

GUILLAUME BARTH

Merci soleil, 2025

ART PARIS 2026



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Silver gelatin negative print on baryta paper
120 x 120 cm
Courtesy Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris-Lisbon

This text engages with a fundamental question, shifting the inquiry about peace toward territories rarely invoked: those of ritual, the cosmos, the invisible, and the relationship between humans and primordial forces. An artist of listening and impermanence, Guillaume Barth has been developing for over a decade a process-based practice nourished by indigenous cultures and vernacular knowledge. His projects take shape through encounters with communities, landscapes, and natural cycles, to the point that, for him, the artwork is never a closed object but a shared act, inscribed in time and collective memory. This approach finds particularly strong expression in the Elina project, initiated in 2013 with the Aymara people of Bolivia, in the heart of the Salar de Uyuni. Conceived as a fragile offering to the land, Elina was a salt sculpture destined to disappear, briefly sublimated by water before dissolving. From this ephemeral appearance arose a poetics of loss and persistence: the work survives not in its materiality, but in image, narrative, and connection.

Currently exhibited at Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire, the photographs of Elina bear witness to this suspended vision, between Earth and Sky, between human gesture and natural forces. It is in the continuation of this foundational experience that the text presented here takes root. By recounting a recent project combining Aymara ritual, radio transmission, and scientific observation of the Sun, Guillaume Barth opens a space for reflection in which peace can be addressed, transmitted, and entrusted. A message sent toward the star of the day, bearer of love and attention, thus becomes a symbolic act: an attempt at re-harmonization, a gesture of connection between humans, the cosmos, and the living.

— Marie-Laure Desjardins, excerpt from *Faire du Soleil un émissaire de paix, Représenter et penser la paix*, ArtsHebdoMedias, February 2025



An Impromptu Visit, 2014, Elina Project © François Klein

The more I immerse myself in the projects of these artists, in their work, the more I have the feeling that they are dealing with the activity of mind and body that is dream. Aren't we made of its stuff? Not the stuff of escape dreams, indulging in the hardware of the marvellous, but of active imaginations responding to a reality that today is worrying, dangerous perhaps... Dreams are concrete thoughts that respond to the state of matter, to the threat of gravity, of the weight of beings and things... A dream, dreams against the tropisms of the age... With them, as with the Austrian writer Georg Trakl or the American poet Jack Spicer, we need to conceive of another topicality and "settle elsewhere". Jean-Claude Carrière and Luis Buñuel agreed that dreams are essential because they are the only real victory over time... Time as a calendar, as inertia. Dreams disarm this "time". (...)

Guillaume Barth's adventures are those of flows that carry him in search of a secret, his own as well as that of elements that take him from one person to "the other" like the Amerindian he saw in his dreams before recognizing him in his wanderings in Canada... Elements that take him from human beings to the trees in Sélestat's Baumschule woods, with which he talks, or from one site to another, such as the Salar lake where Elina is born, whose arrival he has sensed. Guillaume Barth is a visionary artist. Like Bruce Chatwin, he's on the songlines.

I've mentioned dreaming, which is one of our daily thought processes, but let's also talk about premonition, hallucination or revelation, which Guillaume Barth, in very concrete terms, "trusts". They enable him to extricate himself from the alienating ways of the world. Albert Ayler is a composer, a jazz musician and the author, with Mary Maria, of an unforgettable piece Music is the healing force of the universe, which I hear today, contemplating Elina, a lyrical source of balance and healing. Through her posture in the world, her power of concentration, her impermanence, the rhythm of her "appearance-disappearance", she becomes part of our imagination and the elusive present of our memory. (...) Everything is new and new again. Guillaume Barth shares the reality of this state. He lives it, and that's why, rather than a bookish aesthetic, we need to follow this artist's adventures. (...)

Selected excerpts from the text, *LE TEMPS D'UN SOUFFLE [IN THE SPAN OF A BREATH]* by Olivier Kaepelin, for the exhibition *Elina, a promise to the Aymara* at the Jeanne Bucher Jaeger Gallery, April–June 2025.



A dream workshop, 2014, Elina Project © François Klein



Elina nuit, 2015, photograph of the salt-and-water sculpture, 300 cm in diameter, Bolivia, Elina Project, 2013–2015 © Guillaume Barth, Courtesy of Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris-Lisbon