



## Sol Calero: El Autobús TATE LIVERPOOL Royal Albert Dock, Liverpool

This summer, Liverpool's Royal Albert Dock will harbour a little piece of paradise. For her first solo outing in a British museum, Berlin-based Venezuelan artist Sol Calero promises to transport visitors to a tropical destination where they can experience new sensations, enlivened by colour, music and the thrill of adventure. Surrounded by a painted mural that combines abstract landscapes with exotic fruit and plants, they will be enticed into a bus-like structure reminiscent of the ornamented vehicles that ferry people around in Latin America. The lure of faraway lands and life-changing experiences is the currency of the tourism industry; but not all those who travel do so for the sheer fun of it.

In 2016, Calero told the *New York Times* that 'having left Venezuela for Spain when I was 17, my approach is always with the eye of an immigrant'. She works on an ambitious scale, often replicating architectures of commerce and convenience by fashioning visually stimulating versions of set-ups including cyber cafés, language schools and hair salons. These locations provide services to their users, but they also tend to operate as social hubs for immigrants. *Casa de Cambio*, 2016, a pastiche of a Venezuelan bureau de change, is decorated with dazzling wallpapers and tiled flooring, and furnished with artworks, palm trees and chairs upholstered in fabrics designed by Calero. The installation was created at a moment when the ongoing social and political turmoil in the artist's home country was

reaching a crisis point. The *Casa de Cambio* sold limited editions of Calero's drawings hidden in stacks of paper at wildly fluctuating prices, mirroring the volatility of the Venezuelan currency. This engaging take on the problem of economic insecurity is typical of Calero's work, which handles serious issues with intelligence and a remarkable lightness of touch.

For *El Buen Vecino*, 2015, Calero revisited President Roosevelt's 'Good Neighbor' policy of 1933, intended to improve diplomatic relations between the USA and Latin America – and to enable Washington to capitalise on trade opportunities. Calero constructed a multicoloured Caribbean-style house in the yard of the Swiss arts space Salts, complete with a wooden porch, a favela-style roof of

corrugated plastic and a makeshift swimming pool. She installed customised chairs and sculptures draped in multi-layered fabric flounces reminiscent of mambo skirts. Visitors were invited to make themselves at home here, and perhaps meditate on ideas of neighbourliness, nationalism and identity.

In Liverpool, *El Autobús* will include a video composed of footage Calero shot on her travels, accompanied by an audio description of alluring destinations. No doubt it will transport visitors to a place that melds fantasy and reality, and that may just be too good to be true. **SOL CALERO: EL AUTOBUS** runs 14 June–10 Nov, Mon–Sun 10–5.50 ■ ELLEN MARA DE WACHTER is the author of 'Co-Art: Artists on Creative Collaboration' (Phaidon)



Top: *El Buen Vecino*, 2015, installation view at Salts, Basel. Above: *Solo Pintura*, 2016