

KUKJE GALLERY | PRESS RELEASE

SUPERFLEX Solo Exhibition *Fish & Chips* at Kukje Gallery

Press Conference: June 4 (Tues.), 2024, 2pm

Exhibition Dates: June 4–July 28, 2024

Venue: Kukje Gallery K1, K3

Kukje Gallery is pleased to present *Fish & Chips*, a solo exhibition of works by the Danish artist group SUPERFLEX, on view in the gallery's K1 and K3 spaces from June 4 to July 28, 2024. Five years since the artists' first presentation in the Busan space, this occasion also marks their first exhibition in the Seoul gallery. Featuring a variety of media encompassing paintings, sculptures, LED signs, and interactive animation, the exhibition illuminates the artists' practice exploring the intersections of the climate crisis and economic corruption, as well as their speculative vision of interspecies relations as a potential solution to the global challenges facing humanity.

Taking as their point of departure the stated aim of challenging the dominance of economics, SUPERFLEX has developed artistic projects emphasizing the power of collectivity to creatively intervene in issues rooted in social, cultural, and political contexts. Expanding upon this interest, their recent projects have engaged with discourses revolving around the "end" and attendant "futures" brought on by the catastrophic effects of climate change. Pivoting from an "end" to a "future," this exhibition traces the contours of the economic and ecological terrains that frame the artists' vision of alternative futures that might arise in moments of crises. This is also encapsulated in the exhibition's title, *Fish & Chips*, which is a humorous combination of two motifs highlighted in the exhibition: underwater life (fish) and techno-economic transactions (microchips). Initiating a range of encounters between human and more-than-human agents, the artists provide a glimpse into their imaginary, populated by fluid ecologies as models of resistance and resilience.

Upon entering the front gallery of K1, the viewer encounters three text-based installations that respectively read: SAVE YOUR SKIN, MAKE A KILLING, and HOLD YOUR TONGUE. Taking inspiration from commercial signage found in urban landscapes, the artists repurpose idiomatic phrases into a series of light works, each consisting of an illuminated signboard made with pink LED letters mounted on an aluminum frame. Exuding an ambience of anxiety and urgency, the strident phrases signal an impending crisis while hyperbolizing the human desires that underlie both the systems of language and the market. The room flooded with alarming pink light hints at a collapse of the financial systems, evoking a seductive and dystopian atmosphere.

The rear gallery of K1 presents *Chips* (2023-2024), the artists' new series of monochromatic paintings of microchips appearing faintly on white canvas like afterimages on the verge of disappearance. Each painting takes the technological design of a specific portion of a microchip and transforms it into an abstract motif highlighting the invisible parts of communication networks that enable global transactions, from the transfer of money to data exchange. At one corner of the space, surrounded by paintings, is a ceramic sculpture from the *Investment Bank Flowerpots* series. Modeled on the architecture of the headquarters of the global investment banks, including Goldman Sachs, Deutsche Bank, Citigroup, and JPMorgan Chase, the flowerpots function as pots for growing hallucinogenic plants. Each work hosts a different type of plant—Peyote, San Pedro cacti, and marijuana—whose euphoric effects allegorize the toxic qualities of monetary transactions. Exhibited at Kukje Gallery is the flowerpot representing the Citigroup building which has been planted with Nerium Oleander, a poisonous plant native to Jeju Island and the southern regions of South Korea. In their critical view of commerce and market economies, the artists challenge the visible symbols of power and suggest an alternative ecosystem consisting of organic, symbiotic relationships.

Meanwhile, the presentation in K3 shifts the economic critique towards an ecological sphere by juxtaposing two works illustrating aquatic imaginaries in the face of the climate crisis on a planetary scale. Dispersed

across the gallery is *As Close As We Get* (2024), a series of sculptures that can function as an alternative habitat for marine life in the speculative future of rising sea levels. Consisting of modular stone building blocks, the sculptures imagine underwater infrastructure that accommodates the needs of both fish and humans in an era beyond the Anthropocene. Notably, the sculptures in the current exhibition reflect the geometry of the K3 building which, according to the artists, “looks like a giant fishing net that has caught different geometrical shapes.” Extending their vision of interspecies cohabitation into the two-dimensional realm, three aluminum foam ‘canvases’ from the *Interface Paintings* series (2022) punctuate two walls and the ceiling of K3. Reminiscent of coral-like environments [or sea sponges] favorable for fish, these monochromes transform the surface of a painting into a three-dimensional space that serves as a dynamic meeting point between human and sea creatures.

