

## GAGOSIAN GALLERY

### Los Angeles Times

#### [Review: Carsten Holler at Gagosian Gallery](#)

12:00 PM, February 19, 2009



Carsten Höller makes sculptures and installations designed to destabilize and disorient. The Belgian-born, Stockholm-based Höller makes his solo debut in Los Angeles with an uneven show that, at its best, nudges a level of wonder.

An acid-green baby deer quietly curled up in a corner at [Gagosian Gallery](#) certainly does that. Glinting brown eyes and hooves of actual horn yield a level of realism that collides with the outrageously phony color, which seems magical or irradiated, depending on your frame of mind. This gentle creature is either a fairy-tale miracle or nature in its final, poisoned death rattle.

The back room holds a trio of aluminum suitcases opened on the floor beneath high-powered hanging floodlights, as if grow lamps have been trained on a businessman's baggage. Step closer, and solar panels within the suitcases are shown providing electrical power for a couple dozen amanita mushrooms — the white-spotted, deep-red toadstools whose psychoactive ingredients can, depending on the circumstance, cause hallucinations or death.

**456 NORTH CAMDEN DRIVE BEVERLY HILLS CA 90210 T. 310.271.9400 F. 310.271.9420**

**LOSANGELES@GAGOSIAN.COM WWW.GAGOSIAN.COM**

## GAGOSIAN GALLERY



Dotted with sparkly crystals, the mushrooms are gaily spinning. Höller's ensemble is like something from James Bond by way of Disney, with a bit of the Brothers Grimm thrown in for good measure. Tight rationality and wild release are opposed as optimal states of existence.

Upstairs, a suite of large photographic collages mounted on aluminum shows a willowy young nude with cascades of strawberry blond hair engaging with reindeer. The Botticellian Venus offers them mushrooms, while the photographic color-separations on both girl and beast go out of whack, surrounding them with rainbow hues. Produced like a frivolous fashion spread, the serious pictures thrive on ambiguous impulses.

The weak link in the show is a pair of 7-foot acrylic spheres, a red one suspended and a black one resting on the floor. Double layers of acrylic are pierced with holes, and clear- or frosted-glass light bulbs inside the spheres flash at seemingly random intervals. You get the feeling they're supposed to be hypnotic, knocking you off your routine. Instead, they just look overproduced.

-- Christopher Knight

**Gagosian Gallery**, 456 N. Camden Drive, Beverly Hills, (310) 271-9400, through Saturday.

*Top: "Reindeer" (2008), polyurethane, glass eyes, horn; bottom: "Mushroom Suitcase" (2008), nine Amanitas (polyurethane, red acrylic paint, mirrors), aluminum suitcase (foamed plastic, solar panels, electrical motor, aluminum support, cable). Credit: Gagosian Gallery*

**456 NORTH CAMDEN DRIVE BEVERLY HILLS CA 90210 T. 310.271.9400 F. 310.271.9420**

**LOSANGELES@GAGOSIAN.COM WWW.GAGOSIAN.COM**