

STÉPHANIE SOLINAS

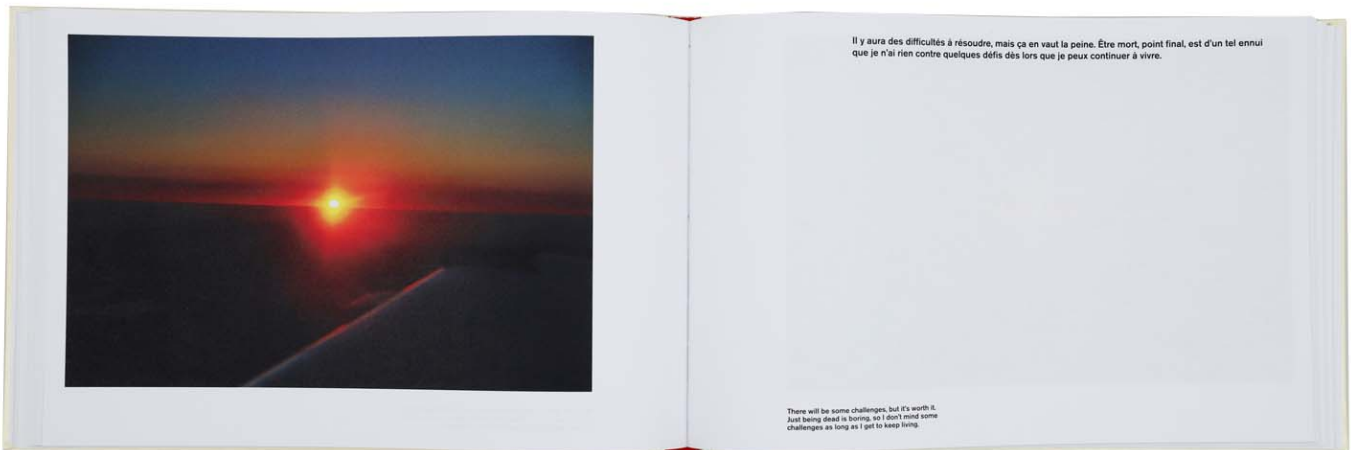
LE SOLEIL NI LA MORT

PUBLISHED BY DELPIRE & CO 17 MARCH 2022



Can we avoid death? How can we overcome our finiteness? In *Le soleil ni la mort*, Stéphanie Solinas questions this possibility from the point of view of cryonics, and the beliefs it carries.

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Stéphanie Solinas' new work unfolds on a futuristic territory, both geographical and spiritual. In *Le Soleil ni la mort*, whose title is inspired by the maxim of François de La Rochefoucauld "Neither the sun nor death can stare at each other", the artist questions our quest for immortality through a work juxtaposing a visual experience she had on a plane with her meeting with the leaders of the Alcor company, a cryonics company based on the outskirts of Phoenix, Arizona, in the United States.

The work is organized in a quasi-filmic sequence of a twilight moment photographed by the artist from a small plane flying over San Francisco and punctuated by her short-phrased dialogue with the founder and CEO of the Alcor company. Caught between sunset in the west and full moonrise in the east, Stephanie Solinas's photographs, one and then the other, are prevented from embracing both views at the same time.

The large double-page spreads, reminiscent of the outstretched wings of the airplane she was in, alternate between the imperceptible changes of solar twilight and lunar aurora. The subtle mix between the scrolling of the almost identical and hypnotic images and the irregular cadence of the dialogue delivered, sometimes surreal, leads the reader to the path of reflection.

Throughout the pages, the rhythm imparted by the artist can provoke vertigo and surprises. The ineffable poetry of this conversation about mortal refusal slips stealthily into philosophical, ethical and religious questions that encompass the belief in rebirth, the human being of the future, possible eternity, our future identity, what we wish to concede to Silicon Valley science. To these questions, *Le Soleil ni la mort* does not impose any answer but opens the field of thought and projection.

"They're not alive, but they're not dead either, which confuses people because it's got to be one or the other, right?"

"We have night, we have day—but we also have twilight."

