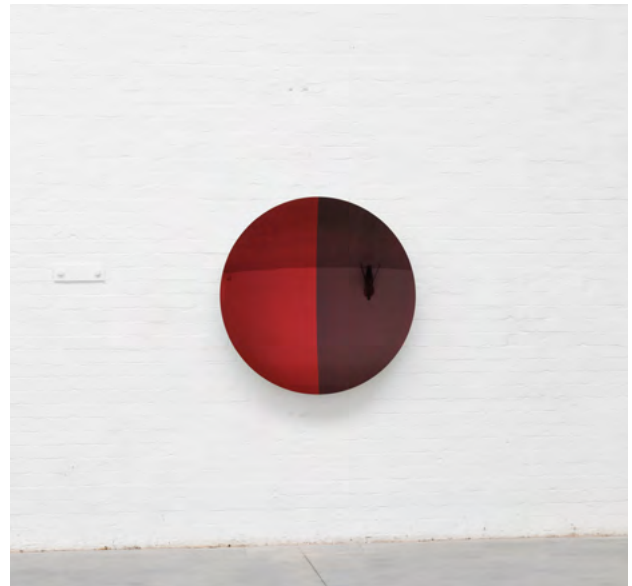


PRESS RELEASE

Galerie Canesso in collaboration with Galleria Continua present

**The Benighted**  
*From Anish Kapoor to Guido Reni*

18 October to 20 December 2023



Galerie Canesso, in collaboration with Galleria Continua, is delighted to showcase art by Anish Kapoor, one of the most significant artists of his generation, in their Parisian exhibition spaces. While confronting 15th-, 16th- and 17th-century art with Anish Kapoor's works is a bold choice, it is well-justified in many respects. Kapoor's art explores the very idea of the sublime in its dynamic and sensorial relationship with the viewer. Colour, light and perspective, whose rules were defined by Renaissance artists, all constitute elements that are essential to the poetry of his work. At the very heart of the dialog between the art works presented here is the colour red, the true cohesive thread of this exhibition.

*"I have an obsession with red... What's interesting about red is that it links to black so unbelievably easily. Red makes great darkness. And of course one might say red is fully a colour of the interior." - Anish Kapoor*

"I chose Anish Kapoor because the energy exuding from his works brings us closer to the artists of the past," explains Maurizio Canesso as a preamble to this unprecedented exhibition.

Establishing a dialog with five paintings selected by Galerie Canesso, Anish Kapoor (in collaboration with Galleria Continua) steps in, setting forth certain counterpoints with paintings, gouaches and sculptures.

## **When Past Meets Present**

In societies of times past, red was a primal colour, that which preceded all the others, conjuring up fire and blood, sacrifices, life and death, love, the inside of the human body. It is the colour that unites all cultures and all peoples through the all-powerful, ever-present symbolism of blood.

The juxtaposition of the works in the exhibition, which are otherwise separated by centuries, brings about numerous, polysemantic echoes: this starts with light and reflections (Portrait of a Soldier, Mattia Preti (1613-1699)/Laser Red to Garnet by Kapoor (2018), transcendence and the power of religious depictions (Saint Jerome by Guido Reni (1575-1642), and blood and carnality (Lucretia by Francesco Cifrondi (1656-1730) and Anish Kapoor's four works on canvas or paper (2022 and 2021). Blood is also a true mark of violence and death (Crucifixion by a forerunner of the Master of Torralba, circa 1420; Francesco Rustici (1592-1626), Salome with the Head of Saint John the Baptist).

In Anish Kapoor's art, red expresses the exploration of the body's interiority, showing what is usually hidden underneath the skin (as epitomized by the title of one of his paintings, Skin) and what dwells within us. This ensemble of works explores the beauty and the expressive power of this colour through the centuries.

Laser Red to Garnet constitutes a prime example of Anish Kapoor's classic series of concave mirror works that pulls the viewer into a mesmerizing vortex. The polished stainless steel creates ever-shifting optical illusions

as one moves around it. From a distance, it reflects back a distorted and inverted image of its surroundings, which gradually enlarges until it bursts into view, like looking through a magnifying glass. While reflections in the distance continue to be inverted, the viewer's reflection restores to its regular orientation at this focus point. The captivating audio effects induced by the mirror adds to the unsettling feeling of these shifting viewpoints.

A rich multimodal experience is provided by this piece, which precisely captures the dynamic interaction between the phenomenological, perceptual, and psychological facets that characterize the artist's work.

