ARTFORUM

Bodily Rites: Ara Osterweil on the Films of Ana Mendieta

by Ara Osterweil (November 2015)

Ana Mendieta, *Moffitt Building Piece*, 1973, two 35-mm color slides.

SOMETHING IS AMISS in the first shot of Ana Mendieta's film *Moffitt Building Piece*, 1973. The image is of an ordinary white Midwestern exterior with a glass door and a storefront window, both blinkered by venetian blinds. Neither the address number (230) nor the old fashioned lettering (H. F. MOFFITT) provides much of a clue. But after a few moments, the camera tilts down to what looks like a bloodstain on the sidewalk in front of the adjoining door. The blot seems out of place, for nothing else in the scene portends violence. Before we have a chance to figure out what has happened, the camera zooms impatiently into the spill, insisting that we bear witness even as passersby do not. There isn't just liquid saturating the threshold, but grisly matter.

This is the doorway to Mendieta's apartment building in Iowa City, 1973. She has poured blood and strewn viscera at the entrance. Her sister is hidden in a parked car out front, filming the reactions of pedestrians through its window. Mendieta herself is photographing the scene. We know from the footage of both of these records that, as it turns out, nobody cares. With the exception of a young hippie couple, who pause briefly before moving on, all we get are a few passing glances. Like a hunter stalking its prey, the camera waits and watches as new pedestrians approach unaware. We cannot help but try to predict: Surely this sensible-looking man will stop. . . . Alas, he doesn't. A woman in what appears to be a nurse's uniform lingers momentarily, and we think, or hope, that she will investigate, but she just pokes at the mess with her umbrella. Cutting back to prepare for the next indifferent onlooker, the camera gives itself away, doing what amounts to a double take every time another person refuses to acknowledge the stain.

Moffitt Building Piece is one of Mendieta's earliest films. It is also one of her most cinematically complex. As in Yoko Ono and John Lennon's film Rape, 1969, Mendieta stages a troubling encounter in a public space in order to implicate the audience within and beyond the frame. Yet unlike Ono and Lennon, who hired a male camera crew to follow, film, and interrogate an unsuspecting woman until she collapsed in fear, Mendieta expunges the victim from the scene of the crime. In spite of this absence, or rather because of it, the film is as incisive a critique of gendered violence as *Rape*. Instead of making a spectacle of the abject body, the film presents the afterimage of violence as an occasion for observing the witnesses—a psychological experiment devastating in its simplicity and objective remove. In *Moffitt Building Piece*, Mendieta does not dwell on the violence of collective struggle— although the Cuban Revolution played a determining role in her own history and arrival in Iowa—but on the kinds of violence that remain occluded in the spaces of everyday life. If a woman is killed and nobody stops to notice, does it still matter? Mendieta insists that domestic forms of violence are perceptible—if anyone is willing to look. The failure of the passersby is our communal failure to acknowledge and address the suffering of those made invisible by their difference.

Created two months after the rape and murder of a fellow student at the University of Iowa, *Moffitt Building Piece* is a key work in Mendieta's oeuvre. It stages motifs that remained essential to the artist's work: the investigation of gendered violence, the perception of invisible difference, the "presence" of missing bodies, the creation of art outside traditional venues, and the use of film and photography to document the afterimages of encounters between body and world. Over the next decade, Mendieta would put the body back into the scene and then take it out again. Although she kept her films short and silent, she learned to maintain her poker face by eliminating the subjective perspective of the camera and ceding to a more neutral viewpoint. And though she jettisoned the kind of visual mediation and distance provided in *Moffitt Building Piece* by the car's windowpane, Mendieta remained ambivalent about direct encounters with the body. Over the next decade, she continued to question the imperfect evidence of being.

Much of the attention given to Mendieta's art has focused on the photographs of her earth body works. With a few notable exceptions—including the 2013 traveling exhibition "Ana Mendieta: Traces," which opened at the Hayward Gallery in London and showed more than a dozen films—comparatively little attention has been paid to her moving images. Making nearly one hundred 8-mm and 16-mm films and several videos between 1973 and 1981, Mendieta created an archive that, along with a large collection of 35-mm slides and photographic negatives, documents her radical innovations in a practice that bridges Conceptualism, body art, Land art, and feminism. Shot primarily with a Bolex Super 8 camera at eighteen frames per second, Mendieta's films are silent (and her videos, with one exception, have only ambient sound) and are usually no longer than the length of a single roll of film (approximately three minutes and twenty seconds), though her actions in the environment often lasted longer.[1] While Mendieta used both still and moving images to document her interventions, her films are uniquely capable of expressing her work's durational aspect, which is so crucial to its engagement with shifting states of indexical reference and questions of mortality.

