

## Convulsion Ltd.

December 15, 2015

MEMO TO: all Convulsion Ltd. stakeholders

FROM: KILOBASE BUCHAREST & Sandra DEMETRESCU

CC: Christian Paraschiv,  
Franco ARIAUDO, Simon ASECIO, Irina BUJOR,  
Farid FAIRUZ, Geumhyung JEONG, Thomas THWAITES

TOPIC: Christian Paraschiv at Convulsion Ltd.

Born in 1953 in Bucharest, Romania and since 1986 living and working in Paris, France, Christian Paraschiv is one of the leading artistic figures of the '80s generation in Romanian art.

Accurate observer of political, economic, social developments and genuinely interested both in spirituality and pioneering scientific research, Paraschiv conveyed knowledge and intuition into a unique body of work, dissolving medium boundaries and linearity.

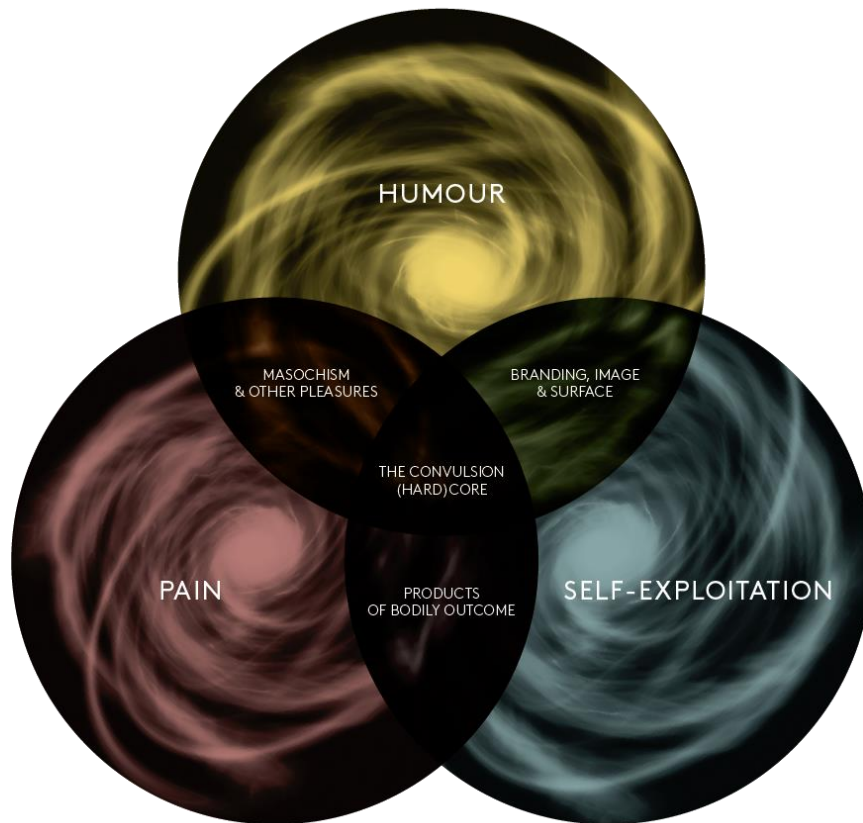
Considering only one of multiple threads in the prolific oeuvre of Christian Paraschiv – his in-depth exploration of the *body* – *Convulsion Ltd.* is the first chapter in a series of exhibitions that will lead to a necessary major retrospective of the Romanian artist.

While his practice has been previously presented through a recurring triangle of themes, such as Memory, Identity and Exile, *Convulsion Ltd.* is a study-exhibition and an attempt to re-read his works related to the body extended over several decades from three parallel, yet profoundly interconnected points of view: Pain, Humor and Self-Exploitation.

