# Superflux's poetic glimpse of an unfolding future

## SAFE, a collection of works exploring a safer world, opens this autumn

The audio of a jet fire test being recorded at the ICASS in South Korea. The resulting materials will be displayed at SAFE as part of the KOSORI sound installation by Superflux. Audio was captured in collaboration with David Velez and KOSORI researchers. Images provided by KOSORI, 2022.

**Dates:** Friday 21 October until Tuesday 1 November. 11:00–18:00 daily
**Address:** New Wing, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 1LA

- Celebrates 10 years of impact from global safety charity Lloyd's Register Foundation by spotlighting 10 global research and engineering projects tackling the world's biggest safety challenges.
- Newly commissioned artistic installations by leading speculative design studio Superflux.
- Offering an imaginative perspective on large-scale engineering projects underway around the world, tackling themes such as water scarcity, sustainability, rise of automation and more.

SAFE brings together 10 projects, based on engineering and collaborative research trying to solve some of the world's biggest safety challenges, to offer a glimpse of a safer future as a result of these interventions.

A showcase conceived by Superflux (Somerset House Studios residents), SAFE is rooted in real-world test cases and near-future trends. From phone footage that highlights the overlooked death toll of global trade, to video game simulations of food farms under the ocean, the showcase champions on-going projects that are

making the world a better place, and shares tangible solutions from industry experts.

The collection of works was commissioned by Lloyd's Register Foundation as part of their 10 year anniversary celebrations. Lloyd's Register Foundation is a global charity with a unique social purpose: engineering a safer world. The 10 Lloyd's Register Foundation-funded projects that are featured in SAFE have harnessed science and engineering to provide innovative solutions to the world's greatest safety challenges, from food scarcity and water infrastructure, to big data and the future of automation.

As a distinct thematic journey across five intimate rooms, the showcase begins with a focus on real and perceived risks around technology, before moving to questions of environmental responsibility, and ending on an optimistic note by focusing on how practical ideas can tangibly change the future.

SAFE is a private showcase initiated by Superflux, and is independent of the official Somerset House Cultural Programme.

> *"With SAFE, we are foregrounding the poetic potential of large-scale engineering and infrastructure projects from around the world, where people are collaborating to build a world where fewer lives are torn apart by the hand of fate. To paraphrase the thinking of the influential pacifist Dr. Ursula Franklin: safety is not just the absence of fear, but it's also the absence of grief."*
> – Anab Jain, co-founder, Superflux

## Tackling urgent threats – now

At the heart of SAFE is a concern for the needless loss of human life. From sea disasters to precarious working conditions, avoidable deaths and life-changing injuries are the reality for many around the world – and this will only intensify due to the climate crisis.

> *"We wanted to start a conversation across a different set of timescales – from direct interventions, and present-day case studies to positive visions of the future. It's our contention that truly transformative change requires action at all levels."*
> – Jon Ardern, co-founder, Superflux

Superflux, a design studio who has pioneered conversations around the role design plays in imagining new visions for the future, draws threads of connection that tie mythology and large-scale ideas to tangible changes that can transform people's lives in a direct way. SAFE gives visitors a poetic glimpse into work that is often hidden from view – large scale engineering, material innovation research, scientific advancement, collaborations where people are working to reduce risk to human life – essentially, making the world a safe place.

## Rooted in 10 years of world-changing expertise

When Lloyd's Register Foundation, a charity committed to engineering a safer world, wanted to celebrate their 10 year anniversary, they needed someone who could grapple with the complexities of their work, while also showing to the public how such complexity embodies poetry, resilience, imagination.

With a track-record of head-turning speculative design work, Superflux were the perfect fit. And for Superflux co-founders Anab Jain and Jon Ardern, they were immediately attracted by the rich scientific and engineering research the projects and the scale of impactful work being carried out. Driven by their research interests in climate change and resilient futures, this was an opportunity to team up with experts to tell world-changing stories they couldn't pass up.

Safety is an often overlooked value. But as a multitude of crises threaten ways of life across the world, Superflux sought to offer a poetic glimpse into a series of long-term research projects and collaborated with Lloyd's Register Foundation to make a selection from their extensive archive of projects.

> *"Lloyd's Register Foundation is a global charity that supports engineering, research, and skills to try and address some of the world's biggest safety challenges and save lives all around the world. This collaboration with Superflux celebrates the impact we have had in the past 10 years, but also explores possible future worlds, how they are safer, and enables us to better understand the societal impact of our work."*
> – David Reid, director of strategic communications, Lloyd's Register Foundation

Pulling it all together wasn't easy. The challenges centred around developing, conceptualising, and completing multiple projects simultaneously, a logistical task

with required communication and collaboration with engineers, data scientists, and ethnographers from around the world.

