

# ENERGY & WORK

Units 10 & 11 Dr. John P. Cise , Professor of Physics, Austin Community College, 1212 Rio

Grande St., Austin Tx 78701 [jpcise@austincc.edu](mailto:jpcise@austincc.edu) & NYTimes October 26, 2011 by Randy Kennedy, Send Dr Cise an e-mail on how you used this.

## Is It Art, Science or a Test of People?

Over the past several years art museums have begun to place much more emphasis on a concept they call the “visitor experience.” Few, though, have attempted to define that concept quite as broadly — or as bodily — as the New Museum, which is mounting [a career survey](#) of the Belgian-born artist Carsten Höller that opens on Wednesday.



**INTRODUCTION:** These Museum patrons slide two stories(36 feet) down the metal slide as shown at left. **QUESTIONS:** (a) Find their speed(ft/s) at bottom of the 36 ft high slide using energy conservation concepts assuming no friction exists? (b) If an average 128 lb person slides down the metal slide and emerges at 30 ft/s, how much work due to friction was done on that person? (c) If the length of the slide was 120 ft, find the average friction force on the person In question (b)? **ANSWERS:** (a) 48 ft/s , (b) -2808 ft lb , (c) – 23.4 lb

Visitors to the Carsten Höller show at the New Museum will be able **((((((to hurtle two stories down a corkscrewing metal slide))))))** They will also be able to feel their noses grow, among other pursuits.

A (greatly abridged) menu of the experiences available to viewers — after they sign a legal waiver and abandon all hope of conventional museumgoing decorum — would read something like this:

Walk around while seeing the world upside down and backward. Hurtle two stories toward the earth in a metal and plastic tube as others watch and, almost certainly, laugh. Ingest an unidentified white pill, or a fistful if you choose. Inhale an amphetaminelike substance said to induce amorous feelings. Feel your nose grow. Feel the walls shift around you. Feel yourself slam face first into a tree at high speed. Or, **if you really want to prove your dedication to art, take off all your clothes and lie with friends or strangers in a modified sensory deprivation tank in heavily salinized water, heated to the temperature of human skin.** Mr. Höller, 49, began his professional life as a scientist, and it is perhaps because of this that a bit of a Dr. Moreau reputation has always clung to him, though it is not wholly undeserved. He did, after all, once design wickedly funny [Swiftian traps](#) for children. (The simplest involved a seemingly live electric cord lying on the floor surrounded by pieces of candy.)

But as he walked around the **New Museum on the Lower East Side** one recent morning, trying politely to stay out of the way of the construction workers installing his pieces, diabolical was not a description that leapt to mind. Slim and balding, he could still easily pass for the agricultural entomologist he once was. Except that now his deeply inquisitive, German-accented musings refer not to [cereal aphids](#) but to the humans who consent to participate in his thoroughly subjective experiments, which stand science on its head, yielding results for the sake of the test subject rather than that of the tester.

The devices and environments Mr. Höller has conceived since he began to make art 18 years ago — he prefers to think of them not as art objects but as “confusion machines” — require a great deal more planning and money than conventional lab equipment. In front of him that morning on the museum’s fourth floor, a man with a metal saw was completing the topmost part of a piece that has become one **of Mr. Höller’s signatures: a corkscrewing tubular metal slide for grown-ups. It was installed by cutting large holes through the concrete and steel of the((((((( museum’s third and fourth floors)))))))).** As intrepid visitors did when a [more complex version](#) was installed in the Turbine Hall of the Tate Modern in London in 2006 and 2007, visitors to the New Museum will grab a cloth pad, sit on it and plunge into the tube. A few moments later they will squirt out the other end on the second floor, their expressions and bodily contortions during the drop having been visible to everyone else in the museum through the slide’s windows. “You will be able to see the madness in their faces for a split second, and then — zup — they will be gone,” Mr. Höller said with a smile. **“It’s a very odd thing with a slide; it’s quite an efficient way to go from place to place, but it is also like a((((((( barely controlled fall)))))))).** It’s a very specific kind of madness to go down one.”