

Persian translation of this paper entitled:
بررسی آثار انیش کاپور با تمرکز بر مفهوم صبرورت از منظر ژیل دلوز
is also published in this issue of journal.

Original Research Article

An Analysis of Anish Kapoor's Works with a Focus on the Concept of Becoming from the Perspective of Gilles Deleuze

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Received: 19/05/2025

Accepted: 18/08/2025

Available online: 23/09/2025

Abstract

Problem statement: In the postmodern era, art is no longer conceived as a static act of representation but as a fluid and generative process. Within this framework, philosophical concepts such as becoming in the thought of Gilles Deleuze provide deeper analytical tools for engaging with contemporary artworks. Given the formal and conceptual complexities of Anish Kapoor's oeuvre—particularly his red wax installations and mirrored sculptures—there arises a need for a philosophical and interdisciplinary interpretive approach to adequately apprehend their aesthetic and conceptual dimensions.

Research objective: This study seeks to analyze Kapoor's works through the lens of Deleuzian becoming—a concept that encompasses flux, transformation, instability, and perpetual creation. The research aims to demonstrate how Kapoor's art serves as a visual instantiation of becoming, producing experiential events that transcend conventional notions of representation and align with the creation of singular artistic occurrences in the moment.

Research method: This qualitative and theoretical investigation adopted an analytical-interpretive method within an interdisciplinary framework of art and philosophy. Drawing on literature review and Deleuze's theoretical corpus, the study examines Kapoor's red wax works and mirrored sculptures as case studies, selected for their close engagement with the logic of becoming.

Conclusion: The findings indicate that Kapoor's artworks—especially *Svayambh*, *Past, Present, Future*, and *Cloud Gate*—operate not as static objects but as dynamic processes of continual transformation. These works dissolve the boundaries between matter, time, space, and the viewer, generating experiences of becoming that embody Deleuze's conception of art as event, creation of meaning, and lived experience. Ultimately, the study argues that Kapoor's work cannot be comprehensively understood without reference to Deleuze's ontology of becoming, which offers a deeper insight into the dynamic ontology of contemporary art.

Keywords: *Gilles Deleuze, Anish Kapoor, Becoming, Postmodernism.*

Introduction and Problem Statement

Gilles Deleuze, a prominent post-structuralist philosopher, is regarded as one of the most significant intellectual figures within the postmodern milieu.

Through a renewed interpretation of Nietzsche's ideas, he secured a distinctive position in expanding post-structuralist thought and postmodern approaches. Deleuze was an empiricist philosopher whose thought was centrally concerned with

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concepts such as multiplicity, difference, desire, and becoming—concepts that constitute the very core of his philosophical project. The significance of his method lies in his deliberate choice of a divergent path: while his contemporaries such as Foucault and Derrida concentrated on Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger, Deleuze turned to thinkers like Hume, Leibniz, Bergson, and Nietzsche, offering an innovative and creative reading of philosophy. As a result, his works not only reflect the philosophy of the postwar period but also provide a fertile ground for generating entirely new concepts that had not previously existed (Imbert, 1999, 140).

Deleuze's thought profoundly influenced major intellectuals such as Foucault, Lyotard, and Barthes to the extent that some have referred to the 1970s as the "Deleuzian years" in the intellectual life of France (Lash, 2004, 99). The key themes of his philosophy include deterritorialization and reterritorialization, multiplicity, difference, desire, and a critique of rationalism. Deleuze is a philosopher who, much like an artist, conceives his role not as explanation but as invention. This is why he states: "Art is a becoming of sensation that liberates us from ourselves, while philosophy is a becoming of concepts that re-creates us and what can be thought" (Colebrook, 2008, 116).

One of Deleuze (2010)'s fundamental concerns was the interrelation between art, science, and philosophy. He privileged none of them over the others but considered each to be a mode of creativity: philosophy creates concepts, science invents functions, and art produces blocs of sensation. Accordingly, art in Deleuze's view is not a representation of reality or an imitation of the world but rather a process of generating movement, sensation, and difference. Deleuzian art, rather than serving institutions or reproducing fixed identities, becomes a field for desire, immanence, and perpetual fluidity.

On the basis of this theoretical foundation, the study of contemporary art—and particularly postmodern works—requires a theoretical lens inspired by Deleuze and his key concepts. From this perspective, the works of Anish Kapoor, the renowned Indian-British sculptor,

hold particular potential for analysis. Through his engagement with materiality, space, and the embodied experience of the viewer, Kapoor constructs a fluid and unstable world that resonates strongly with Deleuze's notion of becoming. Hence, the central question of this study is: How can the works of Anish Kapoor, as a postmodern artist, be analyzed and interpreted through the lens of Deleuze's concept of becoming?

Research Methodology

This study is qualitative and theoretical in nature, conducted within the framework of interdisciplinary research in art and philosophy. The primary methodological approach is analytical–interpretive, employing the philosophical theories of Gilles Deleuze to provide a reading of Anish Kapoor's works. The required data were collected through library-based and documentary research. These sources include Deleuze's theoretical writings—particularly those related to the concept of becoming—as well as analytical books and articles on Anish Kapoor's works, alongside interviews, artist statements, catalogues, and exhibition documentation. The study employed qualitative research tools such as note-taking, conceptual categorization, and textual and visual analysis. Furthermore, visual materials of Kapoor's works are utilized to enable a deeper level of interpretation. The structure of the research proceeds as follows: first, the concept of becoming in Deleuze's philosophy and the evolution of Kapoor's artistic practice were examined; subsequently, two major groups of Kapoor's works—namely, the series of red-wax installations and the mirror sculptures—were analyzed through the Deleuzian lens of becoming.

Literature Review

In recent years, Anish Kapoor's works—particularly from the perspectives of aesthetics, spatiality, and the sensory experience of the viewer—have attracted significant attention among scholars of contemporary art. Likewise, a growing body of research has engaged with Gilles Deleuze's philosophical concepts in relation to art. However, most of these studies have predominantly focused on artists such as Francis

Bacon, Pablo Picasso, William Turner, and other postmodern figures. Accordingly, Table 1 presents a survey of previous research relevant to the subject of this study. A review of the existing literature indicates that, to date, no comprehensive research has specifically addressed the intersection between Anish Kapoor’s works and the Deleuzian concept of becoming. The only study thematically related

to this field is an article entitled “An analysis of Anish Kapoor’s works with a focus on the concept of the body without organs in Gilles Deleuze’s philosophy” (Feizi Moghaddam & Ardalani, 2018). Therefore, the present research is innovative in its thematic orientation and seeks to fill a theoretical gap within interdisciplinary studies of philosophy and contemporary art.

