

ULTIMATE CHARGE

Sylvie Fleury and Esben Weile Kjær

20.08-10.10.26

Twelve fireworks fountains in varying sizes, painted in hot pink, silver, vivid orange, and other vibrant colours, occupy the gallery space. Standing upright, powerful and ready for ignition. With names such as Lady Liberty, Solar Wave, and Mount Etna, it implies that something spectacular, explosive, and extraordinary is about to take place. A soundscape shifting between silence and thunderous detonations emphasizes the tension between anticipation and release.

This tension sets the stage for **ULTIMATE CHARGE**, a collaborative exhibition by **Sylvie Fleury** and **Esben Weile Kjær** at Andersen's Contemporary.

Bringing together two artists from different generations, the exhibition explores themes of desire, consumerism, spectacle, and popular culture.

The exhibition's 12 hand-painted bronze sculptures, Fountain 1-12, are based on existing fireworks fountains. While enlarged to monumental scale, they retain their original graphic, commercial surfaces.

Between celebration and destruction

The fireworks fountain is an object that exist in the tension between celebration, desire, risk, violence, and ephemerality. In the sculptures' monumental scale, this duality becomes especially apparent: the celebratory and the destructive coexist side by side. Fireworks transform the explosive force of gunpowder into a collective spectacle, yet their connection to violence is never entirely erased.

Transformation lies at the heart of the exhibition: from consumer object to artwork, from explosion to silence, and from the temporary to the permanent. The title **ULTIMATE CHARGE** refers to the dual nature of fireworks - as a promise of ecstasy and as a metaphor in our time in which entertainment, capital, and spectacle have become inseparable. Fireworks as a material are not unfamiliar to Fleury or Weile Kjær, as both artists have previously incorporated fireworks into their performative practices.

Artistic dialogue

The dialogue between Sylvie Fleury and Esben Weile Kjær began when they met at the opening of the exhibition *Another Surrealism* in 2022, where they were both exhibiting. Since then, they have maintained an ongoing artistic dialogue while also developing a close personal friendship.

This exhibition marks the first time their practices come together in a large-scale intergenerational

duo exhibition in Denmark and is derived through a dialogue between Fleury's iconic artistic practice and Weile Kjær's ongoing interest in performance, pyrotechnics, and mass culture

The exhibition further incorporates other installation elements that transform the gallery space, including a large-scale wall painting and a sound work created in collaboration with the musician Russell Haswell.

About the artists:

Esben Weile Kjær (b. 1992, Denmark) graduated from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in 2022 and studied at the Städelschule in Frankfurt. His work has been presented across Europe, Asia, and the United States, including solo exhibitions at Copenhagen Contemporary, Kunsten Museum of Modern Art, Amant (New York), Salzburger Kunstverein, and ARKEN, alongside performances at Centre Pompidou (Paris), Neue Nationalgalerie (Berlin), and MMCA (Seoul). His work is held in public collections across Scandinavia.

Sylvie Fleury (b. 1961, Switzerland) lives and works in Geneva. Internationally acclaimed, she has exhibited at major institutions including Kunsthall Rotterdam, Kunstmuseum Winterthur, MAMCO Geneva, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, and participated in exhibitions at MoMA PS1, Grand Palais, and Kunsthaus Zürich. She received Switzerland's Prix Meret Oppenheim in 2018.