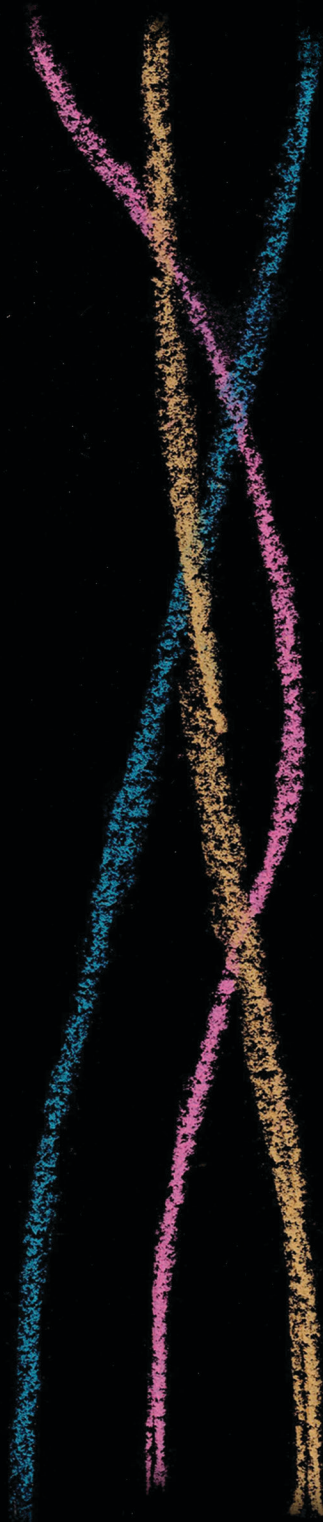


**Vignettes in
3 Sessions**

KaMag at CADVC



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Introduction: Sweeping the Petals of Sunflowers

It was an honor for the Center for Art, Design, and Visual Culture at UMBC (CADVC) to host “Vignettes in 3 Sessions: An Immersive Ancestral Experience” with KaMag (María Magdalena Campos-Pons and Kamaal Malak) on December 5, 2025. As KaMag’s final performance of 2025, the evening brought together sound, movement, scent, and taste in an immersive encounter. Material and experiential offerings became sensorial touchpoints—sunflowers striking the floor to sweep pools of their own petals, pomegranate juice squeezed in bare hands and then tart on the tongue, and pungent eucalyptus in small fabric pendants suspended from the neck—entwined in shifting registers of collective attention, rhythm, and memory.

This publication gathers three points of entry into that multifaceted experience, each distinct in method and texture. Tatiana Flores opens with a scholarly account of the three vignettes, tracing their connective

logic through the concept of radical love. Maleke Glee follows, writing from the sensorium, foregrounding sound and music as interpretive routes into memory, ecology, and cultural continuums. Dell Marie Hamilton follows with a first-person perspective from inside the work, mapping improvisation, vulnerability, and the reciprocal trust built through collaboration. We are pleased to document this work through a free, open-access, multimedia publication.

I am grateful to Gwen Knott, publication designer; Amy Teschner, copy editor; and Elle Jones, CADVC graduate assistant, for their efforts in support of this publication. CADVC especially thanks the UMBC Arts+ initiative and CIRCA for their support of the performance, and the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS) Dean’s Office for supporting the CADVC Video Art Projection Series.

Rebecca Uchill, Director

Center for Art, Design, and Visual Culture at UMBC (CADVC)



Sunflowers on the CADVC gallery floor during the performance of "Vignettes in 3 Sessions" on December 5, 2025. Photo: Tedd Henn for CADVC.



