

FROM JUNE 26th TO SEPTEMBER 13th, 2020

GALLERIA GIAMPAOLO ABBONDIO

BRINGS
THE INSTALLATION OF MARIA MAGDALENA CAMPOS-PONS
"IN THE GARDEN"
TO MILAN
curated by Francesca Pasini

The project inaugurates a temporary exhibition space in **Corso Matteotti 5**, in the heart of the city.

Only a few days have passed since the end of Spazio 22's adventure and now **Galleria Giampaolo Abbondio** is ready to announce its next project: the installation of **María Magdalena Campos-Pons** (born in Matanzas, Cuba, 1959) entitled **In The Garden**, curated by Francesca Pasini. The initiative, which is scheduled to run from **June 26th to September 13th, 2020**, is inaugurating a temporary space for art in **Corso Matteotti 5**, in Milan, in the very heart of the city.

"My idea of an art gallery has remained unaltered –**Giampaolo Abbondio stressed** – as has the central importance of Milan for my work, therefore when this project, which was initially conceived for Dubai, failed to take place owing to the sad events of the pandemic, I thought that my city was simply the very best place where it should be premiered".

In The Garden employs the narration of images to propose a space that is suitable for meditation, a story told by watercolours, drawings, gouaches, and mixed techniques, where the public will be able to focus on some of the topical themes covered by the works: the beauty of landscapes, nature, and the crucial role that water plays in our ecosystem.

"**In The Garden** is a project that was conceived for enveloping a room and creating the empathy of an intimate place of meditation - says **Francesca Pasini**. It is quite an unconventional proposal if you consider that it was intended for a Dubai trade fair stand. In the venue where everything is multiplied, thinking of a "hortus conclusus" (an enclosed garden) seems an oddity. It is instead, a poetic statement, grounded in her work.

"Science says that the "obliterations" caused by man, - continues the curator - by altering the natural balance, are a contributing factor to pandemics. The space, for which Campos-Pons has created the intimate dialogue with flowers and trees, in as much as it is temporary, metaphorically underscores the need to slow down the interventions on the environment, to make them less definitive, to protect the environment instead of invading it and to make it the place of one's own intimacy".

"When I imagined **In The Garden** - says **María Magdalena Campos-Pons** - I conceived it as a place that invited the viewer to redemption and to sin, a zone of negotiation, pacification and resolution. The work is both monumental and intimate, as it contrasts places of initiation and intercultural culture or geographical narratives. In giving life to this project, I deeply thought about how time changes and how human gestures and behaviours continually create transformations and obliterations, standardizing our human experience as a species on this planet".

Biographical Notes

The work of **María Magdalena Campos-Pons** (Matanzas, Cuba, 1959) is mainly defined by the investigation of her identity and more specifically of her Afro-Cuban heritage. The theme of memory plays a vital role in her installations, photographs or drawings, reflecting the feeling of disorientation that the artist experiences as a Cuban expatriate. Campos-Pons constantly tests the boundaries of artistic practice, never allowing herself to be defined by one single medium. The experience as an exile has motivated the artist's production through the themes of belonging, assimilation and transculturation. Another major theme that reoccurs throughout the artist's research is that of feminism, favoured by a strong interest in gender roles.

Her participation in the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013 was fundamental with the multimedia project "53+1 = 54+1 = 55. Letter of The Year" curated together with Neil Leonard.

Campos-Pons' work is included in several public collections, including the Smithsonian Institution of Washington, the Art Institute of Chicago, the National Gallery of Canada, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the MOMA in New York, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Miami Art Museum, the Fogg Art Museum in Boston and the Ludwig Museum in Cologne, which boasts of the recent acquisition of the installation "Bar Matanzas Sound Map" presented by the artist at the last edition of Documenta in Athens and Kassel.

Milan, June 2020

MARIA MAGDALENA CAMPOS-PONS IN THE GARDEN

Corso Matteotti 5, Milan

From June 26th to September 13th, 2020

Visiting Hours: from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm, by appointment only

Entry: Free of Charge

Information:

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IN THE GARDEN

by **María Magdalena Campos-Pons**

In the Garden by María Magdalena Campos-Pons, is a project that was conceived to envelope a room and to create the coziness of an intimate place for meditation.

If you think that it was designed for a trade fair stand in Dubai, it is an unconventional proposal. In a venue where everything is multiplied, thinking of a “hortus conclusus” (enclosed garden), seems an oddity. It is instead a poetic statement grounded in her work. Her own origin, her attention to reminiscing about it, to reinterpreting be this explicitly or symbolically, is the goal of her research. A trade fair was the ideal venue in which to bring out the contrast between the rush outside and the subjective, internal pause that her paintings require. Exactly like the observation of nature, which takes place instinctively, but then the bark of tree, a flower’s corolla turns into an entire, autonomous and unmistakable world like we see in these paintings.

Then Covid19 came and the trade fair never took place. Today “Magdalena’s Garden” lives in a room of one’s own – as Virginia Woolf would say – which is open because you can admire it day and night from the French window. The fact that it is a temporary space is part of the spirit of this moment, while Magdalena’s figures say that our experience gives rise to “changes and obliterations”, exactly as it happens in the natural world and this is why “the human species is comparable to those of the planet”.

“Science says that the “obliterations” caused by man, – continues the curator – by altering the natural balance, are a contributing factor of pandemics. The space, for which Campos-Pons has crafted the intimate dialogue with flowers and trees, in as much as it is temporary, (both in Dubai as well as in Milan), metaphorically underscores the need to slow down the interventions on the environment, to make them less definitive, to protect the environment instead of invading it and to make it the place of one’s own intimacy. It is almost a prophecy.

Artists do not foresee the future but understand in advance those changes that take place in their generation. Magdalena’s figures and words bear witness to this. We follow their suggestion: we all start from our own life and create gardens in rooms in order to interpret what is happening during and after the pandemic stress test.

De Chirico, in his diaries, told us about the fear he felt while driving back to Milan during a summer storm, that only ended only when he recognized the sound of a public fountain, which made him feel at home, safe and sound. May Magdalena Campos Pons’s paintings have the same effect for all those who pass by Corso Matteotti 5 day and night ... in this difficult summer.

Francesca Pasini