

Claudia Del Río

Caravana

By CLAUDIA DEL RÍO y SANTIAGO VILLANUEVA

Caravana [Caravan] brings together a series of works produced by Claudia Del Río between 2025 and 2026. Some have already been shown at the Museo Castagnino for her anthology exhibition, *Estado Harapito. Obras y archivos 1975-2025* (Little Rag State. Works and Archives 1975-2025), for example, several figures called *Respirantes* (Breathers) made of felt, a material Claudia has been using since the 1990s. However, there is also a series of paintings being presented for the first time. For this exhibition, Claudia and Santiago wrote a collaborative text that returns to the figure of the caravan as a transient way of organizing and thinking about this series of breathers.

—There they are and there they go; the *Respirantes* (Breathers) in a visual caravan, forms that gradually take on definition, migratory creatures with no apparent economic destination. They are made of felt, the material of transhumance: they prepare themselves for a future path or an uncertain destination; they are malleable, they protect and serve as support, they raise temperature, they are multipurpose. The felt breathes; it is the memory of thousands of garments that thousands of people have worn, which then goes through an industrial process, to be withdrawn and presented in an artisanal manner.

—The caravan doesn't look back, but it never stops thinking about the past, because one caravan follows another, it dismantles geographies and assembles one of its own. It is not melancholy, except over today's carnival, which is already a short caravan, bounded by barricades, at least in Buenos Aires. It is summoned for a motive, which it loses over time. It has no issue, or it has issues. It is the best format for this work, work that loses its issue, that loses its topic, which it does have, but leaves behind little by little without realizing it.

—The two largest caravans ever to have taken place are the Dancing Epidemic of 1518 and *Experiência n° 2* (Experience No. 2) by Flavio de Carvalho. One was for the war, in many places simultaneously, going from one city to the next, where people would only stop when their hearts did. They were painted and drawn, but never recorded in their complete dimensions. The other was in the opposite direction through a Corpus Christi procession, an anti-caravan, or a

one-person caravan; can that be? Flavio was walking in a skirt well-suited to Brazil's climate, initiating a work while always thinking of it as a way of advancing against the tide.

—Fair exhibitors, with objects brought together on a blanket. The caravan is a popular dematerialized format, with no choreography or planned steps; it is impulsive because it takes shape in order to disintegrate. A caravan is also a format that carries a secret name. Everyone gradually joins in, ceasing to know why; the reasons are forgotten. It moves the camp from one place to another, it is the persistence of that which moves, an open and enjoyable form of instability. The quantity is vitalist, from one to many, it can only be seen as movement.

—In [the film] *Tire dié* (Toss Me a Dime), by Fernando Birri, children form a caravan around the train, waiting for the coins that fall from it. They make up an economy that subsists by taking from the travelers. They move in opposite directions and they meet there, in the toss and the fall. What happens to a country without coins? Marches are the caravans that find no way to expire. [Antonio] Berni's *Manifestación* (Manifestation), *Operários* (Workers), by Tarsila [do Amaral], *Navio de emigrantes* (Emigrant Ship) by [Lasar] Segall.

—The caravan replaces the idea of a series. It is a marginal system, a recipient, a vessel for the imagination, it invents a distribution. It is a novel with one single stanza that repeats, because the quantity illuminates.

—The caravan and the handicraft of after dinner conversation in a country without coins. There was a copious meal, perhaps of Italian lineage. There was wine, breadcrumbs, the sauce stained the tablecloth, the corks, the metallic wrapper, the gold foil and wire from the sparkling wine, the string from the sausage with the appetizers, the coins left over from the trip that are saved as a good luck charm for returning, the box from the cheese, the styrofoam tray, the paste from the paper packaging, the toothpick laid down, the matches from the candles, the coins from the magic, the soda bottle cap, the torn wine label, the silver paper bonbon wrapper, sometimes with liquor, all in the form of a...



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