From the iconography of the Old Masters, Anish Kapoor draws a variety of symbols, revisiting the fundamental themes of religious representation. The materiality of his paintings transcribes the artist's interest in depicting that which is not visible, death behind the sacrifice, interiority and inwardness behind the nativity, what is organic beyond that which takes on a pictorial form. For Anish Kapoor, old masters' paintings are far more than mere scenic representations, they are acts in action, and this conception of movement is quintessential in his art. He himself describes his works as "painting-acts", allowing them to appear and reappear, ceaselessly changing, offering something for the viewer to see well beyond the painting itself.

"Anish Kapoor's radiance transcends Galerie Canesso," confides Maurizio Canesso.

## WORKS PRESENTED BY GALERIE CANESSO

Mattia Preti (Taverna, 1613-Malta, 1699)  
Portrait of a Soldier, oil on canvas, 121.5 x 98.5 cm.  
Circa 1635  
© Galerie Canesso, Paris



This Portrait of a Soldier invites us to time-travel to the bustling streets of Rome in the 1630s, decade during which the young Mattia joined his brother Gregorio, documented to have lived in the Eternal City as early as 1624, both being originally from Taverna (Naples) in Calabria. The figure of the soldier was always among the favourite themes of Caravaggesque paintings, and widely tackled by the French artists present in Rome at the time, from Valentin de Boulogne to Nicolas Tournier. Detached from the usual context of religious or secular scenes such as a concert or a card game, this figure expresses in of itself the chiaroscuro that defines it – the light playing on the metal of the armour through generous white highlights – while preserving the elegance of a ceremonial portrait through the feathers adorning the helmet and the blue sash tied around his waist,

whose end twirls in the background, in what we imagine is air whirling around the dignified figure. With great visual gusto, the artist has depicted a middle-aged man, whose eyes are filled with humaneness and empathy. The right hand, resting elaborately on the pommel of his sword, seems to signal his readiness to parry any potential blow. The character's pose isn't static; despite the tight frame, Mattia Preti knew how to instil him with life, a rendition he had experienced while admiring, among others, sculptures by Bernini, one of his contemporaries, as well as other figures displaying a similar movement in the early years of the baroque.

## WORKS PRESENTED BY GALERIE CANESSO

Guido Reni (Bologna, 1575-1642)  
Saint Jerome, oil on canvas, 65.1 x 50 cm.  
Circa 1605-1610  
© Galerie Canesso, Paris



This Saint Jerome is a new addition to Guido Reni's body of work, categorized as being a significant rediscovery [...].

This Father of the Church is represented as a penitent hermit striking his own chest with a stone – drawing blood with the repeated blows – to harden himself against lowly earthly temptations. The powerfully shaped, chiselled figure emerging from the dark background from which it is set off through a sculptural red cloth draped around the shoulders is a veritable tour de force. The colour of the draped cloth itself conjures up the blood shed by Christ.

The scene is taken from the four years the erudite spent in the desert after he converted to the Christian faith. During this period of time, the Father of the Church mastered the Hebrew language, a skill he would later use to

translate the bible into Latin.

The expression in the eyes looking upwards deliberately imprints his face with an inspired pathos. The pictorial freedom in the flowing brush strokes on his hands or in his long, undulating white beard and locks of hair, as well as the stone's rapidly sketched rendition are typical of the artist's early style, when he was in Rome. The carefully studied light is focused on his face: the saint appears flooded with his faith, his spirituality further accentuated by the picture's bust format.

## WORKS PRESENTED BY GALERIE CANESSO

Francesco Rustici, called Il Rustichino (Siena, 1592-1626)  
Salome with the Head of Saint John the Baptist,  
oil on canvas, 237.5 x 161 cm.  
Circa 1624-1625  
© Galerie Canesso, Paris



The story of Herodias' daughter Salomé, who sought revenge on her mother's behalf, obtaining the head of Saint John the Baptist and offering it to her, is well-known. In the same vein as Caravaggio, who had painted the very same theme between 1609 and 1610 (London, National Gallery), Sienese artist Francesco Rustici proposes a highly Caravaggesque interpretation of the theme, painted in Rome circa 1624-25.

This depiction, which if it weren't for the presence of the cross and the phylactery laid down by the holy prisoner's shackles could easily have been mistaken for a Judith with the

Head of Holofernes, is particularly impressive because of the elegance of the life-size figures, the refined harmony between the bright red of Salome's cloak and the brown of the cloth partly covering Saint John the Baptist's head, and the dashes of light on the faces creating a striking contrast with the surrounding darkness. The dialogue and conniving look between Salome and her servant girl further emphasize the dramatic rendition of this moment of the biblical story (Gospels of Saint Matthew 14, 1:12, and Saint Mark 6, 14:27).

