

INTERVIEW OF SOPHIA BALESTRI

- Could you, in few sentences, summarize your journey?

As far as I can remember, literature has always held a major place in my life. I became absorbed by it in my childhood, and my taste for words evolved over the course of the years, leading me through the various currents of the literature. My self-taught route brought me to visit lateral ways and to develop a rather wide and qualified perception. During journeys in Oceania and Asia, certain meetings permitted me to discover new sensibilities; thanks to them, I devoted myself to numerous forms of art and sometimes shared these experiences in common works.

Finally, I have dedicated these last years to study, thought and analysis, by plunging myself into philosophy and symbolism.

- Why did you choose to set the story of *La Plume et l'Envol* in the XVIIIth century?

This century was an opening on Art. Academies of music, dance, the royal academy of painting and sculpture, as well as the French academy were based there. Many artists and writers, such as Boileau, Madame de Lafayette, Corneille, Racine and Molière, made a revival in France, influencing the nearby countries. It was thus very interesting to place my story in this context.

- Your text is influenced by the art of the poetry. What are the poets who particularly inspired your work as a writer?

Numerous poets intrigued me, from Euripide to Pétrarque, from Shakespeare to Dickinson, or more recently Apollinaire. One of them, Musset, particularly moved me with his subtle spirit and its sensibility, while at the same time being refined and passionate. I often thought of him during the writing of my novel ; one of the main characters, evolves in it in a rather similar surge, on a background of melancholy, he is guided by an idealistic breath.

- What messages did you essentially want to give through this novel, which combines romanticism and realism?

I wished to evoke the freedom to be and to fulfil, according to our deep desires. It is very certainly about the most painful quest due to all the obstacles to get over, and that it comes from family or social order but also the most enriching, because it involves surpassing ourselves, and especially opening up to others. I also develop the theory of the freedom gained with love, or the liberating love. This fervour makes up the essential impulse of liberation; to give, it is necessary to be; to offer the best of ourselves, it is necessary to get rid of the constraints placed upon us. The meeting with the other one also allows us to reveal ourselves and to be placed in the world, because it consists of evolving together harmoniously.

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