

# ANISH KAPOOR

## Ascension

Collateral event of the 54th International Art Exhibition  
la Biennale di Venezia

Curated by

Lorenzo Fiaschi

preview

Tuesday 31 May 2001, 6-8pm

Basilica di San Giorgio

Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore - Venice

realized thanks to

Galleria Continua, San Gimignano / Beijing / Le Moulin  
and illycaffè

organization

Arte Continua

in conjunction with

Fondazione Giorgio Cini onlus  
and Abbazia di San Giorgio Maggiore

la Biennale di Venezia

54. Esposizione  
Internazionale  
d'Arte

Eventi collaterali

Galleria Continua and illycaffè are pleased to present *Ascension*, a major installation by Anish Kapoor, as a collateral event of the 54th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. Organized by Arte Continua and curated by Lorenzo Fiaschi, the project has been made possible by Galleria Continua and illycaffè, with the collaboration of the Giorgio Cini Foundation and the Abbazia di San Giorgio Maggiore.

Anish Kapoor is one of the leading figures of the international contemporary art scene today. His works are a synthesis of materiality and spirituality, object and architecture. Sculptures with an open character, they set up a dialogue between full and empty, external and internal, concave and convex, tension and equilibrium, presence and absence. Emptiness as a metaphor of creation acquires a fundamental role in the artist's work.

*Ascension* is a site-specific installation that materializes the paradox of the column of smoke: a vortex of white smoke rises from a circular base placed at the intersection between the transept and the nave of the magnificent Basilica of San Giorgio Maggiore.

The work, first realized in the former cinema space of the San Gimignano gallery in 2003, was then shown in the premises of the Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil in Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia in 2006 and in São Paulo in 2007. In the same year, it was realized by Galleria Continua in 798, Beijing's important, culturally lively artistic district.

Designed by Andrea Palladio from 1565 onwards, and completed by his pupil Vincenzo Scamozzi in the first decade of the 1600s, the Basilica is being used for the first time as the setting for a contemporary art intervention. The work has taken on a completely new form for its insertion into the exceptional context of the Basilica, so as to respect the venue's nature as a spiritual, consecrated space. Indeed the installation seems to have found its ideal place of realization here, as the words of Kapoor himself show: "In my work, what is and what seems to be often become blurred. In *Ascension*, for example, what interests me is the idea of immateriality becoming an object, which is exactly what happens in *Ascension*: the smoke becomes a column. Also present in this work is the idea of Moses following a column of smoke, a column of light, in the desert..."

Never before has an artist gone so far in rendering tangible what is generally interpreted as being empty. The close connection between spirituality and the spectacle make this piece the installation that best represents that area of contemporary art work that is not content to amaze, but which seeks to open up a new and profound reflection on delicate contemporary issues, such as the conflict between religions and the role that art can still play in the creation of common ground for engagement and dialogue.

Anish Kapoor was born in Bombay in 1954. In the 70s he moved to London, where he now lives and works. In the last thirty years his work has been shown in some of the world's most important museums and institutions. He has had solo shows at the Kunsthalle in Basel, the Tate Gallery and Hayward Gallery in London, the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid, the CAPC in Bordeaux, the CCBB Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil in Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, and, more recently, in the Haus der Kunst in Munich and the Royal Academy in London. In 2010 he showed his work for the first time in India, with solo exhibitions at the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi and the Mehboob Studios in Mumbai. The artist has also taken part in many group exhibitions in venues such as the Serpentine Gallery in London, documenta IX in Kassel, the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, the Centre Georges Pompidou, Louvre and Grand Palais in Paris, and the Guggenheim in Berlin, New York and Bilbao. The artist's works are housed in many public and private collections, including MoMA in New York and Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. Well-known and acclaimed commissions by Kapoor in recent years include *Marsyas* (Tate Modern Turbine Hall, London), *Cloud Gate* (Millennium Park, Chicago), *Underground* (medieval tower of Sant'Agostino, Arte Continua, San Gimignano) and *Earth Cinema* (Arte Pollino un altro sud con Arte Continua, Basilicata). Kapoor won the Premio Duemila award at the Venice Biennale in 1990 and the Turner Prize in 1991. He received an honorary fellowship from the London Institute in 1997 and a CBE in 2003. Since 2001 he has been an honorary member of the Royal Institute of British Architecture.

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## EXHIBITION DETAILS

**Exhibition title:** ANISH KAPOOR Ascension

**Curator:** Lorenzo Fiaschi

**Promoters:** Galleria Continua, San Gimignano / Beijing / Le Moulin and illycaffè

**Organization:** Arte Continua with Fondazione Giorgio Cini onlus and Abbazia di San Giorgio Maggiore

**Press conference:** Tuesday 31 May, 12:00 noon, Sala Carnelutti, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice

**Preview:** Tuesday 31 May 2011, 6-8pm

For the press conference and preview Galleria Continua and illycaffè are laying on a boat shuttle service (Venice/Isola di San Giorgio) from 11.30am to 1pm and from 5.30pm to 8pm. The mooring point, near the main exit of Giardini, will be clearly marked.

**Open to the public:** from 1 June to 27 November 2011

**Exhibition venue and opening times:** Basilica di San Giorgio, Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore, 30124 Venice, Mon-Sat: 10am-1pm, 2.30-6pm | Sun: 2.30-6pm. Admission free

**Ferry route from Piazza San Marco:** Actv Line 2 from mooring point S. Zaccaria-Monumento (in the direction of Giudecca). Journey time: approx. 3 min

**Information:** ARTE CONTINUA, Via del Castello 11, 53037 San Gimignano (SI), Italy  
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