

Above: Fiona Banner, *Nude Reclining*, 2006. Graphite on paper, 69.25 x 106.25 in. Below: Anish Kapoor, *Sky Mirror*, 2006. Stainless steel, 35 ft. diameter.

Nude Reclining, seemingly transcribed from direct observation, alternated hand-written block letters and script in a horizontal format. The other, *Nude Standing*, used only block letters in a vertical format and indicated the silhouette of a tailfin in spray-paint on the background. In *Nude Fin 2004* and *Nude Fin 2006*, two Harrier Jump Jet tailfins, which she obtained after long negotiations with the British Air Force, were covered on one side with erased or scratched, hand-lettered descriptions of a female nude. On the third tailfin, *Birds II*, Banner had written descriptions of the activities of birds. A collage, also titled *Birds II*, collected a ball of fighter jet images into a nest.

Printed Matter hosted two neon images of planes, some posters from other exhibitions, and a window full of shipping cartons for the books. Close inspection revealed that what looked like common ink stamps on the cartons were, in fact, drawn carefully by hand. Banner's methods of re-representation, such as drawing, re-photographing, and building from model-kits, seem like attempts to retain anonymity of address.

Many of Banner's decisions come disguised inside artistic tropes borrowed from the work of Richard Prince. For example, the fighter-jet tailfins which she has appropriated and sprayed gray are reminiscent of Prince's *Hoods*, car hoods exhibited as sculpture. This also holds true for her use of books of re-photographed imagery and her sketchy redrawing of newspaper images, as well as the hand-lettered texts. Banner's oblique imitations of another artist's style indicate a necessary ventriloquism in order to keep her own artistic personality at a manageable distance and the viewer intent on the provocative juxtapositions she has set in motion.

—Joe Fyfe

NEW YORK
Anish Kapoor
Rockefeller Plaza

Anish Kapoor's *Sky Mirror*, which was installed at Rockefeller Plaza last fall, is a 10-meter polished stainless steel section of a sphere weighing about 30 tons. Swarms of tourists and locals hammed it up on its convex side, which mirrored viewers seemingly standing near the Saks Fifth Avenue building across the street.

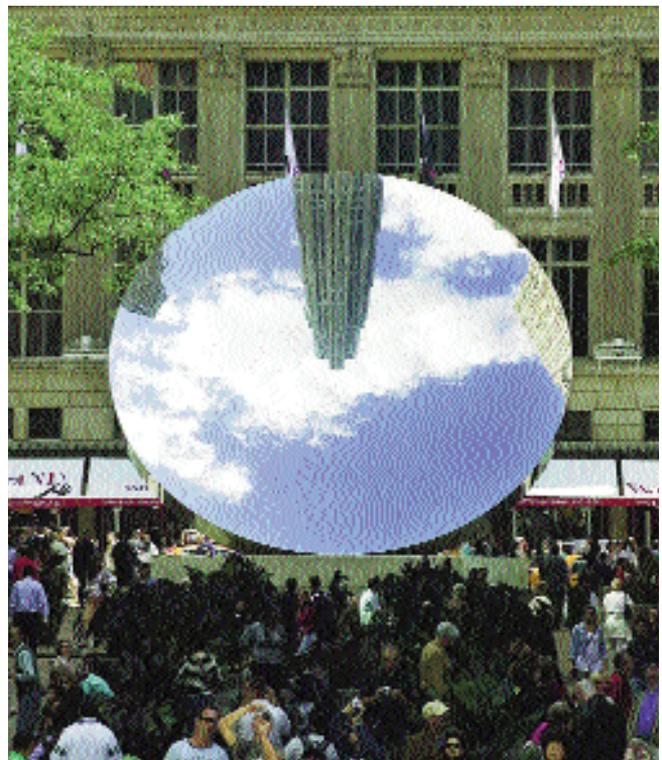
The opposite concave side of *Sky Mirror* offered an even stranger juxtaposition: from a distance, the 30-story-tall 30 Rockefeller Plaza building appeared upside down in the sky inside the giant mirror.

Kapoor noted, "*Sky Mirror* is not directly underneath 30 Rock but at the end of the promenade on 5th Avenue. It faces 30 Rock and by *engaging* 30 Rock in the piece, the architecture is part of this sculpture. *Sky Mirror* is, therefore, 30 Rockefeller Center *and* the mirror, not just the mirror. The analogy I use in this particular case is the mountain and the lake. They are related to each other symbolically as well as physically. This places the object in a slightly different relationship to its surroundings and with a greater symbolic depth and presence." In essence, this metaphorical relationship did not pay homage to 30 Rock but placed the "mountain" inside the "mirror" in a dialectical relationship.

