



Sol Calero
La Escuela del Sur

Friday 9 October – Sunday 6 December 2015

La Escuela del Sur is a major new commission by Venezuelan-born artist Sol Calero, and her largest exhibition to date. Stemming from her South American heritage and migration to Europe, Calero constructs social spaces that use sensory engagement as a democratic entry point for audiences to investigate socio-political themes of cultural representation and national identity.

Her playful installations and carefully selected palette conjure 'tropical' environments, which invite the audience to reconsider notions of creation, appropriation and cultural anthropophagy. Calero's distinctive visual language is loaded with references based on imported ideas and categories. She adopts stereotypical imagery, such as exotic fruit and sensuous salsa dresses, which simultaneously represent and investigate how we conceive of a culturally homogenous Latin America.

For her commission at Studio Voltaire, Calero has worked in residency in the gallery for six weeks creating a large-scale installation based on the Caribbean community of Los Roques, a Venezuelan National Park situated in the Caribbean Sea. The archipelago bears the legacies of colonialism, and the picturesque houses on the main island, a combination of European, indigenous South American and Afro-Caribbean influences, demonstrate this. She uses the hybrid architecture of Los Roques to recreate a vision of paradise but also to problematize the carnivalising identity of the Other.

In the late 1800s Studio Voltaire's main gallery functioned as a Mission Hall and Sunday School, Calero has used this as an initial point of departure to create an interior centred around a school. Working with the gallery's vernacular architecture, she has assimilated its Victorian features into her own visual iconography. As part of the commission Calero has created customised school furniture and changeable blackboard paintings, which double-up as tools for classes. The installation is lined by her façade paintings, the scale and flatness of which recall theatre sets. Calero is interested in the illusion of Latin America as a utopia, however, her constructed spaces could be considered more a heterotopia; a place of otherness with more layers of meaning than immediately apparent.

Calero's spatial interventions are both formal and functional and are designed to allow the space to be fully realised as a social setting. Her Caribbean style school will host art classes for local groups as well as workshops with a neighbouring school. A series of lectures will be held on issues surrounding cultural appropriation of Latin American art and its reception in Europe.



La Escuela del Sur (The School of the South) takes its title from Uruguayan artist and art theorist Joaquín Torres García's text of the same name. Torres García is considered the father of Latin American Constructivism. In 1935 Torres García published *La Escuela del Sur*, in which he proposed an autonomous art movement in Latin America that would invert the traditional hierarchy of art by placing Latin America before Europe. Later he established Taller Torres García, a progressive educational art community that could be considered in the tradition of Bauhaus, its fundamental aim was to develop a distinctive Latin American artistic language based on constructivist theories.

"I have called this "The School of the South" because in reality, our north is the south. There must not be north for us, except in opposition to our south. Therefore we now turn the map upside down, and then we have a true idea of our position, and not as the rest of the world wishes".

– The School of the South, Joaquín Torres García

La Escuela del Sur is curated by Jessica Vaughan, Programme Manager, Studio Voltaire.

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About the artist

Sol Calero (born 1982, Caracas, lives and works in Berlin). Recent solo exhibitions include Sala Mendoza, Caracas (2015), SALTS, Birsfelden (2015), Gillmeier Rech, Berlin (2014); Laura Bartlett Gallery, London (2014); Frutta Gallery, Rome (2013). Recent group exhibitions include KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2015) and Mostyn, Llandudno (2015). Upcoming projects in 2016 include David Dale Gallery, Glasgow. Calero is represented by Laura Bartlett Gallery, London. She is co-director of the Berlin project space Kinderhook & Caracas.

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