This talk explores how images of exotic animals traveled between different pictorial genres in Europe around 1600. We will focus on how artists and naturalists dealt with the problem of picturing animals that they had never seen. Taking camels, giraffes, rhinos and hippopotami as examples, we will examine how credible representations could be created by mixing a limited dose of imagination with a good knowledge of comparative anatomy. An analysis of these images offers avenues to rethink the boundary between fiction and truth in early modern visual culture.

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