

ALBERTO BARAYA.

LLATINA I MESTRAL

[THE ISLAND AS A STAGE]

12.07.25 – 28.09.25
MUSEU MARÍTIM
DE MALLORCA -
MUSEU DE LA MAR,
PORT DE SÓLLER

Curatorship:

–Iñaki Martínez Antelo and Alicia Ventura



View of the performance: *Alberto Baraya, Llatina i Mestral*, 2025. © of the work of art, Alberto Baraya, 2025. Photograph: © Es Baluard Museu (Carmen Verdú)

The project “Llatina i Mestral”, presented by Alberto Baraya as part of Biennial B, is based on a performative action in which the artist paints in situ on a sail. The sail is transformed into a canvas while simultaneously serves as a support for a double journey—physical on the sea and iconographic or conceptual—and the island of Mallorca becomes the stage.

Aboard a traditional *llaüt*—the *Brandó*—Baraya sails across the island’s waters, departing from Portitxol and heading south toward the *Pedreres de la Seu*, a quarry from which the material that has shaped much of Mallorca’s built heritage was extracted. This site is closely linked to the island’s identity, having supplied the *marés* sandstone used in the construction of the columns of the Cathedral of Mallorca—commonly known as *La Seu*—and the walls of Es Baluard. Throughout the journey, the artist paints directly onto the *llaüt*’s sails—specifically crafted by the artisan sailmaker Matheu—while they are filled with the wind that powers the boat, captained by the nautical artisan Jaume Amengual. Baraya thus recreates the surrounding environment and creates a kind of unprecedented landscape shaped by the constant movement of the boat. The action also recalls how, since Baroque painting, some works have been made on disused sails that became a pictorial support.

Alberto Baraya continues a body of work that began with his project “Vento” for the Museum of Pontevedra. If “Vento” referred to the force of the wind that propels the sail, “Llatina i Mestral” offers a nod to technical terms specific to navigation: *llatina* refers to the lateen sail used in this project, and is the most widely used traditional sail in the Balearic Islands, and *mestral* [mistral] is one of the winds that affect the islands: a cold, dry and quite strong wind that can become stormy. Others call the mistral “the good fairy”, because it clears the skies. Joined by the interjection *i*, “Llatina i Mestral” suggests a new story that is yet to come.

This work, which merges sailing and painting, allows us to recover the pictorial tradition of landscape painting and redefines *plein air* painting practices. It also references certain conceptual painting experiences by confronting the sails of a moving ship and painting while sailing. In the artist’s words, “If the process of a journey begins with the conception of an idea or the creation of a utopia in our minds before departing, this project allows the formation of that image between the port of departure and the port of arrival. The image becomes reality (a painting) during the journey. Upon arrival, we will probably be able to confirm that this image was, indeed, a necessary illusion.”

“Llatina i Mestral” tells the story of those unique moments, taking us back to the past of a place with a certain aura of mystery. The extraction of *marés* sandstone creates voids in the quarry. These hollows and cavities have been exploited as coves, being renamed “secrets” by tobacco and other goods smugglers. The parable of a particular economic cycle of the coastline comes to an end here, when the spaces left by the extracted stone have been re-appropriated to conceal bundles and illegal stashes. On its return, the *llaüt* heads toward the bay, carrying the image of the quarry. A second sail is hoisted parallel to the mast, to paint on it, in the manner of a chronicle, the altered landscape in which the stones have given rise to a cathedral.

The formal result of the project is on display at the Museu Marítim de Mallorca-Museu de la Mar in Port de Sóller, reflecting the intention of Biennial B and its promoters—Es Baluard Museu and Consell de Mallorca—to showcase the island’s cultural richness through interdisciplinary creative projects. These initiatives foster collaboration between artists and craft professionals committed to the trades, traditions, and landscape, as well as with key institutions for the promotion of the Balearic heritage and its creative ecosystem. The exhibition features paintings made during the navigation and a video documenting the true story behind: an action in which the artist takes on the challenge of painting a sail over seven meters long while sailing.

This Biennial B action is part of the project “The Island as a Stage”—curated by Iñaki Martínez Antelo and Alicia Ventura—and is completed with “Expedició Sóller”, an educational project initiated by Eva Cifre and Maria Verdejo (Es Baluard Museu’s Education Department). This project has been carried out jointly with Alberto Baraya, Es Baluard Museu, MUCBO, Fundació Jardí Botànic de Sóller-Museu Balear de Ciències Naturals and Museu Marítim de Mallorca-Museu de la Mar. The participating children, starting with an expedition around the Port de Sóller, will embark on a search for artificial marine flora and fauna, with the aim of contrasting what they find with the real, natural Balearic ecosystem. All findings will be presented publicly in the modernist house Can Prunera, in the centre of Sóller.

Alberto Baraya (Bogotá 1968), visual artist, traveller and researcher. He studied Fine Arts at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and specialised in Aesthetics and Art Theory at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. Since 2002 he has developed the “Herbarium of Artificial Plants”, a parodic project of collections and “studies” of fake botany, wire and silk, made in China, with which Baraya tries to recompose a new identity in the relations between man and nature.

Practising the principle “Of expedition as one of the Fine Arts” and appropriating the scientific methodology of collecting as a strategy, Baraya has undertaken expeditions around the world in search of evidence of the transformation of biological and cultural ecosystems. Through the use of traditional techniques of representation or through installation, appropriation or performance, his gaze falls on the observation of phenomena of biological exoticism or on the aesthetic acts of our everyday ecosystem, thus linking his proposals with contemporary ecological concerns.

His artificial collections and photographic works have been presented at the art Biennals of Sao Paulo (2006), Venice (2009), Berlin (2014) and Shanghai (2014 and 2019), and can be found in many public and private collections.

LIST OF WORKS:

Alberto Baraya

Llatina i Mestral

2025

Acrylic paint on cotton canvas (sails),
stainless steel eyelets, jute ropes,
antenna, colour video, sound

Dimensions variable

Alberto Baraya

Llatina i Mestral (video)

2025

Colour video, sound

Duration: 7’ 03”

BIENNAL B is an initiative promoted by Es Baluard Museu d’Art Contemporani de Palma and the Consell de Mallorca, with the support of numerous institutions, agents and collectives of the island.

BIENNAL B highlights the cultural richness of the island of Mallorca and the Balearic archipelago with art as a tool.

BIENNAL B is a transversal, inclusive and non-seasonal project, born with the ambition to shape a creative ecosystem capable of integrating contemporary artistic practices with crafts and trades for the sustainable transformation of the Balearic territory.

BIENNAL B will activate ecological and cultural connectivity actions, a series of interdisciplinary creative projects and an international congress on art, culture and science.

PROJECT: Biennial B. The Island as a Stage

TITLE: “Alberto Baraya. Llatina i Mestral”

DATES: 12.07.25 - 28.09.25

OPENING: 11 July, 8 p.m.

LOCATION: Museu Marítim de Mallorca-Museu de la Mar, Port de Sóller

CURATORSHIP: Iñaki Martínez Antelo / Alicia Ventura

INSTALLATION: Art Life / Es Baluard Museu

COORDINATION: Eva Cifre / Solange Artilles

VIDEO AND GRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION: Carmen Verdú

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