## A deep-dive into the 10 projects

The 10 projects are:

1. **The Resilience Shift**, film and physical model by Superflux, based on Mexico City Urban Water Resilience, Mexico
2. **FISHSafe 2025**, found footage montage by Superflux and poster, in partnership with the FISH Safety Foundation (FSF)
3. **Seaweed Coalition**, multi-screen film installation by Superflux, in partnership with Safe Seaweed Coalition
4. **Engineering Fire Safety**, photography by Justin Sullivan, in partnership Fire Safety Engineering Program at Stellenbosch University, South Africa
5. **Discovering Safety**, robotic installation by Superflux, in partnership with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
6. **Data Centric Engineering**, interactive installation by Superflux, in partnership with Alan Turing Institute
7. **KOSORI**, sound installation by Superflux and David Vélez, in partnership with The International Centre for Advanced Safety Studies (ICASS), South Korea
8. **HiLo**, multi channel film by Superflux, in partnership with HiLo
9. **AAIP**, film by Superflux, in partnership with the University of York in the Assuring Autonomy International Programme (AAIP), United Kingdom
10. **World Risk Poll**, graphic prints by Superflux, Poll by The Lloyd's Register Foundation

Mexico's Palacio de Bellas Artes atop a geological maquette portraying the capital city's parched aquifer. Image: Superflux, 2022.

### The Resilience Shift, film and physical model

Set in the present day, The Resilience Shift takes inspiration from Mexico City's world-class efforts to ensure all citizens have access to safe and clean water.

Facing both extreme weather and a shortfall of critical infrastructure, Mexico City has long struggled with water scarcity – and in 2019, it was identified as the largest global consumer of bottled water. The installation, which includes a two minute animation on a 50' screen accompanied by a physical model, shows a cross section of Mexico City rising out of the ground to form a dynamic simulation of a hydrological diagram. The project visually transforms data from The Resilience Shift's research, sharing their vital insights from Mexico with the world.


From left to right: Safe at Sea poster by fishSafe 2025 selected by Superflux; fishSAFE 2025 representative, M Hasan Joy in front of the safety at sea poster, courtesy: FISH Safety Foundation, 2020.

### fishSAFE 2025, poster and film

fishSAFE 2025 is a large-scale poster and a video, made from phone footage, that raises awareness about the overlooked death toll of global fishing trade.

In Bangladesh, every year over 1,350 fishermen die at sea, in boats without the most basic safety equipment – or even clean drinking water. While this installation tackles the many-faceted impacts that such a loss will have on these families, it is also rooted in hope by drawing attention to the impactful work already being done by initiatives like the Fish Safety Foundation.

Current programmes provide essential resources – lifejackets, first-aid supplies and communication devices – and training fishermen to lead their own safety courses within the community. By showing simple safety interventions that can dramatically reduce risk to life, fishSAFE 2025 argues that a better future is possible in the near-term.

A glimpse underwater at a flourishing seaweed farm in the year 2050. Image: Superflux and Cream Projects, 2022.

### Seaweed Coalition, multi-screen film installation

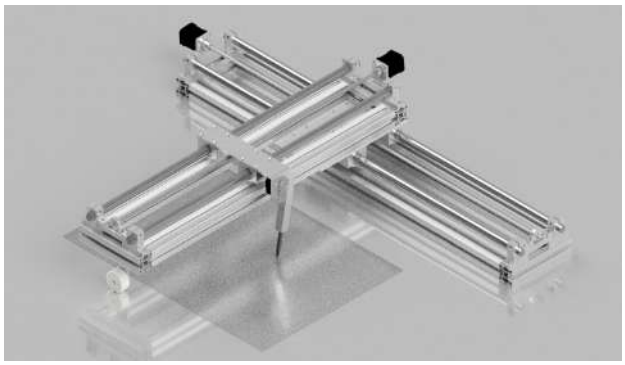
Seaweed Coalition is a video installation which depicts a seaweed farm of the future – to demonstrate the significant potential of seaweed as a healthy source of food, cutting-edge industry and positive environmental force in regenerating oceans. Looking forward to 20–30 years from now, the installation transports viewers to a vibrant and flourishing seaweed farm where the many possibilities of seaweed have been realised. Beginning high above sea-level to survey a vast community of seaweed growers, technologists and innovators, we then plunge beneath the water surface where spiralling ribbons of kelp proliferate as far as the eye can see. Accompanied by an ambient soundtrack and evocative voiceover, screens at various heights and angles tell a story which raises interconnected questions around regulation, technological innovation and environmental responsibility.

Photography of Imizamo Yethu Informal Settlement Wildfire by Justin Sullivan, 2017. Selected by Superflux as part of SAFE at Somerset House.