Radical Love as Life Force: KaMag and “Vignettes in 3 Sessions” at CADVC

Tatiana Flores

The ethos of “radical love” has become central in the recent performances of María Magdalena Campos-Pons. “A Mother’s River of Tears” (2023), which she debuted as part of her solo exhibition **Behold** at the Brooklyn Museum, commemorated the lives of murdered Black women and men both from the perspective of the mothers who mourned them and as a collective celebration of life — a call for radical love to bring forth a space for healing.¹ The following year, the Madison Square Park Conservancy in New York City organized Campos-Pons’s “Procession of Angels for Radical Love and Unity” (2024), in which the artist led participants dressed in white to significant sites in Manhattan that carried meaning for Black and Latinx communities, whether as locations of trauma

1 **María Magdalena Campos-Pons: Behold**, a survey exhibition covering four decades of the artist’s work, was co-organized by the Brooklyn Museum and the J. Paul Getty Museum. Curated by Carmen Hermo and Mazie Harris, with Jenée-Daria Strand, it debuted at the Brooklyn Museum on September 15, 2023, and toured several venues before ending its run at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, on May 4, 2025. For the exhibition catalogue, see Carmen Hermo, ed., **María Magdalena Campos-Pons: Behold** (J. Paul Getty Museum and Brooklyn Museum, 2023).



Madison Square Conservancy performance of "Procession of Angels for Radical Love and Unity," 2024. Commissioned by Madison Square Park Conservancy, in partnership with Harlem Art Park. Photo by Argenis Apolinario. Image courtesy of the artists.



Madison Square Conservancy performance by Kamaal Malik and other performers. "Procession of Angels for Radical Love and Unity," 2024. Commissioned by Madison Square Park Conservancy, in partnership with Harlem Art Park. Photo by Argenis Apolinario. Image courtesy of the artists.

and painful histories or spaces of hope and joy.² “Vignettes in 3 Sessions: An Immersive Ancestral Experience” (2025) by KaMag (María Magdalena Campos-Pons and Kamaal Malak) at the Center for Art, Design, and Visual Culture at UMBC (CADVC) offers a multisensorial meditation on love through interconnected episodes.

The concept of radical love has opened new directions in the artist’s long trajectory. For one, it celebrates her new life partner Kamaal Malak, a Grammy-winning bassist and songwriter, and integrates his musical genius into her continuously inventive oeuvre. The different performances also build new possibilities for audience interaction and community collaborations through the ways they bring people together. Finally, radical love asks us to embrace the intuitive, spiritual, intangible, and unquantifiable, leaving aside the molds and frameworks that dictate our understanding of the world.

In the introduction to “The Routledge Companion to Decolonizing Art History,” Florencia San Martín, Charlene Villaseñor Black, and I propose a series of concepts for rethinking art history, foregrounding love as a key decolonial methodology that challenges colonialism, patriarchy, and neoliberal violence.³ Citing as inspiration

Black women authors, including Audre Lorde, bell hooks, and Toni Morrison, we begin the section “Living and Loving” with the words of Lorde: “Love has been our survival.”⁴ As a Black Lesbian, Lorde refers to Afrodiasporic and queer communities. Her quotation speaks to the sustaining power of affective connections in the face of a hostile and inhumane society. Campos-Pons has expressed similar views throughout her career, invoking both the importance of family or community in the here and now and the ancestors and spirits in the elsewhere. More recently, she has described “radical love” as the realization that she is “just a small, alien individual connected with everyone.”⁵ The critical connectivity of love is underscored in “3 Vignettes.”

2 The procession took place over two days: on September 7 and 20, 2024. For more information, see Madison Square Park Conservancy, “María Magdalena Campos-Pons: ‘Procession of Angels for Radical Love and Unity,’” accessed January 5, 2026, <https://madisonsquarepark.org/art/exhibitions/procession-of-angels/>.

3 Tatiana Flores, Florencia San Martín, and Charlene Villaseñor Black, “Introduction” in “The Routledge Companion to Decolonizing Art History,” ed. Flores, San Martín, and Black (Routledge, 2024), 3–46.

