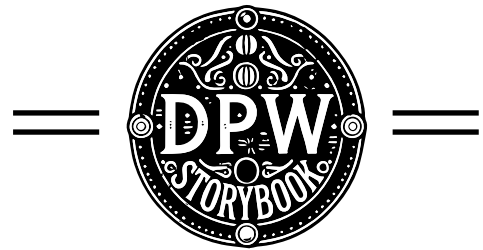


# GUILLAUME

Guillaume is a member of the French Maker and Burner scene. He initiated and co-directed the Villette Makers in Paris for many years. Since 2016, he has been an active member of the DPW, particularly within the Artery department.

P.S.: As of 2024, he is distilling absinthe and other liquors somewhere in the Morvan, France.

This interview was conducted by “Flo”, Flore Muguet, a French anthropologist, in 2016. Most of Flo’s questions have been omitted to improve reading flow.



**“I’ll never know  
Burning Man.  
I’ll only know  
DPW.”**

I met this guy at this event regarding festivals. He told me, “Man, you opened a maker space and it was the first in Paris? You wanna see some guys making huge shit? You should look into Burning Man.” He told me I should connect with some French burners, which I never did. This was in 2013 or 2014. First time I heard about it. At least, it’s the first time it got my attention. The first time I noticed it as existing when people were talking about it.

In 2016—maybe end of 2015, beginning of 2016—a friend told me “do you wanna come to Burning Man with me?” I told her, “yeah! Let’s do that.” So the project of



Photo credit: Chayna Girling. Unknown year.

going there started. I went to a first burning café, which is an original event that’s community organized because it’s very far away and mostly abstract for most of the people. So, we needed a little bit to organize... like, there was some question about how we won’t have a car out there, and how to go there, and if we need water and stuff like that.

I wanted to craft. I wanted to build the city. Like, there’s the event which seems to be a very... I don’t know: fancy, weird, crazy? I don’t have adjectives in English for that since it’s not my native language. But, could you say, “Extravagant?” It seems to be a crazy party, but I was

interested in the building part. So, there’s very, very few people building from France at Burning Man inside the burner community. I checked out the DPW webpage, and I was like “OK, this looks like crafting.”

So, I volunteered online through the first form. Then I received a second form which is a traditional one, which is “OK, you volunteered for DPW. This is a bold choice. Are you sure you want to do it?” And so, I filled in this form like a job interview and I got picked.

I had a convention in China, and I wanted to go on a trip around the world. So, to go from France

to China, and from China to California, California to New York, and New York back to Paris. Like an around-the-world trip, but in a month and a half. And I saw this [Tarot] card—you know, a divination card—which was “The World.” I was not sure of DPW before July and I bought my plane ticket before I even had a ticket for the event.

So, I said, “OK, Playa provides” and [went for it]. I took my plane tickets, and when I was in China my grandma died. I arrived with a delay of two days of changing plane tickets, and going crazy, and whatever. It was a two day delay to San Francisco. I told Logan because I knew at that time that I would be DPW.

For five days I went back to France. Then I flew to San Francisco. It was the year I was to spend more time in planes than otherwise, I guess. I arrived in San Francisco and I was on the DPW spreadsheet for hitchhiking and car share. So I was in contact with three people, and it happened that I went with a guy, who was one of the first guys going in my area of time. This guy told me, “Do you mind driving a truck to the playa? It’s not mine.” I told him, “Yeah, it’s fine.”

It was a girl’s DPW car: an old, broken pickup with no windshield in the back, with an inch of dust inside. For the radio you had to put wires together to make it work. I went to his worksite, which was a crazy worksite in San Francisco, and we left. I was alone. I was following his RV in a caravan. After two days I wanted to spend my whole life here on the playa. After ten days, I realized it was very strange that I don’t remember anything from the default world. I felt so good here. So safe, in a way. And so I said, “Now I need to leave this place to better understand what I experienced.” I was not even sure of going back...

but, actually I am going back.

My answer is that I’m going back and that I’ll have a better point of view on that. When you travel you have to leave three times. Like, when you travel, when you come back, or when you go back away or read your stories about travel. Yeah, I’m going back to see some friends, actually. To go back to the work. And to know better what I think about this crazy thing that you don’t really understand. I think especially because it ends.

There was also this guy, Sweeney Odd, who I was talking about. He

was shaving a DPW guy. It was good to get shaved out there. Well, we’re chatting. We talked for two and a half or three hours before he shaved me. I was chatting with everyone and everything. When I told the guy it was my first burn, and I was here for two weeks building the city and everything, he made an announcement to the whole table to say that, and everybody applauded. This kind of shit. People being really grateful for helping.

So, yeah. I feel like I’ll never know Burning Man. I’ll only know DPW. You see what I mean?



Photo credit: Flore Muguet, 2018.