

Supermedium: Kelan Andrews and Petra Szemán

11 October - 31 January 2026

Slip through layers of celluloid animation into an exhibition that asks what it means to animate: to bring life to human-scale animatronics, or to a digital avatar crossing candy-coloured landscapes.

Supermedium will showcase commissions and existing work by **Kelan Andrews** and **Petra Szemán**, alongside items from the legendary Manchester animation studio **Cosgrove Hall Films Archive**. The artists' new works are developed in dialogue with the archive that is home to items from some of the UK's most iconic and beloved hand-drawn and stop motion animations - **Danger Mouse** (1981-92) **The BFG** (1989), **The Wind in the Willows** (1983-90) and **Postman Pat** (2004 to 2008) to name just a few.

Both artists blur physical and digital realms, working across video, sculpture, stop-motion animation, digital animation, augmented reality, and animatronics. Showing archive material alongside new commissions, the exhibition will open up a dialogue between animation - past, present and future. At a time when digital technologies often overshadow analogue processes, Kelan Andrews and Petra Szemán explore what can be gained by pushing the limits of both.

Alongside his life-size animatronics, new pieces for **Supermedium** see **Kelan Andrews** working with the labour-intensive method of stop-motion animation as a way to explore the various aspects of his lived experience, from performing mundane daily tasks like shaving in the mirror, to living with a chronic illness.

Andrews often makes connections between his daily routines, and at times formative moments and childhood memories. New sculptural works will incorporate recordings of his parents' voices, sections of a model railway, and an unwanted vending machine appropriated from the artist's place of work. The unilluminated window of the vending machine would confront Andrews with his own reflection whilst he waited by the lift for his day of work to begin. In the context of his wider work and the themes of this exhibition, a connection can be made between the window, the mirror and the screen as sites where identities, bodies and worlds collide, are created, shared and manipulated.

Petra Szemán is predominantly known for their video works that feature their digital avatar, usually found journeying through a mixture of real world footage and animated realms. Szemán's avatar makes 'Anime Pilgrimages', visiting real life locations featured in animated films and tv shows watched by the artist and millions of others around the globe.

For **Supermedium**, Szemán will introduce sculptural elements into their work on a more ambitious scale than ever before. A new body of work will house video pieces within an installation that incorporates ceramics and large scale hand painted screens. These transparent screens will operate as blown up versions of the layers of celluloid artists have more traditionally and historically used to create animations. Animators draw background imagery, foreground objects and protagonists onto plastic sheets which are placed on top of each other. For Szemán there is something about the way animators bring ranging elements together to create rich worlds of stories and characters that speaks to the way we make sense of our own lived experience, piecing together observations, memories and sensations into a cohesive picture of our reality.

Visitors will be invited to carry out Szemán's long held desire to slip between the layers of an animation. To look through the layers like the camera would, causing imagery to shift and align as you move in front and between the work.

Following the pioneering work of the likes of **Cosgrove Hall**, animation has moved from the margins to become a major part of our culture. Referred to as a *Supermedium* by theorist Debora Levitt, animation today is made with multiple processes including hand drawn illustration, posable puppets, AI, VR, CGI and various digital and post production programmes. It also appears in multiple different places from gaming and movies to advertising and mobile phone apps; blurring the boundaries between representation, creation and reality.

The works in this exhibition will invite visitors to consider the relationship between the real and the imagined. To consider what animated worlds at the intersection of experience and technology might teach us about how we perceive and shape the world and are shaped by it

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For further information, images or to arrange interviews, please contact: Ryan French at Castlefield Gallery on ryan@castlefieldgallery.co.uk or 0161 832 8034

More on Castlefield Gallery

We are a contemporary art gallery and artist development organisation. Established in 1984, we've led the way in artist development for over 40 years. We provide creative and career development, exhibition opportunities and commissions for artists and independent creatives. We work from our galleries in Manchester, off-site, online and in the public realm. We create long-lasting impacts in our city region, North West and beyond. Our national and international activities focus on artist exchange. Castlefield Gallery's public and participation programmes provoke new ways of thinking, bringing together artists, creatives, communities and audiences to explore the art and issues of our time. We believe when artists and communities come together they can help shape a better world. We support more than 400 [Castlefield Gallery Associates](#) and a host of creatives through person-centred development programmes. Castlefield Gallery New Art Spaces provide affordable making and project space in the North West of England, including on the high street. We are a home for artists

and creatives. We are advocates for what we believe in. We believe in the power of new art. We make new art happen.

Ryan Gander OBE RA is Castlefield Gallery's Artist Patron. We are a registered charity, Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and Manchester City Council Cultural Partner.

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Images available here: [images for press](#)

More about the Artists & Partners [Here](#)

Exhibition Dates

Dates: 11 October – 31 January 2026

Preview: Thursday 8 October 2026 from 6 - 8pm

Slow Saturday Preview: Saturday 10 October 2026, 12noon – 5.30pm

Venue: Castlefield Gallery, 2 Hewitt Street, Manchester M15 4GB

Tel: 0161 832 8034

Web: castlefieldgallery.co.uk

Email: info@castlefieldgallery.co.uk

Opening Times: Wed to Sun, 12noon – 5:30pm

Exhibition and Commission Partners:



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