

INÈS MÉLIA

DON'T HOLD ME BACK

PRESS RELEASE

Opening on Thursday, September 8th from 6 to 9 pm
Exhibition from September 9th to October 7th, 2022
Monday - Friday, 10am – 7pm

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Inès Méliá creates in the various art forms of sculpture, painting, photography and music and her compositions often focus on trivial motifs which she playfully and cleverly displaces. Following her series "La vie domestique", in which she assembled everyday objects (books, tableware, etc.), she continues to work on the issues of intimacy, gender prejudice and beyond that, on what home as a microcosm reveals of our relationship to the world.

For her first solo exhibition at the 75 Faubourg gallery, Inès Méliá presents her latest series of paintings in parallel with her book sculptures which centre around La Prisonnière, the fifth volume of Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*. Whether enclosed in totems or spread out on canvasses, the text is present throughout the exhibition, as a formal motif and a narrative material. The artist plays upon the mistranslation in the Gospel according to Saint John in which Jesus, resurrected, addresses Mary Magdalene and says "Noli me tangere", which was translated by "do not hold me back" rather than by "do not touch me". The exhibition questions these notions of loss and fading traces which always go hand in hand with the desire to hold back.

The two mediums, resulting from the artist's multi-faceted practice and chosen for this exhibition, both oppose and complement each other. The paintings are a means to set the text free, to make it resurface, while the sculptures reveal the entrapment of the words which are taut, captured, prisoners of the books in which they are enclosed. Between scholarship and spontaneity, she sets the object and its content free by isolating them from their bourgeois or elitist context. The book, which has become an item of bourgeois decoration and which is condemned to seclusion in a library, is here redesigned as a stroll-through display.

"For me, the book is a graphic, minimal and reassuring medium which allows me to organise and sort out my inner world". By means of this specific organisation, Inès attempts to get the words out of the structures which enclose them. The creation of compositions and formal combinations such as sequences, space, void, and ellipsis, leads to new contents induced by the attention and the life experience of each person. In between emancipation and confinement, Inès Méliá reveals an ambiguity inherent in reading: the liberating intimacy of the book, similar to a journey, allowing for a global outlook, sometimes even leading to the only possible escape from a forced or suffered isolation.

"Don't hold me back" could in the end be translated by other expressions: Let me go, leave me alone. This injunction does not condemn the artist or anyone else to seclusion outside of the world but is rather an invitation to leave the world in order to be stronger when you return to it. To be an artist is to assert one's freedom, to come and go as one pleases. Don't hold me back, I will be right back, I may come back, I will never come back.

Jérôme Sans, Curator

ABOUT INÈS MÉLIA

Born in Orange (south of France) in 1990, artist Inès Méliá has been living and working in Paris since 2008. Blending abstraction, literature, and poetry to a deliberately surrealist approach, her synesthetic approach to music and art led her to effortlessly mix different forms of expression sculpture, photography, painting, ceramics - which cross and are constantly reinvented in a fertile dialog.

"Don't hold me back" at Galerie 75 Faubourg is her first solo exhibition.