

Let's go back to the river

2025
Creation
by **Annabel Guérédrat**
/ **Artincidence**

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↳ <https://artincidence.fr/portfolio/lets-go-back-to-the-river> •

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Agenda

Note of intent

« *Let's go back to the river* is a multi-disciplinary, performative creation, combining dance and ritual, live and recorded music, and video projection of recycled films or films made for the stage.

Active audience participation is required. The performance lasts 4 hours. It's a gesture of love that I want to offer. This Yoruba-style procession, like the "*ben démaré*", unfolds around a fictional dialogue between myself and Ana Mendieta, until my transformation into a cyborg mother woman. The ceremony ends with a big party on the set.

In 2010, I opened a research on the exposed body of a black woman with the figure of Sarjee Baartman and my solo «*A freak show for S.*». Then I put my intimacy into perspective with that of the witches who inhabit me with the solo *A woman* in 2014 and *Valeska and you* in 2015. *I'm a bruja*, created in 2018, clearly evokes women artists who inspire me, such as Valeska Gert, Mary Wigman, Nina Hagen, Elsa Dorlin and Princess Nokia.

Returning to Martinique in 2013, I became involved through care workshops, with psychologically and physically abused women, prostitutes, prisoners, also young girl mothers, belonging to the Afro-descendant Caribbean community. That same year, with Ghyslaine Gau and Ana Pi, I created *Women part two : you might think i'm crazy but i'm serious* ; then **Women part 3*, in 2021.

Today, in 2024, I am reinterpreting the figure of the multi-ethnic woman, but adding spiritual and maternal dimensions. During this 4-hour performance, I imagine talking with Ana Mendieta, like a friend, a confidante. About my difficulties in getting pregnant, in reconciling my status as a mother and as a Caribbean artist. Also my fusional bond with nature, as a place of refuge. Especially the river, a resource and synonym for the water of life.

“

Through ritual, I can slow down, and I also invite spectators to slow down with me to get closer to them, to their depths, to their souls. ”





In addition, my artistic approach integrates the creation of ephemeral communities based on a reinvention of Caribbean myths for the duration of a workshop, performance or festival. Since 2015, I've been able to experiment with different forms of participatory creation

based on this approach through performance art laboratories in the wilderness, performative series associated with workshops as part of my tours, and finally within FIAP - the International Festival of Performance Art that I created and run in Martinique since 2017.



Annabel Guérédrat

Architecture of the creation

Variable geometry

The performance is inclusive and variable-geometry: Annabel Guérdrat and Chloé Timon, the two main performers, will be joined on stage by other "local" performers. Workshops are planned in advance to work with these "accomplice" performers.

The audience will witness the performers' metamorphosis into cyborg mothers. The ceremony culminates in a big party on the stage, where the audience is invited to dance to the arrival of a carnivalesque West Indian (or Haitian) *Rara*-style foot band, and/or a Dj on the stage.

The prospective artists are:

- **Boris Reine Adélaïde**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSnp0VlhVDk>

- **Dj Douce Sœur**

<https://www.mixcloud.com/douce-soeur/>

- **Jérérasyon Tout Moun Jeun**

(Raranaival during FIAP22 Martinique with the foot band Jérérasyon Tout Moun Jeun, F-d-F)

<https://vimeo.com/787124395/35a3877eca>

Artistic and technical team

- **Annabel Guérédrat**,
designer, choreographer,
performer
- **Chloé Timon**,
performer
- **Làzaro Benítez Díaz**,
dramaturge
- **Henri Tauliaut**,
visual consultant
- **Abigail Fowler**,
set and lighting designer
- **Renaud Bajoux**,
composer
- **a Dj**
- **Judith Tchapka**,
Creator of headpieces
- **Sonia Bogdanovsky**,
editor
- **Calogera Perrot Bertolone**,
production administrator
- **Laura Legall**,
Communication Officer

The space

Today, Annabel Guérédrat has a strong need to connect with her audience. Since her return to Martinique, she has integrated those rituals to her daily routine.

