Sense Makes Memory

Sugar, Plants, and María Magdalena Campos-Pons's Countervisuality in Cuba

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Abstract *This paper analyzes Cuban artist María Magdalena Campos-Pons's installation* The Herbalist Tools *(1993–94), exhibition* Alchemy of the Soul *(2016), and community-based project* Intermittent Rivers *(2019–ongoing), all of which center food production and processing as markers of collective identities. Specifically, Campos-Pons's visual and material language incorporates references to sugar plantations and refineries, as well as to foraging and agricultural traditions passed down by her ancestors – enslaved Yoruba and Chinese indentured workers in Matanzas, Cuba. Countering the distanced visuality of 19th century paintings that illustrate plantation landscapes and sugar refineries as efficient and productive, Campos-Pons's artworks offer immersive spaces that activate the viewers' senses, including smell and taste, to evoke her vivid childhood memories. Through multisensoriality, her installations allow the public to feel what she felt, to get a taste of the embodied experience of Cuban communities often left at the margins. In ongoing projects, the artist collaborates with Matanzas residents to create functional and symbolic infrastructures for the reinvention of Cuban food systems, returning some of the sensorial landscapes of the artist's generation to the present through community gardens and food forests.*

María Magdalena Campos-Pons (Matanzas, Cuba, 1959) creates multimedia works, including synesthetic installations and performances, that evoke her experience growing up in a family of African and Asian origin: her ancestors were Yoruba slaves and Chinese indentured workers brought to Cuba to work in the sugar production industry. Her home was in former barracks within sugar plantations in the town of La Vega, in the region of Matanzas. In Campos-Pons's work, vivid childhood memories are evoked by immersive spaces that activate the viewer's senses, including smell and taste. This paper contrasts the visuality of sugar plantation representations that circulated in the 19th century with Campos-Pons's multichannel video and installations for the exhibit *Alchemy of the Soul* (2016); and with two of the artist's artworks that revolve around edible and medicinal plants – *The*

Herbalist Tools (1993–94) and *Intermittent Rivers* (2019-ongoing). I argue that, through multisensoriality, Campos-Pons constructs a counternarrative embedded in the materiality of experience; and a multisensorial countervisuality that plants seeds of empathy, resistance, resilience, and sovereignty.

Transportation of enslaved people across the Middle Passage connected Europe, Africa, and the Americas from 15th to the 19th centuries, enabling a violent system of chattel slavery and unpaid labor, exploited by European settlers to build economic and geopolitical power (Sullivan 2015: 145; Townsend 2018: 5). Visual representations – together with natural history, religion, written commentaries, and legislation, among other tools – contributed to colonial mindsets that intended to justify slavery and legitimize European trade gains based on supposed racial hierarchies. According to visual culture theorist and art historian Nicholas Mirzoeff, "Visuality's first domains were the slave plantations, monitored by the overseer, operating as the surrogate of the sovereign. This sovereign surveillance was reinforced by violent punishment but sustained a modern division of labor." (2011: 2) The author further explains that

> The overseer, who ran the colonial slave plantation, embodied the visualized techniques of its authority, and so I called it 'oversight.' Oversight combined the classifications of natural history, which defined the 'slave' as a species, with the spatializing of mapping that separated and defined slave space and 'free' space. These separations and distinctions were enabled by the force of law that allowed the overseer to enforce the slave codes. (Mirzoeff 2011: 10)