Table 1. Research background. Source: Authors.

Author(s)	Title	Key Results	Correlation to the current research
Deleuze (2010)	Francis Bacon: The logic of sensation	Analysis of Francis Bacon’s Paintings: Focusing on the Direct Transmission of Sensation to the Viewer through the Image, rather than Representation.	Proposing a Framework for Interpreting Sensory Experience in Art as the “Becoming of Sensation”; Applicable to Kapoor’s Works.
Hazrati (2013)	Picasso and the Issue of Image and Time (Deleuzian Reading of Picasso)	Examining the Interaction of Image, Time, and Body in Picasso’s Works with an Emphasis on Deleuze: The Image as Event.	Applicable to the Visual Analyses of Kapoor’s Works from the Perspective of Temporality and Imagization.
Ardalani et al. (2016)	Visualization of sensation in Gilles Deleuze’s thought: The analysis of Francis Bacon’s paintings	Examining the Transmission of Sensation and Force in Bacon’s Paintings Based on Deleuzian Theories.	Deleuzian Sensory/Perceptual Concepts in the Context of Art: A Basis for Application to Kapoor.
Ardalani (2016)	Post-structural Gilles Deleuze’s philosophy of art: An interpretation of Francis Bacon’s paintings	Introducing Key Deleuzian Concepts such as Becoming, the Body without Organs, and Difference in the Context of Contemporary Art.	A Reliable Persian Reference for Deleuze’s Philosophical Concepts: The Theoretical Foundation for the Present Study.
Feizi Moghaddam & Ardalani (2018)	An analysis of Anish Kapoor’s works with a focus on the concept of the body without organs in Gilles Deleuze’s philosophy	Analyzing Kapoor’s Works with a Focus on the Concept of the Body without Organs: The First Direct Deleuzian Interpretation of Kapoor in Iran.	The Closest Direct Precedent to the Present Study: A Conceptual Analysis Framework for Kapoor’s Works Using the Deleuzian Model.
Deleuze & Guattari (1987)	A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia	Becoming Encompassing Minoritarian Becomings (Becoming-Woman, Becoming-Animal, etc.), Opposed to Fixed Identities.	A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Kapoor’s Works as Variable Compositions.
Bhabha (1998)	Anish Kapoor: Making emptiness	The Void in Kapoor’s Works is Dynamic and Generative; The Artwork Simultaneously Creates Presence and Absence.	The void in Kapoor’s works is dynamic and generative; the artwork simultaneously brings forth presence and absence.
Stagoll (2010)	Becoming	For Deleuze, becoming is a non-static, difference-generating process; not a simple transformation but the continuous creation of difference.	The Theoretical Basis of Deleuzian Becoming; Applicable to Kapoor’s Artistic Structures.
Ebert (2013)	On Anish Kapoor	A Deleuzian Analysis of Kapoor’s Works: Pure Events, Self-Generation, Depthless Mirrors.	A Direct Deleuzian Interpretation of the Works; A Model for the Present Study.
Dalmia (2016)	Anish Kapoor: Embedded impressions of Indian culture	Concepts such as Self-Generation and Emptiness, Rooted in Indian Cultural Traditions, are Active in Kapoor’s Works.	Self-generation is a concept closely related to becoming; it signifies the creation of fluid and transformable forms.
Bankston (2017)	Deleuze and Becoming	Becoming has two aspects: the evental and the sensory; art is the point where the two intersect.	An Analytical Guide to the Two Levels of “Becoming” in Kapoor’s Works: Experience and Event.
van Roermund (2022)	Labour and Leviathan	Kapoor materializes collective and embodied experience through the inner spaces of his works.	His works as events; an experience of constant change and transformation.

Theoretical Framework

• The concept of becoming in Gilles Deleuze's philosophy

Within poststructuralist thought, no fixed center or autonomous subject is acknowledged; concepts such as presence, essence, and truth are regarded as mental constructs devoid of any absolute foundation. Jacques Derrida conceives meaning as a contradictory and fluid structure that emerges through relations and differences. On this basis, his thought rests upon substituting static being with dynamic becoming (Derrida, 1978, 278–279). In continuity with this orientation, Gilles Deleuze (2002, 112) grounds his philosophy on the concept of becoming. In Nietzsche and Philosophy, he writes: “The only thing that is not life is being”. Consequently, life is a stream of movement, escape, and transformation. According to Deleuze, the distinction between the actual and the virtual is fundamental to understanding existence: every actual phenomenon contains within itself new virtualities, and life is vital only insofar as it is in motion and metamorphosis (Colebrook, 2008, 51).

From Deleuze's perspective, time is not linear or accumulative but a field of constant reproduction; the past is not a closed entity but a source of new possibilities. Thus, philosophy, art, and science serve as instruments of becoming rather than static representations of reality (ibid., 65, 108). Art, in Deleuze's thought, occupies a privileged position because it provides a direct experience of becoming. Referring to Francis Bacon's paintings, he identifies the “scream” as the pure perception of sensation (ibid., 211). In this approach, art does not represent truth but becomes part of the very flow of life and the production of difference. For Deleuze, difference is not merely quantitative disparity but the emergence of novelty and the singularity of each phenomenon. This view connects to the notion of the rhizome: a non-hierarchical, plural, and dynamic structure that, unlike tradition, defines truth in terms of movement and transformation (Cliff, 2010, 14).

Poststructuralism, moreover, extends into the domain of subjectivity. Following Michel Foucault, it conceives human identity not as unified or fixed but as constructed

through discourses, power, and shifting social structures. Inspired by Hume's empiricism, Deleuze likewise regards mind and subject as emergent from the flux of perceptions and habits, rather than as a fixed substance (Deleuze, 2009, 126). He conceives the subject as an open, inventive process—an openness toward the other that finds meaning in difference and potentialities (Colebrook, 2008, 11). In sum, Deleuze's philosophy offers a novel image of being, time, art, and subjectivity. In this perspective, stability gives way to becoming, and reality is constituted through the interrelation of differences, possibilities, and new creations. Truth is not static or given but an open horizon for continual construction, experience, and becoming.

• Focus on Anish Kapoor's works and their evolution

Anish Kapoor, an Indian-British sculptor and one of the most prominent contemporary artists, was born in 1954 in Mumbai. He spent his childhood in India and in 1973 migrated to England to study art. This multicultural background later played a significant role in shaping his artistic identity and conceptual concerns (King, 2005, 3). From his student years onward, Kapoor turned to sculpture, with his works influenced by artists such as Joseph Beuys, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, Walter De Maria, as well as the Fluxus movement. His acquaintance with Paul Neagu and his deep engagement with Neagu's works, along with his fascination with the ideas and approach of Marcel Duchamp, profoundly shaped Kapoor's conceptual and experimental outlook (Kord & Arbabi, 2012, 62). Subsequently, Kapoor's artistic trajectory and major works are presented by series and year of creation in Table 2, followed by a more detailed analysis of selected works in Table 3.