On the cover of the book, a compass, drawn by Stéphanie Solinas, serves as an anchor point for this journey into the land of belief. Since 2014, Stéphanie Solinas has been conducting a research elaborated as a cartography of identities at the intersection of science and spirituality, in three chosen territories: Iceland, Italy and the United States, creating three bodies of works – *The Why Not ?*, *The Unexplained* and *Becoming oneself*, which she calls "The Dazzled blind".

In the United States, birthplace of the "New Age" and center of the world's high-tech industry, she investigated the emblematic places of this dual nature and gathered the words of scientists and spiritual guides in order to explore the perspectives of development offered to humanity, between spirituality, artificial intelligence and promises of immortality. Her work aims to shed light on the mechanisms of what constitutes our identities, seeking to make the invisible visible and to give materiality to beliefs.

For each of her projects, Solinas creates protean works (photographs, books, installations, games...). In this series, the book is always considered, as it is the case in *Le soleil ni la mort*, as a space of physical, philosophical and poetic interaction with the reader.

"There will be some challenges, but it's worth it. Just being dead is boring, so I don't mind some challenges as long as I get to keep living."

Excerpts from the dialogue between Stéphanie Solinas and Linda Chamberlain, founder of Alcor, a post-mortem cryonics company whose husband is now cryopreserved, and Max More, CEO of Alcor



Le soleil ni la mort
Stéphanie Solinas
delpire & co
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80 color photographs
160 pages, 290 x 190 mm
Language: bilingual French and English
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par CNAP.

AUTHOR

Graduate in photography from the ENS Louis Lumière in Paris, PhD in Visual Arts, Stéphanie Solinas, 44 years old, explores the thinking process involved in the act of "seeing" and the weaving of the visible and the invisible, of science and belief, of the dynamic between the Self and the Other, which shapes our identities. Her field of investigation extends from the 19th century to the 21st century, from the birth of photography to artificial intelligence.

Solinas was artist in residence at Villa Médicis / French Academy in Rome (2017/18) and at Headlands Center for the Arts in San Francisco (2018/19). Her work received prizes and grants: Camera Clara Prize, the SCAM Experimental Work Prize, Edouard Barbe Prize, *Etant Donnés* French-American grant for contemporary art, Fondation des Artistes, CNC.

Stéphanie Solinas had several solo shows in France and abroad (Headlands Center for the Arts, Fraenkel LAB, FOAM Museum, Rencontres d'Arles, La Maison Rouge, Société Française de Photographie, Musée national Eugène-Delacroix, galerie Gradiva, Centre Photographique d'Île de France). Her work is part of private and public collections among them Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Musée d'Art Moderne Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée Nicéphore Niépce in France, Musée de l'Elysée in Switzerland.



Stéphanie Solinas
©François Bellabas

OTHER BOOKS PUBLISHED

Dominique Lambert, Alaska,
2010 & RVB Books, 2016

Sans titre (M. Bertillon),
RVB Books, 2012

Déserteurs, RVB Books,
2013

Guide du Pourquoi Pas ?,
Seuil / Coll. « Fiction et
Cie », 2020

EVENTS

delpire & co, Launch « Le Soleil ni la mort »

17 March 2022 – 18h / 21h

19h – Conversation in between Stéphanie Solinas and Federica Chiocchetti, writer and curator specializing in photography and literature, founder of the platform Photocaptionist.

Jeu de Paume, Festival « Fata Morgana »

22 March / 22 May

In this group exhibition, Stéphanie Solinas exhibits the video installation "Le soleil ni la mort".

The artist will be at the museum:

5 April, 19h – Group presentation of the Festival catalogue

21 May, 17h – Performed Projection-Conference by Solinas

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INSERT

Cryonics, a science fiction? No, a reality.

The study of the behavior of living beings exposed to cold is a scientific discipline called cryobiology, named after the Greek word "kryos" which means "cold". It studies the effects caused by very low temperatures on the body but also on metals. In 1962, a branch of this discipline - "cryonics" - appeared in the book of the American professor Robert Ettinger in *The Prospect of Immortality*. He hypothesizes that future technological and scientific advances will one day allow for revival, that is to say, a return to life after an indeterminate period of preservation. He was one of the pioneers of transhumanism in the 1970s.