## WORKS PRESENTED BY GALERIE CANESSO

Antonio Cifrondi (Clusone, 1656- Brescia, 1730)  
The Suicide of Lucretia, oil on canvas, 86 x 69 cm.  
Circa 1698-1700  
© Galerie Canesso, Paris



Lucretia, who was the wife of General Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus, was raped by her cousin Sextus Tarquin, the King's son. Lucretia is one of Ancient Rome's tragic heroines, and as such she is an exemplum figure: she may not survive her dishonour. The young woman killed herself, a violent death inflicted upon herself with the sharp blade of a dagger.

The staging here is particularly original and dramatic. Alone, depicted from the waist up, her breast bared, with blood trickling on her diaphanous skin while the dagger, in a striking narrative short-cut, is still there. Her head thrown back, her eyes half closed, she bows to

her destiny, accepting it. A beautiful emphasis is placed on the various whites, smooth and slightly pink for her complexion, as well as purer, thicker white worked in tormented layers for the dress enshrouding her torso.

The painting ought to be linked to the period during which the Bergamasque artist worked with a similar approach to light and colour, circa 1698-1700, not unlike his highly poetic Miller (Brescia, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo), also depicted in a wonderful palette of whites generously applied onto the canvas.

## WORKS PRESENTED BY GALERIE CANESSO

Forerunner of the Master de Torralba  
(Calatayud, Spain, c. 1420)  
Crucifixion, tempera on wood with gold background,  
105 x 93 cm  
© Galerie Canesso, Paris



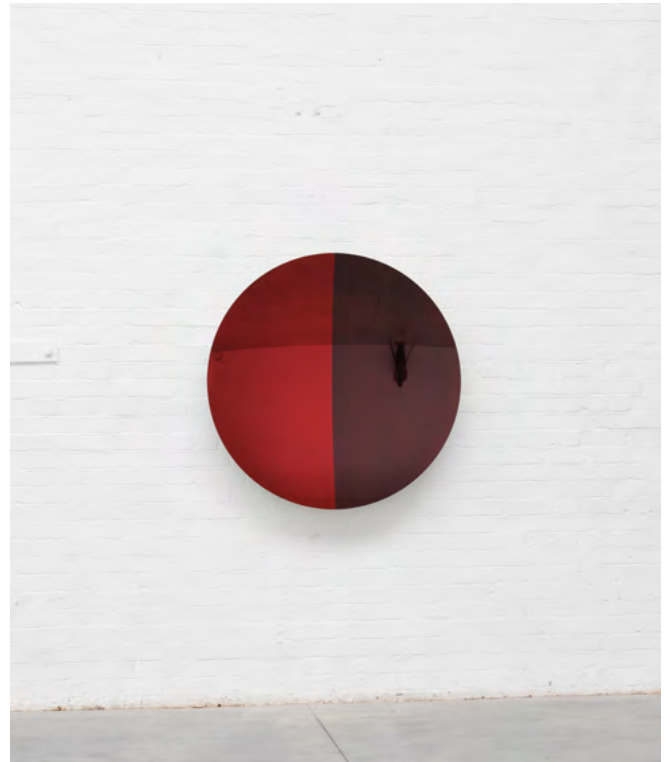
This narrative of the crucifixion, probably a panel that crowned an altarpiece, is limited to just a few figures: Christ, his mother, the other two Marys, and Saint John, his favourite disciple. Highly expressive, due to the visible suffering and tears, this scene is elevated through the use of marked colours. The style points to an international gothic artist from Iberia, circa 1400, as also suggested by certain technical features such as the decoration with gold as well as the richly elaborate edges and halos.

Anish Kapoor's interpretation of Christ's wound on the right side of his chest, which stands out quite distinctly in most representations of the crucifixion, is highly enlightening: "It is blood and earth that are the original ritual matters.

They are full of danger, full of threat, full of death. The god in the sky doesn't die. How can he, he doesn't have any blood. One might dare perhaps to add milk to the ritual material, but it is also female and earthbound. It is not incidental that Christ's wound is just by his breast. Christ has to bare his breast and have a cut on the side of his breast and pretend to be female, and he says don't touch me, because the illusion of me as a woman, me as the giver of blood, will be broken. It is not incidental. I think these things have psychic circularity that make them magical." Anish Kapoor - In conversation with Marcello Dantas, 2019

## WORKS BY ANISH KAPOOR PRESENTED BY GALLERIA CONTINUA

Anish Kapoor  
Laser Red to Garnet, 2018,  
Stainless steel and lacquer,  
111 x 111 x 13 cm  
Photo: Dave Morgan  
© Anish Kapoor. All rights reserved SIAE, 2023  
Courtesy of the artist and GALLERIA CONTINUA



By allowing the environment around his mirror sculptures to become a significant component of the artwork, these works disrupt traditional notions of the art object. Kapoor's reflective surfaces probe into reality's ongoing flux rather than just statically reflecting the external world. Kapoor enables spectators to step into a constantly changing liminal place where the lines between inside and outside, depth and surface, and limited and limitless bounds blur poetically.

