

Leading up to an exhibition the artist engages in conversation with a previously unknown correspondent.

The conversation aims to get an insight on how the initial ideas for the project develop, to paint a picture of the otherwise untraceable choices in the artist's process, practice and the making of this exhibition.

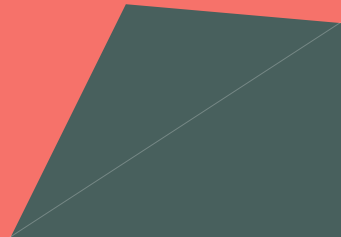
Carmen Roca Igual in conversation with **This is Jackalope**

As part of the
exhibition

**TAN LINES FROM
A SPIRITUAL
RETWEET**

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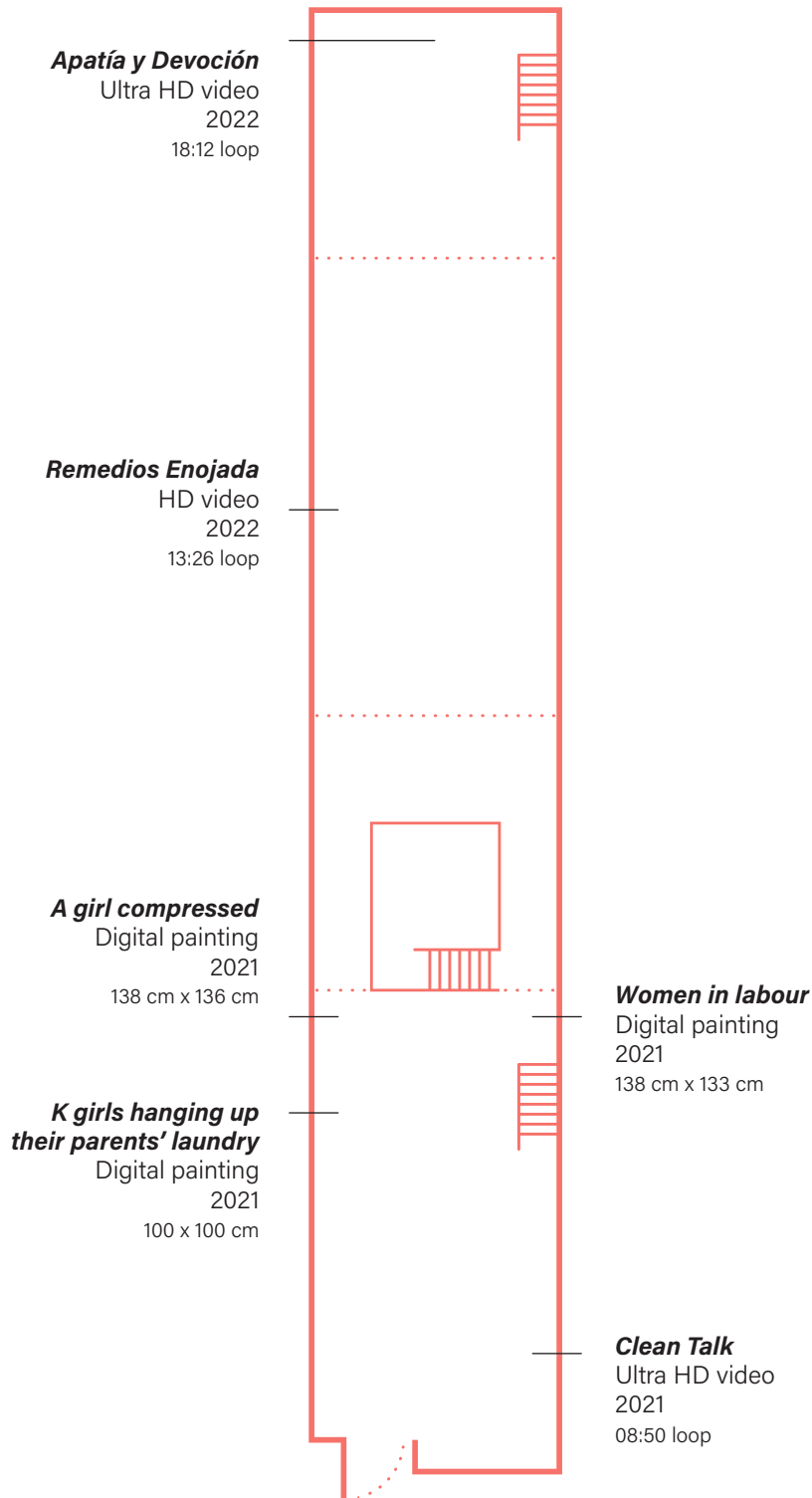
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Carmen Roca Igual

Carmen de la Roca (b. 1998, Paris) is a lens-based artist researching human behavior and the social makeup we apply in relation to new media. Her work combines identity, technology, empowerment and the role of new media, but also the essential pursuit of communication, spirituality, and connection that most humans are in search of. She researches and explores experiences through fictional characters as a proxy to hers and society's dilemmas. The characters live through contemporary narratives as they discover how to utilize the content they create in this attention economy. Roca Igual graduated from the Royal Academy of Art The Hague in 2020. Her work was officially selected for the #AmLatino Film Festival and was nominated for the Young Talent Award during Dutch Design Week. She has assisted artists and filmmakers Amalia Ulman and Pauline Curnier Jardin, and her work was shown before in Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Rijeka, and The Hague.

