

SOL CALERO

*Bienvenidos a Nuevo Estilo*

5 April – 3 May 2014

"I say money, money, money. I say twenty words in English. I say money, money, money and I say hot dog!"

-Carmen Miranda "The Brazilian Bombshell" in an early interview with the New York World Telegram, 1940

In 1933 President Franklin D. Roosevelt pursued the "Good Neighbor Policy", the US doctrine designed as a campaign to win the hearts and minds of Latin Americans, while warming North Americans to the notion of a Pan-American alliance. Films produced at this time created an illusive, idealized image of a lush, exotic paradise and portray its inhabitants as eccentric, erotic subjects. The movie star Carmen Miranda, known for her comic performances and colourful costumes, topped by hats featuring tropical fruits, presented a sensuous welcoming image of Latin America.

Once the economic benefits were overshadowed by communism, the United States quickly discarded all positive intentions, and the CIA embarked on numerous infamous initiatives to overthrow democratically elected Latin leaders. The image of aloof yet fun-loving, banana-wielding salsa dancers remained useful in the portrayal of the latest innocent victims of the Soviet communist hand.

"Bienvenidos a Nuevo Estilo" ("Welcome to New Style") employs as a model for the exhibition the culture of Latin beauty salons that function as a meeting place for women in many cultures and as a safe space where social bonding and micro-communities are able to flourish. Calero uses this model both to discuss marginalization, whether cultural, gender-based or within the art world, and to represent their function as a breeding-ground for self-empowerment and the exchange of ideas, while pointing to the superficiality of the entire system, with which women actively proliferate.

While the television murmurs with novellas, Torres-García's dreams of Constructive Universalism and the aesthetics of Latin Modernism have become as kitsch and passé as furniture fabric or fruit paintings. An aesthetic and classification of laziness, piña coladas and fiestas have survived despite the realities of poverty, high-crime rates and civil war.

Calero is interested in the ambiguities of cultural codes. In considering the relationship between the social and political problematics of image and representation, Calero's primary field of interest are icons, meanings and their mediation. In this way her autobiography is particularly present, acting as a starting point from which she explores notions of individual and collective identity and self-esteem.

The exhibition features videos by Ana Alenso, Deborah Castillo, Michele Di Menna, Aude Levère, Hanne Lippard, Dafna Maimon, Eleanore Pienta and The Pizza Suicide Club. For the opening night the exhibition will function as a hair salon, and Salsa classes will be held in the exhibition space.

Sol Calero was born in Caracas, Venezuela in 1982. She lives and works in Berlin. Calero studied at Universidad Complutense de Madrid and Universidad de La Laguna, Tenerife. Her work has been included in solo and group exhibitions at Mostyn, Llandudno, Wales; Frutta Gallery, Rome; Nogueras Blanchard, Barcelona and The Taut And Tame at Lüttgenmeijer, Berlin.