

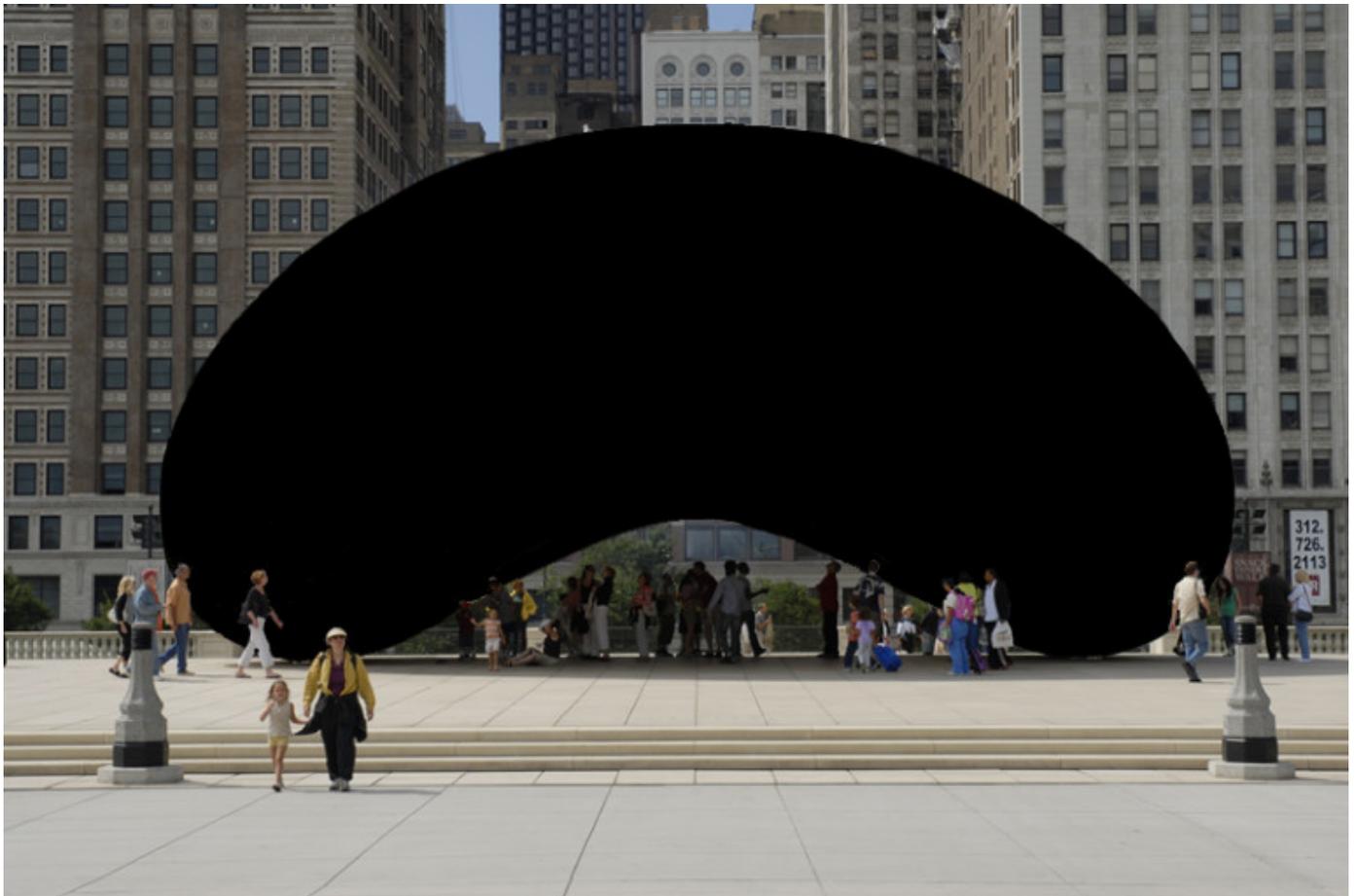


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ARTICLES

Anish Kapoor Coats “Cloud Gate” in the Darkest Black Known to Humanity

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Anish Kapoor’s “Cloud Gate” (2006) following the artist’s recent recoating in Vantablack (photo courtesy City of Chicago)

Taking advantage of his exclusive rights to make artistic use of the high-tech, light-absorbing material Vantablack, the British artist Anish Kapoor has covered the entire surface of his Chicago public sculpture “Cloud Gate” (2006) with it. The result, a looming black

orb that neutralizes 99.965% of the radiation that hits it, is a far cry from the mirrored selfie beacon that Chicagoans and tourists have come to love.

“The public has had a decade to interact with the reflective surface of ‘Cloud Gate,’ and I felt it was time for a change,” Kapoor told Hyperallergic. “Whereas the sculpture was originally about play and surface appearance, I think the Vantablack version is more about introspection, about becoming disoriented, lost, and enveloped in an overwhelming void of nothingness.”



Visitors take selfies in front of Anish Kapoor’s “Cloud Gate” (photo by [@iannahlouisehimel/Instagram](#))

In spite of the artist’s existential ideas about the revamped sculpture, the change of tone doesn’t seem to have deterred the droves of selfie-snappers. Since the artwork’s re-unveiling on Monday, tourists have been posting photos of themselves standing in front of or playfully covering beneath the towering blob of blackness. Meanwhile, locals have taken to calling it “The Black Bean,” a twist on its prior nickname, “The Bean.”

"I didn't believe my friends when they first told me that he'd covered the Bean in that ultra-black paint of his," said Leigh Millicent, a student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, who visited the sculpture earlier this week. "But he did, and it's really, really black. Black as midnight on a moonless night."

Kapoor said that he was pleased with his first public experiment with Vantablack and plans to spend the next year applying it to all of his large-scale outdoor works, beginning with [his London tower](#), the fire-engine red "ArcelorMittal Orbit" (2012). "Since I started taking on these large public projects, the world has become a much darker place," he said. "I want my work to reflect that."

 **comments (29)**