Economics and the Politics of the Self but also, at large, Masochism and Other Pleasures, Branding, Irony alongside its more biting counterpart, Self-Irony, Laughter and related emotions, as well as Bio-Art experiments are all brought to the fore in *Convulsion Ltd.*:  
*Christian Paraschiv.*

The *body* is the only stable tool in our working process; rather than conceiving it as a rigid, (self)explanatory notion, we took it as the necessary impetus for an attempt of creating a *system of multiplicities* around the work of Christian Paraschiv.

Unfolding layers of meaning, gathering possible – even conflicting – ways of reading and inducing a reciprocal process of shifting perspectives are the core-variables of this dynamic exhibition proposal. Acknowledged as a (potential) free flux of energies, the *Convulsion Ltd.* exhibitions are conceived avoiding a view from above and proposing an oblique, fuzzy (at first sight) and overly intense one.



Scheme 1. Imaginary juxtaposition Paraschiv - *Convulsion Ltd.* principles

In order for all the staff at *Convulsion Ltd.* to discover and better understand the wide ranging artistic practice of Christian Paraschiv, insightful weekly memos will follow until the opening of the exhibition but also during the period the exhibition is open at EASTWARDS PROSPECTUS (January 12<sup>th</sup> - March 6<sup>th</sup>).

## Convulsion Ltd.

December 22, 2015

MEMO TO: all Convulsion Ltd. stakeholders

FROM: KILOBASE BUCHAREST & Sandra DEMETRESCU

CC: Simon Asencio, Irina Bujor, Thomas Thwaites

TOPIC: Christian Paraschiv – the body inside-out

In a relentless effort of discovering new possibilities, Paraschiv is peeling off layer after layer of the (in)visible body, deploying almost every available technology at the time in order to forge deeper, with the prosthetic aids of visualizing technologies (like various types of scans) and almost-home-made (some on the verge of legality) bio-art experiments.

The body waste is transformed in artworks of various forms sometimes misleadingly packaged in the seductive manner of luxury products, yet having much of the Arte Povera ethos; nothing is let aside, not much is really wasted: nails, hair, sweat, sperm, urine, shit (or should we call it fecal matter?). This isn't material for the faint-hearted art lover, but there is so much playfulness imbued in the work one can imagine the laugh of Paraschiv while making us accomplices to his criticism on capitalism (a lesson he learned the hard way).

From the surface of the skin, through fragments of X-ray pictures, and back to fully concealed portions of the body, his large-scale depictions of the human body could be read as a statement on the complexity of our perception and ways of relating to images: the unsettling overlapping of revealing (even more than meets the – natural – eye) and hiding from view functions like an overtone of the possibilities and traps of visual (especially the technologized) media, our (at times, blind) faith in them and our own mechanisms of perception and (further) representation.

Maybe one of the most extreme steps taken by Paraschiv throughout his *Nomos* series was the *re-production* of his own body, when (successfully) attempting to clone his skin, an idea he was dreaming of since the early '90s, but that turned to reality with great struggle and a rather big investment starting with 2002.

Once extracted, the *that-which-used-to-be-mine*, a severed piece, was set loose in order to grow, to multiply, to replicate itself infinitely. Containing the trances of the invisible original body and given afterwards the same formal structure as the other pieces from the series (a silhouette divided in 26 fragments), the alien product somewhat regained its bodily shape,

creating a troubling relation between internal / external, since that which is represented invades its carrier medium up to the point of rendering such distinctions futile.

The conflicting nature of his practice - which oscillates between the eagerness to experiment and always take further the medium of his work, wittily inventing new solutions and techniques, and his obsessive revisiting of traditional painting (in terms of visual effects, like the transparency of the layers, or in the deployment of the golden background, a direct - albeit twisted - reference to the representational codes of Christian imagery) - brings to the fore another notion of the convoluted image as bearer of clashing temporalities.

Obsolete as some of these techniques may seem nowadays, they testify to the resilience and vitality of the image, its capacity to embrace and cross media, while in a constant re-negotiation with the body - the living (perceiving) or the absent one, (temporarily) attached to its material carrier.