This is Jackalope

This is Jackalope is an independent organisation dedicated to the creation, production and dissemination of contemporary artistic practices, founded and directed by Cristina Anglada and Gema Melgar. This is Jackalope is a platform for international action, a stage on which to produce cultural projects that experiment with formats and discourses, thereby facilitating the exchange and promotion of conversations taking place in different art communities.

They have collaborated with organisations such as La Casa Encendida, Thyssen Museum, Institute for Postnatural Studies, ARCOMadrid Art fair or Index Book Art Fair among others.

Tue, Jul 19, 9:54 PM

From: Cristina

Dear Carmen,

We are Gema Melgar and Cristina Anglada, founders and directors of This is Jackalope and we are based between Madrid and Mallorca. We are very excited about the invitation we've just received from 1646 to start this conversation with you on the occasion of your exhibition in September 2022.

We must admit that we did not know your work in depth before and we have been very curious after the first encounter we had with it, by reading the text of your exhibition. We have also been peeping into your website and Instagram account to try and get a first approach.

We really like the idea of accompanying you during the previous months with this conversation, and we'd like to start talking about something that has caught our attention: the title itself: Tan Lines from a Spiritual Retweet, such a suggestive mix of concepts in one sentence. Could you tell us a bit about how you got to this title and how it engages with what you are going to show?

Warm regards,

Gema + Cristina

Fri, Jul 22, 10:42 AM

From: Carmen

Dear Gema + Cristina,

I am also very excited to have this conversation with you. I, on the other hand, think I have seen some of your curatorial work at La Casa Encendida in Madrid. Your name, This is Jackalope, was very memorable. It instantly made me think of someone in their late twenties, non-conforming, and a very hands-on personality, but also, of course, of an antelope. Which I thought was humorous. Funny what names and titles do.

Tan Lines from a Spiritual Retweet came from a mixture of moments. I always enjoy words with double meanings, they're playful and you never know which of the connotations the other person is interpreting. I'm also not the best at explaining things, I either do it too fast or too slow, so sometimes I use the wrong word. That's how 'spiritual retweet' came about. I quickly wrote it down because I thought it could be useful one day. It merges past and present ideologies. The relationship people used to have with spirituality vs. us texting daily affirmations on the internet. Tan lines are memories. Memories that are both aesthetic but also bad for you if you don't use protection.

The two video works I'm going to show, *Apatía y Devoción* and *Clean Talk*, contain all of these concepts. Messages and non-messages of topics you read online but also innocent questions that would pop into your head as a child. Times where the message can be super obvious and others where it's up for interpretation. Always an introspective journey. The layout of the exhibition also refers to this,

one room will create the facade of the other, as a way of looking in/out.

Saludos y besos,

Carmen

Mon, Aug 1, 9:03 AM

From: Gema Melgar

Dear Carmen,

Apologies for such a slow reply. We were travelling and had no access to a laptop to properly write back to you.

We like the idea of tan lines as memories that act also warning signs, and we wanted to delve into that; what would the tan lines be when we overexpose ourselves on social media? That way of looking in/looking out you mention could be indeed a good reflection of how we act when scrolling on social networks, stalking other people and comparing ourselves constantly, but also seeking out stuff (and here we mean all tangible and intangible stuff, therefore gestures, ways of being/living, bodies, music, fashion etc..). that we want to incorporate into our identity, not only our digital one but also in our IRL presence.

This could relate to what you mention in the exhibition text, how we embrace change as an opportunity to explore ourselves. In this regard, perhaps out of this exploration, we become accustomed to live as a multiplicity of identities instead of one single self, identities that may shift continuously in a digitalised world.

Could you tell us about how you show that kind of exploration in these two new video works, *Apatía y Devoción* and *Clean Talk*?

Abrazos,

Gema + Cristina

Tue, Aug 23, 1:09 PM

From: Carmen

Dear Gema & Cristina,

Ohhhhhh I'm sorry it took so long to get back to you. It's been a bit complicated to organize my time properly between editing the video, an art residency with no internet, summer and family. Thanks for the response, I love the way you think.

Sometimes a gesture really belongs to a person. You see the memory of the person in your head making the gesture, which becomes very characteristic. Online though, sometimes we share gestures. On TikTok, we share dances, expressions, and movements and thousands of people repeat them. Or even how we tilt our heads to add a face filter on. We've created something different. I love taking some of these characteristic gestures and adding them to my character's personality as a way of archiving the present.

I guess the tan lines on social media are blurrier. We don't know exactly where we saw something for the first time anymore, and memories are somehow more collective but also less intimate. Warning signs are easily ignored because you still have the need to be on an app so that people see you.