She hopes that spectators who are not accustomed to the rituals that still exist in the magico-religious Caribbean basin will enjoy this experience..



A performative experience in 3 acts

Everyone in the audience will witness and participate in Annabel Guérédrat's metamorphosis into a cyborg mother.

> Introduction

They enter the experience as soon as they are greeted in the theater lobby or at the box office. *Oxun's daughter*, the performer Chloé Timon leads them through a maze designed by scenographer Abigail Fowler, to the stage, via libations involving a *ben démaré** of foliage to clean their feet and/or hands.

> Ritual experience

The spectators are then invited onto the stage, while the other performer Annabel Guérédrat sets up the props and other ritual elements to make the magic happen. They will be arranged in a circle, seated on the floor (on the stage). They are invited to watch, eat and drink.

> Final celebration

The ceremony ends with a big party on stage, where the audience is invited to dance the dance of life with a *Rara**-type musical group or a dji.

Aesthetics and references

Yoruba rites - bathing in Oxun

Oxun is the African orisha of femininity, love and abundance. Oshun or Oxun is a goddess (ou Orisha) from the Yoruba pantheon. The Yoruba are an African ethnic group from West Africa. The Orisha Oshun, Osun, Oxun is present in the Candomblé and Umbanda religions in Brazil, as well as in Haitian voodoo and Cuban Santería. In all these native African religions, the goddess is always represented with her link to fresh water and a woman, black or multi-ethnic, dressed in yellow, wearing gold jewelry.

An emblematic figure of African spirituality, she embodies the quintessence of femininity and love. Among the Orishas, she stands as the mother goddess, a symbol of protective motherhood and unconditional affection. The myths surrounding Oxun reveal her celestial origin, emphasizing her birth in fresh waters and her role as benefactress of rivers and streams.

Annabel is Oxun's daughter. For many years, she has been initiated into Oxun's rituals, such as ritual baths and massages, to invoke her healing and restorative energy.

Ben démaré

« Ben démaré » is a ritual in Martinique which consists in washing oneself with medicinal foliage (such as glacial mint, cinnamon apple, basil) and other ingredients,

on the last or first day of the year. The aim is to start the new year free of all last year's problems, thanks to this magico-religious bath.

The concept of the cyborg mother & Afrofeminism

Annabel's aim is to make this piece a grounded experience for the audience; also rooted in a spirituality, the one of her Ancestors.

Here, Elsa Dorlin's conference on *Afrocyberféminismes* at the Centre G. Pompidou 4 years ago (*Trans / Cyborgs/Avatars and Gaming postcolonial*), which refers to Donna Haraway's *Manifeste Cyborg* (1985), making the link with African-American, Chicana and Caribbean feminism, on the need for a decolonization of feminism. In parallel, Annabel also read the Indigenous Anti-Futurist Manifesto, which questions notions of past/present/future and the construction of the cyborg figure: for whom? for what?

Both Annabel and Chloé are already cyborgs, already modified cells. What's more, Annabel incorporates technology; she is an alchemist, a mutant being, from the colonial period, from her enslaved forebears, from a process of dehumanization and "possible non-categorization". Resistance has created post-human mythologies. The question of mestizo and oppositional consciousness.

Ref. Sheila Sandoval and Gloria Anzaldúa. Prefiguring other conditions of existence.

- <http://docplayer.fr/56769734-Gloria-anzaldua-borderlands-les-frontieres-la-frontera-la-frontiere-the-new-mestiza-la-nouvelle-metisse.html>
- <https://theses.hal.science/tel-03975669/document>

Audre Lorde has been inspiring Annabel since *Women part two* in 2012-13. It's within the creative process itself that Annabel seeks to experience this joy, from the inside out. Then she communicates it to the public.

These excerpts from texts, poems and essays will be read during the performance, either by the two performers on stage, or by a chosen spectator.

