

# GAGOSIAN

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August 7, 2017



## CARSTEN HÖLLER

### REASON

**EXTENDED!**  
**Through Friday, September 1, 2017**

555 West 24th Street  
New York, NY 10011

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*I start with a formula to get a process going, then the formula takes over and continues into infinity on its own. It is not about creative decisions anymore; there is no choice, only reason.*  
—Carsten Höller

Gagosian is pleased to present “REASON,” an exhibition of recent work by Carsten Höller, his first in New York since “Experience” at the New Museum in 2011.

Giant mushrooms, mirrored revolving doors, abstract paintings, hyperreal little fishes, an environment for children in the form of a huge dice: Höller unites art, play, and phenomenology to transform the gallery into a laboratory that is equal parts rationality and incomprehensibility. Trained in the natural sciences, he has long been fascinated by the methods through which we seek to understand the world, studying the unique attributes and behaviors of humans, fungi, insects, and animals by imposing standardized systems of logic. *Revolving Doors* (2004/16), constructed according to triadic division, engulfs the viewer in a

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*mise-en-abîme* of ever-changing, turning reflections. Beyond this, the overall scheme for the two galleries is predicated on binary, asymptotic division—with color gradations, light intensity, and the placement of the works themselves following a pattern of diminishing halves. The *Divisions* paintings, as well as the murals that fully cover two adjacent walls of the gallery, follow this same logic. *Divisions (Rose-grain Aphid and Surface)* (2017) provides the geometric structure with a biological equivalent, revealing the parthenogenesis of a female rose aphid against a red background. The aphid produces offspring autonomously through division, while the vivid red sections become smaller and less intense, moving from left to right.

The *Giant Triple Mushroom* (2014–15) sculptures—an organic corollary to the planar environment of the *Revolving Doors*—combine enlarged cross-sections of three different fungal species, hybrids that seem at once empirical and surreal. Fly agaric mushrooms always make up at least half of these sculptures, with two other species attached in quarters; like many of Höller’s topics, they are both formally and conceptually captivating, as incarnations of “irrationality with a method.” When ingested, fly agaric mushrooms can induce hallucinogenic effects—as seen in *Muscimol 3. Versuch* (1997), an early video that Höller made while under the influence. *Flying Mushrooms* (2015) is a giant stabile with moving parts, which turns when its lowest arm is pushed, causing a crop of seven fly agaric replicas to orbit slowly through the air, exemplifying their name. Each mushroom is cut vertically down the middle, then reassembled so that one half is upright and the other upended, the distinctive white-spotted red caps spinning like propellers at either end of their stems. Eliminating subjectivity, Höller instead allows divisional formulae to determine each composition. He searches for reason only to escape or disprove it, providing a model for infinity through dispassionate yet exquisite symmetry.

**Carsten Höller** was born in 1961 in Brussels, Belgium to German parents and lives in Stockholm, Sweden, and Biriwa, Ghana. His work is featured in institutional collections worldwide. For more extensive biographical information, please visit Höller’s artist page on our website.

**Image:** "Carsten Höller: Decision," installation view, Hayward Gallery, London, June 10–September 6, 2015. Artwork © Carsten Höller. Photo by Ela Bialkowska. *Flying Mushrooms*, 2015, polyester mushroom replicas, polyester paint, synthetic resin, acrylic paint, wire, putty, polyurethane, rigid foam, stainless steel, 200 3/8 (h) × 339 3/8 (diameter) inches (509 (h) × 862 (diameter) m).

For further information please contact the gallery at [newyork@gagosian.com](mailto:newyork@gagosian.com) or at +1.212.741.1111. All images are subject to copyright. Gallery approval must be granted prior to reproduction.

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