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Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Danish art collective SUPERFLEX presents film installation *European Union Mayotte* at CAM



SUPERFLEX, *European Union Mayotte* (still), 2016. Two-channel video installation (color, sound), 9:42 minutes, 3:54 minutes. Courtesy the artist.

June 19, 2018 (St. Louis, MO) - The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis presents the Danish art collective SUPERFLEX as part of its fall exhibitions, September 7 through December 30, 2018. Founded in 1993 by the artists Jakob Fenger, Bjørnstjerne Christiansen, and Rasmus Nielsen, SUPERFLEX challenges the role of the artist in contemporary society and explores the nature of globalization and systems of power through a diverse and complex practice. CAM will feature the US premiere of the film installation *European Union Mayotte*, made in the Comoros Islands in 2016. Although few people are familiar with the Union of Comoros, an island nation located in the Indian Ocean north of Madagascar, the film dramatically explores issues of human migration, the status of refugees, and the social responsibilities of governments, institutions, and individuals. Focusing on the unique situation of the inhabitants of the islands of Anjouan and Mayotte, SUPERFLEX opens for thought and discussion the current historical moment in which millions find themselves uprooted from their homes across the globe. St. Louis is an especially poignant place for *European Union Mayotte* to be experienced, with the city's long history as a landing place for refugees from the 19th century through today.

Mayotte, one of the four Comoros Islands that were once part of a French colony, maintained close cultural and political ties to France, and in 2014 was acknowledged as part of the EU, making it the Union's outermost region. The installation consists of two projections: one pictures a scene of a single boat in the ocean, with passengers visible, the other follows the production of a small fiberglass fishing boat on Anjouan, an island situated less than 45 miles from Mayotte. In these small boats, people from Anjouan and the surrounding islands of the Comoros risk dangerous and illegal journeys in the hope of reaching Mayotte—in effect, the EU—journeys that have caused death by drowning for thousands of people.

SUPERFLEX originally came to the Comoros to work on *The Nursery Garden*, a living, collaborative artwork for three hospital communities on the islands. It was during the creation of *The Nursery Garden* that the group became aware of the relationship between the Comoros and France surrounding immigration issues.

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During the process of making the film, which features local islanders, the refugee crisis peaked in Europe.

SUPERFLEX is known for employing strategies of “extreme participation” in such projects as the creation of a park in Copenhagen designed for diverse neighborhoods, which included picnic benches from Armenia, a Thai boxing ring, litter bins from the UK, and a swing set from Iraq. The group’s short film *Flooded McDonald’s* (2009) has toured internationally, showing a life-size replica of the ubiquitous fast-food restaurant gradually flooding with water, an overt hint of the inability of institutions to cope with the threat of climate change. On the side of a London gallery, SUPERFLEX designed a billboard of a euro coin with its value missing. The collective is recognized for artworks with wit and subversive humor that address serious social and cultural concerns. SUPERFLEX describe their works as tools—thereby suggesting multiple areas of application and use.

SUPERFLEX: European Union Mayotte is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Wassan Al-Khudhairi, Chief Curator.



Contemporary Art
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Related Events

Press & Patron Preview

Friday, September 7, 10:00–11:00 am
Join artists and curators for an exclusive introduction to the exhibitions. *RSVP to Eddie Silva at 314.535.0770 x313 or esilva@camstl.org.*

Opening Night

Friday, September 7
Member Preview 6:00–7:00 pm
Public Reception 7:00–9:00 pm

Artist Talk: SUPERFLEX

Jakob Fenger and Bjørnstjerne Christiansen
Thursday, October 25, 6:30 pm

All programs, dates, and time are subject to change.

About the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis presents, supports, and celebrates the art of our time. It is the premier museum in St. Louis dedicated to contemporary art. Focused on a dynamic array of changing exhibitions, CAM provides a thought-provoking program that reflects and contributes to the global cultural landscape. Through the diverse perspectives offered in its exhibitions, public programs, and educational initiatives, CAM actively engages a range of audiences to challenge their perceptions. It is a site for discovery, a gathering place in which to experience and enjoy contemporary visual culture. CAM is located in the Grand Center Arts District.

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