

centre
de
création
contemporaine
olivier
debré

christodoulos panayiotou
the portrait of christopher atkins
July 2, 2021 - february 20, 2022



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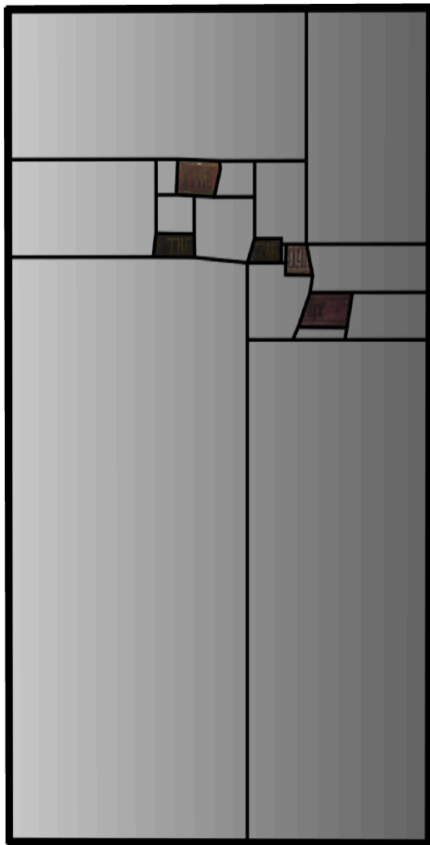
the exhibition

For his exhibition at the Centre de Création contemporaine Olivier Debré in Tours, Christodoulos Panayiotou has designed a theatrical itinerary taking visitors on a spatiotemporal journey responding to the layout of the exhibition galleries and the building as a whole. Through a series of works that constitute a fragmented exploration of a variety of hidden mechanisms, questions of absence and loss are repeatedly summoned up, whether by processes connected with memory, erasure or anachronisms.

Curator : Isabelle Reiher



Mauvaises Herbes, 2019, Natural stone and mortar on metal base, Installation view, Act II: The Island, Camden Art Centre, 2019, Photo: Hydar Dewachi.



The word *The* is reiterated five times like a stutter, a hesitation, a sentence without beginning or end that stumbles repeatedly. This syntactical difficulty provides the *The* of a proposal that expresses a variety of narrative hypotheses, provides several avenues for interpretation, and creates a dialectic in the relationship between time and space. The five words come from fragments of stained-glass windows that the artist salvaged in order to integrate them into a new creation, a mirror/objet that reflects visitors' movements as they pass by. Remnants of a destroyed piece of architecture, bits of broken glass starting a lost sentence, these strange letters now float phantomlike on a surface that reflects images of our unconscious.

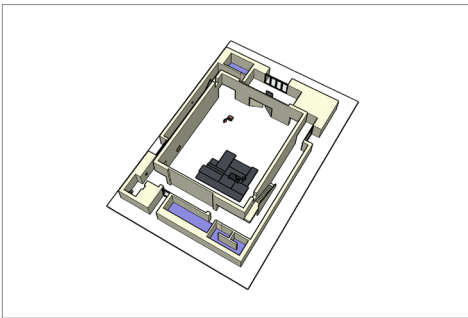
Opening up a breach through a range of temporalities, the exhibition covers the art centre's two upper floors, like two sequential strata of a single life. In a building designed to facilitate fluidity of movement, energies circulate between the works without any obvious or tangible correlation. There is particular emphasis on silence, creating space for the works' density, enabling them to resonate. Each silence is a hyphen, connecting and separating at the same time. Visitors sometimes find the path they have taken blocked by the presence of some obstacle, like that pile of seats, for example, which the artist salvaged when a legendary cinema in Limassol was finally closed down. It is often with a sense of nostalgia that the artist confronts us with history, emphasising the ephemerality of all things.

In *The, The, The, The, The*, an opus of serial sonority, the passage of time is expressed in a variety of registers, by sedimentation. There is the time of materials, a continuum that is beyond us, that is different from humankind's. There is personal time, which is sometimes absorbed into nature's time, as is evidenced by the weeds that the artist found growing in his garden and turned into silver so as to freeze them in time once and for all. Rather than in illustration or explanation, the exhibition is best understood in a series of actions that may be seen as experiments in perpetual motion.