Reflecting on Anish Kapoor's works reveals that his art embodies a fractured identity and a persistent effort to grasp and reimagine concepts such as space, void, matter, color, and identity. These works inherently carry contradictions that function as instruments for generating semantic tensions, thereby opening the ground for a multilayered artistic experience. In this way, Kapoor transforms his art into a bridge—linking cultures as well as individual and collective experiences. Underlying this

Table 2. Classification of Anish Kapoor's body of work. Source: Authors.

Collection	Year of Creation	Selected Works
Pigment Works	1980–1990	1000 Names (1980–1990), As if to Celebrate I Discovered a Mountain Blooming with Red Flowers (1981), To Reflect an Intimate Part of the Red (1981), The Chant of Blue (1983)
Colored Volumes	1984-1994	In Search of the Mountain (1984), Mother as Mountain (1985), Bright Mountain (1993)
Hollow Volumes	1990–1998	Three Witches (1990), Pillar of Light (1991), Ghost (1997)
Hollow Spaces	1991–2008	The Earth (1991), Descent into Limbo (1992), Void Pavilion I (2000)
White Void Works	1992–2002	When I Am Pregnant (1992), White Dark V (1998), White Dark VI (1998), White Dark VIII (2000)
Vortex- and Pit-like Works	1995–2005	Suck (1998), At the Edge of the World (1998), Yellow (1999), My Body Your Body (1999)
Mirror Sculptures	1996–2022	Sky Mirrors (1996-2006), Turning the World Upside Down (1996-2010), Iris7 ,(1998) Ways In (2000), Blood Mirror (2000), Blade (2004), Cloud Gate (2004), Double (2004), Implant (2004), Hexagon Mirrors (2007), Non-Objects (2007-2022), Hex Hex (2008), C-Curve, S-Curve (2006-2020), Islamic Mirror (2008), Tall Tree and the Eye (2009), Wave Torus Blue & Red & Horizon (2009), Mirror ۱۰۱۱۱W (2017), Concave Convex Mirror, Diamond (2020), Regen Projects (2020),
Colored Water Works	1999 -2014	Parabolic Water (1999), Descension (2014)
Red Wax Works	2003–2010	My Red Homeland (2003), Moon Shadow (2005), Negative Box Shadow (2005), Up Down Shadow (2005), V-Shadow (2005), Past, Present, Future (2006), To Divide (2006), Stack (2007), Svayambh (2007), Shadow Corner (2008-2009), Shooting into the Corner (2008-2009)
Monumental Sculptures	1992- Present	Endless Column(1992), Tarantara (1999), Marsyas (2002), Dismemberment, Site I (2003-2009), Hive (2009), Temenos (2010), Dirty Corner (2011-2015), Leviathan (2011), Orbit (2012), Ark Nova (2014)

approach is a philosophical perspective that emphasizes the dynamism and fluidity of identity; each of his works thus becomes a symbol of shifting boundaries between past and present, East and West, and between matter and void.

Discussion

• Reading Anish Kapoor's works through the concept of becoming with a focus on Deleuze's perspective

The analysis of becoming in Anish Kapoor's works, based on the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, is primarily centered on two series: the Red Wax works and the Mirror Sculptures. These works, both structurally and conceptually, resonate with the ontological foundations of becoming. For Deleuze, becoming is an active, decentered, and non-teleological process that emerges from within the work itself, rather than being merely its subject. In the Red Wax series, matter—through its unstable and self-generating structure—materializes, becoming at the level of form and the production of difference. In the Mirror Sculptures, becoming occurs at the level of perception and the viewer's experience, where the destabilization of the subject's position and the creation of multiple reflections prevent identity and meaning from remaining fixed. In Kapoor's other works, traces of becoming can also be observed; however, they

often remain at a metaphorical level. By contrast, these two series actualize becoming itself as an event and a process. The distinction between the “representation of becoming” and “becoming as a generative mechanism of the work” has been the main criterion for this selection. Therefore, the choice of these works lies in their intrinsic and structural realization of becoming at the levels of matter, perception, and process, fully aligned with Deleuzian foundations.

• The red wax series

In Anish Kapoor's Red Wax series, a fluid, semi-transparent, and mutable material is employed that, rather than emphasizing a fixed final form, highlights the continuous process of transformation and the concept of becoming. This wax operates like a living substance, always in transition from actuality to potentiality, foregrounding process over outcome. The dynamic and ongoing flow of the material generates a vibrant and transformative space, interweaving time, place, and matter, and confronting the viewer with an experience of mutability and instability. In what follows, and with reference to [Tables 2 & 3](#), four selected works from the Red Wax series will be analyzed.

- Past, present, future

Anish Kapoor's installation Past, Present, Future is one of his most remarkable sculptural works of the 2000s. Comprising a massive red-wax hemisphere


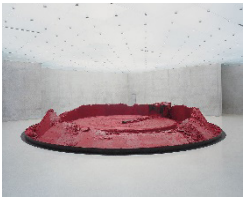

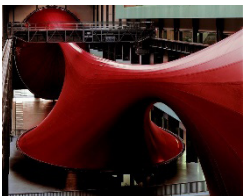
Table 3. Examination of Anish Kapoor's body of works. Source: Authors.

