

25.09. – 19.12.2021

# DEAD SOULS WHISPER

(1986 – 1993)

Derek Jarman

CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN  
D'IVRY – LE CRÉDAC  
La Manufacture des Éilletés 1, place  
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Free admission  
From Wednesday to Friday: 2–6 pm  
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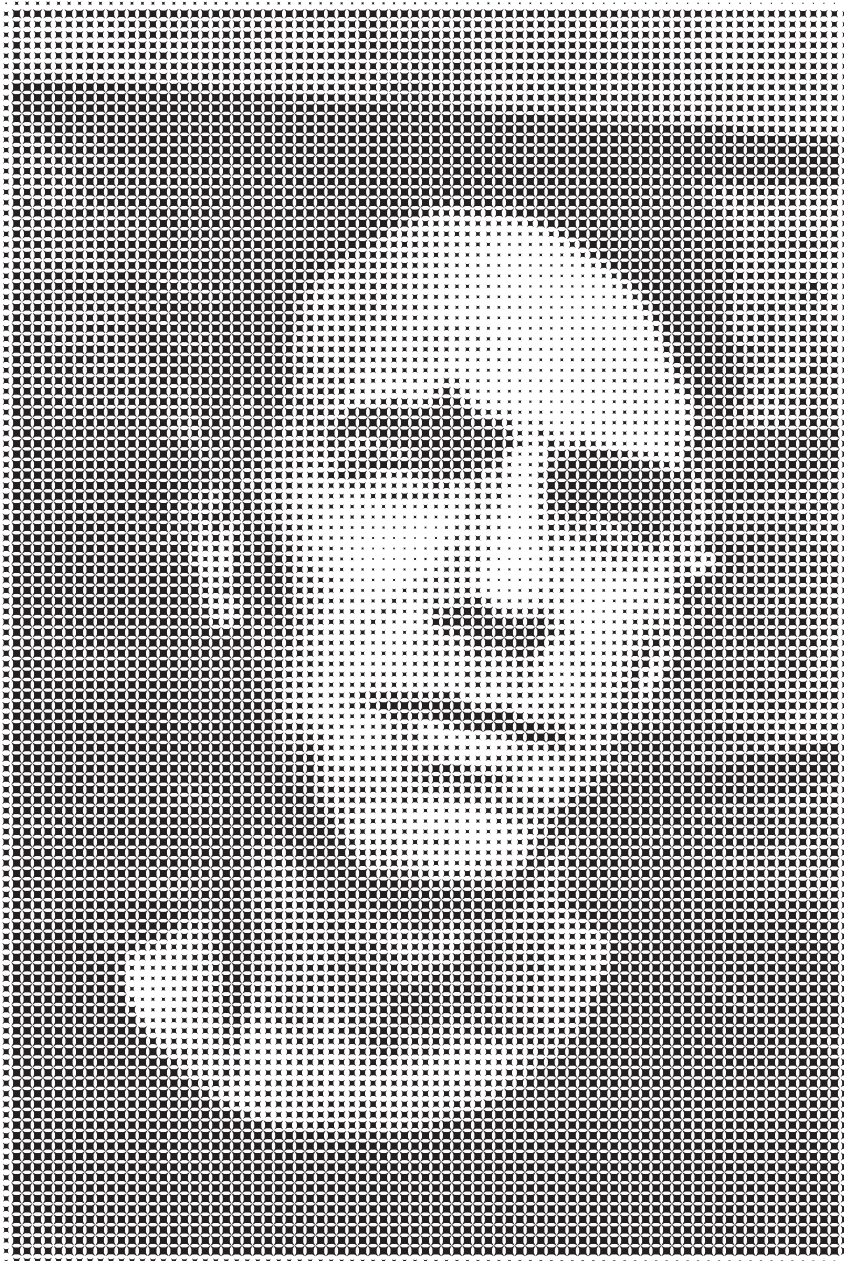
Metro 7, Mairie d'Ivry  
RER C, Ivry-sur-Seine

CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER  
OF NATIONAL INTEREST A member of  
the TRAM and d.c.a. networks, the Crédac  
is supported by the Ville d'Ivry-sur-  
Seine, the Ministère de la Culture –  
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and the Conseil Régional d'Île-de-France.

Production : Centre d'art contemporain  
d'Ivry – le Crédac  
Coproduction : Festival d'Automne à Paris



In collaboration with: the Keith Collins  
Will Trust, Amanda Wilkinson Gallery,  
Basilisk Communications and LUMA  
Foundation, with the support of La Fab.



