Anish Kapoor

Barbara Gladstone Gallery
515 West 24th Street
Chelsea
Through May 22

The Indian-born British artist Anish Kapoor has in the past coated his abstract sculptures with richly colored powdered pigments. The material has the optical effect of both softening the forms and giving their surfaces a soft matte texture that seems to absorb rather than generate energy.

By contrast, the recent work in this show is about reflection and the uncertainties it produces. A small concave piece of platinum-glazed ceramic is sunk into the gallery wall, its mirrorlike surfaces and inward-turning swirls suggesting indeterminate depth. Isolated in the gallery’s main room is a polished globe of stainless steel; its hollowed-out center reflects the viewer and the surrounding gallery, but in a destabilized image, stretched out of shape and upside down.

Sometimes Mr. Kapoor refers to specific Indian sources; he does so here in a sculpture of a narrow rectangular opening cut into black stone. The door resembles the entrances to ancient rock-cut Buddhist temples and monasteries, sites for contemplation, though in this case there is no room to enter, just a curved wall of highly polished stone.

This piece, like the others in the show, can bear many readings and are clearly intended to. The combination of formal inventiveness and interpretive flexibility is what keeps this artist’s work refreshing.

HOLLAND COTTER