When asked about the philosophical implications of inverting 30 Rockefeller Plaza, Kapoor replied,

"There's no such thing as abstract art. All abstract objects have residual meaning. The objective of my work over many years has been to fight and direct those residual meanings. One of those residual meanings, in the light of 9/11, is to turn objects upside down. *Sky Mirror* first of all is bringing the sky down to the ground. It's phenomenological in the sense that it's literally a kind of screen reflecting whatever's going on in the sky. I need to step back from this slightly to say that my trajectory as an artist is the nonobject. My peculiar journey has taken me to the immaterial or nonmaterial. *Sky Mirror* is a bridge from big boy sculpture to a disk of light, as much a hole in the space as present as a physical thing." Installed in New York, it seems to ask viewers to reflect on things and to pay attention to reflections.

Kapoor also discussed some philosophical and physical congruencies and differences between *Sky Mirror* and two recent permanent projects—*Cloud Gate* for Millennium



Park in Chicago and the tube station project for Naples, Italy—noting, “I hate public sculpture. Public sculpture is a problem in that it has come to mean that the art is placed in a tangential, often contingent relation to either landscape or building. My instinct is that there is another, deeper way into the problem. All three projects engage public space. Public space is something that architects do. My sense is that art’s good at intimacy—‘Come here, let me engage you, I can be a friend, even a lover.’ Engaging public space in that spirit engages the viewer in an active position.” Kapoor’s exquisite *trompe l’oeil* was one of the most beautiful and best-engineered public sculptures ever installed in New York City

Born in Bombay in 1954 to a Jewish Iraqi mother and an Indian father, Kapoor now lives in London, drawing on his own and other cultural idioms: “One might say that the postcolonial condition, which I suppose is mine, is also all of ours. In a sense, we all occupy that space of cultural multiplicity in which many different sorts of information run together.” Kapoor’s passion for the non-object, for voids, spaces, and light, connects wit, notions from different cultures, and unique ways of posing philosophical considerations of the human condition. *Sky Mirror* was presented by Tumi, organized by the Public Art Fund, and hosted by Tishman Speyer.

—Jan Garden Castro

BUENOS AIRES

Norberto Gómez, Alberto Heredia, and Pablo Suárez Maman Gallery

Few experiences can be reduced to only one word. Anyone who saw the recent exhibition that Maman Gallery dared to present in Buenos Aires would understand what I’m talking about. The show offered a trio of artists who, despite different styles, aim at the same target. Standing in front of a work by Norberto Gómez,

Alberto Heredia, or Pablo Suárez, it’s hard to think.

Terrified: that’s the word that describes the predominant reaction of viewers walking through the gallery, suddenly lost in the middle of bodies with no flesh turned into pathetic shadows of what they once were. Beheaded puppets were wrapped with bands and tape so as not to fall into pieces, which preserved figures but not personalities already corrupted. Bones embodied the messengers of death; rats represented people degraded to sub-human levels; and the list goes on. Who could have an aesthetic thought when these works cried out for us to take our initial visceral rejection and turn it into the courage to face them and see? These artists try to tell us something beyond superficial analysis; their works engage every fiber of our identity as Argentines and citizens of a world filled with mental and physical corruption. Infused with an ethical and social reality, their works speak of the darkness during the ’70s and ’80s when the military regime left thousands of bodies ripped apart, a scared society captured by panic and silence. Freedom was suppressed in every possible way—freedom to act, to speak, to be—and as a result individuals lost their unique identi-

ties as humans and started to look like the rest, seeking by any means to achieve their goals in a battlefield resembling the Roman arena. Below: Pablo Suárez, *En Campaña / On the Trail*, n.d. Mixed media, 142 x 60 x 80 cm. Right: Alberto Heredia, *Tongue*, from the “Gagged” series, n.d. Mixed media, 103 x 37 x 37 cm.

Gómez’s frightening skeletons are snapshots of the remains of those bodies held in the prison of disgrace, torture, oppression, and violence underwritten by state terrorism. These skeletons no longer resemble people but represent, like holograms, the sequels of a past still so alive that just the sight of them evokes deep memories full of anguish. When Heredia silences his models by cutting off their heads or wrapping their bodies to hold back the erosion that threatens them, it is like trying to take the “perfect picture” to capture something for eternity—a false vision that behind its make-up hides the evidence of time that reaches us all even if we try to deny it.

And when we thought we had enough of the body as the center of attention, as the focus for cruelty and punishment—when we have realized that we are ourselves sometimes responsible since the body is our main tool of integration, interac-

tion, and manipulable passions, one that we use and allow to be used as hostage and temple—the body appears once more in Suárez’s work. His characters gesture desperately with emphatic sarcasm and irony, people turned into fealty animals capable of selling themselves to the highest bidder. Or maybe a simple poor Christian can no longer carry the burden of his cross because it has taken on the enormous proportions of society’s disgraces. We don’t know if these figures are laughing or crying, a confusion that creates satire in the face of tragedy.

Since the 1960s, Gómez, Heredia, and Suárez have occupied a position of compromise, challenge, and denunciation, turning their ideas into sculptures to narrate the suffocating reality surrounding them. I don’t want to think that they represent only despair. Even when hope is hidden in the darkest place of inspiration, it must be there. An artist needs hope to be able to think about the