### Engineering Fire Safety in South Africa, photography

In 2017, wildfires tore through South Africa, and particularly impacted the informal settlements of the Imizamo Yethu community, leaving up to 15,000 people displaced and devastating the local landscape. Three years later, in 2020, LRF announced their funding of the first-ever postgraduate programme on fire safety in Africa: Fire Engineering Education for Africa (FEEFA) at Stellenbosch University.

Interested in how such a story of crisis and adaptation could be told, Superflux turned to Justin Sullivan, a wildlife photographer who documented the mass of firefighters (some 170) who struggled to control the wildfire, and the irreparable damage caused to families and locality. In this context, Sullivan's images tell a powerful message: safety measures could, indeed should, have been available and implemented before the crisis.



Robotic plotter as part of Discovering Safety, robotic installation by Superflux, in partnership with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Image: Superflux, 2022.

### Discovering Safety, installation

Transforming complex risk data into a poetic and luminous sculpture, an AI tool taken from a construction safety site becomes a producer of artwork. The tool, capable of generating risk scores from hand-written health and safety observations, has been shown to predict incidents before they occur. The robot is seen to turn a mass of everyday data into a visceral exploration of risk through time, revealing felt moments of conflict, danger, anticipation and calm.

Powered by the latest digital technology, The Health and Safety Executive's Discovering Safety programme draws together workplace safety data on an unprecedented scale. A global knowledge resource, everything from small incidents to industrial catastrophes (reaching back over the last 40 years) is compiled and logged. Expert analysis of the data subsequently produces bespoke solutions for local contexts to prevent future accidents.

Image of a live digital twin simulation. Data Centric Engineering, interactive installation by Superflux, in partnership with Alan Turing Institute, image by Superflux, 2022.

### Data Centric Engineering, live interactive installation

This work is a live interactive installation that depicts a 'poetic digital twin' of an everyday object – an Angelpoise lamp.

Taking inspiration from pioneering work by The Alan Turing Institute, where a digital twin was developed in parallel with the construction of the world's first 3D printed stainless steel bridge, the lamp's digital twin was made with a video game engine and responds to the viewer in real time. By revealing flows of data that are usually hidden from sight and gesturing towards cutting-edge technology, the installation prompts big questions through a quotidian design object. How could such tools be used to construct the infrastructure of a greener future, or what role will they play in our everyday lives?

David Velez and KOSORI researchers recording a Hyperbaric Subsea Pressure Test at the ICASS, South Korea. Image provided by KOSORI, 2022.

### KOSORI, sound installation

KOSORI is a sound installation that offers a unique look at a sea catastrophe research centre in South Korea – exploring a playful approach with audio to draw an imaginative link between materials and data.

The Korea Ship and Offshore Research Institute (KOSORI) is helping the global maritime industry to better understand catastrophic incidents at sea. Interested in how the relationship between materials, scientific processes and data could be given an immersive presence in the gallery space, Superflux, in collaboration with sound artist and field recordist David Vélez, created a sonic composition using the sounds of KOSORI's material tests.

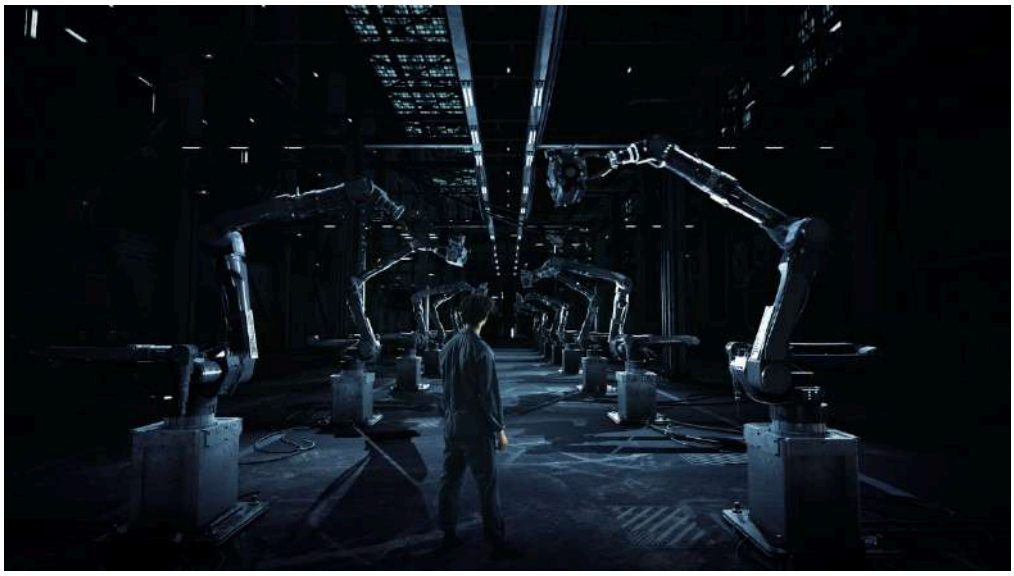
As part of the work, the sounds of extreme temperatures and forces – recorded in collaboration with researchers – collide in an immersive soundscape which surrounds the sculptural forms. Within this ruinous yet fertile space, objective scientific processes are translated into a poetic meditation on the emergence of safety from destruction.