In *Apatía y Devoción*, the characters are really trying to undergo some sort of physical spiritual awakening. They're trying different ways of looking in, some more verbal, some more intangible, and therefore changing a little with each shift. Discovering nothing and throwing themselves in the water for a rebirth to try it all on again.

In *Clean Talk*, we reach some sort of different exploration. The characters are actually reciting a script, with a little improvisation. The cousin is directing them behind the scenes. I think it's the cousin who is actually discovering what her words meant on paper vs. transformed in the way the characters embody them. A script is always an opportunity to explore oneself.

Abrazos, hope you enjoyed your travels,

Carmen

Aug 31, 2022, 10:08 PM

From: Cristina Anglada

Hi Carmen,

We hope you are ok! Here the heat is no longer suffocating and Virgo's rhythms are beginning to be felt, with a great desire to get organized and start new rituals.

How was your August? We imagine you are dealing with the last details for your show, right? How is it going?

We would like to follow up with a couple of questions.

One is intended to go a little deeper into what *Apatía y Devoción* perhaps talks about. We are the generation of apathy, perhaps the one that has lived in a more comfortable manner, full of thousands of possibilities and options and at the same time full of disappointments without much tools with which to act. A generation in which the continuously stimulated desire has caused a sad apathy closely related to the individualism and isolation accentuated with the predominance of the digital and online world. Squandering, fun, excess and apathy. A sense of emptiness that seems to lead us directly to a thirst for spirituality. What do you think about it?

Also, we are very interested to see how you approach your relationship with the audience when conceiving an exhibition.

Hugs!

Cristina + Gema

Thu, Sep 1, 4:38 PM

From: Carmen roca

Hi Cristina + Gema,

August was hot, both in temperatures and fevers, but after everything, it was also rewarding. Building up is becoming realer and realer. I'm lucky enough to live in the Hague so I can come to the gallery every day to figure things out with the team. It's very spontaneous and intuitive, I love seeing how other people think. It's strange to see things in the real life size they were ideated, instead of on my computer screen.

I think you framed apathy and devotion beautifully. Excess and emptiness. I've realized this within myself, I thought it was great to know that Gods and Goddesses didn't exist because that meant we weren't afraid anymore and didn't need supernatural explanations. But this feeling lasted briefly, I was a teenager. I think it's amazing that things and thoughts have meaning and it's easier to live if you believe there's something else out there. That we are here to learn and that can be individually for some but collectively for others. I also love that we still don't have all the answers.

The gallery has two chameleon-like spaces. In every exhibition, they transform completely. As the videos were a bit introspective I thought it would make sense to have the first room be the facade of the other. The second room, figuratively, is an interior patio. Like the ones we have in Spain, in the interior of buildings. A space where people hang their laundry (that will smell like everyone's cigarettes and dinner), have some plants and talk to the occasional neighbour. There will be some patio

chairs and tables from which you can both chill collectively and watch the video. The walls have several screens acting as windows, above them a big french balcony with a video of my mother being annoyed by the sound of the video and the audience. Let's see how the audience will interact with it.

Hope you will start some new rituals <3

Besos!!!

Carmen

Sat, Sep 3, 3:22 PM

From: Gema Melga

Hola Carmen,

We loved to hear your description of how the gallery space is coming along for your show. It's making us even more eager to visit the exhibition.

Your idea of simulating an interior patio with screens acting as windows sounds like the perfect set up of what we actually perform on social media: peeking outside our window into other peoples' lives and see if there's any news or if anyone's up for an informal chat.

When talking about the importance of bonding with something that we feel as real, and with things and beliefs that make life easier to 'navigate', we find it kind of funny to see how spirituality and ads for mindfulness apps are invading our social media offering us a shelter to take from that excess of content (and noise). Only to realise that the shelter itself is also built within the same frame and form as the supposed torment we're escaping from. It's like conceiving current life as an infinite looping paradox.

In *Clean Talk*, you address one of the characters (actually the script writer) as 'the cousin', also in the video installation in the back space of 1646 you mentioned there's a video of your mother. Often it seems like your work takes from family relationships and interactions. Could family be (in all its forms and extended versions) the only physical anchor we can grab to ballast ourselves? Could family possibly be the ultimate ritual?

We hope these last installing days go smoothly and are full of joyance.

abrazos,

Gema + Cristina

Sun, Sep 4, 2022 at 11:14 AM

From: Carmen

Hey Gema + Cristina,

Well family, in all its forms and extended versions, are the people you choose to let in. Through the good and the bad. Right now I can't think of anything better that physically pushes and grounds us but I'm sure there's some vitamin out there.

It's funny you say ritual. A couple of years ago when writing my thesis on masks and face filters I started delving into the history of masks. In some of its ritualistic forms and in some of its theatrical ones. I realized whichever form you take they were all a bit performative. Rituals were done collectively, boosting each other to transcend but also, I guess, transcending in a more obvious manner so that the group could see what was going on. Or maybe that was my perception. You have to be very vulnerable to transcend with other people. I wonder then about the relationship between family, performance and vulnerability.

abrazos!!!

Carmen