Five years later, in January 1967, James Bedford was the first man to be cryogenically frozen in the United States. Today, he is still there, somewhere, his body immersed in liquid nitrogen, preserved at -196° in the hope that one day science will be able to resuscitate him. Today, only the United States, Russia and recently China tolerate cryonics without a clear legal framework. There are three leading companies in this expanding market: the American companies "Cryonics Institute" and "Life Foundation Alcor", and "Kriorus" in Russia. They drive *in concreto* a real reconfiguration of death within an extremely revealing marketing strategy shown on the home page of their website. Cryonics is described as a form of biostasis, that is to say as a suspension of animation through a state close to hibernation, while the deceased placed in the cryostat is assimilated to a "patient" and not to a "deceased". Finally, cryonics takes up ancestral beliefs: "Habes somnum imaginem mortis" wrote Cicero: "Death is a dreamless sleep".

For an amount in between twenty thousand euros - some only keep the head, imagining that science will be able to provide them with a synthetic body - and two hundred thousand euros, candidates can now subscribe to a methodically orchestrated program. Cryonics is no longer a fantasy: it is part of our time, of our culture, it has even become a business.

This new kind of mummification has developed a precise method. The starting point is the concept of "informational death". This (unproven) theory is based on the fact that the brain preserves the individuality of a person, even if clinical death is pronounced. This "legal death" triggers an optimized care of "patients" within the six hours after death.

The three major American and Russian cryonics companies:

www.cryonics.org/

www.alcor.org/

<https://kriorus.ru/en>

Today, more than 300 people are waiting in refrigerated boxes and several thousand are on waiting lists.

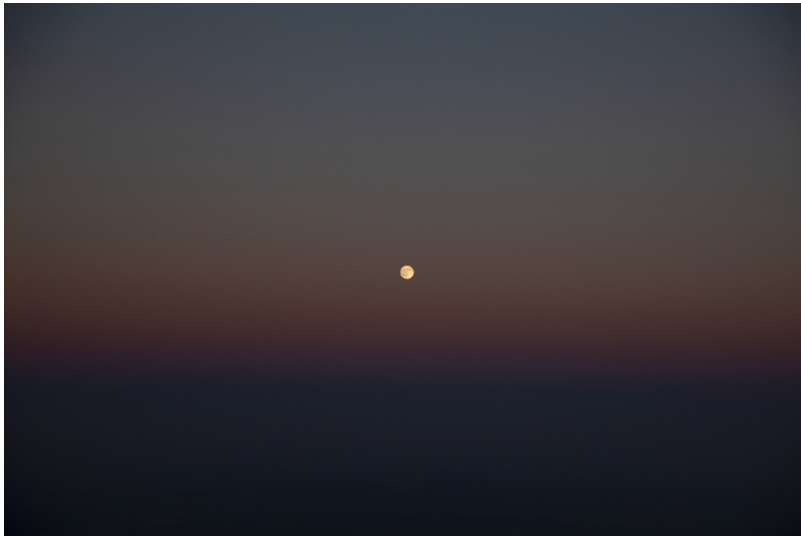
Then, the bodies go to the cryonics warehouses which will preserve, for an indefinite period of time, the bodies whose blood has been replaced by a mixture of glycerin acting as antifreeze.

This bet on the future is legally prohibited everywhere else, which may have caused waves of protest as in 2014, when a British teenager obtained an official right to cryonics in The United States, knowing she was doomed. In common parlance, immortality is defined as being immortal, i.e. not being subject to death, not dying. Today, this term has no specific legal meaning and forces us to question the legality and the validity of cryonics. In other words, without a body, the legal person is supposed to disappear.

Cryonics is still a matter of speculation, even if *Aliens*, *Austin Power*, *Resident Evil*, *Avatar*, *Interstellar* or even *Captain America* feed this fantasy. However, recent discoveries are rekindling the interest of scientists, such as the awakening of a tardigrade frozen for 30 years or a rabbit kidney vitrified and then successfully transplanted into another rabbit. In light of these announcements, the prospect of immortality no longer seems completely implausible to some.

