

# LEHMAN COLLEGE ART GALLERY

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## María Magdalena Campos-Pons

### A Town Portrait

February 11- May 16, 1998

Reception: Wednesday, March 4

Edith Altschul Lehman Wing

**A Town Portrait** is the first of the three-part series, **History of People Who Were Not Heroes**, by Cuban-born Boston-based performance artist, **María Magdalena Campos-Pons**. The multimedia installation, featuring video projections with sculptural elements, captures memories of a 19th-century sugar plantation in Matanzas, Cuba—the town where the artist's African descendants labored. The artist's great grandfather worked on the plantation as a slave. After his children were freed, they remained in Matanzas working in the sugar industry for generations. There will be a reception for the artist on Wednesday, March 4 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

The installation revolves around La Vega, a 19th-century sugar mill that now lays in ruin. The sculptural elements constructed of clay, steel, blown glass, and copper, evoke the architectural remains of the sugar mill. They are constructed as fragments—a distillery tower; a wall; a doorway; and a fountain. The sculpture, together with the videos, impart a sense of history and memory.

Since the artist left Cuba in 1991, she has been collecting and recollecting biographical material which becomes the visual and written sources for her work. Three video monitors will be shown which present a stream of memory fragments. The imagery in these videos is united by a childhood lullaby sung by Campos-Pons.

The exhibition also includes two photographic installations—**When I Am Not Here/Estoy alla, 1997**, and **Abridor de caminos, 1997**—which deal with the artist's ongoing exploration of personal and collective history and identity.

**María Magdalena Campos-Pons** was born and raised in Cuba. The artist was trained in Havana at the National School of Art, the Superior Institute of Art (ISA), and Massachusetts College of Art. She has lived and worked in Boston since arriving in the United States in 1991 and has exhibited extensively in this country and Canada. In 1993 she was a recipient of the Bunting Fellowship, Mary Ingraham Bunting Institute, Radcliffe Research and Study Center, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and completed this project during the fellowship year. Most recently Campos-Pons was one of the artists in the United States representation at the 1997 Johannesburg Biennale.

This exhibition is curated by **Julia P. Herzberg**. Ms. Herzberg has written extensively on Latin-American women artists and has curated many Latin-American exhibitions including *Leandro Katz: Two Projects/A Decade*, El Museo del Barrio, NY; *Raquel Rabinovich: Drawings, 1978-1995*, INTAR Gallery, NY; *Recovering Histories: Aspects of Contemporary Art in Chile Since 1982*, The Zimmerli Museum, Rutgers, NJ; and *Wifredo Lam and his Contemporaries*, The Studio Museum in Harlem, NY.

**María Magdalena Campos-Pons' Spoken Softly with Mama**, the second part of the three part **History of People Who Were Not Heroes**, can be seen at the **Museum of Modern Art**, New York, from March 5 - May 31, 1998.