*"The interesting thing about a polished surface to me is that when it is really perfect enough something happens – it literally ceases to be physical; it levitates; it does something else."*

- Anish Kapoor

The polished, shimmering surfaces that characterize Anish Kapoor's mirror works seem to defy and evade the very notion of shape.

As it reflects their image, inviting the viewers to embark on an introspective journey, the installation allows the surrounding environment to become an integral part of the artwork itself. Under our gaze the surface appears to change and undulate with the slightest movement, the slightest shift in the surrounding light. Playing with the idea of negative space, Laser Red to Garnet is a hollow whose inside, paradoxically, encompasses and enhances everything that is outside.



## WORKS BY ANISH KAPOOR PRESENTED BY GALLERIA CONTINUA

Anish Kapoor  
Skin, 2022, oil on canvas, 213 x 274 cm  
© Anish Kapoor. All rights reserved SIAE, 2023  
Courtesy of the artist and GALLERIA CONTINUA



In his art, the vision that Anish Kapoor has of skin is all-encompassing and is not limited to what envelopes the human body:

“The mirror works, the painted works, they all had skin. Skin is a consistent quantity in everything, I’ve talked about in my work for twenty years now. Skin is the moment that separates a thing from its environment, it is also the surface on which or through which we read an object, it’s the moment in which the two-dimensional world meets the three-dimensional world. Seemingly obvious statements, but I think that looked at in any

detail they reveal a whole other process. There’s a kind of implied unreality about skin which I think is wonderful.” Anish Kapoor

(De Salvo, Donna, and Balmond, Cecil, Marsyas (London: Tate Publishing, 2002), p. 64)

## WORKS BY ANISH KAPOOR PRESENTED BY GALLERIA CONTINUA

Anish Kapoor

The Benighted III, 2022, oil on canvas, 213 x 274 cm

© Anish Kapoor. All rights reserved SIAE, 2023

Courtesy of the artist and GALLERIA CONTINUA



Long celebrated for sculptures that exploit material, volume, and colour to subvert optical perception, over the past decade painting has become an increasing focus in Kapoor's practice. These works are informed by the same terms that constitute his sculptural language and driven by his abiding preoccupation with the material and immaterial. Kapoor explains:

"To make a work out of pigment is to refer very clearly to the materiality of it: pigment is like earth or clay, stuff that sits on the ground and yet has a kind of weird, wonderful, dreamy quality – it's what colour does. Or similarly, to hollow out a stone and paint the interior very dark blue, or to do as I am doing in these paintings. It's the same language."

These paintings animate Kapoor's longstanding concern with the metaphysical dualities of birth and death, being and nothingness, the transitory and the eternal, the entropic and the sublime – states which convulse together on his canvases, leaving behind the aftermath of what has taken place. Kapoor has encapsulated this sense of temporality in the works – of something that has occurred and may continue to occur – in naming them "painting-acts." It is within these "painting-acts" that he materializes primordial dramas which seem to precede or altogether eschew rational cognition.

**WORKS BY ANISH KAPOOR PRESENTED BY GALLERIA CONTINUA**



Anish Kapoor  
Untitled, 2021, gouache on paper, 57 x 76,5 cm  
© Anish Kapoor. All rights reserved SIAE, 2023  
Courtesy of the artist and GALLERIA CONTINUA



Anish Kapoor  
Untitled, 2022, oil on paper, 66 x 101 cm  
© Anish Kapoor. All rights reserved SIAE, 2023  
Courtesy of the artist and GALLERIA CONTINUA

## ANISH KAPOOR

Born in Mumbai, India in 1954, Anish Kapoor is one of the most influential artists of our time. He has lived and worked in London since the mid-seventies, and now divides his time between homes and studios in London and Venice. He has been represented by Galleria Continua since 2003.

