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Carsten Höller's Animalian Antics at Gagosian Gallery Geneva

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"Carsten Höller: Zoology" installation view. (Artworks © Carsten Höller. Photo: Guillaume Mausset)

"Zoology" at Gagosian Gallery Geneva is German artist Carsten Höller's first exhibition in the Swiss city. As the title suggests, the works in the exhibition investigate the way in which different types of animal life might possibly relate to human awareness and consciousness.

Best known for his slides and carousels, Höller's practice focuses on engaging viewers in experiences of disorientation and uncertainty to raise questions surrounding the nature of human experience and how people interact with the world. His original training as a scientist continues to inform his work.

"For a long time, I've been curious about applying the methodology of art as one way — which I think is equal to science and other powerful explanatory concepts — for us to understand what is surrounding us and what we are," Höller has said.

"Zoology" brings together a selection of the artist's recent prints, sculptures, and photographs, created between 2008 and 2016, through which he presents a variety of recognizable yet difficult to classify hybrid animal forms – products of grafting, breeding, and mutation.

Created using techniques of collage, casting, molding, and taxidermy, the works in the exhibition include a squishy neon-colored polyurethane snake, photogravures of absurdly feathered birds, and a fish suspended against an orange grid in a minimalist chamber made of industrial materials.

According to Gagosian, “Zoology” adds another layer to Höller’s philosophical enquiries, with the curious objects evoking an insatiable urge to touch and handle. This tactile wit transports the sculptures and their audience into a surreal or even hyperreal realm, between animal and human, art and nature.

“Zoology” runs through August 12 at Gagosian Gallery Geneva.