

Leading up to an exhibition the artist engages in conversation with a previously unknown correspondent.

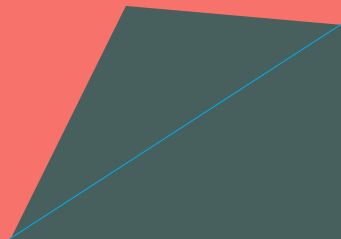
The conversation aims to get an insight on how the initial ideas for the project develop, to paint a picture of the otherwise untraceable choices in the artist's process, practice and the making of this exhibition.

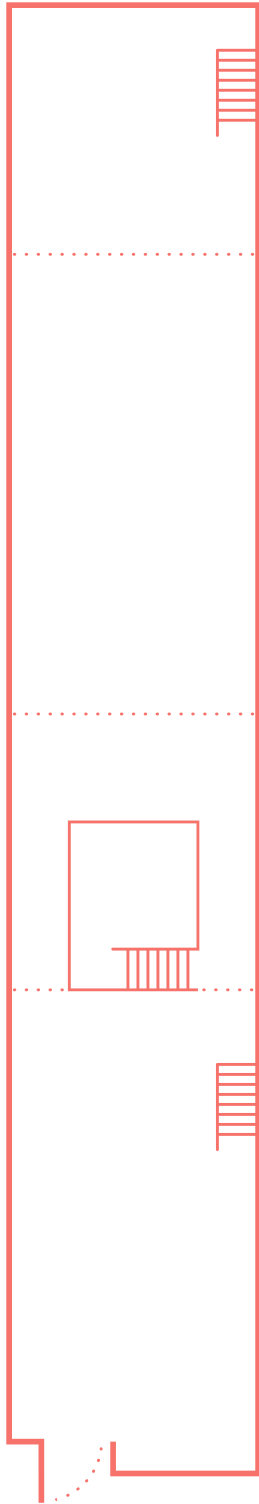
Conversation with **Sol Calero**

As part of the
exhibition
**LOS VESTIGIOS
DE LA TURISTA**

1646.nl

1646





Conversation with **Sol Calero**

As part of the
exhibition

LOS VESTIGIOS DE LA TURISTA

For more information about this and other projects,
check our website or scan the QR-code.



1646.nl

Sol Calero

Calero (b. 1982, Caracas, Venezuela) lives and works in Berlin. Her work revolves around the notions of ancestry, culture, and the transformation of meaning that visual symbols can undergo in society. Calero intends to engage the viewer through her artworks which themselves proliferate meaning, imitating the cultural signs which she aims to explore. Sol Calero and her partner Christopher Kline run the Berlin-based project space Kinderhook & Caracas.

Calero was shortlisted for the Preis der Nationalgalerie and nominated for the Future Generation Art Prize in 2017. Her works were exhibited in venues such as Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; Düsseldorf Kunstverein; La Casa Encendida, Madrid; Copenhagen Contemporary; Villa Arson, Nice; Brücke Museum, Berlin; Nikolaikirche, Stadtmuseum Berlin; Kunsthalle Lissabon, Lisbon; SALTS, Basel; Studio Voltaire, London; Hamburger Kunsthalle; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin; ACCA Melbourne, Melbourne; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris; Dortmunder Kunstverein, Dortmund; Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria; Folkestone Triennial; MO.CO. Hôtel des collections, Montpellier; amongst others.

Conversation 2nd June: Sol Calero, Johan Gustavsson and Clara Pallí Monguilod

Johan: It is important to share that we have wanted to work with you for many years. The first time we worked together was with the Conglomerate show *Oedipusmas Special* in 2016. So it's very nice we can finally make this show, which already looks amazing.

Sol: Yes, I'm very happy we finally got to work together on a solo exhibition at 1646. I feel it's the perfect situation for the project we are presenting because I see this exhibition as a work in progress, so the invitation came at the right time. In experimental spaces like 1646 the expectations are very different so there's more space for trying ideas that might not work in other art spaces.

Clara: There is a sense of trust, where you can try out things, to see how something works, without having to justify it as much.

Sol: Yes, this is an important process, especially when you need time to see things with a bit more distance. To work with people that give you space to experiment and understand the creative process as you do. But of course this comes from experience and you have been running this place for so many years now.

Lately I've been thinking about how accelerated we were all working in the art world before Covid. And I feel lucky I had so much support and had many opportunities to show my work in the past, but at the same time I saw how fast things were moving and how frenetic people were working, so the pandemic gave everyone some time to slow down. So I have been having the opportunity to develop one idea over a longer term. On one hand I wanted to be able to focus on just one project, one concept, and have time to develop works and details with more time, and on the other hand I've been taking in consideration the aspects of making more sustainable works in terms of making better use of resources and making an idea or a concept more sustainable too.

For *Los Vestigios de La Turista* at 1646 we would get to experience one of the chapters of a bigger project that started in 2020 and would end this summer in Bergen, Norway.