"Covered in Time and History: The Films of Ana Mendieta," curated by Lynn Lukkas and Howard Oransky and on view at the Katherine E. Nash Gallery at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis this fall, is the largest exhibition of the artist's films ever mounted. Although the exhibition includes but a fraction of Mendieta's output—twenty-one films and twenty-six related photographs—it provides a solid foundation for understanding the work of an artist who constantly questioned both the solid and the foundational.

Four stills from Ana Mendieta's Silueta sangrienta (Bloody Silhouette), 1975, Super 8, color, silent, 1 minute 51 seconds. © The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC.

MENDIETA'S BIOGRAPHY reads like a classic tragedy—and, indeed, has attained mythic status. Born into an upper-middle-class family in Havana in 1948, the artist spent most of her life in exile from her family and homeland. In 1961, her parents sent twelve-year-old Ana and her fourteen-year-old sister Raquelín from their home to the US in order to spare them the potential terrors of Castro's regime. Their relocation was arranged through Operation Pedro Pan, which transported more than fourteen thousand youths to the US under the guardianship of the Catholic Welfare Bureau. Although the sisters were supposed to remain in Miami, they were instead sent to St. Mary's Catholic church in Dubuque, Iowa, where they were separated and spent the next few years shuttling between foster homes. Mendieta did not see her mother or her brother, both of whom stayed in Cuba, until 1966. Although her father was originally given a position in the government there, he became disillusioned and was eventually imprisoned until 1979 for engaging in counterrevolutionary activities. He died in 1983, three years after Ana, his youngest daughter, was finally able to visit Cuba, and two years before she died amid circumstances that have never been resolved.

Mendieta stayed in Iowa until 1978, spending eleven years studying at the University of Iowa before moving to New York and joining the feminist A.I.R. Gallery. Although she started as a painter, completing her MA in 1972, she soon realized that her vision and energy exceeded that medium. Immediately after finishing her first graduate degree, Mendieta embarked on an MFA at the university's brand-new multimedia and video art program, founded in 1968 by German-born artist Hans Breder, who became Mendieta's partner. Visiting artists such as Vito Acconci, Hans Haacke, Allan Kaprow, and Robert Wilson exposed students to the neo-avant-garde experiments in exhibition and performance that made the 1960s and early '70s such a revolutionary era in the history of American art.

In 1971, Mendieta accompanied one of her professors on an archaeological dig to Mexico. Her first trip back to Latin America, the visit provided an opportunity for the artist to rediscover her heritage and experience a more visceral connection to the pre-Columbian cultures she was studying. The title of the Nash Gallery show is borrowed from a 1988 interview in which she reflected on the tremendous impact of her trips to Mexico: "In 1973 I did my first piece in an Aztec tomb that was covered with weeds and grasses—that growth reminded me of time. I bought flowers at the market, lay in the tomb and was covered with white flowers. The analogy was that I was covered by time and history."[2] Of course, to be covered in time and history is to risk being buried beneath them.

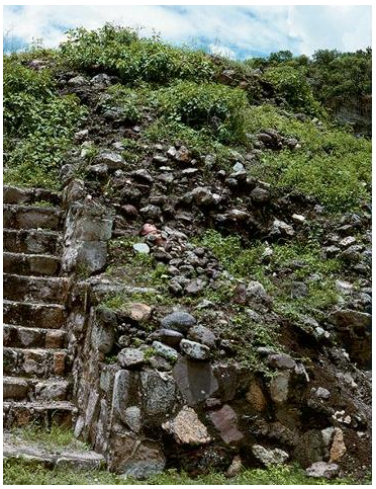
Generative burials are fundamental to Mendieta's work. From 1973 to 1980, she used her own body or a sculptural surrogate to create three-dimensional impressions of a primeval female form on the earth's surface. Whether temporarily occupied by human flesh, filled with organic matter such as blood or ash, or snaked with gunpowder and ignited, these *Siluetas* staged a dialectic between presence and absence, fullness and lack, and past and present. The most iconic suite in the artist's career, the Siluetas allegorized Mendieta's own fraught biography. At the dawn of the environmental movement, they also literalized humanity's impact on the earth and one's ephemeral place within it.