Collection	Material	Work	Specifications
Pigment Works	Mixed media and pigment	 <p>1000 Names</p>	<p>During his journey to India in 1979, Anish Kapoor became acquainted with the colored powders used in temples and religious rituals, which he subsequently incorporated into his works. Upon returning to England, he created a series entitled “1000 Names”, whose title, inspired by Hindu deities, alludes to the notion of infinity. This series reflects the idea of the manifestation of gods in multiple forms (Weng, 2016, 4). The fusion of cultural heritage, artistic influences, and ritual elements in Kapoor’s works renders them exemplary instances within contemporary art. The forms employed in these works—such as cones, domes, pyramids, and volcanic shapes—symbolize an effort to establish a connection between the earthly and the celestial, the human and the divine.</p>
Colored Volumes	Mixed media and pigment	 <p>Mother as Mountain</p>	<p>These chromatic volumes were created through the combination of primordial forms (cone, mass, mountain), pure material (raw pigment), and fundamental concepts (void, birth, inside/outside, maternity). Taken together, they embody Kapoor’s intellectual and artistic framework during the early years of his professional career (Paul, 2017, 280–284). Within this series, he frequently employed the dual titles “Mother” and “Mountain.” The figure of the mother, across cultures, signifies protection of her children against adversity, much like the steadfastness of a mountain. These geometric forms present a cohesive structure, positioned on the ground as if a mountain covered with pigment, while the hollow spaces within them underscore the dialectical relationship between interiority and exteriority.</p>
Hollow Volumes	Stone and pigment	 <p>Three Witches</p>	<p>A series of hollow volumes, carved out of massive stones, whose interiors were excavated, form another body of Kapoor’s work. At times, these pieces were coated with vivid, monochromatic pigments, thereby evoking in the viewer a sense of mystery and enigma. Within this series, Kapoor engages not only with the representation of physical space but also with the exploration of metaphysical elements—dualities such as light and darkness, earth and sky, mind and body. For Kapoor, space is never empty; rather, it is imbued with meaning and potential. It is precisely this paradox and tension that he investigates within both material and abstract conditions (Wahid, 2015, 94).</p>
Hollow Spaces	Fiberglass and pigment	 <p>Descent into Limbo</p>	<p>A series of Anish Kapoor’s works reside at the threshold between sculpture and architecture. Kapoor himself asserts that even during his pigment-based period, he was already contemplating the spatial potential of his practice, consistently regarding the creation of new art as contingent upon the “invention of new space” (Kord & Arbabi, 2012, 63). A paradigmatic example of this approach is Descent into Limbo, in which Kapoor employs the entirety of a building to guide the viewer into a chamber containing nothing but a black circular void—a space simultaneously empty and tense, provoking fear and perceptual instability. Kapoor conceives of this void not merely as a cavity but as a kind of “pictorial surface,” one that summons the spectator to contemplate an imperceptible depth. He insists that this “dark space” is not an empty vacuum but rather a dense, meaningful presence (Baume, 2008, 50).</p>
White Darkness Works	Fiberglass and pigment	 <p>White Dark</p>	<p>The White Darkness series was conceived to create a “luminous equivalent to the darkness of the void and vortex-like forms,” where light replaces obscurity while evoking a comparable depth (Celant, 1996, 221). In these works, hollow geometric structures in white—constructed from fiberglass or marble—open up an inner, boundless space before the viewer; a space not shrouded in darkness but infused with a muted, diffused light. This perceptual experience prompts the spectator to feel themselves as part of this radiant and suspended void (Hedlin Hayden, 2003, 110–112).</p>
Whirlpool and Pit-like Works	Fiberglass and pigment	 <p>Yellow</p>	<p>Some of Kapoor’s works take on a crater-like quality, wherein space itself becomes an artistic object. In these pieces, the concavity functions much like a protruding volume, producing a paradoxical experience of spatial presence. A notable example is Yellow, where the color yellow—symbolizing knowledge, tranquility, and mental growth in Indian culture—intertwines with sculptural form to create a space reminiscent of the sun, energy, and spiritual grandeur. This visual structure generates a fluid and unstable experience that dissolves the boundary between object and subject—a condition Kapoor refers to as a “phenomenological shift,” a moment that compels the viewer’s perception toward doubt and reflection (Wahid, 2015, 104).</p>

Rest of Table 3.

Collection	Material	Work	Specifications
Mirror Sculptures	Stainless Steel		<p>Anish Kapoor’s mirrored sculptures, with their unstable and distorted reflections, generate a dynamic experience of space and time, dissolving the boundary between sky and earth. These works open the possibility of a renewed encounter with objects and the environment, offering an experience of what can be termed the “modern sublime” (Kord & Arbabi, 2012, 63–65). His renowned work, Cloud Gate—commonly referred to as “The Bean”—was constructed in Chicago’s Millennium Park using 160 stainless-steel plates (Wahid, 2015, 110). Through its mirrored surface, the sculpture reflects the sky, the ground, and human presence, thereby generating a unique spatial and perceptual experience. According to Garofalo, Cloud Gate represents not a critique of the city but rather a poetic and symbolic transference of architecture into the political realm—an explosion rather than a revolution (Garofalo, 2005, 64).</p>
			<p>Anish Kapoor’s Tall Tree and the Eye is a conceptual and engineered sculpture composed of 73 polished steel spheres, installed at a height of approximately 14 meters. These spheres, meticulously arranged, reflect one another to generate a fractal-like reflective pattern, simultaneously constructing and dissolving both form and space—particularly when the viewer steps inside and perceives the infinite reflections of the sky, the surrounding architecture, and themselves. The structural design of the work was realized through form modeling and spherical packing analysis, with the aim of concealing the internal framework and evoking a sense of suspension (Tuffanelli, 2010, 51–53).</p>
			<p>Anish Kapoor’s Sky Mirror is a concave, polished stainless-steel disc measuring 10.6 meters in diameter, which inverts the reflection of the sky and surrounding urban architecture. Its reverse side simultaneously reflects passersby and the cityscape in a distorted manner (Anish Kapoor: Sky Mirror, 2006). Through these mutable reflections, the work disrupts conventional perceptions of space and time, situating the viewer in a liminal state between presence and absence. Kapoor describes the piece by stating: “Mirrors eliminate objects and transform space into an experiential surface” (Anish Kapoor ..., 2008). This sculpture redefines urban perception, drawing the spectator into the interplay between their own reflection and the surrounding environment (Garofalo, 2005, 64).</p>
Colored Water Works	Water		<p>This work by Anish Kapoor is a mirrored stainless-steel sculpture located in Kensington Park, London, which, by inverting the reflection of its surroundings, offers a philosophical experience of the instability of perception. In this piece, the viewer is not merely an observer but becomes an integral part of the artistic experience, situating the work within the domain of participatory art (Bishop, 2012, 6). The sculpture’s polished, reflective surface distorts reality, evoking a notion akin to the “return of the real” in contemporary art, wherein reality is no longer fixed or absolute but is entangled with perception, the viewer’s position, and the social context (Foster, 1996, 21).</p>
			<p>Another series of Kapoor’s works is titled “Descension” (Colored Waters), in which water is set into rapid motion within a large chamber, creating a forceful and turbulent flow. Descension, one of the exemplary pieces in this series, is the result of intensive research into materials and processes, exploring the potential of water in astonishing ways. The alternating, vortex-like movement of this liquid mass converges into a central spiral, such that the water appears to be sucked down with great velocity into the depths of the earth. The process of “descent” stirs the imagination while simultaneously evoking social, cultural, and even mythological dimensions (Anish Kapoor: Descension, 2017)</p>
Red Wax	Wax and oil paint		<p>Anish Kapoor’s red wax works emphasize the fluidity of matter and the autonomy of color. He associates the color red with blood, the body, and inner darkness, describing it as deeper and more intense than blue or black (Kapoor, 2008). In this series, Kapoor regards color not merely as a surface coating of sculpture but as an independent substance in its own right. He even refers to himself as “a painter who makes sculpture,” since his works, rather than focusing solely on physical presence, allude to an illusory existence that transcends place (Kord & Arbabi, 2012, 65). One of the most emblematic pieces of this body of work, Past, Present, Future, is a massive hemispherical dome of crimson wax, slowly and continuously carved by a mechanical blade. As the blade traverses the surface, it shaves off layers of wax, generating dynamic mounds that resemble solar eruptions (Anish Kapoor: Past, present, future, 2006, 1 & 2). This gradual and enigmatic process evokes the formation of a planet or the birth of a living organism, instilling a ritualistic and sacred atmosphere. Like many of Kapoor’s works, the piece reflects the interplay between matter, machine, and the passage of time, offering a phenomenological experience of form emerging from within material itself.</p>

