

19.01. – 23.03.2025

# RETOUR DE MARSYAS

CRÉDAKINO

Curator: Caroline Honorien  
as part of the Roy Köhnke's *Fleur, Feu* exhibition

In Greek mythology Marsyas was a satyr whose double oboe could imitate human voices, laughs and cries. Also known for his ability to cure diseases, his fame as a talented musician was such that Apollo himself became jealous. After a musical duel, the god had Marsyas skinned alive. Thus, the latter's naked body became the theatre of a punishment, a space where power and the flesh collided.

It's through and against the skin that our relationship with the world becomes palpable. The epidermis is a surface that can be scrutinized or read. It's a boundary that is both resistant and porous. *Retour de Marsyas* explores this organ as an interface where memory, technology, assignments and claims intersect and redefine each other.

Each video in this sequence examines the tension between the body, control and the quest for self-determination. They present worlds where the real and the virtual intertwine, with the intention of both recognizing power and creating spaces of resis-

tance. Worlds where the ancestral metamorphoses of the divine spider Anansi, computer glitches and gestures and dances inspired by video games make it possible to explore and subvert systems of control - eugenics, predictive technologies, gender norms, etc. - while flooding into and occupying the breaches.

In video games, a player's "skin", the customized appearance of their avatar, embodies this ambivalence. As a marker of identity, distinctness and even value, it's simultaneously the expression of a subjectivity, belonging and self-commodification.

*Retour de Marsyas*, the revenge of a satyr whose tortured flesh is pierced by daylight, invites us to question the skin in all its dimensions - real and virtual - as a site of experimentation where narratives and bodies are reinvented.

Caroline Honorien, curator invited by Roy Köhnke to select the films to be shown at the Crédakino

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## Larry Achiampong & David Blandy

## God Mode

2023, colour video, sound, 11min 52s

“Why can’t we too change our shape? Unite to shake up all these fantasies and create a new game engine? Break the networks of myths contained in the ones and zeros, dollars and pounds sterling.”

Here it all started with Galton and the unique wrinkles in the skin of our digits that can be used to take finger prints. *God Mode*, by Larry Achiampong and David Blandy, explores the persistent heritage of eugenics and other colonial pseudo-sciences in contemporary power structures. Drawing on artefacts from museum collections, along with images and metaphors from video games, *God Mode* is a world where the player becomes invincible. The two artists weave a critique of systems of oppression and the way they are perpetuated by science and technology. Juxtaposing personal and political narratives with poetic discourses, the film interrogates who gets to determine value and survival. They imagine a collective uprising - “a revolt of the NPCs” (non-player characters) - to write new narratives and integrate new bodies.

## Nina Davies

## *Precursing*

2023, colour video, sound, 11min 12s

“Predictions never totally come true... And, also, a predictive technology can never be responsible for anything.”

In a system where technological development is rapidly accelerating, it becomes crucial to analyse how new narration technologies affect the domains that depend on exactitude. Business sectors such as finance, law and insurance employ artificial intelligence to predict the future, but AI is also used to detect ghosts on social media. By centring the predictive systems brought into fictional spaces such as video games, *Precursing* rethinks the NPC dance trends on TikTok and uses them to escape from a present determined by predictive technology.

## Bassam Issa Al-Sabah *It’s Dangerous to go Alone! Take This*

2023, colour video, sound, 29min 29s

*It’s Dangerous to go Alone! Take This* is a digital animation film featuring the successive metamorphoses of an ambiguous “hero” through a series of evolving scenes from an imaginary video game. Mixing fantasy, eroticism and body horror, this film challenges and dismantles the augmented masculinity exemplified by video game avatars, as well as associated ideas like progress, development and transformation. Here exterior worlds fuse with interior worlds, the self detaches from the surface and emotions abound in technicolour.

### Caroline Honorien,

Trained as an art historian, Caroline Honorien is an independent art critic, publisher and exhibition curator. Her research focuses on the practices of the black diaspora and/or queer practitioners, and brings together art history, musical and counter-cultural perspectives.

For his exhibition *Fleur, Feu*, Roy Köhnke gave her carte blanche to programme Crédakino, the Crédac's projection space.