Anish Kapoor at Barbara Gladstone

Like a dream of falling, Anish Kapoor's recent sculptures pull you out of gravity so easily it almost makes you laugh. The most dramatic of these works are two deformed globes made of lustrous stainless steel. A yawning concave depression in the 6-foot-tall Turning the World Upside Down #4 produces an incepted reflection of the viewer on its ripply surface. In Turning the World Inside Out, the tunnelled beginning of what looks like a cosmic wormhole ends in dim opacity, but viewers are reflected twice along the way—once on its rim and again on the sculpture's outer face.

Similar optical effects are created by two untitled works that were set into the gallery's walls. The first, a deep bowl-shaped form scooped into the wall at eye level and lined with ceramic covered in platinum, creates another upside-down reflection. The second, set too far overhead for viewers to be caught on its reflective surface, is lined with bronze and shaped like a trumpet's flared bell. This work produces a visual resonance that suggests an almost comically literal music of the spheres.

While these metallic sculptures are as buoyant as Warhol's floating Mylar pillows, Kapoor provides ballast in the form of two somber, gray-blue limestone plinths. One face of each of these rough-hewn blocks of stone harbors a polished depression which creates inverted images. A nimbus of darkness surrounds the reflection created by the loaf-shaped concavity in Almost Human.

The simplest of the sculptures shown, Mirror, contains a big, shallow, perfectly circular dish of polished stone, a kind of salver for the reflection it offers up.

Early on, Kapoor, an Indian-born English artist, warped perceptions of weight and mass with pure powdered pigment. Applied to the surfaces of his biomorphic sculptures and sometimes heaped on the floor beneath them, the pigment played tricks with light, softening it or sucking it away entirely. Like James Turrell, Kapoor has also been interested in making optical theater by manipulating ambient illumination. The mirrored-surface sculptures which Kapoor began making in 1995 aren't, then, the radical departure from his previous work that they might at first seem. They set out to engage art history's long lineage of real and depicted mirrors, which have furnished a place for the observer all the way from van Eyck and Velázquez to Michelangelo Pistoletto and Dan Graham. Kapoor, however, remains at least as interested in the quality of the light that's absorbed by his sculptures as in the reflections they cast back.

—Nancy Princenthal