

Carsten Höller Unleashes 100-Foot-Tall Slide on Vitra Campus

Sarah Cascone, Thursday, June 19, 2014

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Carsten Höller, *Vitra Slide Tower* (2014).

Photo: Courtesy the artist, Vitra.

Carsten Höller is a big believer in that playground favorite, the slide, a major part of the Belgian's artistic practice since 1998. The latest piece in the ongoing series, reports the *New York Times*, is Höller's first freestanding slide, installed on the grounds of Swiss furniture company Vitra's campus in Weil am Rhein, Germany. The installation, dubbed the *Vitra Slide Tower* (2014), is a soaring 100 feet tall.

"I think it would change our lives if we could slide more," Höller told the *Times*. He believes there is more to the structures than their functional ability to let one quickly travel between places. Höller likes to quote French sociologist Roger Caillois to describe what he thinks of as a special state of mind created by sliding: a "voluptuous panic." It's not a turn of phrase *artnet News* would have come up with, but there is a certain sense of heady giddiness that comes with sliding, one that is rarely experienced in adulthood—but Höller is working to change that. Since first debuting at the Berlin Biennale, Höller's slides have made a splash in several major exhibitions. In 2007, the artist took over the Turbine Hall at London's Tate Modern with *Test Site* (part of the *Unilever Series*). More recently, in 2011, Höller brought his spiraling steel slide to New York, giving visitors to the New Museum the opportunity to slide between three of the museum's four floors.

Before sliding down the *Vitra Slide Tower*, one has a chance to enjoy the view of the nearby architecture, which includes buildings designed by Álvaro Siza, Tadao Ando, and Zaha Hadid. The slide also serves as a clock tower, although the timepiece is both numberless and tilted askew, making it a challenge to discern the correct time. Nevertheless, Höller encourages people to try, rather than relying on their cellphones, which he thinks can come off as rude, since "people think you could be checking your email."



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