4 Audre Lorde, quoted in Flores et al., “Introduction,” 31.

5 María Magdalena Campos-Pons, “Barbara London Calling” podcast, season 3, episode 11, “María Magdalena Campos-Pons,” recorded November 4, 2024, <https://www.barbaralondon.net/3-11-maria-magdalena-campos-pons/>.



Still image of recording, Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons in "A Mother's River of Tears." from "A Mother's River of Tears: Performance by Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons," September 26, 2023, at Brooklyn Museum, video by Charles Howe. Courtesy of Maria Magdalena Campos Pons studio and the Brooklyn Museum.

The performance is prefaced with a blessing by two Tibetan Buddhism practitioners, Lawrence Galea, a Ngakpa or spiritual guide, and Xiaoming Zhang, whose Tibetan name is Dechen Drolma. Galea informs the audience he has previously purified the room through a ritual. He then begins by asking permission from the spirits for the performance about to ensue. As he and his companion stand in the front of the room, the screen projects a single giant eye, whose pupil rotates. The colors shift and, at times, the pupil resembles a heavenly orb, connecting the human with the celestial. As Galea recites a series of prayers, he invokes the Four Immeasurables, states of being that encompass happiness, freedom from suffering, joy, and equanimity. He offers his own interpretation of radical love: “abandoning oneself, opening one’s mind to the universe.” Dechen follows, reprising some of his points and then reciting the Heart Sutra in Chinese, followed by English. This sutra is foundational for Buddhism and declares that “all things are emptiness,” an expansive concept that suggests, not a lack of meaning but, rather, freedom from material attachments to achieve a state of harmony and liberation. These words, simultaneously inspirational and challenging, set the stage for the performance that follows. The first vignette reprises “A Mother’s

River of Tears” with some variations, including a different score and a screen in the background featuring updated animated drawings. In this performance, the artist wears a white pantsuit with a long jacket and black shirt and headwrap. Two dancers dressed in white accompany her and sway to the background music. Together, they interact with the audience and distribute flowers and small packages. Campos-Pons calls for justice, for those who suffer, who are wrongfully incarcerated, and who form part of besieged communities. The music builds in intensity, and the artist lets out several shrieks as the performers sway to the rhythms. To close the first vignette, she brings members of the audience to dance with her, holding onto a knotted rope. Having called attention to the challenges, this coming together offers a restorative space of interconnection.

The second vignette is more abstract, akin to stream of consciousness. Malak enters the stage with a bass guitar, and the background images change to more brightly colored drawings whose forms and tones quickly cycle through. They begin by depicting women’s bodies, focusing attention on the reproductive organs, then center the feet in contact with the earth, then show indeterminate body parts and faces. The musical pace starts slow and ominous, with sounds that resemble



Xiaoming Zhang and Lawrence Galea, Tibetan Buddhist practitioners, perform a purification ritual prior to the December 5, 2025 performance of “Vignettes in 3 Sessions” at CADVC. Photo: Tedd Henn for CADVC.



María Magdalena Campos-Pons performs “Vignettes in 3 Sessions” on December 5, 2025. Photo: Tedd Henn for CADVC.

animal howls, possibly the cries of owls, which are mentioned later, but they could also be the whimpers of dogs. Quickly, the tempo turns brisk, and a recording of the artist's voice competes with her words in real time. The recorded narration is hard to make out, drowned out in parts by the bass, but you hear "grandmother," "plantation," and "departed." Then Campos-Pons speaks some words in Spanish, compounding the sense of indecipherability. The effect recalls Édouard Glissant's notion of opacity. In his famous text "For Opacity," he discusses how "Western thought" has "this requirement for transparency," or the assumption that everything is knowable.⁶ He famously counters with, "We demand the right to opacity," where the "we" is addressed to Black people. Campos-Pons is similarly calling forth an Afrodiasporic experience, during and in the aftermath of slavery. Some of the images suggest legs of people in chains. An owl remains close at hand, witness to the past and present. The artist tells of a sleeping girl under a mosquito net, dreaming of scenes of people in the field—in despair, trying not to fall, to remain upright, knowing there is no escape. Campos-Pons repeats the words "plus, plus, plus" and the Spanish equivalent, "más, más, más" to indicate that the story is much larger, that there is much more that cannot be uttered. A steady rhythmic drumbeat contributes

to the sense of foreboding, as virtuosic lines of harmony emerge from the bass.

