

SOL CALERO

Buscando guanábana ando yo

Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo (CA2M), curated by Tania Pardo

September 28, 2024 - January 08, 2024

Artist Sol Calero (Caracas, Venezuela, 1982) presents her solo exhibition *Buscando guanábana ando yo* (Busy Looking for Soursops). The title is inspired by the popular Rubén Blades song 'Buscando guayaba ando yo'. In this project, soursops - a fruit native to Central America and the Caribbean - symbolise the search for essentials: identity, a sense of belonging, the meaning of home. The exhibition explores concepts related to movement and displacement, materialised in large-scale installations comprising murals, paintings and sculptures that attempt to recreate the experiences of migrants, or the circumstance of having been born in one place and living in another. This is true of our artist, who was born in Venezuela and lived there until she was seventeen, when she and her family moved to Tenerife. After a sojourn in Madrid, she settled in Berlin, where she lives today. Her time in different countries and her trajectory as a Latin American immigrant both proved significant to the development of her work, which focuses on issues of identity in connection with symbols of Latin American culture.

*Buscando guanábana ando yo* is the first solo exhibition devoted to Sol Calero at an art centre in Madrid and brings together some of her oeuvre's central themes and formats. These include the building of collective spaces, which make up a large portion of Calero's output and draw on her interest in architecture and design. Mural painting, a technique she has used since the beginning of her career to transform fruit and vegetation into graphic and symbolic elements characterised by a play of untold colours, as well as ex-votos, sculptures that include references to folklore and popular beliefs are also heavily featured. For this exhibition, the artist has created a version of the installation *El Autobús*. The installation was first shown at Tate Liverpool in 2019 and subsequently at Helsinki's Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma in

2022, and now forms the starting point of the exhibition itinerary at Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo. In Calero's audio-visual installation, visitors are invited on a journey across fictional worlds, challenging conventions related to travel and leisure activities. This way she reconsiders the figure of the tourist and the discrepancy between the idealised perception of a place and the reality discovered upon closer examination. Latin American art is often perceived as a homogeneous entity, reduced to a simplified vision of a specific region. Calero uses this perspective to call cultural stereotypes into question, both in and outside of Latin American countries, revealing how expectations may differ from lived experience.

The exhibition also includes the artist's *Milagritos* sculptures, which are part of her *Pica-Pica* project, originally exhibited at Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, as well as the soap opera titled *Desde el jardín*, screened for the first time at David Dale Gallery, along with various paintings from different installations evoking the Latin American symbols that represent the artist's origins and act as vehicles transporting us from inside to outside, engaging visitors throughout the exhibition.

These symbolic references to Latin American tradition enable Calero to reflect on power and the ambiguity of cultural signs, as well as the clichés and connotations that these symbols acquire in different social and political contexts, influencing issues such as gender and identity. This is the first appearance of soursops in Calero's oeuvre. The fruit symbolises her trajectory, an ongoing search depicted for the first time in the paintings on view in the show. These works invite visitors into the process of building new places, where an aesthetics of displacement emerges from the transformation of everyday elements to shape a new reality.