Plantation paintings and prints usually adopted distanced points of view, allowing an overall representation of the landscape that incorporated slave figures as part of the whole, to highlight the efficiency and supposed naturalness of forced labor while concealing its violence and dehumanizing oppression. Visuality of this kind helped romanticize the institution of slavery in the eyes of European colonizers. Similar visual strategies can be found across the Americas, from Louisiana to Puerto Rico and Brazil. In the Cuban context, a significant example is offered by prints with vistas of sugar refineries and plantations that illustrate Justo Cantero's book *Los Ingenios: Colección de Vistas de los Principales Ingenios de Azúcar de la Isla de Cuba*, published in Havana in 1857 and illustrated by French artist Eduardo Laplante (Cantero 2005 [1857]). Cantero and Laplante provided textual descriptions of individual sugar refineries and the Cuban sugar production system as a whole to demonstrate the industry's financial potential. Within this context, Black slaves were considered part of the *ingenios*'s capital, similarly to how they were treated and insured as cargo on ships crossing the Middle Passage (Sharpe 2016: 34–62). According to this cynical worldview, Black people were only valued for their function and labor in production systems governed by upper class white colonizers. The language of *Los Ingenios*'s in-

troductory text adheres to this conceptualization of race hierarchies and labor structures. The book describes the workforce used in the overall Cuban sugar production system in the following terms:

> The number of workers employed on these farms amounts to more or less two hundred thousand, to which we must add eleven thousand Chinese indentured laborers, who provide some benefits. On the other hand, since the slave trade is completely prohibited and the lack of labor is made increasingly felt, the owners of mills have no choice but to resort to the employment of said Chinese settlers, although they are actually much inferior in physical strength to the Blacks and their acquisition is more expensive, circumstances that have naturally made labor more costly, and that have created the conditions by which regular Black slaves for work in the fields cannot be obtained for less than eight hundred to one thousand pesos. (Cantero 2005 [1857]: 98)[1]

Black and Asian humans are exclusively described as numbers: number of bodies to signify production pace and power; and number of pesos to signify the costs associated with their acquisition, livelihood, and (in the case of Chinese salaried workers) salary costs. This is further shown by detailed accounts of the 'value' of individual sugar refineries, in Cuba and, for comparison, in Louisiana: the list of goods includes, in this order, land, buildings, machinery, slaves and animals (Cantero 2005 [1857]: 94). Similarly, the costs for the *ingenios*'s maintenance include food and clothes for enslaved people. This shows that Black and Chinese workers were not looked at as subjects with distinct personal histories and cultural baggage; this representation is amplified by the volume's illustrations, which have attracted previous scholarly attention.

Latin American History and Economics scholar Alejandro De La Fuente (2010: 36–45) has shown that *Los Ingenios*'s images participated in conveying the idea that well-fed and efficiently managed slaves would be content, their happiness seen as a way to curb the risks of revolts. According to a recent contribution by art historian Rachel Stephens (2021), Laplante represented orderly and harmonious views to convey nationalistic ideas and depict the Cuban sugar industry as modern and efficient.

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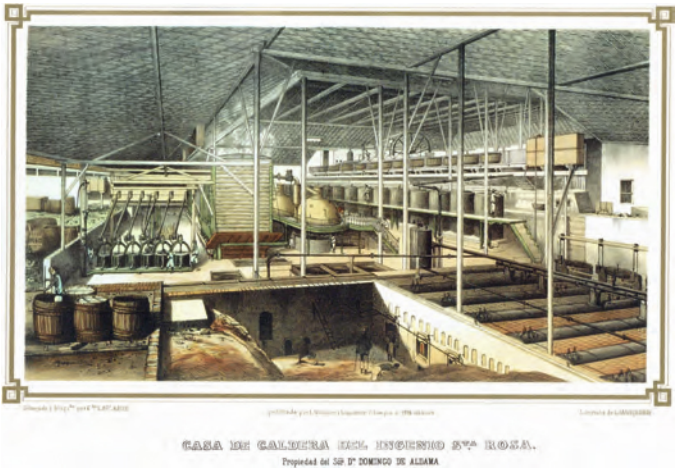
1 English translation by author. The original Spanish text is included here: "El número de labradores empleados en dichas fincas asciende poco más o menos a doscientos mil, a los que debemos añadir once mil chinos importados hasta la fecha en calidad de colonos asalariados y que proporcionan algunas ventajas. Por otra parte hallándose completamente prohibida la trata y haciéndose sentir cada vez más la falta de brazos, los dueños de ingenios no tienen más remedio que acudir al empleo de dichos colonos, aunque muy inferiores realmente in fuerza física a los negros y aun cuando su adquisición resulta más costosa, circunstancias que han hecho naturalmente más cara la mano de obra, y que han dado margen a que no pueda conseguirse un negro regular de campo en menos de ochocientos a mil pesos."