The third vignette is dedicated to Yoruba deities: Oshun, goddess of rivers and fertility; Yemaya, the mother of the oceans and all life; and Olokun, a deity of the depths of the sea, who may be gendered male, female, or androgynous (here, the artist refers to Olukun as "she"). The ocean has been a central facet of Campos-Pons's work over the course of her career.⁷ Where for many Afrodiasporic peoples, the ocean is a site of trauma, Campos-Pons locates within it redemption and divinity.⁸ As the bass sets up a laid-back sonic ambience, the performers bring out a large aquamarine colored cloth joined together at the seams, and place themselves within it to mimic the rolling movement of the waves. Behind, the screen projects abstracted black-and-white images of the artist at the edge of a body of water, while in real life, she dances through the space, proclaiming and singing. The vibe is

6 Édouard Glissant, "Poetics of Relation," trans. Betsy Wing (University of Michigan Press, 1997), 189.

7 See Tatiana Flores, "The We Within: Oceanic Imaginaries of Caribbean Art," *La Escuela Journal* 1 (2024): 278–384.

8 See Tatiana Flores, ed., "María Magdalena Campos-Pons: Sea and Self," exh. cat. (Haggerty Museum of Art, 2021).



Performer M'Balou Camara writes words upon a chalkboard during the performance of "Vignettes in 3 Sessions" on December 5, 2025. Photo: Tedd Henn for CADVC.



Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons and other performers during "Vignettes in 3 Sessions" on December 5, 2025. Photo: Tedd Henn for CADVC.



The performers bow at the conclusion of the December 5, 2025 performance of "Vignettes in 3 Sessions" at CADVC. Photo: Tedd Henn for CADVC.



KaMag, "A Mother's River of Tears" animated video still reading "Radical Love," from the performance that accompanied **Behold**, Brooklyn Museum, New York, 2023. Courtesy of María Magdalena Campos-Pons studio.

relaxing and hypnotic, and the audience sways along, as if in trance. Campos-Pons ends by dedicating her performance to Koyo Kouoh (1967–2025), the Cameroonian curator, who was planning the 2026 Venice Biennale at the moment of her untimely death.

In her dedication to the 1992 book of essays, “Black Looks,” bell hooks writes:

I dedicate this book to all
of us who love blackness,
who dare to create in our
daily lives
spaces of reconciliation
and forgiveness
where we let go of past
hurt, fear, shame
and hold each other close.
[. . .]
Holding each other close
across differences,
beyond conflict, through
change,
is an act of resistance.⁹

Radical love embraces life by rejecting colonial logics of individuality,

self-centeredness, egocentrism, and domination. It is premised on dialogue, reciprocity, cooperation, and horizontal relationality. Many of these qualities were elicited through KaMag’s performance: The audience came together in an intimate setting: We were asked to look at our neighbors, and when the performance was over, everyone gathered in the front for a group picture. The night was unforgettable—a gift and a privilege. Only the performers and the gallery staff knew what to expect. All of us came out of the experience with our hearts full.

hooks offers additional words to live by: “As we work to be loving, to create a culture that celebrates life, that makes love possible, we move against dehumanization, against domination.”¹⁰ For Campos-Pons, love is all those things, but it is also redress for past and current injustices, a mechanism for healing, and a tool for remembrance and commemoration. KaMag’s performance argues that radical love is a vital component of life itself.

9 bell hooks, quoted in Flores et al., “Introduction,” 31–32.

10 bell hooks, quoted in Flores et al., “Introduction,” 32.