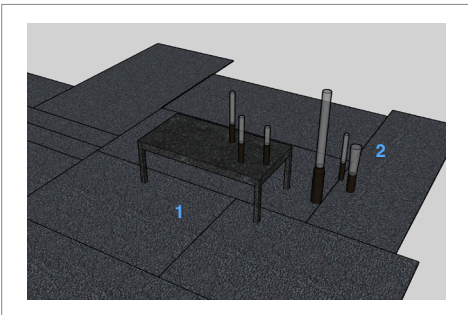
A mirror piece containing vitrail fragments of the word "the", from old destroyed stained glass windows.

The lower floor is predominated by the power of materials and their infinite capacity for transmission. Copper, a resource much sought after on the island of Cyprus, is a recurrent element in Christodoulos Panayiotou's work. Here, it is present in all its natural beauty, a simple sheet of copper from the Skouriotissa mines, which the artist has transformed into a perpetual fountain.



Christodoulos Panayiotou © 2020

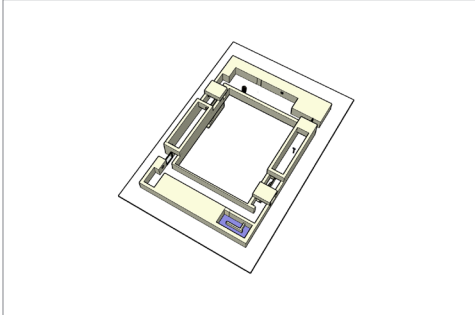
It also returns in disguise in the Rust paintings, oils on canvas providing almost photographic replicas of the effect that oxidation has on copper. The metal's transformation is imitated using brush and oils, hand-painted like a motif, the random and the unforeseen countered by the painter's complete control over his every move. The artist expresses the consequences of time by portraying nature's most versatile and fugitive aspects. Painting becomes a kind of trick in an attempt to halt an irremediable natural process, as all matter is bound to mutate in an endless cycle.



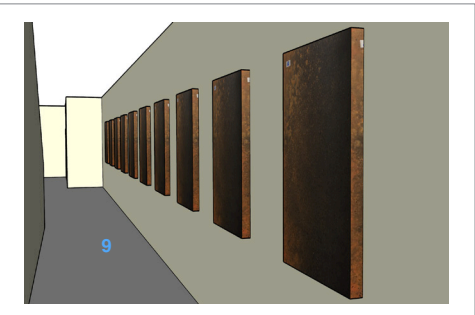
Christodoulos Panayiotou © 2020

In a similar vein, playing on the erasure of motifs, the almost perfect whiteness of the wallpaper covering the whole of one wall of the exhibition's main central gallery makes it disappear. It proves to be a sensor of micro-events occurring during the days that pass throughout the exhibition's lifespan, collecting the dust and other residues afloat in the surrounding air on its sticky surface. The wallpaper forms a passive relationship with visitors, as, when they move through the area, they necessarily leave faint but increasingly visible traces behind them. This work echoes the carpet laid on the central white gallery's floor. In this case, it is a piece of the carpet on display at the artist's *Lux S. 1003 344* exhibition at Musée d'Orsay in 2019.

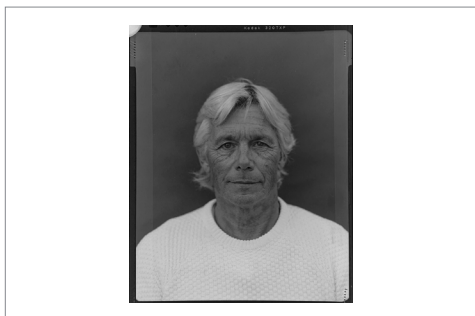
On that occasion, Christodoulos Panayiotou had salvaged a piece of the carpet laid for an earlier, extremely successful exhibition at the museum: *Picasso, Bleu et Rose*. Juxtaposed with a new carpet of the same colour and reference, the contrast revealed what the passage of time had caused, the stigmata left by the feet of thousands of passing visitors. This almost invisible operation helps preserve an indented memory of a highly mediated cultural event.



