

12 JUNE 2014 | ART & PHOTOGRAPHY, FREE & CHEAP, MUSEUMS & GALLERIES | BY: TABISH KHAN

## Photographs Of Anatomical Specimens By Daniel Malva



Mandrillus sphinx (Mandrill), Natural History Museum. Image courtesy of the artist and Kristin Hjellegjerde



There is a fascination with looking at preserved animal specimens, which probably stems from a combination of both a scientific and a macabre interest in how other creatures function compared to us. Plus, it's a rare opportunity to study animals up close that we wouldn't normally approach. It's probably why we love the [Grant Museum of Zoology](#) so much and consider it one of our favourite smaller museums.

This attraction to the natural world is clearly shared by Brazilian photographer Daniel Malva, who has made his first show in the UK all about creatures from around the world. The diverse range of specimens includes a cheetah skeleton, a preserved tarantula and the head of a caiman.

These works have a painterly feel to them but they are in fact photographs taken with a lens purposefully altered to make the image seem faded and fuzzy. This faded look is a reference on how the natural world often takes a back seat to industrialisation, and the murkiness of the works reminds us of how similar humans and other animals are on the inside.

A gigantic, and possibly life-sized, whale heart greets visitors upon entry but it's striking how similar it is to a human heart, which is also on display. The row of mammalian hearts on one wall contrasts with the Crocodylian one next to them, highlighting a subtle internal difference between mammals and reptiles.

Elephants are often viewed as giants yet an elephant foetus looks remarkably delicate, as does a marmoset skeleton. The cross-linking of science and art continues to grow and Malva's work is yet another example of an exhibition that combines both scientific interest and artistic merit in an engaging display.

**[Daniel Malva: gabinete de curiosidades](#)** is on at Kristin Hjellegjerde gallery, 533 Old York Road, SW18 1TG until 28 June. Entrance is free.

For more art to see, check out our [June listings](#).