A Sonic Site for What Returns

Maleke Glee

“I am Soil – My Tears Are Water” (2025) is a single-channel video produced by KaMag, a collaboration by artist Kamaal Malak and María Magdalena Campos-Pons, that makes its debut as a site-adapted public video projection in the UMBC Fine Arts Building amphitheater. In the video, colors and symbols move like watercolor spreading across paper: never fully still, never fixed. Even after the pigment dries, the trace of its journey remains visible in the memory of its movement. The fluid dreamscape is cast upon a steady eye illustrated on center screen, a symbol across cultures for the interrelations between self and the divine. Sonically, chimes, synths, and other sounds for which I don’t yet have adequate language conjure a procession. Something is approaching. A steady chime, paired with drums, suggests time, an arriving, time insisting. Later, in their performance “Vignettes in 3 Sessions: An Immersive Ancestral Experience” (2025), that procession leads me inward, toward my third eye and a higher consciousness, rather than toward any external guide, deity, or otherwise cultural “prominent” figure.

In both the amphitheater and the gallery of the Center for Art, Design,



Drawings of eyes / video still from "I am Soil — My Tears Are Water" (2025). Courtesy of María Magdalena Campos-Pons studio.

and Visual Culture at UMBC (CADVC), Malak's musical productions evoke futurity by engaging ancient wisdom encoded in the frequencies of the percussion, wind, and new technological devices. There remains much to learn and uncover in a moment that urgently calls for renewed engagement with the earth and its custodianship. While the past unlocks understandings of a time before the colonial capture of consciousness (the precursor to more legible social and ecological atrocities), the experience of "Vignettes" was not one of facing the future as it is often depicted within the cultural zeitgeist. Rather, the performance's Indigenous futurism reflects a return to the past—to a quintessential human impulse toward creation sustained across global cultures. That continuum of making has been rendered legible within Western contexts by artists such as KaMag, whose collaborative practice collapses linear time and reasserts creation in tandem with ancestral knowledge carried forward. The performance felt simultaneously new and familiar. Unlike other efficient and prominent presentations of decoloniality within the contemporary arts arena, it was not didactic nor exacting through comparative analysis. Instead, it offered an embodied presence of global multiplicities—a projected universality that honored and invited

many interpretations and sources of inspiration, among them the presence of Ifá, a spiritual and ontological umbrella for African traditional religions across the diaspora, known by different names, yet grounded in a shared philosophical cosmology. Central to many of these traditions is a pantheon of Orisha, divine forces through which the sacred is encountered in elements of the natural world.

The composition "Olokun Jemaja," a four-minute hybrid genre soundscape that was presented within "Vignettes," includes a steady timbre of a beaded instrument and 808s, producing cadences that make heads nod, feet tap, and nervous systems regulate with steady pulse. In homage to West African deities of the ocean Olokun and Jemaja, the patriarchal and matriarchal orishas reflect the character of the ocean, representing depth of experience, material abundance, spiritual provision, and protection. As the Atlantic Ocean connects so many African descendants throughout the world, those waters are said to be the sacred threshold for Jemaja. The soundscape engulfed these spiritual currents; with each strike of the synth, the audience was pushed further into this proverbial ocean. Both slow and fluid, the soundscape built gradually, like a ripple growing steadily, eventually rushing on the



Kamaal Malak of KaMag during the performance of “Vignettes in 3 Sessions” on December 5, 2025. Photo: Tedd Henn for CADVC.



Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons (center) performs “Vignettes in 3 Sessions” with performer and contributor Dell Marie Hamilton (left) and performer M’Balou Camara (right) on December 5, 2025. Photo: Tedd Henn for CADVC.

shore. This shore was our collective consciousness, which was saturated with the words of Campos-Pons and the live guitar of Malaak. Accompanying them were two additional performers, whose hands and feet became percussive devices to further embed the body as a tool in this ritual space.