➤ Portrait of Derek Jarman. Photo: Edina van der Wyck, The Garden

## EDITORIAL

Artist, director, screenwriter, musician, drag artist, actor, homosexual rights activist, Derek Jarman (1942–1994) is one of the figures who left his mark on a specific moment in British and European culture. It is both his political and artistic position that this project wishes to salute, these two points constituting an important part of Crédac's programming.

*Dead Souls Whisper* shows both his Super 8 films produced in the mid-1970s and his practice of painting and assemblages through some fifty works produced from the time he was diagnosed with HIV in 1986 until his death. This period coincides with the birth of his legendary garden around Prospect Cottage in Dungeness, Kent, which he created as a therapy, a metaphor for his relentless battle for life, a garden of modern nature that can fight against crises. His garden is not a melancholic refuge but a place of creation. And if it's not really exhibited in the exhibition, it is nevertheless omnipresent.

It seems essential to us that an art center should shed light on the living work of a deceased artist, which carries messages as intimate as they are collective. For as Vinciane Despret reminds us, "if we do not take care of them, the dead die altogether<sup>1</sup>". "The burden of offering them more existence is ours<sup>2</sup>". Derek Jarman was, in the eyes of society, part of a homosexual minority. This exhibition reminds us that often when society moves forward, it is due to minorities. This struggle still exists and concerns us.

When Jarman learned of his HIV status, he put all his energy into communicating the impact of AIDS on the gay community and on his own life through the content of his work, his aesthetics and his absolute necessity to bring autobiography to the universal level.

His last series entitled *Queer paintings* (1992) located in the large room of the Crédac focuses on the treatment of the HIV epidemic by the press. The tabloids were unleashed with homophobic fury. In reaction, he had the courage to create his paintings as a final testimony, through which he wished to make known the violence suffered by the infected people and his own anger. Jarman called his own paintings "poor" and said they were the only kind of painting he could produce in his condition, with the fierce desire to communicate to the public. As with Robert Rauschenberg, the words are contained within the painting: *Spread the Plague, Tragedy, Positive, Dead Angels*, whose wavelength ruins the surface. When he made them, the artist was very weak and his eyesight had deteriorated, but his desire to paint remained intact. He needed the help of Piers Clemett and Peter Fillingham to complete this series, which they say was done in a light-hearted atmosphere, similar to the one he established for his film directions. The beauty of Jarman's work is that it holds together an overflow of life and a lack of hope.

The exhibition also gives a large place to series related to alchemy, to the assembly and collection of objects gleaned from the beach at Dungeness. Jarman's preferred colors were black and gold, through the use of tar and gold dust. Black is the color of the universe, the color that connects everything, at the edge of darkness. The path of the exhibition underlines the erasure of the materiality of the body

1 Vinciane Despret, *Au bonheur des morts — Récits de ceux qui restent*, La découverte, 2015, p.14

2 *Ibid.*

which disappears gradually. *Blue*, Derek Jarman's ultimate work closes the course. It is both the total dematerialization of the painting, which, with the exception of voices, removes as much affect as possible. Jarman, was almost blind when he produced *Blue*. He offers the viewer an experience of listening and returning to oneself, based on the perception of the words of his diary, which he has friendly voices (Tilda Swinton, John Quentin, Nigel Terry) say, accompanied by the soundtrack composed by musician Simon Fisher Turner.

This exhibition format in tribute to Derek Jarman is primarily artistic, but it can also be considered a memorial, as there are few visible narratives dedicated to the AIDS epidemic. Cy Lecerf Maulpoix in their recent book reminds us that there is "an attempt to be made collectively to make the memory of the dead and the forgotten lives a fertile ground. To give them another role, which would not only have to do with a work of mourning, but rather with the desire to make them exist differently in the present<sup>3</sup>".

Claire Le Restif

Curator of the exhibition

In collaboration with Amanda Wilkinson and James Mackay

3 Cy Lecerf Maulpoix, *Ecologies déviantes. Voyages en terres queers*, Edition Cambourakis, 2021, Paris

## ROOM 1

The main exhibition hall holds seventeen *Queer paintings*. Nine of these paintings are medium-sized format (61 × 101,5 cm) and another eight are larger (251 × 149 cm), all of them denounce homophobia and the British tabloids' demonization of people living with AIDS.