Christodoulos Panayiotou © 2020



Christodoulos Panayiotou © 2020

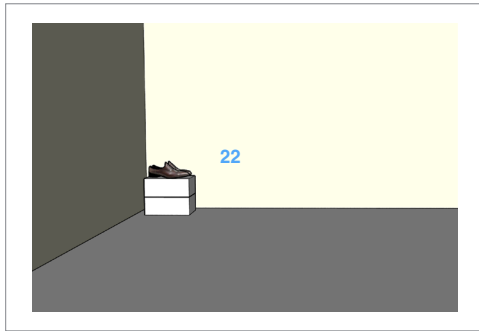


Christodoulos Panayiotou © 2021

On the upper floor, the passage of time is depicted by various expressions of portraiture. The desire to freeze time, that profoundly human inclination, is central to the work entitled *Les Lettres de Da Vinci*. Here, the artist has chosen to transpose two letters onto canvas that make up an exchange of correspondence between the Marquise Isabella d'Este and Cecilia Gallerani, documents conserved in the city of Mantoue's archives. The powerful Renaissance lady is looking for the artist best able to paint her portrait. She is known to be much attached to her image but, paradoxically enough, she is a reluctant sitter. Knowing that Leonardo da Vinci has painted Cecilia's portrait, (the now famous painting of the *Lady with an Ermine*, 1489, Krakow, National Museum), she writes to her to find out her opinion of the artist. In her reply, Cecilia confirms that Da Vinci is the only artist capable of painting Isabella. Nonetheless, she adds that the portrait the artist painted of her finally does not look all that much like her, not by any fault of the painter's, who has no equal anywhere, but rather by that of time. This search for lost time is also expressed through the way the documents are reproduced, turning the letters into images, by the transition from parchment to canvas, by setting a Renaissance archive on a contemporary substrate. The work very subtly emphasises the inexorable nature of passing time, as Cecilia so subtly expressed in her letter to Isabella d'Este.

In parallel to this ephemeral correspondence, the photographic portrait of Christopher Atkins marks a fresh attempt to turn back time. Here is the face of a middle-aged man who, as a teenager, had been an icon of beauty for a whole generation of young people. The image, in its density and materiality, in the direct connection it makes with memories of the past, resonates deeply with Roland Barthes' postulate "ça a été" ("that has been") in reference to a photograph of his mother.¹

¹ Roland Barthes, *La chambre claire*, Paris, Cahiers du cinéma, Gallimard, 1980.



Christodoulos Panayiotou © 2020

Christodoulos Panayiotou invents portraits that replace the individuals at their centre by subtle introduction of places of intimate reflection on identity, the uncertain, fluctuating areas of gender, assertion of the self. Autobiography is never completely absent, and is often expressed implicitly. Take, for example, the men's shoes created by a master shoemaker in the artist's size, out of leather from handbags owned by women he has known. Timeless, classical models, these iconic shoes are in some way a representation of the artist's identity, both by the leather's provenance, which is part of his personal history, and by their possible use in his everyday life. Inspired by the concept of "ego history" invented by the historian Pierre Nora², the artist adopts a distanced, reflective method to analyse his career and its development. He presents his own story as if it were another's.



Christodoulos Panayiotou © 2021

An abundance of subjects are researched in Christodoulos Panayiotou's body of work, and the references are equally varied and profound. The foundations of a western civilisation and its culture, and universalism and the community's contribution to the birth of individual mythologies are two major spheres explored in his encyclopaedic works. And through such investigations, he succeeds in involving whoever discovers his work in a moment of fertile, attentive introspection, in focusing the eye on details that reveal one of the world's hidden sides, and invites them to make their way into forgotten or repressed confines. But it is also by always revealing his materials' intrinsic qualities, and highlighting the age-old processes and craftsmanship that enable transformation of matter, that Christodoulos Panayiotou provides his works with their sensibility.

² Pierre Nora (dir.), *Essais d'ego-histoire*, Paris, Gallimard, 1987.

With the support of kamel mennour Paris/London and Rodeo Gallery Athens/London.