As further argued by Latin American Art scholar Emily Sessions (2021), in *Los Ingenios*'s vistas Black bodies are shown as part of an efficient machine system, signaling the plantation owner's aspiration to automation and industrial progress at a time in which, by the mid-1800s, the industry was in decline.

Fig. 1: Eduardo Laplante, Ingenio Santa Rosa, *1857.*



Source: Print published in Justo Cantero (1857): Los Ingenios: Colección de Vistas de los Principales Ingenios de Azúcar de la Isla de Cuba, Havana: Litografía de Luis Marquier, p. 49.

The treatment of slaves as merely gears of an overall production machine is well exemplified by Laplante's print titled *Ingenio Santa Rosa* (fig. 1) in the Matanzas region, the same area in which María Magdalena Campos-Pons's family lived. Laplante depicts the interior of the *ingenios* from a distanced point of view that showcases various phases of sugar manufacturing. The rigorous linear perspective helps render the three-dimensional space to signify rationality, order, and control. Laplante emphasizes the large architectural scale of the building – meaning wealth – by representing its multiple levels and environments. Machinery, ovens, and storage units are neatly positioned within the space, indicating its efficient management. The architecture itself, and the modern tools inside it, are the real protagonists of this lithograph: the distanced perspective underlines the perceived lack of importance of the laborers, who fade within the larger structure. One needs to look carefully in order to spot the thin bodies of Black laborers who participate in the scene: hidden by dark shadows, or camouflaged through visual devices such as scale, color palette, and composition, the workers cannot be easily distinguished

from sugar production structures and spaces. Laplante's representation contrasts with Campos-Pons's later visual documentation of a sugar refinery in the Matanzas region – the Horacio Rodriguez central – as seen in the video *In Cuba with María Magdalena Campos-Pons* that accompanied the artist's solo exhibition titled *Alchemy of the Soul* at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, in 2016 (fig. 2). While stills from the video almost replicate Laplante's *Ingenio Santa Rosa*'s viewpoint, the place is depicted as decrepit, documenting decay instead of promise for the future. Campos-Pons is shown walking around the 'skeleton,' as she calls it, of the former refinery. She speaks about the building as a ruin, what is left of the powerful sugar industry. The artist appropriates historical visual language and turns it around to convey a counterhistory of sugar refineries and plantations, both through the very subject matter of the ruin, and through the visual language that she employs.

Fig. 2: María Magdalena Campos-Pons, In Cuba with María Magdalena Campos-Pons, *2016, three-channel video.*

Source: Exhibited in *Alchemy of Soul*, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts, 2016, min. 0.21 to 2.39. Available online https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MULRM5OHid8.

Multi-channel video, as a format, allows one to view multiple facets of the structure at the same time. Similar visual strategies – combining several windows with separate scenes within the same artwork – were also used by anti-slavery prints that illustrated phases of an enslaved person's life. Such prints circulated in abolitionist circles in North America in the 19th century: they assumed white viewers' 'right to look' (Mirzoeff 2011: 77–116), thus implicitly acknowledging their power, while also pushing the viewers to assume responsibility in the name of such power (Goddu 2014: 20).

Similarly, *In Cuba with María Magdalena Campos-Pons* shows problematic views of the sugar production systems and their socioeconomic legacy in Cuba, and addresses non-local publics to prompt involvement: the intended contemporary viewers of the video are in an analogous position of both power and responsibility as the intended public of anti-slavery prints in the 19th century. In fact, the video was first shown in Salem, Massachusetts, a city the economy of which indirectly depended on Cuban sugar, as the product was imported to feed the rum distillery industry in New England. As highlighted by Latin American and Latinx Art Historian Adriana Zavala (2019: 23–29), Campos-Pons's work shows that New England was as implicated in the system of slavery as areas that practiced plantation agriculture between the 16th and 19th centuries (see also Mintz 1985). For contemporary publics, understanding various facets of history can foster a more aware approach to racial relations in the present.