Ultimately, if cryonics one day demonstrates its effective possibilities, what will post-mortem data look like? In France, the 2016 Law for a Digital Republic addresses the issue of "digital death", from now on it is up to individuals to decide during their lifetime what will happen to their data after their death. Many economic, ethical and philosophical questions will eventually arise for these "sleeping beauties". Will they be wanted in the next world? Will they be able to adapt? What will they inherit? All these reflections and the spectacular character of this growing sector are the reflection of a contemporary trend. They reveal something about our society and its relationship to death, as if it were now repressed, hidden, medicalized, procrastinated or even inconceivable.

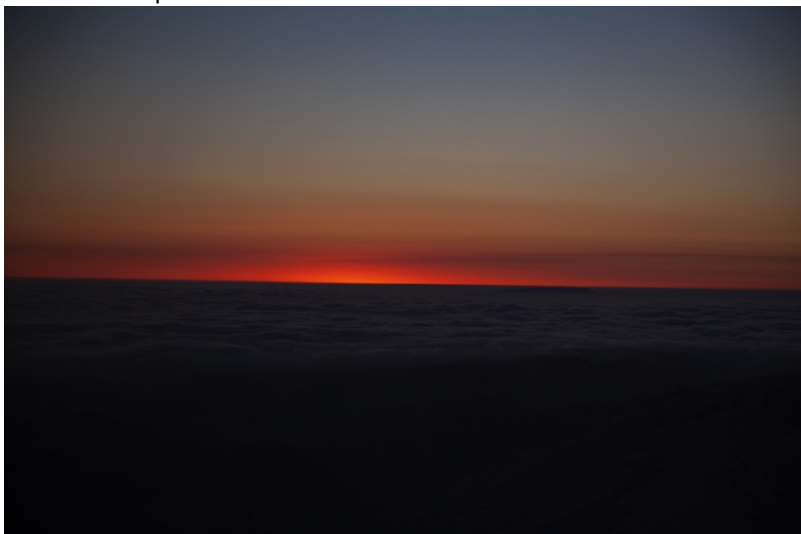
PRESS IMAGES



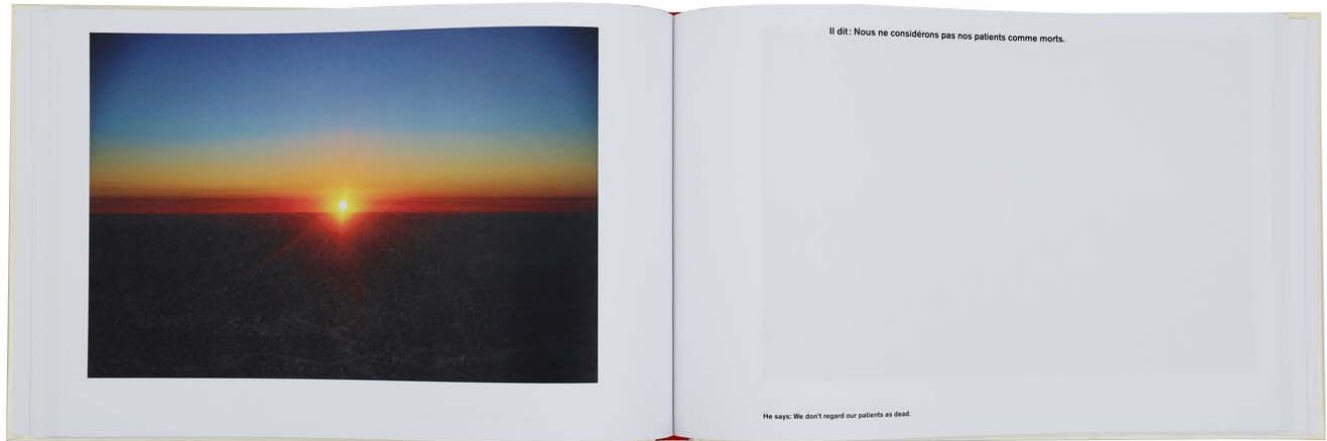
Full moonrise ©Stéphanie Solinas



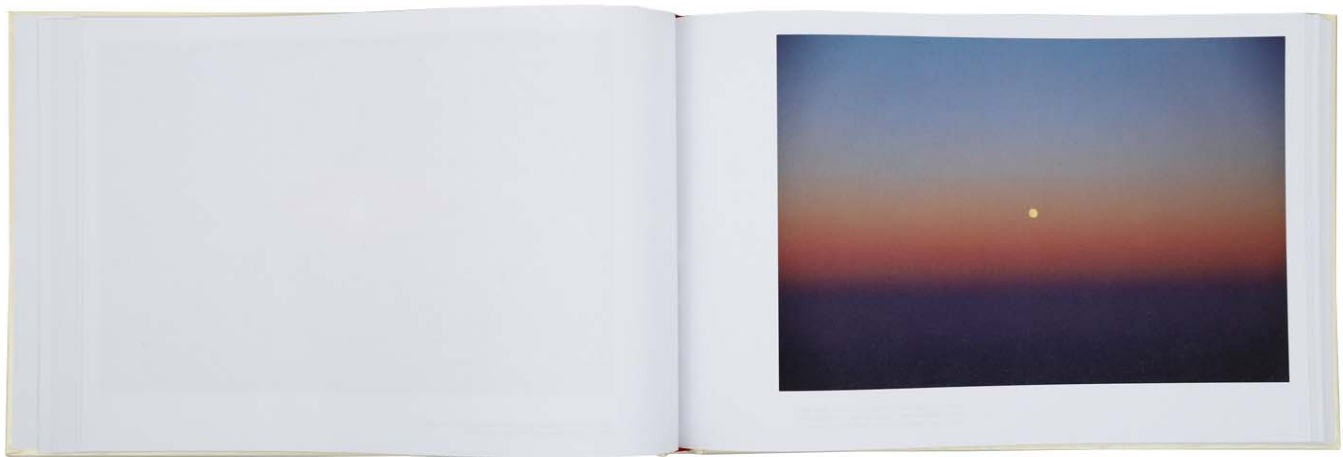
Sunset ©Stéphanie Solinas



Sunset ©Stéphanie Solinas



Double-page spread ©Stéphanie Solinas



Double-page spread ©Stéphanie Solinas



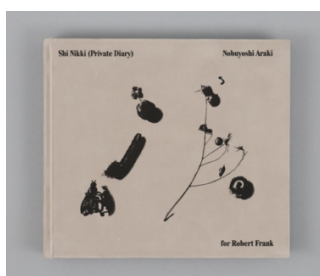
