf*, 2016, exhibited in Gladstone Gallery's Twenty-First Street location, is an enormous arch of resin and earth that rests on a white, gouged-out marble base. The looming figure resembles a wolf with swollen breasts, coarse and heavy in nature. She forms an overwhelming vision of the maternal: engulfing and smothering rather than loving and nurturing. But this was all to the point—Kapoor reminds us that art, like life, is always charged with danger.