His works are permanently exhibited in the most important collections and museums around the world from the Museum of Modern Art in New York to the Tate in London; the Prada Foundation in Milan and the Guggenheim Museums in Venice, Bilbao and Abu Dhabi. Recent solo exhibitions have been held at Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, Italy (2023), Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia and Palazzo Manfrin, Venice, Italy (2022), Modern Art Oxford, UK (2021); Houghton Hall, Norfolk, UK (2020); Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany (2020); Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum and Imperial Ancestral Temple, Beijing (2019); Fundación Proa, Buenos Aires (2019); Serralves, Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Porto, Portugal (2018); University Museum of Contemporary Art (MUAC), Mexico City (2016); Château de Versailles, France (2015); Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center, Moscow, (2015); Gropius Bau, Berlin (2013); Sakip Sabanci Muzesi, Istanbul (2013); Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2012).

Anish Kapoor represented Great Britain at the 44th Venice Biennale in 1990, where he was awarded the Premio Duemila Prize. In 1991 he won the Turner Prize and has gone on to receive numerous international awards and honours. In April 2022, Anish Kapoor was the first British artist to be honoured with a major exhibition at the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice, Italy.

For the entire length of career, this contemporary artist has been fascinated with the notions of shape and void, perspective, light and the absence thereof. Kapoor, who works across numerous scales with diverse materials such as mirror, stone, wax or PVC, relentlessly explores geometric and biomorphic shapes while demonstrating a singular interest in negative space. "That's what I am interested in: the void, the moment when this is not a hole, it is a space full of what isn't there," he explains.

Engaged in a constant dialog with the masterpieces of the great Venetian masters – Bellini, Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, etc. – Kapoor's body of work triggers abundant reflection on the power of contemporary art and the purpose it may serve in historical locations. As far as the artist is concerned, being part of one of the most beautiful collections of classic art for the duration of an exhibition is truly an honour: "I am profoundly attached to Venice, its architecture and support for contemporary art." "The history of painting is the history of the manner in which you make things appear."

## **GALERIE CANESSO**

Maurizio Canesso has been immersed in the international art market for forty years. He opened his first gallery in Paris in 1994, and specializes in Italian Renaissance and Baroque paintings, and in foreign artists who were active in whole or in part in Italy.

From the very start, his quest for excellence has been guided by the discovery, re-evaluation, and promotion of masterpieces. Entirely committed to his clients, Maurizio Canesso has the expertise and exacting savoir-faire which have enabled him to create flourishing relationships and gain the trust of private collectors and curators in major French and foreign museums (including the Musée du Louvre and the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne). The gallery's paintings are also much in demand for loans to international museum exhibitions.

Research published in the gallery's scholarly catalogues, during prominent art fairs (TEFAF, Biennale des Antiquaires) or significant annual exhibitions in Paris – sometimes in collaboration with prestigious Italian museums – has helped to establish the solid reputation of the Galerie Canesso over the years.

2021 saw the opening of new premises in Milan close to the Brera Gallery, in the former greenhouse of the garden of Casa Valerio, one of the historic buildings of via Borgonuovo. Collectors and art lovers now have a new chance to see Maurizio Canesso's latest acquisitions in the fields of both painting and sculpture.

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## GALLERIA CONTINUA

Galleria Continua was founded in 1990 by Mario Cristiani, Lorenzo Fiaschi and Maurizio Rigillo, with the intention, evident in the name, to give continuity to contemporary art in a landscape rich with the signs of ancient art. Occupying a former cinema, Galleria Continua established itself and thrived in an entirely unexpected location in a town - San Gimignano – steeped in history, timeless and magnificent.

In 2004 Galleria Continua began a new adventure in Beijing, China, showing contemporary Western artists in an area where they are still little seen. Three years later, in 2007, Galleria Continua inaugurated a new peculiar site for large-scale creations - Les Moulins - in the Parisian countryside.

In 2015 Galleria Continua embarked on a new path, opening a space in La Habana, Cuba, devoted to cultural projects designed to overcome every frontier. In 2020, the same year as Galleria Continua's thirtieth anniversary, a new space in Rome opened, dedicated to an open interculturality and new forms of dialogue and encounters between art and the public. In 2020, a space in São Paulo also opened, situated inside the Pacaembu sports complex.

In early 2021 a new space opened in Paris in the heart of the Marais, just a few steps from the Centre Pompidou. In the same year, the gallery also inaugurated a space inside the most iconic hotel in the world, the Burj Al Arab Jumeirah in Dubai.

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**Exhibition presented at Galerie Canesso  
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[www.canesso.art](http://www.canesso.art)**

**Monday to Friday: 11 am --6h30 pm  
The exhibition will be exceptionally open on Saturday 21 October.  
Closed on 1 November.**

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