

Ștefan Radu Crețu



(Roumanie/Romania/Rumänien/România)



Ștefan Radu Crețu was born in 1983, in Cămpina, România. He studied at the Art and Design University in Cluj and graduated from the Ceramics-Glass-Metal Department in 2006. In 2005 he received an Erasmus grant for one year at the Fine Art Academy, Wrocław, Poland. In 2008 he achieved his master degree in Sculpture at the National University of Arts in Bucharest. In 2013 he became a PhD candidate in Visual Arts at the National University of Arts in Bucharest.

Since 2011 he's been participating to the annual workshops Cetate Arts Danube organised by Joana Grevers Foundation in Barbu Drugă Villa.



From Duchamp to the post-1989 Pegasus. An Essay on Sculpture as a Playful Game

Playfulness is a dimension overlooked in art, often neglected to the detriment of depth or tragic. It is a dimension which remains linked to an epoch of experiment and chance, and until Dada, it was unconceivable that art could be mocked at. The transition from conservatism to modernism was violent, and artists, these "enfants terribles" have explored with thirst and curiosity all that was not considered in the previous eras. As the 20th century was one of speed and of the great discoveries, the 21st century is, until now, auspiciously and selectively, an extension of a world of all possibilities. Fighting for freedom and rights has been refined, freedom of expression is, at least apparently, unlimited, and artists have everything at their disposal, from materials to ideas. Only filters and selections differ from the past.



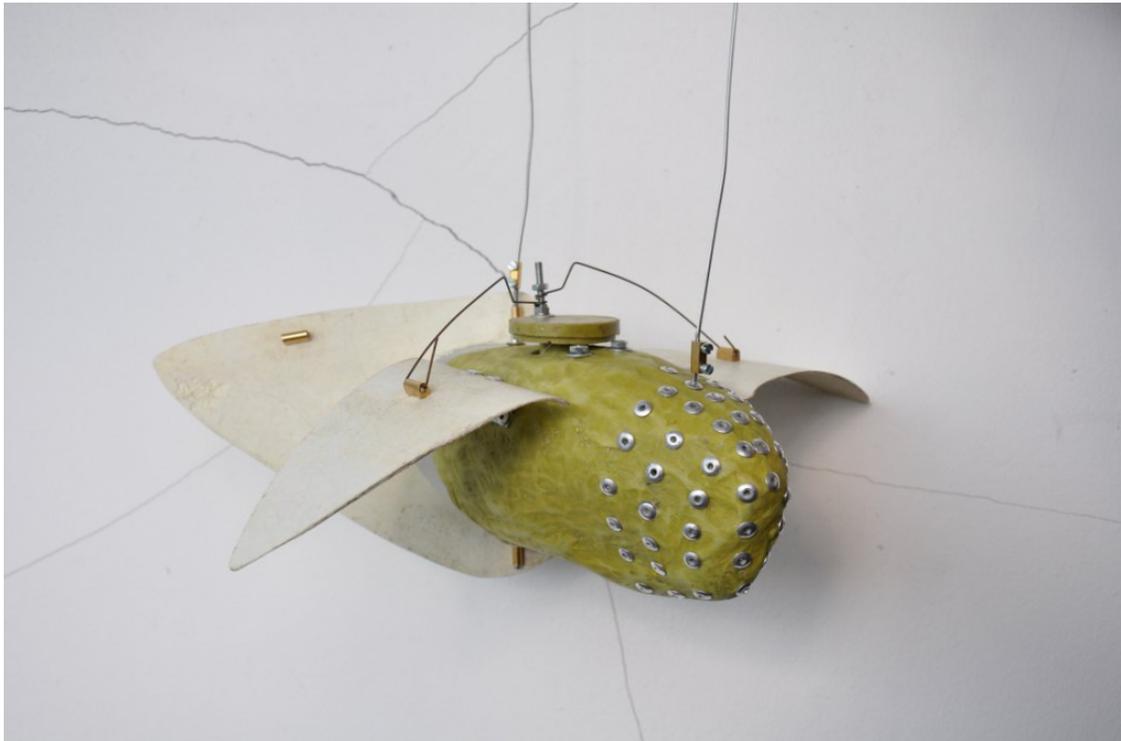
In this carousel of all possibilities, Ștefan Radu Crețu has set his attention on several less explored topics and techniques – such as animals and electrical circuits – with unexpected outcomes such as a combination of linear drawing, three-dimensional volumes, synthetic fabrics brightly coloured, and rudimentary electrical circuits. Ștefan stood out so far with works bearing Latin titles inspired from the world of animals and insects, who invite non connoisseurs to open Zoology or Entomology dictionaries. Is it a bird, an animal? Or maybe an insect? This is what we may wonder, amazed in front of the plain shapes sharply cut, half abstract, superimposed to mysterious and heavy volumes. Or hydrodynamic shapes, suspended and mobile. The surprise of a technological field may engender initially some confusion and then a sort of endless interpretation. Like when you hear for the first time a foreign language and try to make sense to new sounds and associate them to something familiar. Even if you forget the title instantly, the image will remain in the memory for a long time.



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Monsters and fantastic creatures don't necessarily have a face not until we see a picture, and after seeing it, that's it! The archetype will remain in the memory and all variations discovered lately will be compared instinctively with the prototype. For me, as I am not a connoisseur, *Coccinella nonpunctata* is firstly Ștefan Radu Crețu's work and only after it will turn into a ladybird, and this will be repeated with every work.

Kinetic art is rooted back in the Avant-garde and is synchronous with the progress of science and the insertion of the Dada spirit in the consciousness of artists. Kinetic Art refers both to the illusion of movement, as well as to movement itself, generated voluntarily by circuits and electric impulse, which is the case of our artist. A precursor of Kinetic Art as optical illusion was Marcel Duchamp, with his famous painting *Nude descending a staircase* (1913), but the same expressive level is to be found also in the Italian futurists, active previously – such as Boccioni, Balla, Carra, who were interested in rendering speed and dispersion by using the means of painting. Later on, Alexander Calder, Jean Tinguely and Eduardo Paolozzi have also experimented the illusion of movement in their works.



Beyond the metaphysical connotation of movement in Visual Arts (which are considered, by definition, static), Kinetic Art has a purely physical, commensurable and dynamic dimension. Unlike the modern artists quoted above, Ștefan Radu Crețu doesn't work with the illusion of movement, but with movement itself. A further innovation and distance as compared to the consecrated sculpture. His works cannot be worshiped, embraced (they may sting!) and cannot be remembered the way we remember human things. The sphere becomes a labyrinth. Light in his works doesn't surround and hide, but dissects and misleads. The artist is an extension of his work, the portrait of a sportsman – inventor, redheaded and eccentric, who has learned mechanics while repairing his bike. And if Duchamp's bicycle wheel has changed the perception of art on the pedestal, Ștefan's Pegasus has turned his chisels into screwdrivers. "What goes around, comes around", as English say. The forced bracket is meant to highlight a specific peculiarity and not to create a pantheon of Kinetic Art. Undoubtedly, right now, in a few thousand different points on the globe, simultaneously, one boy is repairing his bicycle.

Simona Vilău, August 2014