Rest of Table 3.

Collection	Material	Work	Specifications
Red Wax	Wax and oil paint	 <p>Svayambh</p>	<p>The title of Svayambh derives from a Sanskrit term meaning “self-generated” or “self-produced.” This monumental sculpture consists of a massive block of red wax that moves slowly along a set of rails, gradually shaping itself as it passes through doorways and leaving behind a crimson trace. The project required the precise engineering of both the wax composition and specially designed mechanical drivers, ensuring a balance between structural stability and pliability (Dodgson, 2016, 289). According to Kapoor (2002, 61), meaning in this work—like the object itself—emerges gradually through process; the piece is less a pre-determined statement than a site for experience and the unfolding of meaning.</p>
		 <p>My Red Homeland</p>	<p>Anish Kapoor has employed the color red across various media—such as wax, steel, and lacquer—due to its inner darkness and profound emotional resonance. In My Red Homeland, a slow-moving mechanical arm methodically shapes a vast mass of red wax, effectively substituting for the hand of the artist (Wahid, 2015, 108). Kapoor (2008) regards red as the color of passion, blood, and affect, finding its meaning within the tension between light and darkness. In his work, red thus becomes an instrument of interior and perceptual exploration.</p>
		 <p>Shooting into the corner</p>	<p>The work Shooting into the Corner is a hybrid sculpture, performance, and ritual action, in which red wax projectiles are rhythmically fired into a corner of the gallery, intertwining the concepts of creation and destruction. Executed with carefully selected performers and imbued with ceremonial precision, the process produces a theatrical experience in which time and space converge. The red wax, splattered across the wall like blood, simultaneously provokes sensations of rage and pleasure in the viewer. Kapoor traces the origin of this idea back to his student years, when the notion of “filling the space between the center and the corner of the room” through shooting was transformed into a dramatic image (Wahid, 2015, 115–116).</p>
Giant Sculptures	PVC and Steel	 <p>Marsyas</p>	<p>In his large-scale projects, Kapoor regards sculpture as a necessary presence within contemporary life—something that must be perceived on a monumental scale. His works are the result of intensive collaboration with engineering and design teams, a process also informed by his brief studies in engineering (Dodgson, 2016, 281). A prominent example is Marsyas, inspired by the Greek myth, in which Kapoor constructs a vast and blood-red spatial form interweaving three steel rings. Declaring, “I want to turn the body into the sky” (Kapoor, 2002, 16), he transforms the human body into a cosmic form, destabilizing the viewer’s perception within the monochromatic and unified environment of the work.</p>

(approximately 9 meters in diameter) and a mechanical blade, the work stages concepts of time, becoming, and material transformation. The blade continuously carves the wax surface, slicing away layers and thereby keeping the sculpture in a perpetual state of change, effectively replacing the artist’s hand. This ongoing process evokes a mythical and cosmic scene, resembling the birth of a sun or a crimson planet constantly erupting with fiery bursts. Within this structure, the past (the carved wax), the present (the current form), and the future (the surface yet to be shaped) co-exist simultaneously, rendering the wax matter itself a vessel of time and metamorphosis. The hemispherical form resembles a planet in perpetual shedding, never reaching stability or an outcome, but instead revealing a material existence of continuous becoming. In line with Gilles Deleuze’s philosophy,

the work exemplifies becoming in its purest sense: the artwork is not understood as a static object, but as a fluid and unending process. Deleuze frames becoming as a machinic state—where human, matter, and machine converge, collapsing the traditional boundaries of creator, artwork, and tool. Thus, Past, Present, Future offers the viewer a sensory, philosophical, and cosmic experience of “something in the midst of becoming,” transforming sculpture from an object into a process (Fig. 1).

- Svayambh

Anish Kapoor’s installation Svayambh—literally “self-born” or “self-generated” in Sanskrit—embodies a material and kinetic expression of becoming, occupying a central place in a Deleuzian reading. Its title, with strong resonances to Hindu mythology, underscores the

notion of self-creation, a form emerging from within rather than imposed from outside. In this monumental installation, a massive block of oily red wax moves slowly along rails through the museum space, passing through a series of identically sized doorways. As the wax brushes against the walls and frames, its surface is scraped, leaving visceral red traces that record the process of formation, like the tangible remnants of a lived past. With its associations of flesh, body, and blood, the wax acquires a living, fragile, and unstable quality. The sculpture is thus not experienced as a fixed object, but as a temporal process, continuously in the midst of becoming. From a Deleuzian perspective, the work resonates with concepts such as becoming and the body without organs, where the rigid structure of the body gives way to a fluid, decentered, and unstable mass. The combination of movement, color, form, and space transforms this installation into a multimedia event that transcends the conventional boundaries of sculpture, painting, theater, and architecture. As Kapoor himself remarks, “The meaning of Svayambh is made gradually, just as the object is made”—a statement that emphasizes the generative reciprocity of matter and meaning. Consequently, Svayambh is not merely a material image of becoming but a tragic and, at the same time, liberating representation of modern existence: a life perpetually fleeing stability, continually reinventing itself in moments of precarious transformation (Fig. 2).

