

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

Mark Hudson, "Anish Kapoor's Arcelor Mittal Orbit, Olympic Park, London – review," *The Telegraph*, May 11, 2012.

## Anish Kapoor's Arcelor Mittal Orbit, Olympic Park, London - review

Anish Kapoor and Cecil Balmond's Olympic Park sculpture, the Arcelor Mittal Orbit, doesn't disappoint, says Mark Hudson.



Image 1 of 5

Roped up: three workers discuss their next move

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

Mark Hudson, "Anish Kapoor's Arcelor Mittal Orbit, Olympic Park, London – review," *The Telegraph*, May 11, 2012.

It's visible from some distance away, like a great letter R looming over the tangle of industrial buildings and buddleia-choked brownfield sites that fringe the Olympic Park. The UK's tallest sculpture, the work of artist Anish Kapoor and architect Cecil Balmond, the Arcelor Mittal Orbit is already one of the most talked about aspects of the whole Olympic experience, its red-painted tangle of steel seen in endless digital mock-ups. An inspirational symbol to some, it will doubtless be written off as a monstrosity by others — yet another overbearingly tall structure crowding the London skyline.

Sponsored by Indian steel magnate Lakshmi N. Mittal, the 114 metre high structure has been constructed from 2,000 tons of Mittal's steel, an impressive 60% of it recycled. Yet as you approach it across the Olympic Park, it doesn't appear as gigantic as you might expect. Here you're in a kind of fairground of extraordinary structures, from the great white crown of the main stadium to the ergonomic ellipse of the velodrome, where gigantism rules. You've come here to be overwhelmed and entertained, and on that level the Orbit doesn't disappoint.

Where its obvious rival, the considerably taller Eifel Tower is rigidly symmetrical, the Orbit appears at first barely comprehensible: a helter-skelter staircase surrounded by an anarchic, near random spiralling of red geodesic mesh. Standing beneath this wildly asymmetric structure is like looking up at some classic early Modernist building that's been grabbed by a monstrous hand and shaken all over the place.

Yet as you look closer, a certain order appears. Over the entrance hangs a massive rusting steel canopy, like an enormous inverted trumpet. It brings to mind the immersive web-like structures seen in several of Kapoor's other large-scale quasi-architectural sculptures, and is echoed by a vast horn-like form at the top of the work.

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

Mark Hudson, "Anish Kapoor's Arcelor Mittal Orbit, Olympic Park, London – review," *The Telegraph*, May 11, 2012.

The viewing platforms at the top afford spectacular views over the City, with two distorting concave mirrors that are designed to change our sense of space, as though, in Kapoor's words, 'you're in an instrument for looking'. That is a rather elevated description of the mirrors' rippling, distorting effect. Yet overall the Orbit provides a challenging twist on the idea of the tower as viewing point and visitor attraction that is inspiring and uplifting. I loved it.

It is disconcerting to learn that while the tower has been paid for by the richest man in the world, it will cost the ordinary visitor £15 a head – £7 for children — to enter. Yet as you look down into the structure's central well, with a great mass of red girders spiralling beneath you, and then turn to see the immensity of London rolling away ahead, you can almost believe it will be worth the price.