Double-page spread ©Stéphanie Solinas

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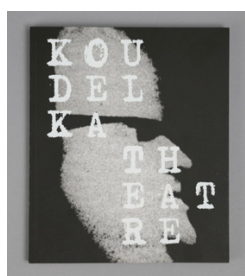
delpire & co opens a new chapter in the history of Delpire Editions, in continuity with the spirit and approach of "image-maker" Robert Delpire, its founder.

Located at 13, rue de l'Abbaye in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, delpire & co is a publishing house, a bookstore, a gallery, a place of life and encounters. delpire & co wishes to work towards the birth of demanding photographic projects, singular photographic writings, encounters between text and image, curatorial research, discoveries of new talents as well as forgotten works, political points of view and sensitive expressions.

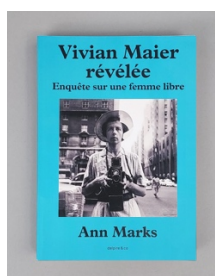
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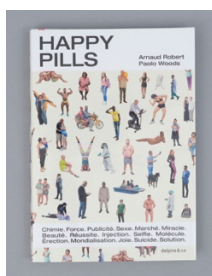
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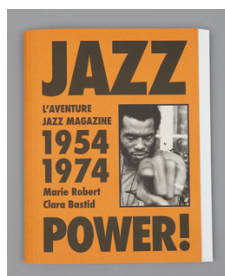
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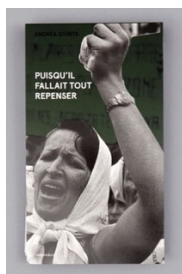
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