Both the *Siluetas* and Mendieta's engagement with filmmaking date from the same crucial moment. These practices are deeply connected—both were concerned with making an impression of the body on a receiving surface at a particular moment in time and space. Recalling Neolithic carvings, while simultaneously suggesting the outlines of modern crime scenes, the *Siluetas* archived the traces of fallen bodies. Yet while nearly all of the *Siluetas* have receded back into the landscape from which they were coaxed, the filmed recordings of these interventions persist. This paradox—of preserving or documenting that which is intended to disappear—not only speaks to Mendieta's history of dislocation but is central to contemporary debates about performance and the archive. As her earth-body sculptures were integrated into the landscape that surrounds them, so Mendieta's biography is embedded in her work. Her life was defined by an ongoing experience of exile. The *Siluetas* were, as she acknowledged, attempts to reclaim the sense of emplacement severed at a young age:

I have been carrying out a dialogue between the landscape and the female body (based on my own silhouette). I believe this has been a direct result of my having been torn from my homeland (Cuba) during my adolescence. I am overwhelmed by the feeling of having been cast from the womb (nature). My art is the way I re-establish the bonds that unite me to the universe.[3]

And yet, as the compulsively repeating motifs of Mendieta's work attest, profound loss is, by definition, impossible to redress. One never gets more than a temporary grasp of the ground beneath oneself. Landscapes shift; people slip away.

Whether embracing the ground with outstretched arms or blazing in a halo of lights before being enveloped by darkness, the *Siluetas* remind us that all flesh returns to the earth. Imaging the correspondence between body and world as a literal relation between figure and ground, the *Siluetas* marked an exchange characterized by a mutual, albeit transient, recognition. The artist's body made a temporary indentation in the earth that the earth reclaimed and redistributed. By carving her shallow, corporeal imprints in muddy shores, grassy fields, sandy beaches, and cave walls, Mendieta ensured their inevitable disappearance. Filled in, washed away, burned out, or grown over, the *Siluetas* participated in the ancient rites of mark-making even as they exposed the futility of humanity's attempts to reshape the world in its image. While painting and sculpture make delusional claims to immortality, the *Siluetas* captured the artist's inevitably and deliberately failed attempt to fuse human and geologic time. Though they had elements of both painting and drawing, the *Siluetas* were not objects that could be traded on the market—although photographs of them certainly are—but fugitive impressions of embodied encounters that were simultaneously ancient and modern, universal and particular.



Ana Mendieta, *Burial Pyramid*, 1974, Super 8, color, silent, 3 minutes 17 seconds.
35-mm color slide. © The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC.

MOST OF MENDIETA'S WORK was staged outdoors. (She did not have her own studio or a studio-based practice until she was awarded an American Academy fellowship in Rome in 1983 and began making more portable sculptural forms.) Like many of the artists associated with Land art, including Robert Smithson, Dennis Oppenheim, and Nancy Holt, Mendieta made interventions that were site specific. Her signature earth-body works were staged in particular locations (including the East Coast of the US, Canada, Iowa, Mexico, Indiana, and, eventually, Cuba) and were largely constructed of natural materials available in the immediate region. However, there are crucial differences between Mendieta's work and the best-known Land art pieces. While Mendieta used earth, air, fire, and water to memorialize her own sense of dislocation, the marks she left were deliberately unmonumental, though uniquely recognizable. Maintaining her work at a "human scale," Mendieta distinguished her own "Paleolithic" spirit from the "industrial" scope of the male artists working in a related vein.[4] She resisted the moniker "Earth art," just as she would resist most labels that critics attempted to affix to her.[5] Unlike Smithson's iconic Spiral Jetty, 1970—Mendieta described the artist as having "brutalized nature"—or the mysterious ruins at Stonehenge that inspired both Smithson and Mendieta's husband Carl Andre, her earthworks did not make claims to immortality or attempt to conquer nature.[6] Instead, they focused on woman's often literal attempts to find her breath under the weight of time and history.

Many, though not all, of us are lucky enough to take breathing for granted. Call it empathy or call it outrage, but when film captures certain bodies struggling to breathe—as we know all too horrifically from the documentation of recent police atrocities—we can experience a mimetic sense of anguish. What might the identifying particulars of bodies (such as race, gender, nationality, and even size) have to do with such violence?

In the incredibly poignant Burial Pyramid from August 1974, we catch sight of a supine body, almost completely covered by stones. Only the face and hair are visible. The body belongs to Mendieta. She is, for all intents and purposes, buried alive.