This first room is also where the Super 8 film *Death Dance* (1973) is projected. Jarman filmed a sort of *danse macabre* under a pale blue light. Four naked young men move gracefully, reflecting the light with small mirrors. Suddenly a white-draped figure wearing a death's head appears. One by one, as he touches them, they slowly collapse. Elegant and unhurried, Death takes its leave.

## ROOM 2 & 3

The Crédac's two other exhibition rooms are devoted to Jarman's *Black paintings*, works halfway between paintings and assemblages of objects found or gathered on the Dungeness beach: "In his work made in the mid-1980s, especially the *Black Paintings* series, there is a notable predominance of found objects, often stuck into the surface itself, made of thick oil paint and tar. Jarman usually coated his canvases quickly. This material made the surface toxic and evokes death. Ordinary and affected objects populate his paintings: broken mirrors, pieces of metal, newspapers, fabric, dried flowers, condoms, handgun bullets and old photos are all brought into association. Like Rauschenberg, Jarman used the colour black, gold leaf and dust, and words written into the surface of the canvas. Like Warhol, Jarman loved working with black. In the *Black paintings* his slightly kitsch decorative sensibility and theatricality are tangible. 'Black is boundless, the imagination races in the dark. Vivid



dreams careening through the night. Goya's bats with goblin faces chuckle in the dark'<sup>1</sup>''<sup>2</sup>

Two other Jarman Super 8 films are projected opposite these paintings: *Sloane Square: A Room of One's Own* (1974-76) and *At Low Tide (The Siren and the Sailor)* (1972).

*Sloane Square: A Room of One's Own* is a static shot documenting daily life in his friend Anthony Harwood's apartment, where he lives and works. In the changing light in its two rooms, we see the comings and goings of the occupants and their guests, various objects and Jarman's canvases and drawings. At first shot in black and white, the film shifts into colour, and toward the end shows the apartment emptied, with graffiti and slogans spray-painted on the walls. Jarman and his friends enjoy a last party in the flat they have just vandalized after receiving an eviction notice from the owners. The title's reference to the Virginia Woolf essay is characteristic of this British artist's sense of humour.

Filmed on the island of Purbeck where Jarman spent part of his childhood, *At Low Tide (The Siren and the Sailor)* is a dream-like tale with three characters: a drowned sailor washed up on a rocky beach, a mermaid dressed in a fishing net who makes little silver foil boats and sets them in the water, and a masked god. Despite the hopes of the siren who hopes to bring him back to life, the sailor never opens his eyes. Out of friendship or pity, the god embraces the mermaid. They both disappear when the tide comes in.