In the context of the exhibit *Alchemy of the Soul*, María Magdalena Campos-Pons's video co-existed with sculptures that evoked the architectural outlines of Matanzas *ingenios* and the aesthetics of refinery machinery, often recalling alembics and tools from alchemical laboratories. Zavala describes the multisensorial aspects of these installations, in which smells of rum and sounds of Afro Cuban rumba filled the air:

> The last of the five units, set against one wall, was filled with amber liquid that flowed through tubing, bubbled, and pooled in clear bowls, giving off the sweet scent of rum. Walking among the sculptures, visitors experienced the second of Neil Leonard's sonic installations. The sound of real liquid coming from the fifth sculpture was accompanied by gurgling sounds and swelling vocals emitted from speakers around the room. These evoked the pouring of rum, a precious 'elixir' and the culmination of the histories and arduous processes evoked by the sculptures arrayed. (Zavala 2019: 21)

Through multisensoriality, Campos-Pons counters the visuality of *ingenios* vistas: by engaging the viewers' senses of smell, touch, and taste, the artist makes space for the exploration of memory, personal narratives, and subjectivity. Thanks to the activation of multiple senses, Campos-Pons introduces yet another point of view: not that of the plantation owner or the wealthy and complicit Northern American resident, but rather that of the enslaved person or their descendants. Campos-Pons created a number of synesthetic installations that refer to sugar production and plantation life by incorporating sugar and sugarcane as materials throughout her career.[2] In these works, the artist conveys a sense of embodied knowledge that rivals both the supposedly rational and distanced visuality of plantation vistas and the complicit

2 Examples, including the installation *Sugar/Bittersweet* (2010), are analyzed in Muehlig and De La Fuente (2010).

yet empowered visuality of the Northern abolitionist. For the enslaved and for those who continued to endure the harshness of the plantation and sugar refinery industry after slavery was abolished, including the artist's family, the perception and materiality of sugar were pervasive and often overwhelming. Complex personal memories were associated with the experience of sugar plantations, raw sugar, and derived products like rum, which Campos-Pons reintroduced in her installations to evoke such memories in immersive ways (Enwezor 2007: 69–71; Hassan/Finley 2008: 211–254).

The associations connected to specific scents vary from person to person, thus the artist's memories will not necessarily coincide with those of all viewers. Via smell and taste, Campos-Pons curates multiple levels of access, depending on the positionality of the public. For those who share the artist's intimate experience of Matanzas, rum and sugar will be sensorial signifiers that activate similar memories, even without the aid of additional information encoded into text, images, and objects that co-exist in the installation. For those that are outsiders to the artist's story, smells and tastes might provide a shared experience in the context of the installation, and yet they will be connected not to the artist's but to the viewer's own distinguished memories, becoming evidence of a degree of cultural and personal distance from the artist's community. This complicates the reception of the work, fostering a level of empathy while revealing difference.

In other installations and performances, the artist does not only incorporate sugar and sugar products, but also herbs and plants. In the latter cases, she embraces multisensoriality to elicit the cultivation and foraging of diverse traditional plants, used for nutrition as well as healing and spiritual purposes: herbs and vegetable consumption functioned as coping mechanisms that helped maintain autonomous cultures and ties to ancestral knowledge for Cuban workers of Yoruba origin. Campos-Pons recalls that, as a child, her father – a herbalist in the context of the Santería religion – brought her on herbal walks in the woods and, when a plant was to be harvested, he knocked on the tree's trunk, asking for permission to take a sample. Animism, that is the belief that plants and all beings have a soul and thus require careful and respectful treatment, guided his relationship with the environment (Casanova 2002: 148–49).

