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Robert Zhao Renhui

A Guide to the Flora and Fauna of the World

Main description

To what extent can we trust photography and science? Robert Zhao Renhui explores these questions in *A Guide to the Flora and Fauna of the World*, which appears to be an authentic catalogue of plants and animals but is in fact entirely fictitious.

Renhui's guide ostensibly "documents" 55 different animals, plants and environments that have been manipulated by man but do not appear to be, and examines the myriad ways in which humans are altering nature. Here are curious creatures that have evolved in often unexpected ways to cope with our changing world, including rhinoceroses with barely visible horns and monkeys dependent on food handed out by humans. Other organisms in the series are the products of human intervention, mutations engineered to serve various purposes from scientific research to the desire for ornamentation, such as man-made gelatin grapes, genetically modified tomatoes and "unbreakable" eggs.

All living things constantly adapt to the various pressures they face including predators, pollution and environmental change. Yet the human species has undeniably emerged as the main perpetrator of the dangers that threaten the survival of other life forms. *A Guide to the Flora and Fauna of the World* reminds us of this fact, and above all to retain a critical, cautious and ironic attitude to the "real."

Biography

Robert Zhao Renhui was born in 1983 in Singapore where he lives and works today. His practice is closely informed by science, in particular zoology, and he creates and publishes works with the fictional organization The Institute of Critical Zoologists which "aims to develop a critical approach to the zoological gaze, or how humans view animals." Renhui has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions including the Rencontres d'Arles Discovery Award 2015, Daegu Photo Biennale 2014, Busan Biennale 2014, Moscow International Biennale of Young Art 2014, PhotoIreland 2014 and Singapore Biennale 2013.

Bibliography

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A Guide to the Flora and Fauna of the World

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55 photographs

24 x 34 cm

Photo prints and text sheets in a box

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