**A propos d'amour* by bell hooks - about community and communing in love:

"It's communities that sustain life, not nuclear families, not the couple, and certainly not rugged individualism. There is no better place than a community to learn the art of loving." ... "When we think of love as the will to nurture our own spiritual growth or that of others, manifested in caring for others through respect, knowledge and responsibility, the love we have for different people, whoever they may be, always rests on this same foundation."

***Sister Outsider* by Audre Lorde - of the use of eroticism: eroticism as power:

"Another important function of the erotic bond is to underline openly and fearlessly our capacity to experience joy. Just as our bodies tense up to the sound of music and respond by opening up, attentive to its deepest rhythms, every level of sensation opens the door to a fulfilling erotic experience, whether it's dancing, building a library, writing a poem or studying an idea."

****Contrechant*, poetry anthology by Audre Lorde - For Each of You. (...) *"Whenever you love, love as hard as if it were forever only nothing is forever. Speak proudly to your children wherever you find them tell them you are descended from slaves and your mother was a princess in the darkness"*.



A Dialogue with Ana Mendieta

Annabel feels very close to Ana Mendieta through her performance rituals and her integration into the heart of nature. Anna Mendieta was American-Cuban, belonging to the world of the

Americas, which makes it easier to identify with her. And a feminist to boot. In her art, she also practiced disappearance, camouflage and fusion with the elements of nature.

Who was Ana Mendieta?

Ana Mendieta, who was born in Havana in 1948 and died in New York at the age of 36. She was a performer, sculptor, painter, photographer and video artist. She is best known today for her generally autobiographical “earth-body” work, which falls within the field of performance art and addresses themes of feminism, violence, death and belonging. Her political works are generally associated with the four elements of nature and imbued with a strong spiritual dimension.

Commenting on her film *Creek*, Ana Mendieta says: “I believe in water, air and earth. They’re all

deities. And they speak. I communicate with the goddess of fresh water.”

Talking about her *Siluetas* series, she says: “Only an awakening that is real enough and long enough can enable someone to become present to themselves, and only this presence enables one to start living as a human being. To know oneself is to know the world, and it is also, paradoxically, a form of exile from the world. I know that it is this presence of myself, this knowledge of myself, that makes me dialogue with the world around me by making art.”

This creation will be accompanied by awareness-raising initiatives aimed at non-mixed audiences, such as young women with children, as well as awareness-raising initiatives aimed at schoolchildren (middle and high school students) on the subject of river water in Martinique and elsewhere.

All workshops and audience activities will be developed according to the focus groups in collaboration with the team of the venue welcoming the creation.

Biographies



ANNABEL GUEREDRAT

Artistic director of *Let's go back to the river*, is a choreographer, dancer and performer.

She lives and works in Martinique. She founded her company, Artincidence, 20 years ago. She began her career by studying modern literature in preparatory classes, before specializing in the history of contemporary Africa at the Sorbonne. Alongside her years as a teacher in the 93 district, she has received training in butoh dance, pilates, yoga, ladjá, kyudo, contemporary dance and Afro-Brazilian dance, as well as in somatic practices. She is a certified body-mind centering® practitioner. After performing with the Sphota ensemble in 2003, in 2010 she made three decisive encounters: Meredith Monk, Keith Hennessy and Anna Halprin, which led to her solo performance *A freak show for S.*, a tribute to the Black Venus. Inspired by Valeska Gert's "dancing witch", she creates bruja figures with Valeska and you (2015), *Hysteria* (2017), then *I'M A BRUJA* (2018). She is primarily interested in the body politic and social posture of black and mixed-race women in the Caribbean. Also trash & radical ecofeminism and dark ecology with, in 2021, her new contaminated avatar, in female human form, *Mami Sargassa*. In parallel with her creations, she carries out dance actions in prostitution, prison, educational, medical and socio-humanitarian environments. In 2017, with Henri Tauliaut, she created the first FIAP - the International Festival of Performance Art in Martinique, which continues to this day.