## Convulsion Ltd.

December 29, 2015

MEMO TO: all Convulsion Ltd. stakeholders

FROM: KILOBASE BUCHAREST & Sandra DEMETRESCU

CC: Farid Fairuz, Geumhyung Jeong, Franco Ariaudo, Simon Asencio

TOPIC: Christian Paraschiv - on the pathological paradigm

In his 2000 *Black is the colour of language* performance - marked by the ambivalence of creating a symbolic protection of the body, yet achieved by means of a painful procedure that challenges the limits of endurance - Paraschiv underwent a process of being gradually and entirely covered in lead bands.

Thinking of it as a conscious (and thereby - nearly - controlled) act of self inflicting violence could lead the way to questioning and confronting the external instances of control: the oppressed body (by the mediated, symbolical violence stemming from society's power relations) thus takes resort in becoming insubordinate, an abnormal body, self-exploited, both host and (its own) parasite.

Conversely, another one of his performances (*The Back*, 2003) functions in this scenario as the remedial counterpart - the awareness of one's body as incongruous generates a self-healing act that adds yet another layer of disorder to the undetermined notion of the body. Cupping therapy (an ancient, alternative technique), in its blurred curing scope, responds exactly to the immanence of the pathological agent, which, this time, awaits to be localized in the body. In other words, it is a symbolic action of prophylactic decoding of the parasite, the threat within the body, setting it apart from the host in order to achieve its exclusion.

Redefining our understanding of the body, from the perspective of the parasitical anomaly, as both the threatened and the threat, human and non-human (*hostis* - "guest" and "enemy"), creates a new, yet utterly distressing space of potentiality in our sense-structuring of the world.

Paraschiv succeeds once more in pushing us to reflect, this time on biological determinism and on the violence the body is exposed to in contemporary times.

The good, the bad - which parasite?

## Convulsion Ltd.

January 5, 2016

MEMO TO: all Convulsion Ltd. stakeholders

FROM: KILOBASE BUCHAREST & Sandra DEMETRESCU

CC: Simon Asencio, Farid Fairuz, Geumhyung Jeong

TOPIC: Christian Paraschiv - Logo(centric)

The exile in Paris, starting in 1986, proved to be a huge cultural shock for Christian Paraschiv. No wonder that, for an eye accustomed to the shades of grey covering Bucharest in the '80s, the landing in Paris was almost an aggression: colors abounding as well as commercial and non-commercial visual communication screaming for attention.

For someone younger, like us, it sounds almost incredible; but re-memorizing with him this enormous change, we had a recollection of how puzzling it was for us when listening, a few years ago, to North Korean defectors' similar experiences.

The series of abstract paintings he did during the first years in France, using a rather violent color palette, is the first manifest of the visual turmoil he was experiencing. But for the *bodily matters* put forward in *Convulsion Ltd.* it is of greater interest to rather look at the development and use of the logo in his practice.

Informed by the attention given to signs and signatures in all commercial enterprises, Paraschiv designed a personal logo that is at once deadly serious and hilarious by choosing a picture of him resembling a bigger-than-life *Draculian* character.

Acknowledging a change in status - from a young artist already gaining recognition in Romanian art circles (and beyond), to a virtually unknown artist (full of hopes) in Paris - he started a long term flirt with corporate aesthetics: from developing artworks as labeled products commenting on realities he encountered in Romania (like the packaged sugar bits reminiscent of the small ratios available in Bucharest in the most desperate times of communism, or the packs of sardines, tobacco, wine - and the list goes on), to applying it on books, works, materials and leftovers from performances, or developing a proposal for a bank to use checks with an individual facial signature.

In time, the process turned into something of an abuse, as the logo started to be placed countless times on the same object.

Was he trying to pave his way into immortality?

Or was he critical towards an imagery saturated with protocols of corporate communication?  
At a closer look, none of them excludes the other.