Love was our guiding principle, filling the room through shared fragrance, moving imagery, synchronized movement, and a kaleidoscopic soundscape. “Love” was spoken to us and with us; it was sung, and it swayed through the lines of Campos-Pons’s speech like a thread weaving the entirety of the performance with unified intention. Other sounds, the brushing of fabric against the floor, the dragging of chalk across the chalkboard as words were intuitively written and erased by the dancer duo, and small gestural movements, deeply informed the experience. These subtle sounds proved just as impactful as those made by mouths and instruments. All elements contributed to the holistic experience.

Chromesthesia was evident in the work — the colors in both “Vignettes” and “I am Soil” paired perfectly with their respective sounds. While colors, symbols, and other imagery were projected onto the screen and echoed in the few props at play, other colors danced within my mind and spirit. Purples, yellows, and cool blues offered a tranquil embrace,

pairing with the ambient and meditative soundscapes.

Through an ongoing affirmation of our connectedness through love, Campos-Pons invited reflection on love’s transformative power to quiet systems of dominance and oppression. This is the love that established societies, someone unknown and unnamed.

The love spoken of felt like a small seed planted in my heart; as the evening unfolded, it sprouted and bloomed, its petals lifting my cheeks into a long-held smile. Euphoria. The power of this performance lies in feeling as both current and material: It does not instruct emotion or prescribe response but speaks to metaphysical understanding and ignites spiritual insight. Potent sonic vibrations were packed with the love current, waves moving our minds, carrying the potential to move our world. The performance stands as a sonic site, a testament to the power of culture to awaken dormant intelligences ready to rupture adversarial enterprises once pressed on shore — through sound, in movement, and collective ritual, these intelligences and philosophies meet this current moment. They are not embedded in history through text, but are active in our bodies.

This performance, alongside “I am Soil — My Tears Are Water,” set a tone for the possibilities of the contemporary art canon and its spaces of presentation. This work,



KaMag, "I am Soil — My Tears Are Water" (2025), installed in the UMBC Fine Arts Building amphitheater as part of the CADVC Video Art Projection Series. Photo: Tedd Henn for CADVC.



KaMag (Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons and Kamaal Malak) in front of a projection screen during the performance of "Vignettes in 3 Sessions" on December 5, 2025. Photo: Tedd Henn for CADVC.

reflecting UMBC's interdisciplinary Arts+ Initiative, welcomes Indigenous knowledge systems, and other spheres of philosophy that are often siloed in a sociological container, relegated to historical narratives. In this relation, the

potent power's potential is often unrealized, feeling distant and anthropological, for study rather than embodiment. With KaMag, the ancestral is venerated and its liveliness is an invitation. This is the future of art.

Surrender, Agency, and Co-Performativity in the Work of María Magdalena Campos-Pons

Dell Marie Hamilton

My very first performance with Magda Campos-Pons happened at the tail-end of a three-day multidisciplinary symposium: “Carrie Mae Weems LIVE: Past Tense/Future Perfect” at the Guggenheim Museum, New York, during the last weekend of April 2014. The Guggenheim’s presentation of Weems’s decades-long body of work marked the museum’s first solo exhibition honoring the contributions of an African American artist. Magda’s processional performance of “Habla La Madre” (loosely translated as “the mother speaks”) served as the coda to this monumental gathering of Black artistry and self-determination.

We were living in the aftermath of the Great Recession, President Barack Obama was still in office, and in just over three months, the murder of teenager Michael Brown, in Ferguson, Missouri, would produce nightly protests and ignite the formation of the Black Lives Matter movement. In the days leading up to the event, Magda asked if I could help with the performance, and I didn’t know exactly what she had in mind. But several days later, I finally made up my mind, and I was on a Bolt bus



"A Mother's River of Tears," September 16, 2023, Brooklyn Museum. María Magdalena Campos-Pons in yellow at center, with performers including Dell Marie Hamilton at right. Photo: Naeem Douglas/Souls in Focus. Courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum.

beating a path to New York City. The ride was long and uncomfortable, and I arrived at Magda's hotel room in the middle of the night, where she selected an outfit from my packed luggage, asked me how quickly I could memorize stanzas written by poet Michael Ladd, and handed me a pair of her sandals to wear for the performance.

