

## PILAR ALBARRACIN NO APAGUES MI FUEGO, DÉJAME ARDER\*

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28.02

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11.04

2020

**VERNISSAGE**  
/  
**OPENING NIGHT**

27.02  
6pm - 9pm

33

Rue de Seine

**ZHENYA MACHNEVA**  
« Reminiscences »

Pilar Albarracín makes transgression and humor both plastic and political tools.

Since the early 1990s, the Spanish artist has opened areas of feminist claims through her works. For this, she chose to analyze in a viscerally critical way the Andalusian folklore, popular culture and vernacular. She thus examines the culture which has been transmitted to her and constitutes a large part of her identity. From flamenco to Catholic rituals, bullfighting and baroque art, the artist takes each tradition head on. By physically imposing herself at the heart of powerful territories and symbols of a patriarchal culture, Pilar Albarracín is claiming part of a collective history, that of women. With undisguised anger, she exaggerates, she multiplies, she moves, she assaults or strangles stereotypes and ancestral traditions. In this, she appropriates costumes, props, symbols and decorum of rituals where men and women are confined to specific roles. If we focus exclusively on women, their roles and modes of representation are particularly limited and/or invisible. The actions, photographs, embroidery and misappropriated objects aim to deconstruct these roles and to become aware of the shortcomings, absences and prohibitions. The rituals she invests and revisits are inscribed in an identity thought guided by religious morality and patriarchal ideology that the artist strives to turn around and undo.



Pilar Albarracín's new exhibition in Paris is based on a critical and political exploration of the Semana Santa («Holy Week») in Seville. For a week in April, the whole city lives to the rhythm of plural and thematic processions. About sixty fraternities commemorate the Passion of Christ by carrying *pasos*, richly decorated floats on which are placed extremely heavy sculptures. According to long and precise routes, the men carry the *pasos* at arm's length to reach the cathedral of Seville and do penance. In absolute silence or, on the contrary, in musical effervescence, hundreds or even thousands of men move painfully towards the same geographical point. Pilar Albarracín then questions these spectacularly painful processions during which bodies are tested by beliefs, the weight of morality and respect for traditions. The new works are more tinged with violence and solemnity than with humor and irony. She proceeds in this way by blasphemous gestures to make palpable an oppression and suffocation generated by ideologies and the idea of a Spanish identity. The artist relies on the codes of Baroque art to dramatize gestures, emotions, postures and objects.

Albarracín plays with the highly theatrical dimension of religious rituals to create images with powerful symbolic power. She holds a mirror to the violence inherent in the authoritarian systems against which she struggles. The title of the exhibition contains an order, then a request: no apagues mi fuego, dejame arder, «don't put out my fire, let me burn». The fire that must not be extinguished by the other is that of her commitment, her convictions, her history, her body. She asks that the other let her burn, in hell as is implied, if that is her choice. Individual choice is at the heart of the artist's plastic and critical reflection. During the 1970s, feminist activists advocated, and still advocate today: MY BODY, MY CHOICE. By taking up the codes and decorum of the dominant ideologies, Pilar Albarracín fights against the guidelines, taboos, morals and prohibitions that regulate and shape bodies. Through her work, she continues to demand the fundamental right to self-determination.

Julie Crenn

\*Don't put out my fire, let me burn