## CRÉDAKINO

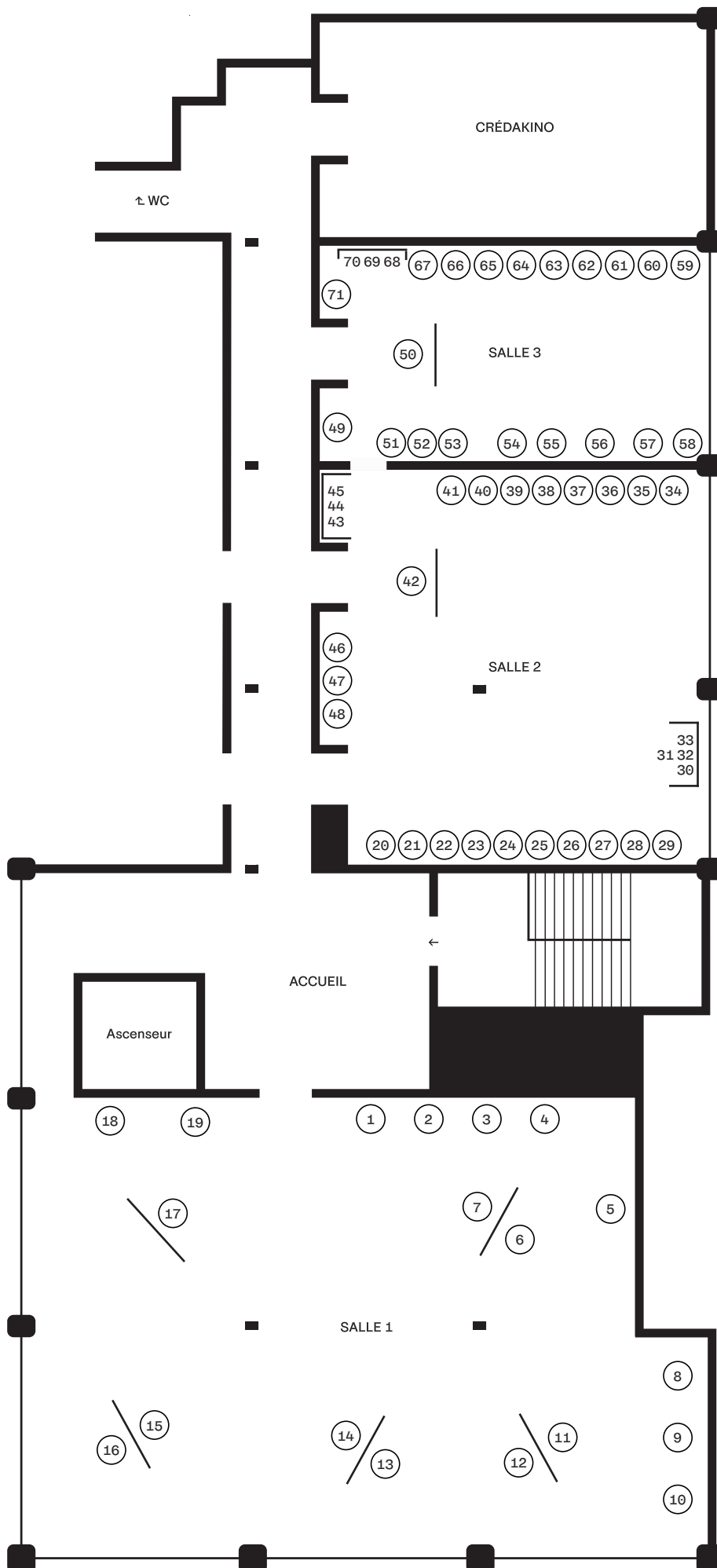
Finally, the Crédakino movie theatre is showing *Blue* (1993), made when Jarman had gone practically blind. Considered one of his masterpieces, it shows a dark, unbroken blue background for 79 minutes. "In *Blue*, Jarman allows viewers to experience the kind of meditation he himself was undertaking, to share a moment of listening and inwardness, based on the perception of words, noises and sounds [...]. The soundtrack composed by Simon Fisher Turner enhances the beauty of this almost mystical minimalist piece.

"This is both his last film and his last painting, the closest to the esoteric artist Yves Klein, who called for painting to become dematerialized and stripped of as much affect as possible. Here the image disappears, leaving nothing to stare at but the colour blue in which viewers lose themselves because the materiality of the body has also disappeared."<sup>3</sup>

1 Derek Jarman, *Chroma: A Book of Colour* — June '93, Vintage, 2000, p. 139.

2 Claire Le Restif, *Pleased to meet you — Derek Jarman*, éditions Sémiose, 2021.

3 Claire Le Restif, *Pleased to meet you — Derek Jarman*, éditions Sémiose, 2021.



## ROOM 1

- 1 *Kiss*, 1992  
Oil on canvas.
- 2 *AIDS Blood*, 1992  
Oil on canvas.
- 3 *Virus*, 1992  
Oil on photocopy on canvas.
- 4 *TV Star*, 1992  
Oil on photocopy on canvas.
- 5 *Love Sex Death*, 1992  
Oil on canvas. Triptych.
- 6 *Mania*, 1992  
Oil on canvas.
- 7 *40% of British Women*, 1992  
Oil and charcoal on photocopies on canvas.
- 8 *KY*, 1992  
Oil on canvas.
- 9 *Poofs*, 1992  
Oil on photocopy on canvas.
- 10 *Priest*, 1992  
Oil on canvas.
- 11 *Spread the Plague*, 1992  
Oil on photocopy on canvas.
- 12 *Now we've all been screwed by the cabinet*, 1992  
Oil on canvas.
- 13 *Tragedy*, 1992  
Oil on photocopy on canvas.
- 14 *Positive*, 1992  
Oil on photocopy on canvas.
- 15 *Dead Angels*, 1992  
Oil on photocopy on canvas.
- 16 *Negative Image*, 1992  
Oil on canvas
- 17 *Death Dance*, 1973  
S8mm, colour, 15 min 27 s.  
With Christopher Hobbs as Death, Gerald Incandela, Tim Spain, Robin Wall, Kevin Whitney.  
Courtesy LUMA Foundation
- 18 *True Blue*, 1992  
Oil on photocopy on canvas.
- 19 *Blackmail*, 1992  
Oil on photocopy on canvas.