- My red homeland

Anish Kapoor’s My Red Homeland, created from 25

tons of deep red wax and a hydraulic mechanical arm that slowly rotates the mass in a circular motion (one revolution per hour), is a concrete manifestation of becoming within a material and kinetic framework. In this ongoing process, the wax is perpetually reshaped without ever arriving at a final form—simultaneously being created and destroyed. As Rosenthal et al. (2013) observes, the substance remains “always in a state of potential toward form,” thereby embodying an endless and purposeless becoming. Here, the mechanical arm is not merely an external tool but an integral creative agent of the work, enacting Deleuze’s notion of “machinic becoming,” in which the boundary between artistic creation and natural processes such as erosion or organic transformation dissolves. The installation thus becomes what Deleuze and Guattari call a “block of sensation”: a perceptual-material experience grounded not in representation but in intensity and affect. The red wax, with its organic connotations of blood, passion, and vitality, generates a sensorial and philosophical encounter. The title My Red Homeland simultaneously evokes Kapoor’s birthplace in India and a broader, universal sense of belonging and affective rootedness. For Kapoor, red is “the color of blood, passion, and emotion”—a primordial element that, in its interplay with light, darkness, matter, and void, destabilizes the viewer’s perception. Ultimately, like many of Kapoor’s works, My Red Homeland shifts sculpture from a fixed object to a continuous process: a restless matter that acquires meaning through time, motion, and machinic intervention, fully aligned with the Deleuzian philosophy of becoming (Fig. 3).

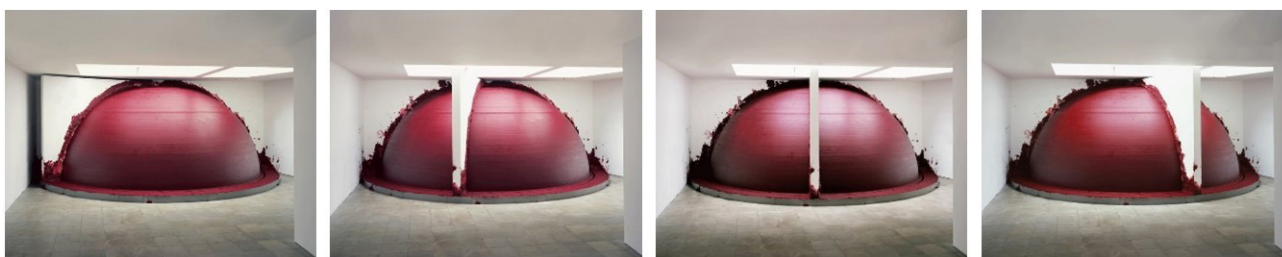


Fig. 1. Past, present, future. Source: www.anishkapoor.com.



Fig. 2. Svayambh. Source: www.anishkapoor.com.

- Shooting into the corner

Anish Kapoor's *Shooting into the Corner* is one of his most radical explorations at the threshold between sculpture, performance, and painting, embodying Deleuzian becoming in a visceral and literal way. In this installation, a monumental pneumatic cannon propels massive projectiles of red wax into the white corner of the gallery at regular intervals (approximately every twenty minutes), accompanied by a deafening blast. The wax collides with the wall, shatters, and collapses in layers, gradually transforming the pristine corner into a blood-like, ever-accumulating field—formless, unstable, and without any final resolution. Rather than a finished object, the work unfolds as a recurring event: each shot, each explosion, and each subsequent collapse constitutes an inseparable part of the meaning of the piece. The act of firing is performed by operators with ritualistic rhythm, reinforcing the performativity of the work, while the audience becomes entrapped in a cycle of anticipation, shock, and observation: the silence before the shot, the sudden eruption, and the slow subsiding of wax form a sensory, bodily, and temporal drama. The organic, unstable quality of the red wax—evocative of blood,

violence, and disorder—lends the space a haunting and uncanny atmosphere. From a Deleuzian perspective, *Shooting into the Corner* exemplifies the “sculpture-as-event”: not representation but production, not an end product but an endless process of deterritorialization and becoming. The machine and the material operate in a continuous interplay, generating a violent yet creative becoming in which no two moments are identical. In this sense, Kapoor enacts what may be called a form of “creative destruction,” collapsing the boundary between art object and event, and transforming the process of artistic creation into a fluid, momentary, and unstable experience—one deeply resonant with Deleuze's philosophy of becoming (Fig. 4).

• Mirror sculptures

Anish Kapoor's mirror sculptures are a prominent embodiment of becoming and fluidity in contemporary art. These works, through convex and concave structures and the use of the optical properties of mirrors, create a multilayered and changing reflection of the surrounding environment and are always in transformation. Thus, the work does not present a final and fixed form but rather a transient experience of space and time. The unstable

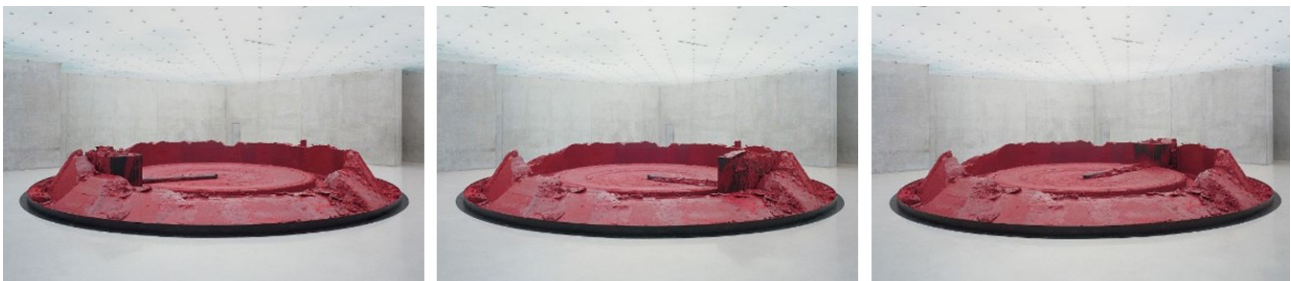


Fig. 3. My red homeland. Source: www.anishkapoor.com.



Fig. 4. Shooting into the corner. Source: www.anishkapoor.com.

reflections cause the boundary between subject, object, and environment to overlap and engage the viewer's perception in a process of image instability; a situation that is consistent with the concept of becoming in Deleuze's thought. These sculptures function as dynamic events that constantly lead visual experience and the concept of reality toward reconsideration. According to (Tables 2 & 3), four works from the series of mirror sculptures will be analyzed.