Portrait (Christodoulos Panayiotou), Photo:
Åsa Lundén / Moderna Museet.

christodoulos panayiotou

né en 1978 à limassol (chypre)

vit et travaille entre limassol et paris

Christodoulos Panayiotou's artistic work is a journey through history, making frequent use of mythology, legends and archaeological knowledge in order to invent new narratives. In his works' materiality, he reveals the forgotten aspects of our lives, our societies and the relationships interwoven therein. Often inspired by the history of Cyprus and its culture, his minimalist abstract works take an offbeat critical look at all forms of totalitarianism, nationalism and self-isolation.

He's represented by kamel mennour Paris/London and Rodeo Gallery Athens/London.

Artist's website : <https://christodoulospanayiotou.com/>

solo exhibitions

2021

Personal exhibition, Galerie kamel mennour, Paris, France

« The portrait of Christopher Atkins », Centre de Création contemporaine Olivier Debré, Tours, France

« L'aqua », Galleria Franco Noero, Turin, Italy

2020

Florida State University, Tallahassee, Floride, United-States

A4 Contemporary Arts Center, Chengdu, China

« Dying on stage: chapter three », La Bâtie – Festival de Genève, Genève, Switzerland

« Dying on stage: chapter one », La Bâtie – Festival de Genève

Genève, Switzerland

« Dance first, think later », Le Commun, Bâtiment d'art contemporain, Genève, Switzerland

« Christodoulos Panayiotou », Irish Museum of Modern Art

Dublin, Ireland

« Between the sun and the moon », Lahore Biennale 02, Lahore, Pakistan

2019

« LUX S. 1003 334. », Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France

« Dying on Stage », lecture-performance, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France

« Act II: The Island », Camden arts Center, Londres, England

2018

« Friday, 3rd of February 1525 », kamel mennour, Paris

« Sectile », 2016, Permanent installation of a work, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

2017

« Dying on stage », lecture-performance, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France

« Mármol Rosa », Estancia Femsa - Casa Luis Barragán, Mexico City, Mexico

« I write, erase, rewrite, erase again, and then a poppy blooms », CCA Kitakyushu, Japan

2016

« Pragmática contra o Luxo », Lumiar Cité, Lisbonne, Portugal

« False Form », Rodeo Gallery, Londres, England

« Theories of harm », kamel mennour, Paris, France

2015

- « Two Days After Forever », Biennale de Venise, Venise, Italy
- « Stories From The Lives of My Friends », Point Center for Contemporary Art, Nicosia, Nicosia, Cyprus
- « Theories Of Harm », Beirut Arts Center, Beyrouth, Lebanon

2014

- « The Permeability Of Certain Matters », Spring, Hong Kong, China
- « NGC 1277 », Kaleidoscope Project Space, Milan, Italy
- « 35/22/35/36D », Galerie Nordenhake, Stockholm, Sueden

2013

- « Days And Ages », Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sueden
- « And », Luxembourg City, Luxembourg
- « In The Light Of The Day The Fireflies Are Like Any Other Insect », CCA Kitakyushu, Kitakyushu, Japan
- « The Invention Of Antiquity », Camera Austria, Graz, Austria

2012

- « Tenuto, Rodeo », Istanbul, Turkey
- « The Price Of Copper / To Bring Back The World To The World », Centre d'art contemporain de Brétigny, Brétigny-Sur-Orge, France
- « One Thousand And One Days », Museum of Contemporary Art St. Louis, St. Louis, United States

2011

- « Christodoulos Panayiotou », Museum of Contemporary Art Leipzig, The Future of Europe Prize, Leipzig, Germany
- « Christodoulos Panayiotou », Norrlands Operan, Vita Kuben, Umea, Sueden

2010

- « Christodoulos Panayiotou », Kunsthalle Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland
- « Christodoulos Panayiotou », Cubitt, Londres, England

2009

- « The End », Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Germany
- « Never Land », Rodeo, Istanbul, Turkey

2008

- « Act I: The Departure », 1m3, Lausanne, Switzerland
- « If tomorrow never comes », Freymond-Guth & Co. Fine Arts, Zürich, Switzerland
- « Christodoulos Panayiotou », Arco Madrid – Selected Solo Project, Madrid, Spain