## ROOM 2

- 20 *Prima materia*, 1992  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 21 *Untitled (Technico)*, 1989  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 22 *Untitled*, 1988  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 23 *Untitled*, 1988  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 24 *Untitled (gold bible)*, 1990  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 25 *Untitled (Bone, Face and Cross)*, 1988  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 26 *Short Circuit*, 1988  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 27 *The Waxwork*, 1987  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 28 *Sleep*, 1987  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 29 *I will come when you call (self portrait)*, 1987  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 30 *Household God I (Handel)*, 1989  
Mixed media.
- 31 *Untitled*, 1988  
Mixed media.
- 32 *Household God II (Mozart)*, 1989  
Mixed media.
- 33 *Household God III (Wagner)*, 1989  
Mixed media.
- 34 *This Instant*, 1987  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 35 *The Fairest Order in the World...*, 1986  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 36 *Silence*, 1986  
Huile et techniques mixtes sur toile.
- 37 *Untitled*, 1991  
Tar and mixed media on canvas.
- 38 *Untitled*, 1988  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 39 *Untitled (Comb)*, 1989  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 40 *At the Fifth Quarter of the Globe*, 1988  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 41 *Untitled (fan)*, 1991  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.

- 42 *Sloane Square: A Room of One's Own*, 1974-1976  
S8mm, colour and B&W, 8 min 19 s.  
Filmed by Derek Jarman and Guy Ford  
With: Guy Ford, Alasdair McGaw, Graham Cracker, Derek Jarman.  
Courtesy LUMA Foundation
- 43 *Household God VI (Mendelssohn)*, 1989  
Mixed media.
- 44 *Untitled*, 1988  
Mixed media.
- 45 *Untitled*, 1989  
Mixed media.
- 46 *Archaeology*, 1988  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 47 *Untitled*, 1988  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 48 *The Boy who drowned in Holy Water*, 1990  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.

## ROOM 3

- 49 *LAND*, 1988  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 50 *At Low Tide (The Siren and the Sailor)*, 1972  
S8mm, colour, 6 min 53 s.  
Filmed by: Derek Jarman and Marc Balet.  
With: Andrew Logan, Bente Lohse  
Costumes and props: Christopher Hobbs.  
Courtesy LUMA Foundation
- 51 *Dead Souls Whisper*, 1987  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 52 *Untitled*, 1989  
Mixed media.
- 53 *The Common Prayer*, 1989  
Tar and mixed media on canvas.
- 54 *Untitled*, 1987  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 55 *Thee Thou*, 1986  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 56 *Untitled (Clothes)*, 1989  
Tar and mixed media on canvas.
- 57 *Untitled (photo and string bale)*, 1991  
Tar and mixed media on canvas.
- 58 *Nightlife*, 1990  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.

- 59 *The Bridge of Sighs*, 1987  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 60 *Untitled*, 1987  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 61 *Untitled (red crucified figure)*, 1991  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 62 *Death is all the things we see awake*, 1991  
Tar and mixed media on canvas.
- 63 *Every thought*, 1987  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 64 *Night Life*, 1987  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 65 *The fifth quarter of the globe*, 1987  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 66 *Film*, 1988  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 67 *Untitled*, 1988  
Oil and mixed media on canvas.
- 68 *Untitled*, 1989  
Mixed media.
- 69 *Household God V (Molière)*, 1989  
Mixed media.
- 70 *Untitled*, 1989  
Mixed media.
- 71 *Andy*, 1989  
Tar and mixed media on canvas.

## CRÉDAKINO

Dedicated to cinema and video, Crédakino is a projection space within Crédac. It hosts programs by artists and curators.

- Derek Jarman, *Blue*, 1993  
Looped.  
English and French version alternate.  
35mm, colour, surround sound, 74 min, digitalised.  
Courtesy Basilisk Communications.

■ Courtesy of the works unless otherwise noted: Keith Collins Will Trust and Amanda Wilkinson, London.

## EVENTS

■ Sunday 10 Oct. ■ 4pm **TALK**  
A discussion between Marco Martella and Claire Le Restif,  
"Eden et Gethsémani: Derek Jarman's garden"

■ Tuesday 19 Oct. ■ 7 pm **APÉRO CULTUREL**  
Derek Jarman symposium organized in conjunction with the  
Médiathèque d'Ivry, featuring the exhibition's curator,  
Claire Le Restif.