Film still from HiLo, multi channel film by Superflux, in partnership with HiLo. Image credit: Superflux and Dimitris Papadimitriou, 2022. Stock Media provided by stefanwelder / Pond5.

### HiLo, multi-screen film installation

High impact, low frequency (HiLo) incidents at sea are notoriously difficult to predict, their consequences disastrous for ships, crews, economies and ecosystems. In this short poetic film, Superflux turns their attention to the ways in which predictive technologies are used today – and invites viewers to consider how they might shape the future.

A slow tension builds through this quietly paced speculative film which juxtaposes the prosaic routines of the crew alongside a holistic monitoring system – until the ship is suddenly faced with a large volatile danger. Extensive footage shot onboard vessels, with a rich and layered soundtrack, is accompanied by an animated dashboard that detects risks and issues resolutions as it responds to information gathered from around the ship. The live predictive model utilises information from the various departments of the ship to anticipate danger, and notify the crew when potential disaster may emerge.



A still from AAIP, film by Superflux, in partnership with the University of York in the Assuring Autonomy International Programme (AAIP), United Kingdom.

### AAIP, film

AAIP is a short film that probes media-driven fears of automation and the future of the workplace. Set in an imagined robot-run factory, the film precisely choreographs green screen footage with game engine animation to tell the story of a quality control officer who encounters danger during a work shift.

By presenting interactions between humans and robots in a non-judgemental manner, the film offers viewers an opportunity to confront and consider their own feelings of fear and uncertainty about robotics and autonomous systems. At its crescendo, the film's narrative flips and offers an alternative speculative perspective: a vision of the future in which robot-human relationships are built on mutual trust and care.


Response to the "Imagining Safer Future's" questionnaire by a 10 year old from the UK. Image: Superflux, 2022.

### World Risk Poll, graphic prints

In 2021, 34% of people across the world felt less safe than they did five years previously.

The World Risk Poll is the first global study of perceptions and experiences of risk to people's safety. From online safety and workplace injury to the safety of food and climate change, the poll generates striking and often surprising insights about how safe people feel, what risks they experience everyday and how such experience of risk differs across the world.

Mirroring the process and methodology of the World Risk Poll, Superflux has gathered responses from children aged 8–12 and uses their insights to build a picture of the risks that will face the population in 2050. The result is a series of optimistic and playful posters displayed across a wall in the gallery space, with the colourful A3 graphic prints featuring texts based on the responses.

## Notes to editors

For more details about SAFE, Superflux, and their other visionary projects, please contact Emily Ward on emily@zetteler.co.uk.

**Showcase**
As a private project initiated by Superflux with Lloyd's Register Foundation, SAFE should be referred to as a showcase rather than an exhibition, as it is not part of the Somerset House curated programme.

**Suggested social media etiquette**
Somerset House should not be credited or tagged on social media.

**Visit**
Private view, 6pm-9pm, Thursday 20th October

Visit between Friday 21 October until Tuesday 1 November. Booking essential via Eventbrite:
eventbrite.co.uk/e/418945686827

**Accessibility information:**
The New Wing has step free access to spaces from Lancaster Place Entrance.

**SAFE website:**
safe-showcase.lrfoundation.org.uk

**Superflux**
Founded by Anab Jain and Jon Ardern in 2009, Superflux is a boundary-defying experiential futures company. Their work aims to confront diverse audiences with the complex and deeply interconnected nature of today's challenges and invites us to navigate precarity with active hope. Superflux is the recipient of the HORIZON2020 European Union Grant (CreaTures Project) and the 2021 Design Studio of the Year for its contribution to speculative design with a committed social mission. The studio has worked with international organisations, cultural institutions and government offices including Google AI, DeepMind, Microsoft Research, Cabinet Office UK and the Government of the UAE.

superflux.in
twitter.com/superflux

instagram.com/superfluxstudio

**Lloyd's Register Foundation**
Lloyd's Register Foundation is an independent global safety charity that supports research, innovation, and education to make the world a safer place. Its mission is to use the best evidence and insight, such as the World Risk Poll, to help the global community focus on tackling the world's most pressing safety and risk challenges. For more information about Lloyd's Register Foundation, visit lrfoundation.org.uk.

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