

**SUPERFLEX "EUPHORIA NOW"**  
APRIL 25 – JULY 11 / 2015



**SUPERFLEX, *Modern Times Forever*, made for IHME Contemporary Art Festival**

**Produced by The Propeller Group, photo by SUPERFLEX**

Von Barthas is pleased to present its first solo exhibition with Copenhagen based art group SUPERFLEX, who are renowned for their playful, subversive analysis of our economic and social structures. The exhibition, *Euphoria Now*, features new works and past projects, including large-scale installations, films and long-term, process-based projects. SUPERFLEX describe their works, which are related to economies, democracy and self-organisation, as *Tools*, often inviting participation from the visitor. Often the works are assisted by experts who bring in their special interest as well. All tools can be further used and modified by their users.

On display at von Barthas is an installation consisting of numerous 3D printed flower pots, each of which is a model of, and will be named after, one of the world's top twenty investment banks. Out of these grow a range of psychotropic plants, including the cactus and the poppy. With this tool, SUPERFLEX scrutinizes unbalanced economic conditions within the global market, examining relations between producer and consumer, appropriation as a strategy, the violation of ownership and various systems of power. The euphoric effects created by the drugs derived from the plants – such as mescaline, opium or marijuana – are compared with the euphoria felt by those in the financial industries when dealing with large amounts of money. By contrasting the use of psychotropic drugs with the financial world, SUPERFLEX examine the global social order, questioning whether the commercial systems we live by are themselves a parallel reality, created by our own euphoria and psychoses, and if so, how should they be treated?

SUPERFLEX continue to confront issues of copyright, intellectual property and trademark infringement with a new Tool that directly references contemporary artist Hans Haacke's 1960s installation *Blue Sail* that saw chiffon fabric suspended in the air over an oscillating fan. In SUPERFLEX's version fake Hermès and other designer silk scarves from Thailand are stitched together to create the sail.

Also presented are *Non Alcoholic Vodka* (2006), *Modern Times Forever* (2011) and *Corruption Contract* (2009). *Non Alcoholic Vodka* a work that originally highlights the issues faced by the minority Russian population in Estonia. The vodka itself has the taste of vodka but does not contain any alcohol. The Tool was first presented in the exhibition *Shiftscale – Sculpture at the Extended Field* in 2006 at the Kumu Art Museum, Tallinn (Estonia) – a museum neighbouring one of the largest Russian ghettos in the city. More than 25% of the Estonian population are Russian, a majority of which are isolated from the rest of society because of cultural differences: they do not speak the language, are less educated and often have drinking problems. At the opening of the exhibition, the gallery's bar only served non-alcoholic vodka.

*Modern Times Forever* is a film about what would happen to the Stora Enso building (Helsinki) as an architectural and ideological symbol over the next few thousand years, if the building was only affected by the ravages of time. *Modern Times Forever* was first shown in Helsinki Market Square on a 40m<sup>2</sup> LED screen, so that the original building could be viewed simultaneously with the building in the film. The film itself lasted ten days (the duration of the exhibition) and was played continuously during this time period. At von Bartha, *Modern Times Forever* again runs on its ten day loop.

With *Corruption Contract*, SUPERFLEX aims to threaten the stability and security of society, to undermine the institutions and values of democracy, ethical values and justice, and jeopardize sustainable development and the rule of law. By signing the contract, the client agrees to actively be involved in, or solicit others to be involved in, corruption activities during the contract period. The wording, as well as the definition of corruption, is based on the text of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. The *Corruption Contract* is a 84 x 60 cm, handwritten document.