Amid the next morning's jittery hustle and bustle, Magda was ebullient as she commented on the enormity of the moment. She exclaimed, "We are going up!" That kind of exhortation and vision is rooted in Magda's conceptions of Black futurity, and her approach to performance is a deeply spiritual quest to baptize humanity and every site she inhabits into her cosmology of radical love.

Years later, I participated in the 2023 performance of "A Mother's River of Tears" at the Brooklyn Museum. By then, I was more familiar with her artistic references and better prepared for the trust and surrender that punctuates Magda's collaborative process. For example, the cobalt blue that coats her nude body in her Polaroid "When I Am Not Here/ Estoy Allá" (1994), evokes Yemaya, the mother of the survivors of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. In both Brooklyn's "River of Tears" and Baltimore's 2025 "Vignettes," this same blue appeared in the performance, as waves of the ocean come to life as another performer

and I hold, manipulate, wave, and wrap an unwieldy, large swatch of blue silk fabric. In another Polaroid work, "Freedom Trap" (2013), Magda's face is covered in cascarilla, white eggshell powder that is used to shield oneself from evil. As performers, we always wear white, so that we are clothed in Olukun's wisdom, purity, and protection. In both performances, Oshun's favorite color, yellow, signifies warmth and beauty, materialized through long-stemmed sunflowers that become divine implements for directing energy and bestowing blessings.

Though there were similarities between the 2023 and 2025 performances, an obvious difference between the immense 10,000-square-foot Beaux-Arts Court of the Brooklyn Museum and the compact CADVC gallery was scale. The smaller scale made "Vignettes" feel familiar and, for me, anchored in the past and the present.

In the aftermath of the twin pandemics of COVID and the injustices of state-sanctioned police violence, performers used the chalkboards in the Brooklyn performance to memorialize Black folx like George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, whose deaths mobilized Americans during that miserable summer of 2020. Also, the names of missing Indigenous women like Ashley Rosales and Ashley Morin were written on a second chalkboard to reveal how



Polaroid from "When I Am Not Here / Estoy Allá" series (1994). Polaroid Polacolor Pro 20 x 24 photograph, unframed: approx. 24 x 20 in. Image courtesy of the artist and Peg Alston / Peg Alston Fine Arts. Collection of the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth. Purchased through the Contemporary Art Fund.



Dell Marie Hamilton with María Magdalena Campos-Pons in background during the performance of “Vignettes in 3 Sessions” on December 5, 2025. Photo: Tedd Henn for CADVC.



Dell Marie Hamilton during the performance of “Vignettes in 3 Sessions” on December 5, 2025. Photo: Tedd Henn for CADVC.

their lives have barely registered in the public consciousness, and because Indigenous survivance isn't part of the history being taught in US classrooms.

Comparatively, in Baltimore, the chalkboards were focused on Trump 2.0's anti-DEI executive orders, which have resulted in the erasure of words like "queer," "allyship," "minority," "racism," "discrimination," and "marginalized" from government websites, museum wall labels, and federal grant guidelines. Coupled with the fact that the Trump administration is rewriting the narrative of what happened during the January 6, 2021, Capitol attack, I can't help but think about an Instagram clip that I came across last year of legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw's stating, "The battle for our democracy is the battle for memory."¹

As I maneuvered the easel through the CADVC gallery, I began to conceive of it as an extension of my body. My hands were covered in traces of the chalk. The delineations between the words, time, and the movement of my body no longer existed. I reflected on how the antidote to anxiety or uncertainty is to move into and through the experience with commitment and purpose. When in

doubt, always follow Magda's lead. Whether pushing the chalkboards through the gallery, wielding the sunflowers above my head, writing banned words on the chalkboard, or enveloping myself in turquoise silks, the lessons I learned from Magda both as teacher and performer allow me to embrace the uncertainty that comes with performing, which I consider a negotiation with the constraints and possibilities of time, and an opportunity to recognize the peculiarities of a given historical moment.