LÀZARO BENÍTEZ DÍAZ

**Creative dramaturge,
is a dance researcher
and choreographer.**



He holds a Master's degree in Dance from the Department of Dance at the University of Paris 8. His artistic and academic research focuses on the border zone between dance and performance. Notions of borders, margins, liminality and the invisible are all part of his analysis. He explores a choreographic writing of the social that dialogues with the issues and power relations in our contemporary societies as manifestations of dissidence and (art)ivism. Since 2021, he has been working on a cartography of contemporary dance in the insular Caribbean.

ABIGAIL FOWLER

**scenographer
and light designer**

Born in Paris in 1984, ABIGAIL FOWLER trained at the École Supérieure des Beaux-arts d'Angers in Interior Architecture and then in Visual Communication, obtaining her DNSEP in 2010. During her studies, she worked with dancers at the Centre National de Danse Contemporaine d'Angers, and then decided to train in stage lighting with contemporary dance lighting designers.

She began working on her first lighting designs with Vincent Thomasset, Madeleine Fournier and Jonas Chéreau.

She worked as a lighting director at the Ménagerie de Verre in Paris, where she met the emerging contemporary scene programmed there between 2010 and 2013, and where she presented her lighting creations from 2014 onwards. In 2012, she met Mickaël Phelippeau and created the lighting for *Pîle* in an Olympic ice rink in Orléans. She will continue to collaborate on several of these projects, notably on the portraits: *Lou*, *Ben&Luc*, *Juste Heddy*, *Françoise et Alice* and soon *Young Yellow Years*. In 2013, she met Gaëlle Bourges, for whom she has been the lighting designer for all shows and performances to date. Her show *A mon seul désir* will be performed in the "in" section of the Avignon Festival in 2015. Mainly linked to the world of dance, she has been collaborating for several years with Volmir Cordeiro; François Chaignaud (for his Carte Blanche with the Norwegian National Ballet, among others); Béatrice Massin in lighting and set design; Danya Hammoud; Vania Vaneau, and others. She also assists Philippe Quesne as lighting designer between 2013 and 2016. Her artistic approach is articulated between the purpose of the project she is collaborating on and a reflection on the performance space that hosts it, envisaging light as a scenography linked to the dramaturgy of the performance.





CHLOE TIMON

Contemporary Martinican dancer in her final year of studies at SEAD, Experimental Dance Academy from Salzburg.

CHLOE TIMON is a contemporary dancer from Martinique in her final year of study at SEAD, the Salzburg Academy of

Experimental Dance. During her studies, she had the opportunity to work with talented teachers and choreographers who helped her develop a strong vision of dance.

Chloé Timon is a contemporary dancer from Martinique in her final year of study at SEAD, the Salzburg Experimental Dance Academy. During her studies, she had the opportunity to work with talented teachers and choreographers who helped her develop a strong vision of dance. In 2020, after obtaining her scientific baccalaureate.

She left for France for 1 year to study dance at the Conservatoire Régional de Nantes, where she discovered the Graham technique. The following year, she spent 2 years in Portugal, continuing her studies at Performact, a professional dance school. It was an intensive program based on floor work/partnership/low-flying and acrobatic techniques. Chloé is also a powerful Bharatanatyam dancer. She began practicing this style in 2008 in Martinique, and being curious about different dance styles, the following year in 2009, she launched into ballet and contemporary classes.

RENAUD BAJEUX

**Cellist and
Training sound engineer,**



RENAUD BAJEUX is a cellist and sound engineer by training. He works as a sound designer for cinema and has been collaborating with INA GRM (Groupe de Recherches Musicales) as a sound engineer and performer for the past ten years.

Between 2017 and 2018, he composed from magnetic field recordings made with two electric coils, attempting to capture this perceptual out-of-field where industrial noise and harmonic vocals mingle. This work, released by Nahal Recordings under the title Magnetic Voices from the Unseen, was shortlisted for the Prix Russolo 2018 and the Banc d'Essai 2017 and 2018 competitions.