The exhibition will also include Brion Gysin's legendary *Dreamachine* – one of only four in existence. The *Dreamachine* is a flickering light device that produces visual stimuli in the observer. Gysin, a surrealist painter and the friend and partner of William Burroughs, devised the idea in the 1960s during his attempts to go into trance-like states using light stimulation. The *Dreamachine* enjoyed a resurgence in 1976 when the art dealer Carl Laszlo invited Gysin to visit Basel where he met the young gallerists Miklos and Margareta von Bartha (co-founders of von Bartha). Inspired by Gysin, Miklos von Bartha constructed the four fully functioning *Dreamachines* which are still in existence today. The ideas behind the *Dreamachine*, such as the exploration of trance-like states and hallucinatory experiences, reflect the themes explored by SUPERFLEX in *Euphoria Now*.

## About SUPERFLEX

SUPERFLEX was founded in 1993 by Jakob Fenger (1968), Rasmus Nielsen (1969) and Bjørnstjerne Christiansen (1969). They live and work in Copenhagen. SUPERFLEX describe their projects as Tools. A Tool is a model or proposal that can actively be used and further utilized and modified by the user.

The members of SUPERFLEX all graduated from The Royal Academy of the Fine Arts in Copenhagen. They often lecture at internationally renowned cultural institutions and universities and occasionally take on professorships teaching Bachelor and Master students.

They have held solo exhibitions at the Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen (2013), Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington (2010), the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2010), South London Gallery, London (2009), Kunsthalle, Basel (2005) and Redcat, Los Angeles (2004).

They have appeared in group exhibitions such as *The Spirit of Utopia* at The Whitechapel Gallery, London (2013) and *Image Employment* at MoMA PS1, New York (2013). Their work features in public art institutions such as MoMA (New York, USA), Queensland Art Gallery (Brisbane, Australia) and Louisiana Museum of Modern Art (Humblebæk, Denmark) and Kunsthau Zurich, (Zurich, Switzerland). SUPERFLEX have participated in international arts biennials such as the Gwangju Biennial, Korea (2013), Shanghai Biennial (2010), São Paulo Biennial (2006), the Istanbul Biennial (2005) and in the *Utopia Station* exhibition at the Venice Biennale (2003).

## About von Bartha

Representing over twenty artists, *von Bartha* is a contemporary gallery with locations in Basel and S-chanf active in both the primary and secondary markets.

Co-founded in 1970 by Margareta and Miklos von Bartha, the gallery initially gained recognition for showing historically significant groups such as the Asociación Arte Concreto-Invención, the Arte Madí, the ZERO group and the Hungarian Avant-Garde. They also worked with significant contemporary artists of their own era such as Ollie Baertling and Aurelie Nemours. The gallery built on its foundations to establish a contemporary programme now directed by the second generation of the family, Stefan von Bartha. Today it maintains a focus on Concrete Art, Op Art, Kinetic Art, Activist Art, Installation Art and Light Art.

The gallery represents an international roster of artists that includes Christian Andersson, Andrew Bick, Terry Haggerty, John Wood and Paul Harrison, Imi Knoebel, Sarah Oppenheimer, Bob and Roberta Smith and Bernar Venet as well as important Swiss artists such as Daniel Robert Hunziker, Karim Noureldin, Boris Rebetez and Beat Zoderer. Von Bartha continues to represent European modern artists such as Olle Baertling, Camille Graeser, Gerhard von Graevenitz and Bernhard Luginbühl.

Von Bartha's location in Basel is a 850m<sup>2</sup> converted garage which has been used to great effect to present large-scale installations by gallery artists. The gallery has a second space located in S-chanf in the Engadin Alps used for special exhibitions and projects. By commissioning and exhibiting ambitious new works, the gallery nurtures successive generations of artists, while supporting the continually evolving practice of their established artists.

Von Bartha publishes art books, exhibition catalogues and its own newspaper featuring commissioned essays and interviews.

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## Exhibition Facts

**Title:** Superflex

**Address:** von Bartha, Kannenfeldplatz 6, 4056, Basel, Switzerland

# VON BARTHA

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Dates: April 25 – July 11, 2015

Preview: April 24, 6 – 8PM

Opening Hours: Tuesday to Friday 2 – 6pm, Saturday 11am – 4pm, or by appointment

Admission: Free