In addition, the interactive animation *Vertical Migration* (2021) continues to push beyond the anthropocentric perspective by depicting the ascent of a computer-generated siphonophore, a jellyfish-like underwater life form that bears no resemblance to human beings. Anticipating a future in which humans will be migrating vertically to higher elevations as sea levels rise, the artists suggest a parallel relation between humans and marine organisms, which travel every night toward the ocean surface to feed, in their shared fate alluded to in the animation. Tracing the upward journey from the depths of the ocean, the animation’s perspective gradually shifts to offer a view of the world seen from the nonhuman perspective of the siphonophore. Originally commissioned by ART 2030 and TBA21-Academy, *Vertical Migration* debuted as a projection on the United Nations Secretariat Building during the 76th United Nations General Assembly.

In the interactive version of the animation installed at the gallery, the siphonophore comes closer to or retreats from the viewer based on movement in the space, bringing into relief the work’s stated aim to intimately connect the viewer to other species. Also closely attuned to the creature’s movement is the animation’s soundscape, which is played on the outside of the building as well, expanding the sonic horizon of the nonhuman perspective beyond the gallery.

About the Artists

SUPERFLEX is an artist group founded in 1993 by Jakob Fenger, Bjørnstjerne Christiansen, and Rasmus Rosengren Nielsen. They scrutinize and expose hidden systems of power by engaging with themes such as unbalanced economic conditions as well as issues of migration, copyright, and ownership. SUPERFLEX plays a catalytic role in enabling people to participate in their artistic inquiries into global discourses and to gain broader insights from the interaction. Through their work, they ultimately aim to mobilize the “power of collectivity,” which lies at the heart of their practice.

SUPERFLEX has gained international recognition for their projects. The group held solo exhibitions at the Institute of Contemporary Art, San Diego (2024); the University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum, Tampa (2023); Le Bicolore, Paris (2022); Kunsthaus Graz, Graz (2021); Turku Art Museum, Turku (2020); Tate Modern, London (2017); Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City (2013); South London Gallery, London (2009); and Kunsthalle Basel, Basel (2005), among other venues. SUPERFLEX has also participated in numerous biennales and group exhibitions, including the Venice Biennale (2024), Gwangju Biennale (2018, 2002), Sharjah Biennial (2017, 2013), and São Paulo Biennale (2006). Artworks by SUPERFLEX are included in major collections, such as Arken - Modern Museum of Art, Ishøj; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Pérez Art Museum Miami. In 2023, the group was invited by the Real DMZ Project to permanently install *One Two Three Swing!*, a modular three-seater swing set that metaphorically explores the significant potential of collectivity and collaboration, in the DMZ. Conceived in celebration of the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Denmark and South Korea, the work has been donated to the permanent care of the Ministry of Unification.



