



# The ultimate slide show

As part of his brilliantly interactive new exhibition, Carsten Höller is adding huge outdoor slides to the Hayward Gallery. So what, asks **Martin Coomer**, would the perception-altering artist like to do to London's other landmarks?

**A**rt this summer is all about putting a smile on your face and a shine on your trousers. Yes, Carsten Höller's slides – which we fell head-over-heels for (though it had to be feet first) at Tate Modern in 2006 – return to London this week. They'll be in a new location on the South Bank for the German-Belgian artist's retrospective at the Hayward Gallery: attached to the façade of the building, these

brilliant childhood-regression machines offer the speediest exit from Höller's show. But they're not the only interactive artworks in this hands- and bums-on extravaganza. You'll also be strapped to flying machines that will whizz you high over Waterloo Bridge, wander among giant rotating mushrooms and don augmented-reality headsets that make you think you're walking through trees. You might even get to spend the night in a roaming robotic bed.

It's not just fun and games, mind. Fascinated by the social spaces we share, Höller is a man on a mission to redefine the way we interact with art, our surroundings and each other. And his art goes way beyond the confines of any gallery. So the challenge we set him was to reimagine London as a series of interactive artworks in his own inimitable style. We provided the locations, he provided the ideas. And here's the public art our favourite new town planner came up with.

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# Carsten Höller's London playground

## A slide down The Shard

**He says** 'I would like to make a slide that is really, really long so that you'd have time to read and to eat and drink on the way down. That would give you the amount of time you'd need to reflect upon the situation you're in – because you're not able to do that with the slides I have made so far. It's always too short a ride.'

**We say** A long, slow trip where you have time to reflect, read and eat? Just hope it's more fun than the Northern line.



## Giant mushrooms in Trafalgar Square

**He says** 'I find mushrooms appealing because they're so powerful in terms of form, colour, taste and toxicity. Most mushrooms don't attract insects to pollinate. So why do you have all these different colours and shapes?'

**We say** Dotted Trafalgar Square with poisonous fungi is a perfect way to whittle down the number of tourists who congregate there. We're all for it.



## Dicey games on the Millennium Bridge

**He says** 'It's a sculpture of a large die with holes in it that are only accessible to children. I think the kiddies crawling in and out would look like maggots in a piece of cheese.'

**We say** If your cheese has maggots in it, you've got to take it straight back to the deli counter. That aside, sure: give the kids something to do – just keep them out of our pubs.



## Roaming beds on Oxford Street

**He says** 'I want the beds to dance some kind of random ballet. I imagine it to be almost like sleepwalking but without having to get out of bed. Hopefully it's affecting your dreams and probably inducing a certain form of madness.'

**We say** Anything to make Oxford Street less of a living nightmare is okay by us. And you could even pop into John Lewis for a duvet. Very civilised.

'Carsten Höller: Decision' is at the Hayward Gallery Jun 10-Sep 6.

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SHARD: ROB SHERIDAN