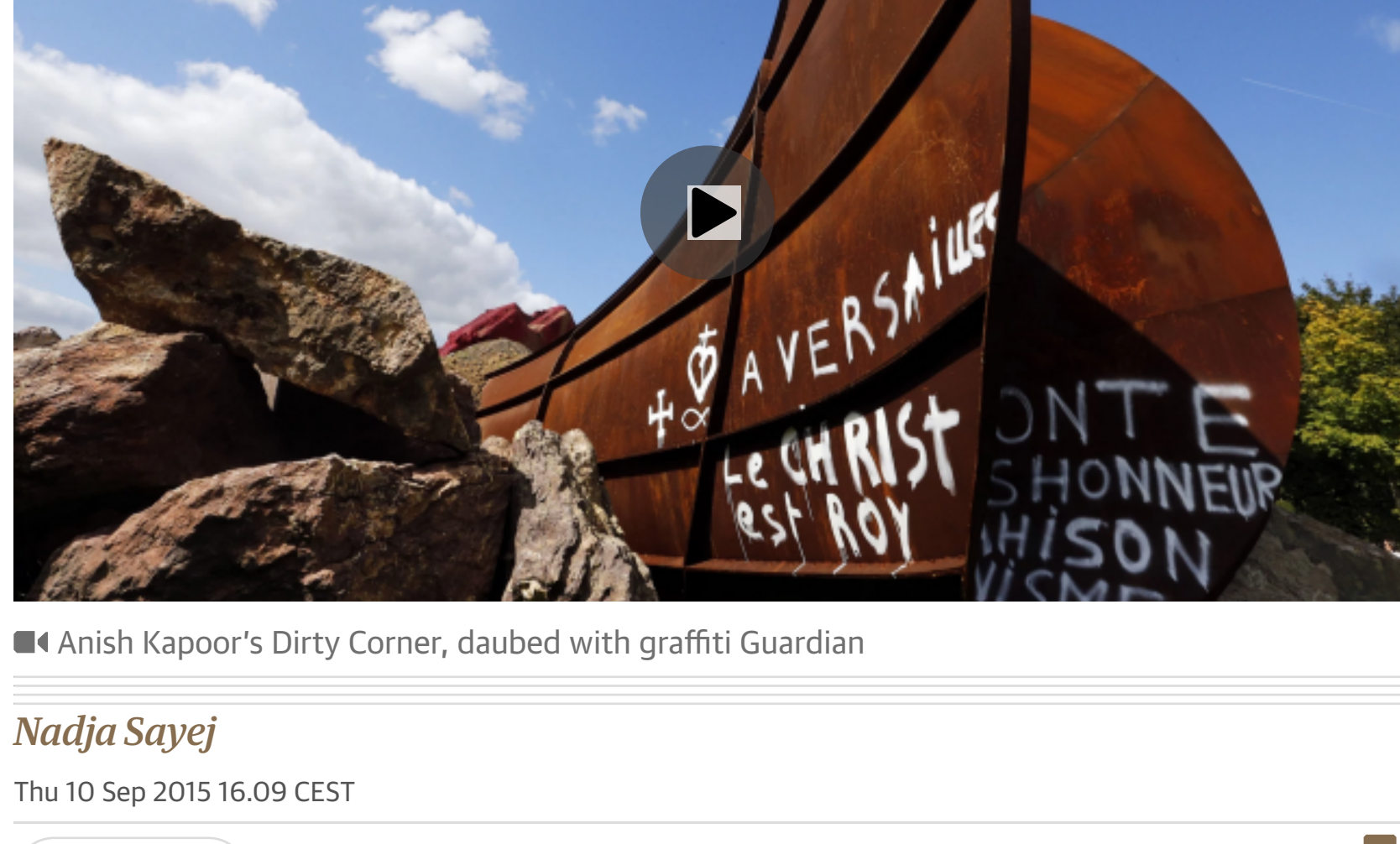


Anish Kapoor

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Anish Kapoor sued for leaving racist graffiti on his 'queen's vagina' sculpture at Versailles

The controversial sculpture, which has been repeatedly vandalised, could land the artist in court for inciting racial hatred



Anish Kapoor's Dirty Corner, daubed with graffiti Guardian

Nadja Sayej Thu 10 Sep 2015 16.09 CEST

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British artist Anish Kapoor announced at a press conference on Wednesday that a Versailles politician is taking him to court for choosing to display antisemitic information on his sculpture Dirty Corner.

"I think it's a wonderful reversal; I'll see him in court," said Kapoor. "It shows how insane the whole thing is."

The sculpture on display at the Château de Versailles - a large steel structure surrounded by large rocks, dubbed by French reporters "the queen's vagina" - was vandalised last weekend with hateful, antisemitic graffiti for a second time, which Kapoor has decided not to scrub off.

Le Parisien reports that Versailles municipal councillor Fabien Bouglé filed a complaint to the local public prosecutor against Kapoor and the president of Versailles palace, Catherine Pégard.

In a copy obtained by AFP, Bouglé said the artwork now incites racial hatred and insults, citing the artist and Versailles president as being "perfectly aware" and able to "fully recognise the antisemitic content of these entries".



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In June, when the work was first vandalised, the right-leaning Bouglé commented on the sculpture's first attack as "a response to art with art".

Kapoor recently met with French president François Hollande in Paris. He also visited his vandalised artwork. "I was there yesterday and I felt like crying," said Kapoor. "It's really nasty."

When asked why he had decided to leave the graffiti up, he said the response was complicated.