- Cloud Gate

Anish Kapoor's Cloud Gate, located in Chicago's Millennium Park, is the most iconic example of his mirror-sculptures, embodying concepts of becoming, reflection, and the dissolution of subject/object boundaries in a concrete, spatial-phenomenological form. The monumental, concave structure, clad in a seamless reflective surface, does not present a fixed image but instead generates a shifting visual field, perpetually altered by light, angle, and the movements of its viewers. Kapoor refers to such works as "non-objects," since their identity does not reside within themselves but is constituted through the reflection of the environment and the presence of the audience. Cloud Gate is in a constant state of becoming: a form without finality, transformed by every environmental change. This renders the work a material manifestation of Deleuze's notion of "becoming," wherein the spectator is no longer a passive observer but an active participant, merging with their own reflection and with the surrounding environment in the mirrored

surface. In this process, the boundaries between human and object, earth and sky, reality and reflection are destabilized, transforming space into a fluid and dynamic field of perception. The reflections of the sky across the convex surfaces, together with the mirroring of people and ground on other facets, enact a continual encounter of earth and sky. Shifting clouds, changing light, and the presence of crowds endow the work with a living, mutable quality, one that is perpetually in flux. Furthermore, some critics interpret Cloud Gate not as a direct critique but as a narrative of "urban dissolution," a metaphor for the redefinition of boundaries of power, order, and perception. Ultimately, Cloud Gate epitomizes the "sculpture-as-becoming": a work that absorbs both viewer and environment, manifesting through its reflective quality the philosophical concepts of becoming, instability, and the blurring of boundaries in sensory and visual terms. It is precisely this "non-object" that Deleuze would describe as the pure manifestation of becoming (Fig. 5).

- Tall tree and the eye

Anish Kapoor's Tall Tree and the Eye, a fifteen-meter-high sculpture installed at the Royal Academy of Arts in London, consists of dozens of polished, mirror-like steel spheres, suspended and delicately balanced upon one another. The reflective surfaces of the spheres capture both the surrounding environment and each other, producing an unstable, multilayered network of overlapping images of spectators, sky, and architecture. From a Deleuzian perspective, the structure possesses



Fig. 5. Cloud Gate. Source: www.anishkapoor.com.



“rhizomatic” qualities: it lacks a center, resists linearity, and remains perpetually contingent upon the shifting position of the viewer. The endless reflections fracture the unified identity of the spectator, dispersing them into a multiplicity of images and perspectives. This condition materializes what Deleuze and Guattari describe as the “crystalline image”—a moment in which reality and illusion, the actual and the representational, are inextricably entangled. Kapoor refers to this experience as the “improbable”: something appearing simple and coincidental on the surface but in fact the outcome of meticulous calculation and hidden order. The continuous play of mirrored surfaces and reflected light renders life as fluid and unstable, with the spheres themselves evoking the temporality of human existence—passing, recurring, and always differing. Thus, the sculpture emerges not as a static object but as a process of becoming: a manifestation of the interweaving of form, space, and perception, one that collapses the boundaries between reality and reflection, human and environment, center and periphery. In the end, *Tall Tree and the Eye*, like many of Kapoor’s works, embodies Deleuzian notions of becoming, instability, and nonlinear participation, transforming art into an event in perpetual flux (Fig. 6).

- Sky mirror

Anish Kapoor’s *Sky Mirror* is a lucid embodiment of becoming within the domains of space, perception, and reflection. This monumental concave mirror of polished steel, by inverting and reflecting the sky, clouds, and

surrounding architecture, draws the transcendent sky down into a terrestrial, unstable plane—a gesture that Deleuze would call the “deterritorialization of the sky.” In this experience, the boundaries between above and below, subject and object, reality and representation collapse. The viewer simultaneously stands upon the ground while inhabiting the reflection of the heavens—a condition that exemplifies Deleuze’s notion of “cosmic becoming,” wherein the human merges with the vast order of nature through a direct, sensory encounter. The New York installation offers a paradigmatic example: the convex side reflects the city and its passersby, while the concave side inverts the sky and skyscrapers. Kapoor remarks: “This mirror stitches the sky to the earth.” Thus, the work functions as a mediator between human and cosmos, not merely on the level of visual reflection but as a physical and conceptual act in which the distinction between transcendent and terrestrial realms is undone. Depending on the time of day and the play of light, the mirrored surface sometimes dissolves seamlessly into its environment and at other moments asserts itself as a focal point. This fluidity transforms the piece into a field of becoming, where space, light, time, and spectator are inextricably intertwined. Like Kapoor’s other mirror works, *Sky Mirror* renders reflection as a participatory and unstable experience. Ultimately, the piece is not a fixed object but a site for the experience of becoming—what might be called a “point of transition,” in which dualities collapse and the movement from stable being to continuous becoming is enacted (Fig. 7).

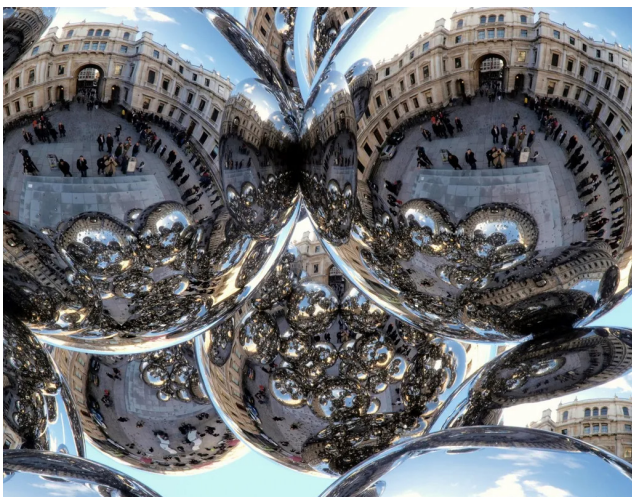


Fig. 6. Tall tree and the eye. Source: www.anishkapoor.com.



- Turning the world upside down

Installed in Kensington Gardens, London, in 2010, Anish Kapoor’s Turning the World Upside Down is a monumental double-faced mirror sculpture—convex on the lower side and concave on the upper—that offers an inverted reflection of sky, ground, and viewer. This reflection is never fixed or transparent; rather, it is always in flux, a continuous “repetition with difference” that collapses the boundaries between subject and object, interior and exterior, observer and observed. Here, the mirror functions not as an instrument of identity or a stable representation of reality, but as what may be called a “machine for the production of difference.” The body and identity of the spectator become fluid on its surface—dissolved, fragmented, and unstable. The viewer is no longer a passive onlooker but is drawn into the very process of becoming. In Deleuzian terms, this

condition exemplifies “becoming”: an endless, goal-less process in which meaning emerges through perpetual transformation. The sculpture’s form, at once simple and conceptually complex, destabilizes perception. What appears familiar is rendered strange upon encounter, producing an experience of instability with respect to both space and reality. In this sense, Turning the World Upside Down is not merely a sculpture but a philosophical machine, one that constructs an alternative world—a fluid and shifting world in which the spectator enters directly into the experience of Deleuzian becoming (Fig. 8).