He also performs live with the same device at venues such as Les Instants Chavirés and the Festival Château Perché. His music lies at the crossroads of ambient, noise and field recording.

JUDITH TCHAKPA

Costume Designer and Textile Designer



Judith TCHAKPA was born in 1986 in Bangui, Central African Republic. After completing most of her schooling in the Central African Republic and France, followed by travels around Europe, she settled in Guadeloupe in 2011. A self-taught artist and textile designer, she creates astonishing paintings and sculptures. Her works are vibrant with color and are inspired by Ancient Peoples and Cultures.

Judith crafts her textile artworks by hand, using fabrics, fibers, and textile materials (whether natural, synthetic, or plant-based). Her techniques are unique and personal. She blends and layers fabrics, embroiders, sews, weaves, knots, and interlaces threads and ropes. Her approach resembles that of both couturiers and weavers.

Judith TCHAKPA aligns herself with a movement she likes to call: [My] The Revelation – R.eve-lation of Identity.

According to her, her creative process is simple. Indeed, her artistic practice is intuitive, driven by a desire to uncover herself, to “know oneself,” and “be in the world,” guided by the famous quote at the gates of Delphi:

«Know yourself and you will know the secret of the universe and the gods.»

She is particularly drawn to Black people, indigenous Africans—those often called «primitive-first» peoples to whom she traces her roots. In exploring her identity, she questions her gender, social belonging, lineage, and heritage. She revisits various figures and forms of being, including the Divine, which is a major theme in her work. Through masks and costumes, she brings these entities—divinities to life, similar to African ancestral rites and practices, creating entities as in traditional African ceremonies. The mask serves as a medium, an object that facilitates transmission, communication, and, through dance, trance, creating bridges between visible and invisible worlds.

A true creation enthusiast, Judith TCHAKPA is also the founder of the artisanal brand Emoi Creations. Since establishing herself as an artist, she has been invited to showcase her work in various galleries and art fairs, including the Pool Art Fair, for which she received a grant in 2019 and 2020. She has participated in several contemporary art group exhibitions and held her own solo exhibition in 2022.

Her works can be found in private collections in Guadeloupe and around the world—in the United States and Switzerland—as well as in trendy spaces and events like the ART MARKET.

artwork completion schedule

2024

- **January 29 to February 2,**
At TASN in Martinique
- **March 16,**
At the CND, Pantin
- **April 1 to April 6,**
At Terre d'arts, F-D-F
- **May 19 to May 26,**
In Alicante, Spain
- **July 5 to July 21,**
At TASN, Martinique, with a residency
ending on July 18, 2024
- **September 2 to September 13,**
Terre d'arts, Tivoli, F-D-F
- **November 4 to November 17,**
Halle aux Cuirs, Paris La Villette

2025

- **February 17 to February 22,**
Le Quartz de Brest, Dansfabrik25
Festival, with a residency ending
on February 22, 2025
- **February 24 to February 28,**
Mille Plateaux CCN (La Rochelle)
with a residency ending on
February 28, 2025
- **March 17 to March 25**
CCN Belfort, with a residency ending
on March 22, 2025
- **March 28 to March 31,**
le Klap de Marseille
- **April 19, 2025,**
festival Trouble

Première création, April 1, 2025 at Le Klap de Marseille

- **presentation on April 24-25, 2025, in Paris.**
In La Villette for the **festival 100 % l'expo**, salle Boris Vian

Partners

Produced by Artincidence Cie, a company conventioned by the DAC Martinique (2024-2025-2026) with confirmed coproductions including financial support from Klap Marseille, Initiatives d'Artistes / la Villette - Paris, TASN, Tropiques Atrium - Scène nationale Fort-de-France, Le Quartz de Brest, Carreau du Temple (Paris), Mille Plateaux, CCN La Rochelle,

SPEDIDAM, Ville de Saint-Joseph, CCN Belfort, as well as logistical support in the form of facilities from CND Pantin and Terre d'arts, Parc de Tivoli in Fort-de-France.

Production Budget

On demand.

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