

Ventilator

Exhibition: **Auto Christ**

Vaseline Dog

Reception: Thursday, August 22, 2019, 8pm | 3 Elyqum St. Tel Aviv, IL
August 23 - August 31 by appointment only

Ventilator Gallery is pleased to announce the opening, on Thursday, August 22, of *Vaseline Dog*, Auto Christ's debut show in Tel Aviv.

To look and look and look, and then to look again, because nothing replaces looking

Anne d'Harnoncourt to Hans Ulrich Obrist, 2006

At its purest form, vagabondage may be perceived as an equivalent to freedom of movement. Rather than looking *at* something, vagabondage is a look *for* something. In its rejection of today's most common form of life organization into settlements, vagabondage is human in its most primordial sense, and generates unordinary lives that cannot be fully regulated by systems of power. From a philosophical standpoint, vagabondage posits the relation between *belonging* and *belongings*: one's material property (belongings) must be physically reduced in order to hit the road and set in motion one's own metaphysical journey (belonging).

Auto Christ became known in the tattoo community after his drawings and tattoos were reposted in several blogs that ridicule tattoos. He started traveling and tattooing at the age of twenty when he moved to Zurich. After spending two years in the city, he was caught by the police for a felony, detained in jail for six weeks, sentenced and deported from Europe with a verdict of three years. In 2013, Auto Christ left for Jerusalem and founded *Studio Straus* together with a group of self-taught artists in a basement underneath the hassidic neighborhood of Mea She'arim. Although most of the *Studio Straus* members have never visited the Lower East Side of Manhattan, their style presents influences from NYC's downtown punk scene in the seventies. *Studio Straus'* rebellious industrial punk attitude provokes frictions in Mea Shearim: two radical groups of believers, both wearing black and subsisting on very limited means, are unexpectedly pushed to live side by side. Since then, *Studio Straus* has been active as a tattoo studio that hosts performances, readings, drone and experimental music events and exhibitions. Their style is scrappy, sometimes repulsive, rejectful of the aesthetics and concerns of "high art". After founding *Studio Straus*, Auto Christ traveled illegally to London where he was somehow able to enter the country. He lived and worked there for six months, before he decided to take the risk of flying to Budapest. Upon arrival he was immediately detected by the border police as an illegal EU immigrant and sent back to London. This time, he was caught and detained for ten days in jail at *la Manche*. Then the court sent him to Kiev, where he lived for two months as a tattoo artist. He then moved to Montreal where he was thrown into jail again following an argument and was forced to leave the country after six months. Auto Christ lives a peripatetic life, as he continues to travel without any fixed destination.

The vagrant paintings exhibited in *Vaseline Dog* were conceived over the course of the artist's one-month stay at Piazza Dante (Naples) in May 2019. They are painted with black oil sticks on white fabrics, folded into a brown vintage leather suitcase. *Vaseline Dog* is a suitcase show. The paintings were produced quickly, on large formats, and present a mix of wording, broken shapes and empty spaces. They were inspired by the urban landscapes of Naples and reflect Auto Christ's striking biography and personality.

Auto Christ (1991, Jerusalem) is a self-taught artist. He has tattooed, performed and exhibited internationally in different venues such as Barbur Gallery, Jerusalem, IL (2019); Otel, Kiev, UA (2018); Kisloty, St. Petersburg, RU (2018); Nii, Moscow, RU (2018); Sterput, Brussels, BE (2017); Deepwood, Stockholm, SE (2016); Trieze, Paris, FR (2016); The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, IL (2010); among others. Auto Christ is currently in the process of obtaining his skipper license and will sail on a boat to an unknown destination in the summer of 2020.