

Jon Rafman  
*Player Character*  
February 28 —  
May 23, 2024  
Opening  
February 28,  
2024

Curated by CURA.  
Exhibition  
Architecture by BB

Tuesday–Friday  
2:00 pm–7:00 pm  
and by appointment

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Basement Roma  
is run by CURA.

“I’m interested in this age-old question of what it is to be human and what it is to experience the world. And I think technology has always reflected how we experience the world, who we are as individuals, and how we relate to ourselves, each other and the past.”—Jon Rafman

A visionary interpreter of the troubled human mind, of the streams of consciousness and the anxieties of the present, Jon Rafman explores the all-encompassing impact of the virtual within the representation of our time. Through an immense vocabulary drawing from internet, virtual worlds, video games and devious areas of the web, Rafman creates surreal and absolute landscapes in which he nourishes a constant sense of loss and alienation, of resurrection and death, of instinct and memory, of extreme sacrifice and rebirth. In a world oppressed by obsession, paranoia, a sense of emptiness and loss, the artist leads us into the most concealed realms of the web, among the gooiest drives that replace reality and at the same time embody it.

Within an absorbing architecture created by the BB studio (Fabrizio Ballabio, Alessandro Bava) which distorts the coordinates of the room and creates a claustrophobic and befuddling environment, Rafman presents *Player Character*, the main character of a video game, who lives in a virtual world, where violence, abyss, transformation and rebirth fuel a game with no rules, no memory and without a future.

Here, video works, films, images and sounds processed by artificial intelligence are interwoven into a totalizing experience that takes the viewer through Rafman’s production of the past twenty years. Two sinuous walls divide the environments inhabited by characters from the artist’s new video game, *SS Laguna (prologue)* (2024), premiered in Italy for this occasion. New video stations present the series of *Egregores I, II, III, IV*, the latter made entirely through artificial intelligence and created on the occasion of the exhibition, in a short circuit between the sacred and the profane. The term “*egregore*” coined in the field of occultism, defines a mental field, a thought-form that manifests as an emanation of a large group of people sharing a common cultural context. Rafman, once again, speaks of the collective self, through an infinite archive of images that seem to be generated from one another. Within *Rafman Cinema* the artist also presents the filmography from the last twenty years (2004–2024), from the initial works of *Advice for a Prophet* (2004) or *City Girls* (2005) to his most iconic films including *Dream Journal* (2016–2019), *Minor Daemon* (2021), *Punctured Sky* (2021), programmed in cycles. Also, *Nine Eyes* (2008–) scrolls the ending atlas of images captured by Google Street View over the years: single moments locked in the flow of events through the neutral but merciless eye of technology. Finally, Rafman’s new album, *Musique Pour le Chevalier Aux Fleurs (Classic)* (2024) interprets new sounds through algorithms linked to the artist’s most cherished music. Accompanying the exhibition is a new production of sweatshirts made on demand in a limited edition, and the promo of the flipbook *Player Character* (2024), also on demand.

**Basement Roma**

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## RAFMAN CINEMA – PROGRAM

On view through March 29, 2024  
Minor Daemon Volume 1, 2022  
Single-channel HD Video with stereo sound  
87:52

Minor Daemon, Vol. 1 (2021) is set in a surreal dystopia that feels like the deranged fever-dream of Hieronymus Bosch if he grew up on 4chan, and traces the intersecting fortunes of two young men, Billy and Minor Daemon, who share an extraordinary gift for virtual reality gaming and go through a series of nightmarish events. Billy, a spoiled frat boy, is the top dog at an elite prep school. Minor Daemon, abandoned at birth, is a guileless asthmatic raised in a child labour compound. After a nightmarish sequence of events, the two are incarcerated at the same supermax penitentiary. They join forces and catapult their VR prison team to the league championships, where a victory will secure their freedom. After a devastating defeat in the grand finals, the two men then plan an intricate escape. Billy ends up betraying Minor Daemon during a bungled prison break, and flees to a remote pleasure planet. There Billy climbs the ladder of an intergalactic criminal underworld, as Minor Daemon suffers through the horrors of prison life. When he's finally released years later, Minor Daemon, obsessed with vengeance, tracks Billy down to the violent alien planet. In a place where dreams are paid for in blood, Billy and Daemon face-off in an ultimate showdown that will seal their fate.

April 03–April 20, 2024  
Punctured Sky, 2021

April 24–May 23, 2024  
Dream Journal, 2019

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