

CATPC Renzo Martens

Cercle d'Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise was founded by plantation workers, trapped at the bottom rung of global value.



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Website:
www.visibleproject.org/blog/project/catpc-former-unilever-palm-oil-plantation-lusanga-democratic-republic-of-the-congo/

Since 2014, the cooperative has produced and exhibited figurative sculptures. The sculptures are made in clay, 3D scanned and uploaded into the cloud. They are then cast in chocolate originating from African plantations. Overwriting existing value chains, CATPC started to sell these chocolate sculptures, so far grossing \$150,000, resulting in a net profit of \$50,000. Since 2016, CATPC invests all profits into buying back land to start inclusive and ecological post-plantations. In January 2017, the cooperative opened its critically acclaimed US debut show at the SculptureCenter in New York. After this successful enterprise, CATPC member Matthieu Kasiama found himself on the front page of the NYT arts section. CATPC has also exhibited in places such as the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, Artes Mundi in Cardiff, or KunstWerke in Berlin. In all these places, the chocolate sculptures have helped European and American viewers and collectors understand the current value chains and power structures that govern us all. The next step was to repatriate the art institution back to the plantations that have historically financed them (Tate, Van Abbe and Ludwig museums have all been financed by plantation labour).

In April 2017, CATPC has inaugurated a quintessential White Cube, designed by OMA, on the former palm oil plantation of Lusanga, formerly known as Leverville, and has curated its opening exhibition. With its internet server located inside the White Cube, the former plantation has become a legitimisation machine, validating and spreading the visions for the future and strategies of resistance of all plantation workers, both in the Congo and the global South. The white cube will now host an ongoing exhibition program and educational workshops on the alternatives to monoculture or slash-and-burn agriculture, organised in collaboration with the schools of the surrounding rural region of 50.000 inhabitants. Plugged into international networks, this apex of the art world will expose inequalities, and generate the legitimacy and capital needed to design a blueprint for a social and ecological shift. Here, the art world is put to the service of a new ecological and economic model: the post-plantation.

