

A WORK BY ENRIQUE CAVESTANY

Inspired by the Comte de Buffon

The troop of creatures currently dwelling in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Madrid was first sighted near Enrique Cavestany's garden, where they began to appear in the second week of March 2020—a moment of global uncertainty that many will vividly remember.

At that time, the artist set out to create a reality that resonated with ours—with that unsettling (a)normality. In a journey through uncertainty, Cavestany gave life to these beings who, with skin, eyes, and sometimes feathers, welcome the disconcerting and the ambiguous without fear. Like a naturalist, he proceeded to name them, describing their morphologies, eating habits, vocalisations, and imagined places of origin. An old copy of the renowned *Histoire Naturelle, générale et particulière, avec la description du Cabinet du Roi* by the Comte de Buffon helped Cavestany—in his taxidermist zeal—to name the unknown.

Where Buffon, from his tower in Montbard, devoted his life to classifying the diversity of distant worlds—those often portrayed by the Enlightenment Europe as chaotic and in need of meaning—Cavestany found the uncanny much closer. The strange and the unexpected emerged from his own garden: these mutated beings had perhaps always been there at his home (or rather, at *their* home).

As we wander among these small mutants—creatures that speak so clearly to our present, to the contradictions and transformations of our time—we encounter a fertile dialogue between artistic imagination and scientific method. We thus become witnesses to the arduous human attempts to create meaning by ordering the world, though we also recognize the inevitable sense of disorder.

The beings from Cavestany's garden—delightful mutant creatures—remind us of our capacity to create amid instability, to articulate meaning in what remains unfinished, when so much is yet to be said, yet to be done. This is art taking form in a space of uncertainty—on the threshold (and in mourning) of comprehension. And it is precisely there, in the shadows of understanding, that it moves us to laugh out loud.