Campos-Pons's early installation titled *The Herbalist Tools* (1993–94) evokes the figure of her father within the frame of these foraging trips, using multisensoriality as a way to immerse the viewer into an embodied experience (fig. 3). In an interview with art and visual culture scholar Lynne Bell, the artist describes the piece as follows:

> The three columns stand for the three different trees in my backyard in La Vega: la ceiba is a sacred tree, la palma is the national tree and the almacigo just happened to be in my backyard. On the top of each column is a glass bowl inscribed

with the name of each tree. On the walls are drawings of different plants and frames that contain live plants from Cuba. In Cuba people put offerings in the bottom of a tree, they create a little temple in which they reproduce everything that was outside, inside. When I was a little girl, I wanted to make a house like this – now I'm doing it in this piece! I open up the trees to make a little place to contain offerings; you can look inside and the texture looks like the skin or bark of the tree. I was trying to reverse the dynamic of inside and outside. One of the columns contains a bowl of cornmeal: my father used to give corn as an offering and this is why I use corn in this particular piece. The installation combines sound, sight and smell too – with all the fresh plants. (Bell 1998: 40)

Fig. 3: María Magdalena Campos-Pons, The Herbalist's Tools, *1994, mixed-media installation, collection of the artist.*

Source: Courtesy of the artist.

The columns echo the verticality of sacred trees that grew close to the artist's home; their concave bases emphasize the relationship between inside and outside spaces, the domestic space and the backyard, and even the forest where the artist's father foraged plants. Plant drawings on the walls and actual specimens – placed on stools that were similar to those used by herbalists to both seat on and arrange their herbs – occupy the installation environment: these visual and material elements enrich the installation by communicating through representation and presentation. They undoubtedly activate the viewers' sight, yet their presence is greatly amplified by scent. In a conversation with me, Campos-Pons put stress on the strength of the herbs' odor: "So, when a visitor enters the installation room, the smell is very powerful, the air is filled with scents from the plants. The viewers encounter this entire

range of plants from the forests in Cuba." (Campos-Pons/Bottinelli 2021) Scent is an integral part of the piece, to the extent that museum attendants are asked to replace wilted plants with fresh ones on a regular basis to maintain an intense scent over the duration of the show.

The sense of smell's centrality in *The Herbalist's Tools* may be connected to the fact that the piece evokes a particular time in the artist's life: her childhood. In fact, according to chemosensory scientists Maria Larsson and Johan Willander, childhood memories are more effectively triggered by smell than by visual or verbal cues; smell affects stronger emotional reactions capable of triggering deep associations with a past phase of one's life. Larsson and Willander write:

> Current evidence suggests that memories triggered by olfactory information are localized to the first decade of life (< 10 years) rather than to young adulthood (10–30 years) which is the typical finding for memories evoked by verbal and visual information. Further, empirical evidence indicates that odor evoked memories are more emotional, associated with stronger feelings of being brought back in time… (Larsson/Willander 2009: 318)

Thus, through the inclusion of scented herbs, Campos-Pons immerses the visitors into an embodied experience that, complemented by textual and figurative elements in the installation, gives access – if at different levels – to memories from her childhood's time and space. Having moved to Havana to attend boarding school at age eleven, her memories of her family's agricultural life are indeed rooted in her first ten years. Compared to the distanced view of the plantation overseer and *ingenios* prints, and even to multi-scene prints meant for anti-slavery advocacy, Campos-Pons's multisensorial installations provide a counter-experience that does not aim to control, rationalize, justify, acknowledge, or empower Cuban sugar plantation owners, industries, and trades. Rather, her work transports the viewer into the sensations of her childhood, sharing the immanence of her own personal histories, while also allowing space for the viewer's own personal associations, which fluidly intermix with the artist's.