I was invited to participate in the Bergen Assembly (Norway) in 2019 and Saâdane Afif, the curator of this year's Bergen Assembly, invited me to design a restaurant or canteen for the triennial and I got really excited. Designing a restaurant is something that has always been in my mind because it overlaps many things that you can see in my work. A social space mixed with interior design, furniture, ceramics, painting and architecture. So to be able to put together all those elements that I had used in the past with art exhibitions, and put it into practice within a real space is a great opportunity for me.

So for the show at 1646 people would have the opportunity to see some of the elements that would end in this restaurant in Norway, particularly the tile murals that would be permanently installed on the walls of it and some ceramic decorative elements that have been previously designed by the participants of a ceramics workshop we had in an exhibition I did in CC Copenhagen in 2021. The idea of the installation refers to an archeological site where we are finding the remains of what was a restaurant in the past.

From the beginning, the name of the canteen, *La Cantina de La Turista* (The canteen of the tourist), was very clear and it was suggested by Saâdane. This name is linked to his idea for the triennial where seven fictional characters define how the different locations are related to these characters. One of the characters is called 'The Tourist,' and that is the character I have been invited to work with.

I deal with creating spaces that when you experience them you immediately feel that they do not belong in the place where they are. Within his concept of the tourist, Saâdane thought having me design the canteen would be a good fit. To place a tropical looking place in Bergen, Norway, seemed like an interesting idea for me as well so I accepted the challenge.

Johan: One thing that I find very interesting in relation to this idea of a place, is something I have read recently. They have measured the joy of tourists when going on holiday, and they have found that people are actually happier during the preparations, imagining themselves being on holidays and when planning, rather than being at the place itself, when they are on the holiday. I find that such a fascinating idea of what it means to be a tourist, and how when you are actually there it might not at all be as exciting as you had imagined.

Sol: Which sometimes happens to me when I am doing projects, right now I got an invitation for a project that I don't know if I am going to do, but if I end up not doing it, it doesn't really matter because in my mind it feels like I already did it, like I was already there (laughing).

But, yes, I am glad that you point that out, because it has to do with imagination, with the narrative we create in our minds about a place and this is something I have been thinking about in the last years in relation to immigration which requires people to travel to a new place but with a much different purpose than the tourist and with very different expectations.

When you are an immigrant you are put in a position where you have to forget where you come from in order to adapt to a new place, to integrate. And this integration process I find so surreal for the identity of a person. It gets even more complex if you come from a place that is being so damaged that it does not even exist anymore in the way you remember it. The memories that you have from a place influence the identity of a person.

When a person doesn't belong to one or either place, what happens in between? I like to think of the potential creative aspect of it, because this process creates narratives that are so complex and I feel we are not really aware of the power of these narratives because we are so focused on the aspects that come from the idea that "you have to belong to one place or another". I think what happens in this 'in between place,' this narrative, is similar to the one of the tourist. Imagining the ideal place were to be.

Clara: About the mural that is being discovered in this archeological site at 1646, it includes an image, does it have specific references?

Sol: I work on these tile murals as I work on painting. In my work the paintings and the installations support each other. You see elements of the installations that were in paintings before, and you see elements in the paintings that were also in the installations. And I am often working on a very classical theme, the view from a window, and the interior versus the exterior. The murals designed in 1646 are based on views from an interior window. For me painting is like looking through binoculars through the frame of a window. You can look really far out when using binoculars or you can look at closer things without them. Also because I'm designing a mural to be placed in an interior, I like to open the murals as windows, so they create some sort of perspective in the space.

Johan: As you see your installations as paintings, would you feel comfortable with the translating idea of walking into your paintings when people walk into your installations?

Sol: Yes, for sure. When I describe my work I always say “I work from inside and outside of the painting”. To put a concrete example in this installation, we are now positioning the plants, and for me I am painting with the plants. So while placing the plants seems like a job anyone can do, for me it’s not, it needs to be in the right place for the composition of the total view of the space. I compose in the space as I compose in my paintings.

Clara: At the same time, it’s also interesting that both in the idea of looking through a window and the tourist, there is a certain distance to the position from which you look. You are an observer of something from a distance, to an extent.

Sol: Right, and it’s also about perspectives. Every viewer also comes with their own interpretation.

The artist would like to thank: Arthur Cordier, Athanasios Anagnostopoulos, Aude Lèvere, Bergen Assembly, Cerama (Copenhagen), ChertLüdde (Berlin), Christian Roncea, Clara Pallí Monguilod, Contemporary Copenhagen, Daniëlle de Hoog, Deutsche Bahn, Elizabeth Ravn, Galerie Crèveœur (Paris), Gilles Broersma, Johan Gustavsson, Honey Kraiwee, Lisa Ünsever, Lucian Lee, Maria Chiara Ziosi, Mariia Karimova, Matei Vlad Dragomir, Ramon Ottenhof, Rebeca Pérez Gerónimo, Ruth Ur, Saâdane Afif, Sarah Klevan, Stanley Street, Tea Bernardelli and all the participants that took place in the ceramic workshops in *El Barco de Barro* at Copenhagen Contemporary Studio.