In *Burial Pyramid*, Mendieta engineers and then endures her own suffocation. A mountain of boulders presses down on a tiny female body—a body that is not, by any stretch of the imagination, a neutral term in this equation. The film at first seems to be a still photograph. We then notice the breeze imperceptibly moving blades of grass, the slight shake of the handheld camera. Mendieta inhales,

bringing the atmosphere into her lungs. This is survival: how a body integrates and redistributes the elements. Mendieta's chest heaves, displacing some of the smaller rocks. She breathes harder, the rhythmic extensions of her body causing one infinitesimal quake after another. Her pelvis thrusts; her legs rise and fall. A few larger rocks roll off her body, fall away.

How can you liberate your body and your legacy from the icons that entrap them? How can you make art when the eternity that succeeds us is even longer than the one that precedes us? Pace Chris Burden, one need not be shot in the arm to remind the viewer of either the vulnerability of the body or the weight of the world. For Mendieta, it is enough to exaggerate the most basic corporeal functions. Although she survived the experiment, Mendieta remains covered by a blanket of boulders when the film ends. In a 1985 interview, she recalled almost dying while making *Burial Pyramid*, although it is not clear whether it was the weight of the rocks maintained for the duration of the shoot or the worms slithering over her body that made her feel so imperiled.[7] The danger of working in stone is that you can become interred beneath it.

Like the actions she filmed, the landscapes Mendieta transformed were quotidian. Holding tight and still around the gashes her body has made in the earth, Mendieta's camera tends to capture but a few surrounding feet of unremarkable fields or shoreline. The exceptions to this pattern are telling. Shot in Yagul, Mexico, during the same month as *Burial Pyramid*, *Silueta del laberinto (Laberinth [sic] Blood Imprint)*, 1974, documents the mazelike pre Columbian ruins in the Oaxacan valley, whose dirt and gravel floor Mendieta has imprinted with blood. One of the few such works that reveal an anthropologically significant landscape, *Silueta del laberinto (Laberinth Blood Imprint)* is also the earliest film in the Nash exhibition that includes significant camera movement. Meandering through the labyrinth or shakily hovering over the stain, Mendieta's camera disorients; we, too, are lost in history's corridors. But what might this vaguely alien shape signify? How might one perceive the landscape anew or change one's course of action because of it? Like Moffitt Building Piece, *Silueta del laberinto (Laberinth Blood Imprint)* places corporeal and architectural ruins in dialogue in order to investigate how one transforms the meaning of the other. Yet here there are no witnesses to note or disregard the uncanny mark. The camera must serve as both evidence and observer; hence its slightly directionless animation. As afterimages, both the labyrinth and the spectral bloodstain radiate mysteries that cannot be anatomized. Like the ruin, the figure refuses to disclose its secrets. For an artist whose relationship to homeland and heritage had been cleaved, it is enough to attest to one's presence, however limited its duration: *Be here now*.

Or be elsewhere. Mendieta began the *Silueta* suite by pressing her nude form into the earth and documenting the indentation it made in the ground, with her body still inside the silhouette. She asked someone else (often Breder) to film and photograph the results. She arranged these scenes as tableaux, privileging the record of the event as an art object in its own right. But by 1975, Mendieta had largely stopped using her own body in front of the camera. "I decided I didn't want to be in the work anymore [because] I don't particularly like performance art," she explained:

I don't like that kind of immediacy. . . . If you have a body right there—a woman, naked— it's pretty much that and it's really a confrontation. So I just decided that the next best thing would be to have just my silhouette. So that's why there's a mark because that's the work. I wasn't really there.[8]

Shot in November 1975 in Iowa City, *Silueta sangrienta (Bloody Silhouette)* condenses this crucial transformation into a single film. Mendieta uses editing to effectively bend our perception of time: First, we glimpse a silhouette occupied by the artist's naked, upturned body; suddenly, it is empty; then it is

filled with red liquid that resembles blood. She's not there, and then she is again. The final shot captures her lying facedown in the bloodlike pool, light shimmering on her back. *Silueta sangrienta* illustrates not only the instability of the subject but also how fluidly the artist moved from an expression of the particular experience of a body to a more universal exploration of loss, then back to an investigation of gendered violence. The durational medium of cinema can reveal the nuances of these vacillations in ways that the frozen medium of photography cannot.