In *The Herbalists' Tools* plants are represented and presented in the context of a gallery space, using installation as an art medium. In more recent works, the artist's media expand to incorporate the very act of planting seedlings and caring for their growth. Campos-Pons sees this as a form of expression that is rooted in art performance, social sculpture, and community-based practice. Her gardens are art mediums and function as tools for communication.

In a unpublished interview (Campos-Pons/Bottinelli 2019), Campos-Pons listed some of her gardening-based art projects, which I further analyze elsewhere (Bottinelli 2023): for example, on July 15th, 2018, at the Montalvo Art Residency in San Francisco, the artist and several volunteers planted *Imole Blue II (Field of Memory)* a

garden in the shape of a previously-classified archival aerial map used during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962: from a distance, the map recalls a mandala, yet it hides the terrible realities affecting the territory on ground level (Montalvoarts.org). In 2011, Campos-Pons planted a garden of blue hyacinths in Vanderbilt University's botanical garden with the help of twelve students who used spoons to dig the soil; the garden had the shape of Matanzas's aerial view based on a Google Maps image of the city, and the color blue of the flowers was meant to evoke a blueprint. The garden was seen as a form of architectural drawing, though it was materially rooted in the ground and in the practice of agriculture (Lee Burd 2018). Finally, as part of *Interiority (Or Hill-Sided Moon)* at La Marrana, Montemarcello, La Spezia, Italy, the artist planted a garden of lavender and blue verbenas in 2003 (Hassan 2004).[3] Through such actions, Campos-Pons intentionally embraces the legacy of German artist Joseph Beuys and his seminal piece *7000 Oaks* for documenta 7 in 1982 (Campos-Pons/Bottinelli 2019).[4] The long-lasting social and environmental purpose of Beuys's famous piece fascinated Campos-Pons, who observed Kassel's oaks attentively during her time in the city for documenta 14 in 2017.

Shortly after, planting and gardening became incorporated into *Intermittent Rivers* (*Ríos Intermitentes*), a series of initiatives directed by the artist in Matanzas beginning in 2019 (Cuban Art News 2019). The project involved collaborations with students of the Camilo Cienfuegos University, the local Environmental office authority, and local artists, curators, and exhibition spaces. Research on edible trees and plants – both native to the area and associated with diasporas – continued with the harvesting of seeds and climaxed with the planting of thirteen palm trees – the national tree of Cuba – in May 2019 (fig. 4). This was the first of a series of nine gardens, most of which edible and medicinal, that the artist would like to plant over time in order to make public fruits available to a local population in need of achieving food sovereignty.[5]

Campos-Pons's plans for the gardens have changed through the years, since they have adapted to existing regulations, the logistical challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, inflation, social unrest, and other overlapping crises on the island. The long-term goal is to eventually recreate an urban environment where locals can

3 Silvia Bottinelli, *Unpublished Conversation with María Magdalena Campos-Pons*, September 6th, 2019. See also: "María Magdalena Campos-Pons *Imole II*," Lucas Artist Program, last accessed June 23, 2021 (https://blog.montalvoarts.org/imole-blue-ii.html).

4 Bottinelli, *Interview with Campos-Pons*, January 2nd, 2021.

5 In 2022, the second edition of *Intermittent Rivers* also included a garden-based piece titled *Suelo Constellado* by local artist and curator Helga Montalván, who honors the experiences of women through her art. This project is a garden of henequen, or Cuban sisal (*agave fourcroydes*), displayed in the shape of a constellation. Sisal is traditionally used to make ropes and other items, and was cultivated in the region of Matanzas from the late 19th to the mid-20th century.

easily forage foods and medicine that are part of their national identity and diverse histories (Campos-Pons/Bottinelli 2021). Exposure to those histories can foster a deeper awareness of Cuba's biodiverse environment prior to the centuries-long deforestation process triggered by plantation agriculture.

Fig. 4: María Magdalena Campos-Pons, planting Royal Palms at the University of Matanzas during Intermittent Rivers, *2019.*

Source: Photo by Amor Diaz Campos.

