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View of “There is a story about a woman who / Hi ha una història d'una dona que / Hay una historia de una mujer que,” 2020.

BARCELONA

## Irene Solà

ÀNGELS BARCELONA

Pintor Fortuny, 27

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A narrative circulates from ear to mouth, mutating into varied contexts, sometimes traversing continents. It can become a myth—more diffuse and powerful than a piece of text, an engraved image, or a whispered folktale. As it moves across the earth, it picks up new adaptations.

In both her artistic and literary practice, Irene Solà traces these meandering paths, some of which proliferate and others of which die. In her current solo exhibition, “There is a story about a woman who / Hi ha una història d'una dona que / Hay una historia de una mujer que,” she focuses on a provocative image that has recurred throughout Europe, Asia, and North America: that of a woman riding a man with a bridle in his mouth. This trope is found in engravings, paintings, folkloric texts, and even in the documents of court proceedings against those accused of witchcraft. It gained particular traction in the

European middle ages, where it served as a cautionary symbol warning of the evils of women.

For this show, Solà configures the exhibition space as an open archive, with engravings in stone, paintings in egg-tempera, and various prints and texts reproduced in a horizontal ribbon running across the gallery walls, like a line written on a page. The iconography on view—the centrepiece of the show depicts Phyllis mounting Aristotle, a demonstration that even the wisest of men were susceptible to the tricks of women—reveal anxieties around threat of female domination in patriarchal society, and its inclination towards sensationalist conspiracy theories well before the internet. Now and then, entrenched moralism reproduces itself through narrative—transmitting and ensuring its own survival through artistic and literary forms.

— Àngels Miralda

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