Once Mendieta stopped being in the *Siluetas*, she was able to shoot them herself. Although she did not consider herself a performance artist or a filmmaker, it is difficult to discuss her work without invoking these terms. Performance is unique for its liveness—it is contingent on both the artist's and the audience's presence. Performance theorist Peggy Phelan has famously argued that

performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. . . . Performance's being, like the ontology of subjectivity proposed here, becomes itself through disappearance.[9]

By making film and photography essential parts of her practice, Mendieta complicated the immediacy of presence promised by performance. Staged for the camera rather than for any live observer-participants, the earth-body works engage deeply and deliberately with absence. One can only apprehend Mendieta's work through recorded traces that are intended to linger even as the earthly remains disappear. These traces emerge in the form of three ghostly images: the ground on which Mendieta's body or proxy lies, the photographic print that captures it as a single moment, and the celluloid strip or videotape that records it as a durational event. As Amelia Jones and other scholars have argued, these traces "flaunt the body itself as loss or lack" by denying it the self-sufficiency of presence.[10]

Of course, photography and cinema have radically different natures from performance, although they have both been framed in compelling relation to the body. French film theorist André Bazin famously considered the photograph to be an indexical sign because of its evidentiary relationship to the thing photographed. Comparing photograph to fingerprint, Bazin argued that there was an unbreakable carnal bond between the photograph and its subject. After all, light bouncing off the subject's body produces the impression on the emulsion that produces the photograph. For Bazin, the photograph is "the object itself."[11] Roland Barthes put it even more startlingly, calling a photograph "an emanation of the referent":

From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here; the duration of the transmission is insignificant; the photograph of the missing being, as Sontag says, will touch me like the delayed rays of a star. A sort of umbilical cord links the body of the photographed thing to my gaze: light, though impalpable, is here a carnal medium.[12]

Photography's umbilical link to the body is part of the magic that Mendieta came to believe painting lacked. Her films are profoundly carnal media. If all photography is about the imprint of bodies, Mendieta's images go still further; they are about the imprint of bodies on the earth. Whereas Barthes made a hard distinction between photography and film, Mendieta used both media to communicate aspects of our doomed love affair with time. Her photographs reify the encounter between body and earth into still, archetypal images. In contradistinction, even when Mendieta's films manipulate time, they foreground the duration and transience of this unpredictable exchange. These films lack the crisp

iconicity of her better-known photographs. But it is precisely their fluid imperfections that lend the films the most resonance in the discourse of ephemerality at the heart of Mendieta's work.

Nowhere is this distinction more astonishing than in the pieces Mendieta executed in fire. *Ánima, silueta de cohetes (Firework Piece)*, a combustible effigy of a standing female figure that Mendieta made in Oaxaca in the summer of 1976, created a searing still image of burning lights. In the filmed version, however, we are able to watch the figure burn from the moment it lights up until after it languishes. How else might we be so moved by the way the "heart" of the figure smolders longest, illuminating the dark hedge of the mountain range until, finally, nothing of the world remains visible? In Mendieta's most haunting firework films, the camera lingers on the remains after the pyrotechnic event has ended, and we are left to contemplate the persistence of geologic time after human time has been extinguished.

Ana Mendieta, Chicken Movie, Chicken Piece, 1972, 35-mm color slide.

The silence of Mendieta's films only emphasizes their engagement with the temporal limits of mortality; as in *Moffitt Building* Piece, the *Siluetas* conjure bodies that can no longer speak for themselves and disappearances that have no warning cry or fiery crackle.When I finally watched Mendieta's only video with an edited sound track, *Ochún*, shot on U-matic videotape in 1981, I was as startled by the sound of screeching gulls and lapping waves as I would have been by a corpse suddenly sitting up in its coffin and singing.

It is the last moving-image work Mendieta ever made.

LIKE MOST OF MENDIETA'S ART, the *Siluetas* aim to make reparation through acts of violence. Only by gashing the earth can the artist heal the wounds inflicted by her displacement from mother and motherland. Although visible in just a handful of films at the Nash Gallery, such blunt trauma is a crucial part of the artist's oeuvre. Staged the same year that Mendieta commenced the *Siluetas* and *Moffitt Building* Piece, in the immediate aftermath of the 1973 murder of a fellow Iowa student, both *Rape* and *Rape Scene* implicate viewers as legal witnesses and potential voyeurs. In *Rape Scene*, friends and fellow artists were invited to Mendieta's apartment only to discover the artist tied to a table with rope, her lower body naked and smeared with blood. Similarly, visitors to *Rape* found, as scholar Julia Bryan-Wilson has described, Mendieta splayed out in the woods over a fallen log, bleeding as if left for dead in a debased version of Marcel Duchamp's *Étant donnés*, 1946–66, and its voyeuristic scene. Casting herself as the object of violence as well as the gaze, Mendieta became the abject other as a way of carrying forth the dead.[13]