In continuation, and to provide a theoretical synthesis, Table 4 is presented. This table seeks to concisely articulate the connection between the Deleuzian concept of becoming and the visual, technical, and processual characteristics of Kapoor’s two bodies



Fig. 7. Sky mirror. Source: www.anishkapoor.com.

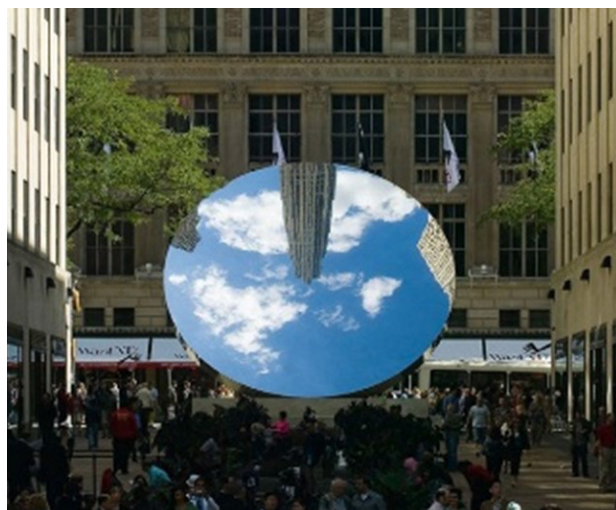


Fig. 8. Turning the world ppside down. Source: www.anishkapoor.com.



Table 4. The Relationship between Deleuze’s Concepts of Becoming and Kapoor’s Red Wax Works and Mirror Sculptures. Source: Authors.

Collection	Work	Visual/Technical Features	Becoming Approach	Deleuzian Concepts
Red Wax	Past, present, Future	A red wax hemisphere continuously carved by a mechanical blade	Continuous carving representing temporal becoming and the instability of matter	Becoming, process, temporality, continuous creation
	Svayambh	The passage of a red wax mass through doorways on a moving rail	Gradual formation process, without a final form, representation of self-generation	Body without organs, self-generation, material becoming
	My Red Homeland	Red wax rotating by a mechanical arm	Continuous rotation and simultaneous destruction; machinic and self-generating becoming	Machinic becoming, tendency toward form, sensory block
	Shooting into the Corner	Repeated firing of red wax bullets at the gallery wall	Endless event, simultaneous process of creation and destruction; non-fixity	Event, intensity, process without telos
Mirror	Cloud Gate	Convex mirror sculpture reflecting the city, sky, and people	Becoming-image, unstable reflections; interaction of human/environment/work	Becoming-nonhuman, crystalline image, non-object
	Tall Tree and the Eye	A collection of suspended mirrored spheres with multiple reflections	Multi-layered reflection, fluid process; rhizomatic structure	Perceptual becoming, rhizomatic structure, unstable reflection, fluidity
	Sky Mirror	Giant convex mirror, reflecting the sky onto the ground	Suspended sky on the ground; spatial integration, participatory experience of perception	Cosmic becoming, perceptual mirror, merging of above/below
	Turning the World Upside Down	Concave-convex mirror form, variable and inverted reflection, visual distortion	Negation of perceptual stability, spatial and identity fluidity, and audience interaction	Perceptual becoming, body without organs, unstable reflection, production of meaning within change

of work, the red wax installations and the mirror sculptures.

Conclusion

An examination of Anish Kapoor’s works through the lens of Gilles Deleuze’s philosophy of becoming reveals that the concept of becoming in these works is not merely metaphorical or allegorical, but material, sensorial, and experiential. For Deleuze, becoming is a dynamic, non-centered, and perpetually transformative condition that stands in fundamental opposition to notions such as traditional representation, fixed form, and static identity. Kapoor’s red wax installations—Past, Present, Future, Svayambh, and My Red Homeland—as well as his mirrored sculptures such as Cloud Gate and Sky Mirror, serve as paradigmatic examples of this orientation, generating for the viewer a tangible encounter with becoming. In engaging with these works, time, space, matter, and perception remain in constant oscillation and redefinition, situating the spectator within a process in which no form is stable and no identity is final.

What distinguishes the Deleuzian understanding of becoming in Kapoor’s works from other contemporary

discourses on fluidity or indeterminacy is that becoming, for Deleuze, does not denote mere instability or decentering, but is understood as a fundamentally creative and generative process—one that arises from the encounter of forces, matter, and perception, and is grounded in the production of difference and the invention of concepts. From this perspective, Kapoor’s works do not simply represent or symbolize fluidity; rather, they transform the artwork itself into a field of event and experience. For instance, in Shooting into the Corner, the focus is not solely on the splattering wax, but on the moment of propulsion, the energy discharged in the collision of material with space, and the suspension of anticipation experienced by the spectator. Together, these constitute an event that exemplifies all the characteristics of becoming—where meaning resides not in the outcome, but in the immediacy of its production and occurrence.

This study demonstrates that Kapoor’s works surpass generalized notions of fluidity or instability, embodying qualities directly aligned with Deleuzian becoming: material instability, perceptual suspension, the production of difference in the moment, the active participation of the spectator, and the dissolution of

classical boundaries between subject and object, inside and outside, form and content. Such qualities render Kapoor's works as concrete manifestations of becoming within contemporary art, wherein he employs visual, material, and even ritualistic strategies to construct spaces in which becoming is experienced as both lived reality and philosophical concept.

In this sense, Kapoor's oeuvre, by mobilizing matter, space, and perceptual engagement, provides a framework for apprehending becoming in its Deleuzian sense. What unfolds in these works is not the fixation of form or the representation of meaning, but the opening of a space for an experience that is always in flux—where spectator, artwork, and environment are interwoven in a dynamic and ongoing process of creation. Thus, Kapoor's works are apprehended not as static art objects but as fluid events in the process of becoming—events that regenerate meaning within the very unfolding of transformation. Through his distinctive visual language, Kapoor materializes a conception of becoming that resonates directly with Deleuzian philosophy while simultaneously expanding the horizons of contemporary artistic experience.

Declaration of No Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest in conducting this research.

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HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Feizi Moghaddam, E., Sajjadi, S. A., & Ardalani, H. (2025). An analysis of Anish Kapoor's works with a focus on the concept of becoming from the perspective of Gilles Deleuze. *Bagh-e Nazar*, 22(148), 71-86.

DOI: [10.22034/bagh.2025.520350.5817](https://doi.org/10.22034/bagh.2025.520350.5817)

URL: https://www.bagh-sj.com/article_228542.html?lang=en

