

SOL CALERO
Paisaje del olvido

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Text by Sira Pizà

Pasaje del olvido presents a continuation of Sol Calero's recent body of work, immersed in the notion of memory and its place in the act of painting. In her trajectory, Calero has questioned the idea of projection in many different ways: how do cultures imagine and present themselves? How do we see and describe others? What expectations do we have of places and societies labelled as exotic? Memories are not just recollections of the past, but also projections of what we have built that past to be. It may be idealized, it may be exaggerated, maybe suppressed; but it is always an abstraction. Sometimes memory fails us, and our reminiscence isn't linear and complete, but fragmented and contrasted in intensity. Personal memory is anchored in sensorial experiences, impactful events, and emotional magnitude, so the images that result in the narrative of that memory have the same kind of texture. In Calero's new paintings, this tonality has taken over: the elements coexist in different kinds of scale and hierarchy, while backgrounds, figures and patterns are juxtaposed in a sort of irrational harmony. Amongst snakes, dominoes, landscape bubbles, floral wallpaper and pieces of furniture, her images appear as blurry but detailed accounts of a dream.

Both personal and collective memories tend towards a narrative of self-explanation that creates identity; in the case of common pasts, it turns into historical narrative. In the Latin American context, memory is a key element in the understanding and the articulation of colonial legacies. For many cultures, oral transmission has been the only channel for passing on traditions and practices that have been left out of the canonized version of History. In rapidly changing environments with violent and volatile situations like Venezuela, personal history and collective memory become the only alternative to mainstream discourses driven by political agendas. In this way, the personal memories that are inherited within a family and live on through people represent a way of telling stories that defy institutionalized and mediatized narratives. Throughout her paintings and installations, Calero has created a visual vocabulary that isn't representing one particular experience, but embodying how collective thought turns complex realities into cleanly outlined icons. In her work, paintings are like souvenirs, an abstract memory of a larger environment encapsulated in an object. In this new period, Calero circles back to familiar documents and personal archives to rescue memories from oblivion and present a domestic yet oneiric universe of exuberant semblance and diffused boundaries.