What you learn as a performer is that neither you nor the audience can ever truly anticipate or control what will happen next. There are no mistakes in live art. There are only conditions for learning and transformation. Risk-taking in Magda's performances is riven with a multitude of unknowns yet buttressed by the trust and agency she bestows on her collaborators. By feeling and listening intently, with and through my body, I willingly open myself to an uncanny sense of urgency, and surrender. When it all comes together, it is both the impermanence and the ritual of live art that make liberation possible and accessible to all of us.

¹ Kimberlé Crenshaw stated this thesis during "The Road to Justice," TIME 100 Impact Dinner on May 21, 2025, in Washington, DC.

KaMag is the performance collaboration between artist **María Magdalena Campos-Pons** and musician **Kamaal Malak**.

María Magdalena Campos-Pons was born in 1959 in the province of Matanzas, in the town of La Vega, Cuba. Her work is autobiographical, investigating themes of history, memory, gender and religion and the ways they inform identity. She is a MacArthur Fellow (2023) and currently serves as the Cornelius Vanderbilt Endowed Chair and Professor of Fine Arts at Vanderbilt University, where she founded the Engine for Art, Democracy & Justice Program. She also launched Intermittent Rivers, a multi-artist initiative in Matanzas, Cuba, as part of the 2019 Havana Biennial. Her work has been presented at venues including the Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University; Peabody Essex Museum; National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC; Museum of Modern Art; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; List Visual Arts Center, MIT; Pérez Art Museum; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; Johannesburg Biennial; Gwangju Biennale; Documenta; Venice Biennale; and the Brooklyn Museum.

Kamaal Malak is a multifaceted musician, producer, academic, and researcher whose career spans diverse areas of the music industry. As a bassist and songwriter with the two-time Grammy-winning group Arrested Development, they significantly influenced conscious hip-hop in the early 1990s. His versatility as an artist is further exemplified by his collaborations with country music icon Shania Twain, bridging genres and expanding his musical reach. Beyond his performance career, Malak has made significant strides in music production, blending hip-hop, electronic, and world music influences.

Contributors

Tatiana Flores is the Jefferson Scholars Foundation Edgar Shannon Distinguished Professor of Art History at the University of Virginia and the 2025–26 Helen Frankenthaler Foundation Senior Fellow at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. A scholar of modern and contemporary Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx art, she authored the widely cited article “‘Latinidad Is Cancelled’: Confronting an Anti-Black Construct” (2021) and co-edited “The Routledge Companion to Decolonizing Art History” (2024). Her recent essay “The We Within: Oceanic Imaginaries of Caribbean Art” received the 2025 Afro Latin American/Afro-Latinx Scholarship Prize.

Maleke Glee is a cultural worker, curator, writer, and professor whose practice explores the intersections of popular culture, vernacular expression, and fine art. His writing has appeared in books, exhibition catalogues, and arts journalism, and his curatorial and leadership work includes posts with the Bancker-Douglass-Tubman Museum, STABLE Arts, and The Studio Museum in Harlem. He also consults with small and midsize cultural institutions on strategic planning and community-based projects.

Dell Marie Hamilton's expansive multi-media practice includes curatorial projects as well as painting, drawing, sculpture, video, photography, and performance art, which has been featured at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Clark Art Institute, and the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College. In 2019, she was a participating artist in the **Ríos Intermittentes** exhibition curated by María Magdalena Campos-Pons for the Havana Biennial. In 2021, Hamilton received the ICA/Boston's James and Audrey Foster Prize.

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