"It feels the right thing to do is leave the scar there," he said. "The work is called Dirty Corner, the piece seems to push something dirty, now we see dirty politics. It's complicated partly because it's the home of how France views itself - there are three or four sites like that in France, and this happens to be one of them."

According to Kapoor, Hollande said he supported the artist's choice to leave the graffiti untouched.

"He said he supported my choice from a pedagogical view," said Kapoor.



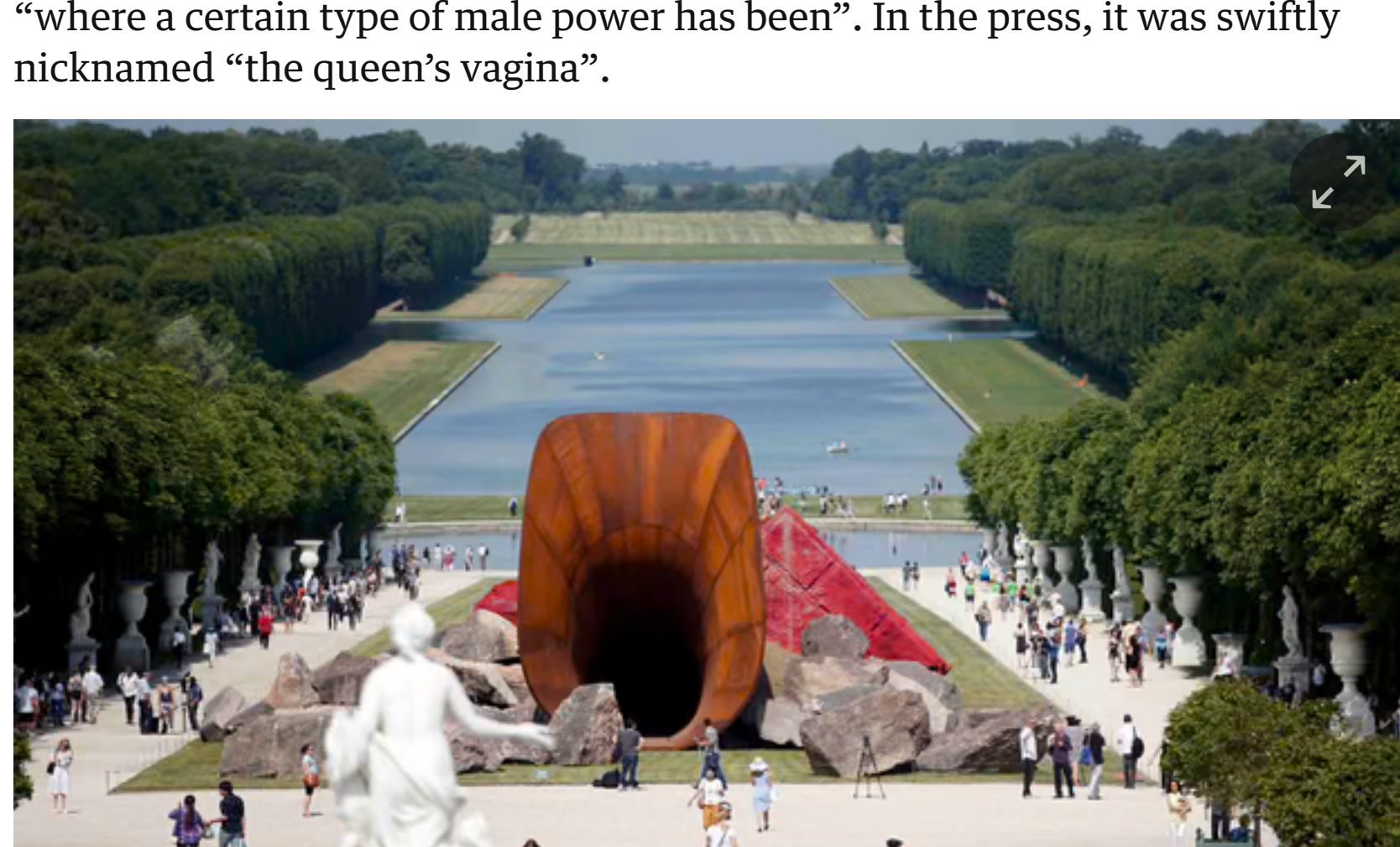
François Hollande, president of France, left, with Anish Kapoor at the Elysée palace, Paris, on 8 September. Photograph: Alain Jocard/EPA

"What is the right thing to do?" he asked. "I don't really know the answer. It's really violent, I want to get rid of it, but maybe this is what the work is asking for." Even if Versailles wants to clean it off, he said, "it's not their work."

A request for comment to the Palace of Versailles was unanswered.

"It's a very strange situation for an artist to be in," said Kapoor.

When he first made the abstract artwork, Kapoor referred to it in the feminine, calling it "she". It was, after all, in Versailles, which he defined as "where a certain type of male power has been". In the press, it was swiftly nicknamed "the queen's vagina".



Dirty Corner was unveiled in June in the gardens of the Palace of Versailles. It was defaced within days. Photograph: Charles Platiau/Reuters

"If you take a teacup and put it on its side, it's a vagina?" he asks, shaking his head.

Kapoor made his comments at the Convent La Tourette, a Le Corbusier-designed monastery in Eveux, where his latest exhibition opens today as part of the 13th Biennale de Lyon.

Despite his love of symbolism, Kapoor said he tried not to overload his art with meaning. "Art is a process of experimentation where certain things arrive and you try to follow them," he said. "In the end, one has to trust the work does its own thing."

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