One notable absence in the Nash exhibition is Mendieta's film *Chicken Movie, Chicken Piece*, 1972, in which the artist is handed a just-decapitated chicken, whose twitching corpse sprays blood all over her nude body. It is a troubling image, for the bloodletting is not artificially staged, and the chicken's death is not metaphoric. Well before the prevalence of smartphones and surveillance video made the evidentiary recording of random acts of violence commonplace—and the irreversibility of their outcomes that much more disturbing—Mendieta's film demonstrated the medium's narrative power to record such encounters.

However preliminary and unusual, this work transforms the way we understand Mendieta's corpus, for it reminds us that real violence, in addition to metaphoric loss, is at stake. There is a danger in navigating too cautiously around such indexical provocations, just as there is a danger of reducing her work to a single, if endlessly variable, icon. Whereas many pieces demonstrate Mendieta's abiding obsession with blood, none remind us quite so insistently that this very red and quite photogenic fluid drains from inside the body. Jean-Luc Godard famously described the sanguine palette of his *Pierrot le fou* (1965) as not "blood" but "red"; in *Chicken Movie, Chicken Piece*, the effusive spray is both. (This was not always the case in Mendieta's work, as we have seen; she used pigment paint as well as animal blood.) When she removed the body from inside the *Siluetas*, she allowed viewers access to the universal anima of her work. The chicken's real-time, spectacular expiration is an insistent reminder that Mendieta was only able to access the mysteries of the soul by going through the body first.

If it is impossible to perceive Mendieta's work without meditating on mortality, then it has become equally impossible to speak of the artist without considering the circumstances of her death. Myths involve the hero or heroine tripping up on a fate that they have persistently attempted to avoid, and Mendieta's death in early September 1985—she supposedly fell out of her apartment window after a fight with Andre—provokes such promiscuous interpretations. After all, how can one avoid thinking of the imprint Mendieta's body made on the roof below in relation to her haunting silhouettes or to her investigation of gendered violence? In a miscarriage of law enforcement, the police never photographed Mendieta's corpse; for an artist so committed to indexing the tracks of recumbent bodies, this strikes me as particularly uncanny.

Of course, the danger of reading the tragedy of the artist's death metaphorically is that to do so considers the victimization of women and the apotheosis of tragic biography over achievement as inevitable. Mendieta's work rages against such complacency. One of the magical insights of *Chicken Movie, Chicken Piece* is that beings remain animated long after they are dead. And so Mendieta's work has continued to signify its vital matter. As her films remind us in their inconspicuous durée, absence can often feel like the most conspicuous form of presence.

"Covered in Time and History: The Films of Ana Mendieta" is on view through Dec. 12 at the Katherine E. Nash Gallery, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; travels to the NSU Art Museum, Fort Lauderdale, FL, Feb. 28–July 3, 2016; University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Nov. 9, 2016–Feb.12, 2017.

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NOTES

1. Mendieta used 16 mm for two short, silent works: *Energy Charge and Source*, both 1975.

2. Ana Mendieta, "An Interview with Ana Mendieta by Linda Montano," *Sulfur*, no. 22 (Spring 1988): 66.

3. John Perreault, "Earth and Fire: Mendieta's Body of Work," in *Ana Mendieta: A Retrospective*, ed. Petra Barreras del Rio and Perreault (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1988), 10.

4. Ana Mendieta, "Joan Marter and Ana Mendieta in Conversation (edited excerpt)" (February 1, 1985), in *Ana Mendieta: Traces*, ed. Stephanie Rosenthal (London: Hayward Publishing, 2014), 231.

5. Channing Gray, "Earth Art: Ana Mendieta Looks into the Past to Find Our Relationship with Nature," *Providence Journal-Bulletin*, April 21, 1984.

6. Mendieta, "Joan Marter and Ana Mendieta in Conversation," 231.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., 230.

9. Peggy Phelan, Unmarked: *The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), 146.

10. Amelia Jones, *Body Art/Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 34.

11. André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image" (1945), in *What Is Cinema?*, vol. 1, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 14.

12. Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida: *Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 80–81.

13. Julia Bryan-Wilson, "Against the Body: Interpreting Ana Mendieta," in *Ana Mendieta: Traces*, 26–37.