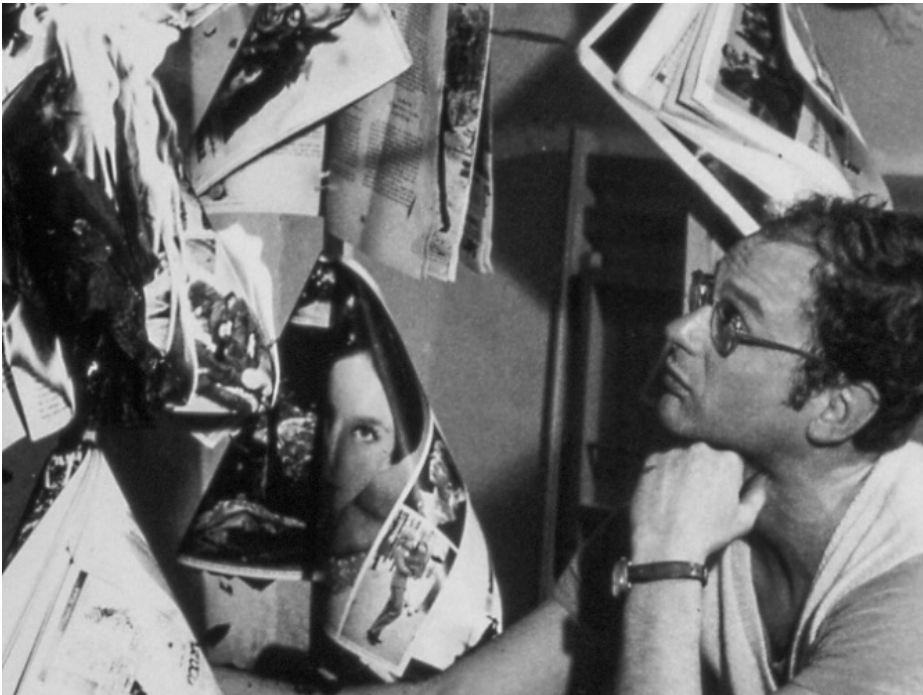


VINCENT TRASOV
Controlling Chaos

ChertLüdde, Berlin
11 January - 22 February 2025

Chert
Lüdde

PRESS TEXT



In *Controlling Chaos*, ChertLüdde presents a selection of historic works by Canadian artist **Vincent Trasov** (1947, Edmonton, Canada), who lives and works in both Germany and Canada. Delving into the **dynamic interplay between creation and destruction**, the solo show presents **process-driven paintings stemming from various fire performances and a series of heat-treated works on paper**. Made in Berlin during the 1980s and 1990s, these artworks—with their surfaces uniquely distressed, burned or streaked with chemical reactions—are lively interjections within the artist's broader Gesamtkunstwerk centered around the figure of Mr. Peanut. This iconic project spanning drawing and performance, alongside his collaborations with Michael Morris (1942, Saltdean, UK – 2022, Brentwood Bay, Canada) on the *Image Bank*, differ from what is on display as they dive deeper into themes of consumer fetishism and the interconnectedness of imagery. *Controlling Chaos* shifts focus more locally, exploring Trasov's engagement with his immediate environment and nature.

Central to the exhibition are video documentations such as *Flammable*, a film of Trasov's 1969 fire performance in Vancouver, in which he ignited a cache of 13 flammable objects to investigate processes of consumption, provocatively associating them with the cultural milieu. Inspired by Yves Klein's fire paintings, Trasov began incorporating naturally combustible materials into his artist practice in the 1970s, establishing a ritualistic process that he would later revive in Berlin after a decade-long break from this practice.

The works displayed at ChertLüdde trace their origins back to the artist's **1981 residency with the Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD in Berlin** with Morris. This second phase of his process paintings, titled *Berliner Bilder*, captures raw elements transformed by flames, with banner-like canvases marked by fire and

OPENING
11 January 2025
/ 6 - 9 pm

Portrait of Vincent Trasov
by Emma Luvisutti from
video-performance
"Closed Circuit" at Galerie
Donguy, Paris, 1983

snow juxtaposed against bold geometric forms. Morris once described these process-based artworks as “by-products of investigation,” reflecting Trasov’s fascination with ephemerality, echoed in the unpredictability of his later heat-treated works on paper. In *Boys’ Choir*, words such as “BOY,” “JUNGE,” and “GARÇON” appear on chemically processed paper, each word carrying its own cultural resonance. These works follow a similar series titled *Female Voices*. Both series were originally accompanied by a collaborative video with Morris, vocalizing the distortions and mutilations of modernist ideals. Created with metal stencils from East Berlin, the heat-processed pages explore the tension between the standardization provided by these design tools of the former Socialist state and the unpredictability of the creative process. Using copper sulfate directly on the paper, Trasov transformed the artworks into a metaphor for his own resistance to homogeneity.

Adding an unexpected layer of intrigue to the *Boys’ Choir* series, the reverse sides, as shown in the exhibition, contain a hidden dimension: repurposed sketches by Michael Morris from another point in time. These further change the authorship of the work and all the unique processes and influences behind the pieces in *Controlling Chaos*. Moreover, the artworks are deeply connected to the location in which they were created, resonating with the avant-garde spirit that characterized Berlin’s cultural landscape before and shortly after the fall of the Berlin wall.

BIOGRAPHY

Vincent Trasov (1947, Edmonton, Canada) is a painter, video and performance artist. Deeply involved in the development of networks, his work is often media-based and has a collaborative spirit. *Image Bank*, which he co-founded in 1970 with Michael Morris, facilitated an international method for personal exchange of information between artists. Using aliases that frequently changed, *Image Bank* was a subversive project reworking images and text found in mainstream media.

‘Since 1971, Trasov has been working with video. It was around the same time that Trasov assumed the alter ego *Mr. Peanut* through performances, Mail Art, happenings, exhibitions, drawings and sculptures. Many of these performances as *Mr. Peanut* were recorded on tape, including his campaign as Mayor of Vancouver in 1974.

In 1973, he was co-founder and co-director of Western Front Society, Vancouver, a center for the production and presentation of new art activity. In 1981, he was invited with Morris as a guest of Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD to Berlin. Ten years later, the two founded the Morris/Trasov Archive, now in the collection of the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, Vancouver, to research contemporary art and communication. Trasov has had numerous international exhibitions and is represented in public and private collections in both Europe and North America.

At present, he continues to live and work in Germany and Canada. While in Germany, he helped to establish the Werkstatt Brandenstein, a production and presentation center for contemporary art in Brandenstein, Saxony-Anhalt.

PRESS MATERIAL

IMAGES

[Download Selected Photos](#)

*Available for distribution

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Video:

[“Flammable, Fire”, performance by Vincent Trasov, 16 May 1969, Vancouver \(CA\)](#)

Books:

- [Image Bank 1969 – 1977](#)
- [Mr Peanut Drawings](#)
- [Berliner Bilder](#)
- [Vincent Trasov - Michael Morris - Burned Studies](#)

INFORMATION

“Controlling Chaos”
Vincent Trasov
11.01 – 22.02.2025
Admission free

Opening hours:
Tuesday – Saturday
12 pm – 6 pm

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