2006

- « Prologue: Quoting Absence », Museum Of Modern Art Oxford, Arrivals, Oxford, England
- « Christodoulos Panayiotou - Video Works », National Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Umjetnicka Galerija) - XXII International Festival Sarajevo (Sarajevo Winter 2006), Sarajevo, Bosnie-Herzegovine

2004

- « Forever is gonna start tonight », Medieval Castle of Limassol, Limassol, Cyprus

2003

- « You make me feel brand new », Archimede Staffolini Gallery, Nicosia, Cyprus

the centre de création contemporaine olivier debré



Maurizio Nannucci, *Listen to your eyes*, 2010, FNAC 10-1055, collection du CNAP, 2018-2020. Photo F. Fernandez, CCCOD - Tours

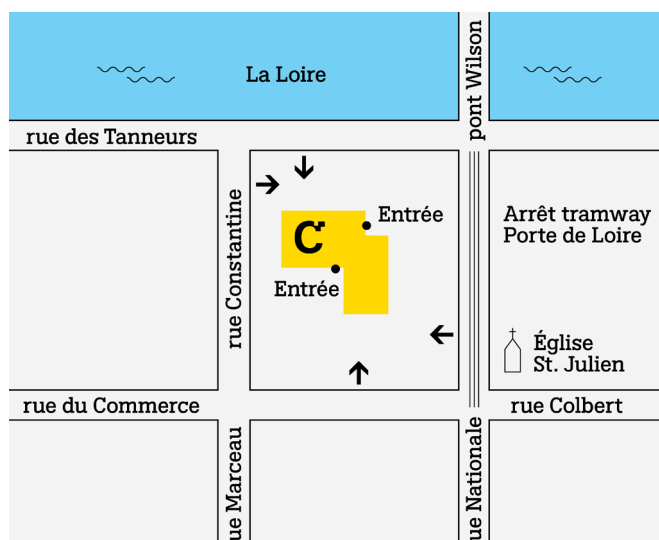
Right in the historic centre of Tours, with its contemporary architecture designed by the Portuguese agency Aires Mateus, the Centre de Création contemporaine Olivier Debré is somewhere the public can come and make discoveries, share knowledge and experiences in an open setting. A contemporary art centre, it is also a multidisciplinary culture venue which engages with all local stakeholders in its ambition to explore new ground.

The CCCOD is now the custodian of a donation of works by the painter Olivier Debré who lived in Touraine from early childhood. Hosting a historic collection within a contemporary art centre throws up a whole host of unique possibilities for building bridges between past and present creation.

All year round, our Visitors' Department organises a wide range of activities for young and old alike, tailoring their options to suit individuals and different groups. An exciting and intriguing programme of cultural events can be enjoyed alongside the exhibitions, including conferences, encounters, performances and film screenings – all designed to awaken your senses and broaden your knowledge.

With an ambitious exhibition programme, the CCCOD is forging ever closer ties with its region whilst exploring international creation. Pioneering, inquisitive and ever mindful of the issues that matter today, it looks ahead with the artists who are constantly questioning our world in a different way.

practical informations



getting here

Jardin François 1^{er}
37000 Tours
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F +33(0)2 47 61 60 24
contact@ccc.od.fr

train station 70 minutes from Paris by TGV train
by motorway A10, exit Tours Centre

facilities

bike park
car parking spaces Porte de Loire, place of the
Résistance and street of the Commerce on-site
amenities available : lifts, magnetic induction
loop, disabled toilets, pushchair parking, baby
change area, wheelchairs

free access

the café - restaurant

Marie and Stanislas welcome you to taste their meals
and wines, from Tuesday to Sunday from 11am to 4pm.
+33(0)9 72 61 78 71 / contact@lpctours.com
<https://lepotagercontemporain.com/>

the bookshop

The publisher Bookstorming-Paris proposes a broad
choice of book specialized in art, architecture and
design.
+33(0)7 85 93 42 93 / librairie@ccc.od.fr

opening hours

tuesday-sunday, 11am - 6pm
saturday until 7pm

entry fees

4 € (reduced price)
7 € (full price)
free access under 18

CCC OD LEPASS

unlimited access to exhibitions and events valid
for 1 year
27 € single pass
45 € duo pass
12 € for students / 7€ PCE

The ccc od is a cultural equipment of Tours Métropole Val de Loire.
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