Deforestation systematically reduced the number and variety of trees and plants to make space for cash crops and was tightly linked to Spanish colonialism and the slave trade since the late 15th century (Funes Monzote 2008: 217–62). Thus, planting trees in Matanzas, a former center of sugar plantations, counters the environmentally and socially exploitative patterns of settler colonialism to foster a rebirth of local vegetation, as well as the residents' reclaiming of their own story and access to a

wealth of foods. The loss of biodiversity corresponds to a loss of cultural diversity as well as a loss of bodily sensations, which are enabled by human and non-human connections through the care for edible and medicinal plants. *Intermittent Rivers* seeks to reestablish such connections through planting, growing, foraging, and harvesting. The caring for edible and medicinal plants is enhanced by sensorial perceptions that become associated with both personal and collective identities: for example, the haptic feel of soft aloe leaves, the velvety surface of orchid petals, the pervasive scent of cedar, and the intense taste of fruits like mangos or cherimoyas bring the artist and others from her town and generation back to a time past, which they hope to return to the present through *Intermittent Rivers*.

Taste plays a crucial role in María Magdalena Campos-Pons's work: food-based and participatory performances punctuate her whole *oeuvre*: she has offered foods and drinks to viewers from different places – from Milan to Boston, San Francisco, and Nashville, to name a few – encouraging the public to savor flavors imbued with symbolic meanings and historical weight. Among other ingredients, her audiences have tasted raw sugar cane and rum – of course connected to Cuba's plantation systems and international trades – and pomegranate juice. Pomegranate grew in the artist's backyard in Cuba; thus the choice of this fruit is linked to the artist's own story. It also combines the artist's memory with ancient Greek mythologies involving women narratives: Hades lured Persephone with pomegranate seeds, marking her return to the Underworld during winter seasons.[6]

The peculiarity of Campos-Pons's edible and medicinal gardens for Matanzas is that they encompass Campos-Pons's vision for the city: through them, the artist affirms a right to the land and cultivates food sovereignty in Cuba by exposing younger generations of local residents to the tastes and smells that made the fabric of her everyday life growing up in the same places. When she surveyed high-school students in the city, she realized that most of them could not list or remember eating any local plant and fruit among those that nourished her body and spirituality as a child (Campos-Pons/Bottinelli 2019). Sharing the fruits and herbs that she smelled, touched, and tasted with young Cubans means immersing them into her story, which is their story too. Campos-Pons's hope for the near future is that Matancero children and teens will be able to walk in a forest of edible fruits, pick

6 Examples include the following performances: *A Conversation with Fra Angelico in the Garden*, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, March 24, 2018: Campos-Pons offered edible sugar and chocolate sculptures in the form of pears, exploring the connection of Beato Angelico's and her own iconography; *Agridulce*, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, January 21, 2016: during the performance, Campos-Pons offered the public small pieces of sugarcane; *Habilitation, Mojitos and Crocodile Tears*, at the exhibit *Getting Emotional*, ICA Boston, 2005, and at Galleria Pack, Milan, June 21, 2006: the artist offered mojitos, made with rum and sugar, to deconstruct the drink, demonstrating where its ingredients come from; during a performance at the Bernice Steinbaum Gallery, Campos-Pons offered pomegranate juice to the public.

them and consume them, feeling their texture, inhaling their scent, and savoring their juices – taking in the complex story of their country a bite at a time.

To conclude, such sensorial knowledge does not map the island's landscape to own it and conquer it, as colonial vistas like Cantero and Laplante's *Ingenios* did. It also avoids linking the viewers' 'right to look' with their responsibility to affect change for others, like historical anti-abolitionist prints and contemporary multi-channel videos meant for not-Cuban publics. Rather, Campos-Pons's installations and gardens engage the body's senses to offer a ground-level learning, and foster forms of sharing and community-engagement that hope to build resilience through slow, everyday, and embodied experience.

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