In the Médiathèque's downtown press room: 152 Avenue  
Danielle Casanova, 94200 Ivry-sur-Seine

By reservation on site or online: [mediatheque.reservations@ivry94.fr](mailto:mediatheque.reservations@ivry94.fr)

■ Sunday 7 Nov. ■ 4pm **TALK**  
A discussion between Elisabeth Lebovici and Claire Le Restif,  
"Derek Jarman, the alchemist (painting, films, plants, words)"

■ Sunday 21 Nov. ■ 4pm **TALK / FILM SCREENING**  
A discussion between Didier Roth-Bettoni and Claire Le Restif,  
"Sebastiane or Saint Jarman, queer filmmaker and martyr", and  
screening of *Sebastiane* at the Ivry cinema — le Luxy

■ From November to December 2021 **FILM CYCLE**  
*The Tempest* (from 24th to 30th November) and *Jubilee* (from  
1st to 7th December) by Derek Jarman at the Ivry cinema — le  
Luxy: 77 avenue George Gosnat, 94200 Ivry-sur-Seine.  
More information on the Luxy's website.

■ Wednesday 1st and Thursday 2nd Dec. **FILM SCREENING**  
On the occasion of World AIDS Day, *Blue* at the Bourse de  
Commerce — Pinault Collection.

■ Sunday 12 Dec. ■ 4pm **TALK / FILM SCREENING**  
A discussion between Yann Beauvais and Claire Le Restif, and  
screening of *The Last of England* at the Ivry cinema — le Luxy

More information in newsletters and at [www.credac.fr](http://www.credac.fr)

## PUBLICATIONS

### PLEASED TO MEET YOU

"To present the artist as a rock star" — that's the goal of the  
fanzine *Pleased to meet you* that seeks to take a highly personal  
and unusual approach to artists and their work.

The eleventh issue of this deluxe fanzine, devoted to  
Jarman, is the first French-language publication about his work.  
While little known in France, across the Channel he is considered  
an icon of the British underground art scene.

The publication includes an essay by Claire Le Restif, curator  
of this show, head of the Crédac and co-editor of this issue;  
an interview with Jarman; pages illustrated by portraits, set stills,  
studio views and shots of Jarman's Prospect Cottage garden,  
along with a special section stuffed with reproductions  
of drawings, paintings and sculptures — a dense, previously  
unpublished survey of Jarman's visual art production over a span  
of thirty-five years.

### CATALOG BY JRP

A monograph extending the exhibition will be published in 2022  
in co-publication with JRP|Editions.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- Amanda Wilkinson gallery, London, and the Keith Collins Will Trust: Amanda Wilkinson
- Festival d'Automne à Paris, Paris : Marie Collin, Gérard di Giacomo, Christelle Masure, Sara Clément-Colas, Marie-Camille Désard, Clara Guedj, Yoann Doto, Rémi Fort
- Basilisk Communications, London : James Mackay
- Pleased to meet you editions, Paris : Laetitia Chauvin, Benoît Porcher
- Fondation LUMA, Arles : Maja Hoffmann, Mustapha Bouhayati, Matthieu Humery, Luz Gyalui
- Pinault Collection - Bourse de Commerce de Paris, Paris and the musicians: Martin Béthenod, Simon Fisher Turner, Rainier Lericolais, Cyrus Goberville
- La Fab., Fonds de dotation agnès b., Paris : agnès b., Sébastien Ruiz
- Centre d'art contemporain d'Ivry — Le Crédac: Claire Le Restif, Jean-Denis Frater, Jérôme Girard, Julia Leclerc, Noemi Martins, Sébastien Martins, Ana Mendoza Aldana, Lucia Zapparoli. Technical staff: Gwendal Coulon, Jérémy Rey, Colin Thil, Timothy Larcher
- Derek Jarman's assistants: Piers Clemett, Peter Fillingham, Karl Lyndon
- Musée Zadkine, Paris
- Jérôme Desvisgnes

## UPCOMING EXHIBITION

*GRAIN*, solo show by Simon Boudvin, from 15 January  
until 20 March 2022

## PARTNERSHIPS

Derek Jarman, *Dead Souls Whisper*  
(1986–1993)  
The exhibition was coproduced with the  
Festival d'Automne à Paris.



In collaboration with: the Keith Collins Will Trust, Amanda Wilkinson Gallery (Londres), Basilisk Communications (Londres) and LUMA Foundation (Zurich), with the support of La Fab. (Paris)

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# LE CRÉDAC