SUPERFLEX

Hold Your Tongue

2024

LED letters, aluminum structure

37.5 x 146 x 8 cm

Courtesy of the artists and Kukje Gallery

Photo: Chunho An

Image provided by Kukje Gallery



SUPERFLEX

Chips 7

2024

Acrylic and silicon on canvas

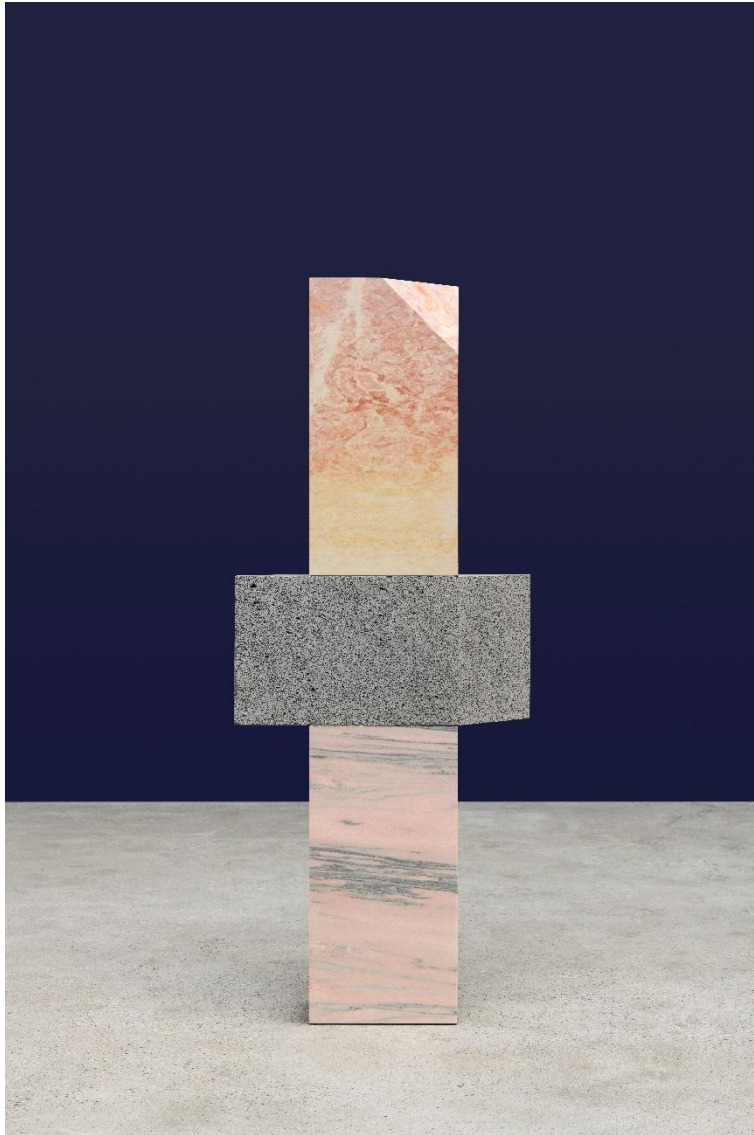
122 x 87 cm

120 x 85 cm (unframed)

Courtesy of the artists and Kukje Gallery

Photo: Chunho An

Image provided by Kukje Gallery



SUPERFLEX

As Close As We Get

2024

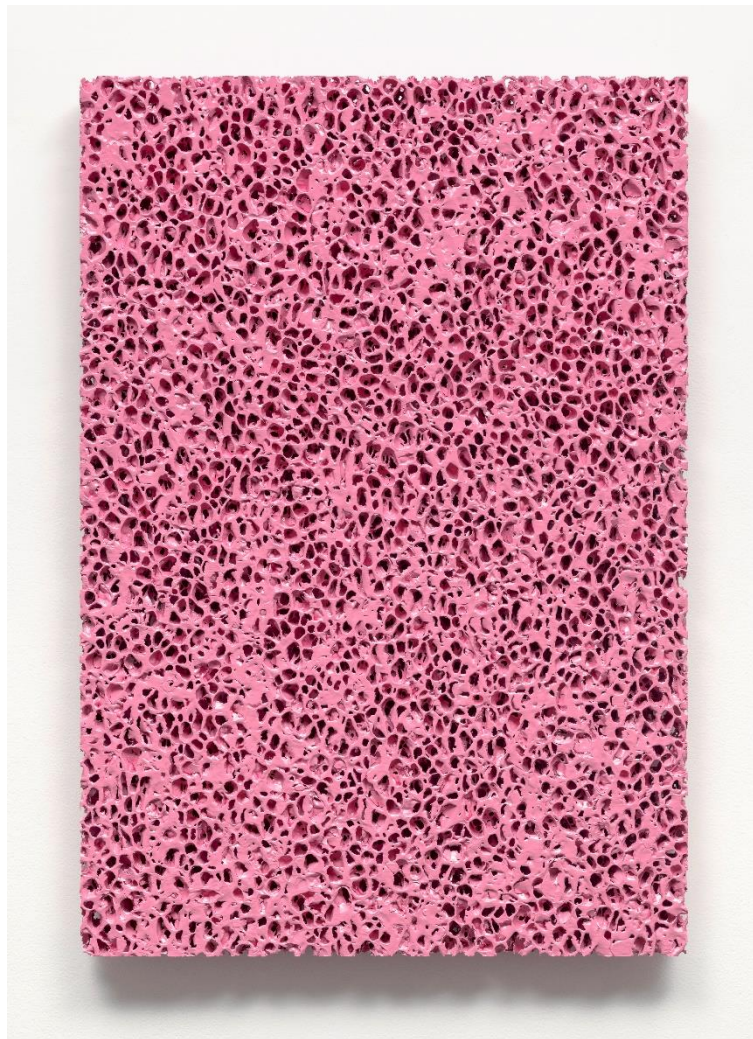
Lioz coral, gray basalt, pink marble, and steel plate

150 x 60 x 20 cm

Courtesy of the artists and Kukje Gallery

Photo: Chunho An

Image provided by Kukje Gallery



SUPERFLEX

Interface Painting

2022

Aluminum foam, pink enamel, powder coated aluminum frame

96 x 66 x 6.5 cm

Courtesy of the artists and Kukje Gallery

Photo: Chunho An

Image provided by Kukje Gallery



SUPERFLEX

Vertical Migration

2021

LED screen, Mac mini, sensor, Raspberry Pi 4, and speakers

300 x 150 x 150 cm

Courtesy of the artists and Kukje Gallery

Image provided by Kukje Gallery

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