

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## The Museum of Modern Art

### MULTIMEDIA ARTIST MARIA MAGDALENA CAMPOS-PONS TO PREMIERE INSTALLATION AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons: *Spoken Softly with Mama*

March 5-May 26, 1998  
Garden Hall Video Gallery, third floor

Multimedia artist Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons (b. 1959) debuts a site-specific installation entitled *Spoken Softly with Mama*, on March 5, 1998 at The Museum of Modern Art. The Cuban-born, Boston-based artist combines elements of sculpture, painting, photography, performance, and video work to explore her African/Cuban roots and to address themes of gender, race, family and history. *Spoken Softly with Mama* will remain on view through May 26, 1998.

"Unfolding layers of history and experience, Campos-Pons brings to light the ephemeral qualities of everyday lives and untold stories. The artist's life and work involve a continuous engagement with her mother, sisters, family, and neighbors in Cuba. By extension, her work refers to the generations of Africans transported there in centuries past to work on sugarcane and tobacco plantations who transcended their oppression through the strength of their religious and cultural practices," says Sally Berger, Assistant Curator, Department of Film and Video, who organized the exhibition.

*Spoken Softly with Mama* is the second part of a series entitled *History of People Who Were Not Heroes*, begun in 1994 as a chronicle of the former slave barracks in the province of Matanzas, Cuba where Campos-Pons was born. This new installation comprises projected video images, cast-glass irons, wooden objects, fabric, and sound, evoking and transforming the memories and experiences of the town's inhabitants. It is also a portrait of the artist's family, revealed through their imprint on household objects and told through the women's voices and songs.

"A space can bear the imprint of its inhabitants even in their absence. An object can personify an individual even more than his or her portrait. This is the concept behind the selection of objects-furniture for the installation; a portrait of a family narrated through the voices of objects that constitute their environment," says Campos-Pons of *Spoken Softly with Mama*.

The first part of *History of People, A Town Portrait* (1994) will be on view at the Lehman College Art Gallery, New York, N.Y., through May 16, concurrent with the MoMA exhibition. Ms. Campos-Pons created this work during her residence as a Bunting Fellow of Visual Arts at Bunting Institute of Radcliffe College at Harvard.

This exhibition is supported by The Junior Associates and The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art.

#### Public Program

The Museum presents a screening and discussion in conjunction with this exhibition:

**Monday, March 9, 1998, 6:30 p.m.**

*Video Viewpoints*

Multimedia artist Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons discusses *Spoken Softly with Mama*, as well as her installation work that combines elements of sculpture, painting, photography, and performance. *Video Viewpoints* is organized by Sally Berger.

The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2. Tickets are free of charge after 6:00 p.m. and available at the Lobby Information desk.

No. 15

[press office](#)

[menu](#)

©1998 The Museum of Modern Art, New York