“Prototypology” at Gagosian Gallery Rome is an ambitious project to say the least. Described as an “index of process and mutation,” the exhibition explores research and development in the work of 30 contemporary artists, revealing moments of triumph, process, trial, and error.

Taking as its point of departure the concept of the artist’s studio as a zone for sourcing, modifying, and testing, “Prototypology” traces the artistic process from conception to finished artwork through a range of works including preparatory drawings, archives, maquettes, proposals, and bricolage.

Commenting on the exhibition, Curator Aaron Moulton says that it “uncovers distinct incarnations of preliminary research, development, and progression within the individual artist’s practice,” and in doing so reveals “the nature of innovation.”

Highlights include new works and archival material from Robert Therrien, Takashi Murakami, Michael Heizer, and Albert Oehlen, among other artists, as well as studies for sculptures by the likes of Claes Oldenburg, Dan Graham, Tatiana Trouvé, and Rachel Whiteread.

In a contemporary art world that focuses attention squarely on the product of artistic expression—the art object, “Prototypology” offers visitors the rare opportunity to meditate on the origins of the art object and realign their senses to the wonders of human creativity.

“Prototypology” is at Gagosian Gallery Rome until March 5, 2016