

ecofeminism(s):

A Closer Look at Ana Mendieta's *Bacayu* (Light of Day)

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“Allá cuando se muere la tierra que nos cubre habla”
(*In Cuba when you die / the earth that covers you / Speaks*)
—Ana Mendieta, 1981

A solitary photograph by Cuban artist Ana Mendieta hangs on the far wall of the Thomas Erben Gallery, a modest-sized gallery in New York's Chelsea art district, in June 2020. The photograph, entitled *Bacayu* (Light of Day) [1981/2019], is part of *ecofeminism(s)*: an exhibition showcasing the development of ecofeminist art through a selection of cutting-edge works created by sixteen women artists between 1970 and 2020. Incised into limestone from a natural cave and outlined with coal-like pigment, the photograph renders visible the contour of a female form amidst the rugged landscape from which it derives. Like her famed *Silueta* series (1973-80), Mendieta references her body in *Bacayu* while remaining visibly absent; the work's eventual decay subverts the tradition of permanence characteristic of land art. As site-specific earthwork, photograph, and performance, *Bacayu*, (and much of Mendieta's oeuvre) exists between genres, evading categorization. Using various feminisms: ecofeminism, postcolonial feminism, and post-structural feminism, in conjunction with a critical curatorial approach, I will argue the inclusion of *Bacayu* within *ecofeminism(s)* highlights the importance of absence, ephemerality, and uncategorizably for present-day (eco)feminist art.

I do not intend for this essay to serve as an additional piece of biographical writing on Mendieta's already well-documented career. Rather, I aim to examine Mendieta's place within a contemporary exhibition of women artists whose works recount the development of ecofeminism and eco-art. Not only do I seek to tell a brief history of ecofeminist artists that is ongoing, but I also situate Mendieta's practice within a new category, among a new group of artists carefully selected by *ecofeminism(s)*'s curator, Monika Fabijanska.

The term “ecofeminism” first appeared in 1974 in *Le féminisme ou la mort* by the activist and writer Françoise d'Eaubonne and came into use during the second-wave feminist movement of the 1970s.¹ It is both a theoretical and activist movement that draws from ecology and seeks to end the oppression of women and nature by patriarchal systems. Ecofeminism has various definitions which continue to evolve today. For Janis Birkeland, an ecofeminist environmental planner, ecofeminism is “the logical conclusion of feminism that ‘theorizes the interrelations among self, societies, and nature.’”² More broadly, author and art critic Eleanor Heartney claims “ecofeminism needs to be thought of as a philosophy of interconnectivity” between all living things.³ Above all, Nancy Howell, professor of Theology and Philosophy of Religion, writes that ecofeminism “recognizes that historical ideological association of women and nature has not been advantageous for either women or nature.”⁴

Bacayu (Figure 1) is one of several cave sculptures Mendieta made as part of her *Esculturas*

Rupestres (Rupestrian Sculptures) series during her first visit back to her native Cuba in July of 1981, almost thirty years prior to the opening of *ecofeminism(s)*.⁵ For this series, Mendieta carved ten female silhouettes inspired by *Taíno* goddesses, the pre-Columbian inhabitants of the West Indies, into various natural caves in Jaruco State Park in Havana, Cuba.⁶ At the particular site where *Bacayu* was created, the limestone was much harder, and Mendieta was searching for shapes that already existed in the stone rather than carving directly into the cave walls. *Bacayu* differs from the rest of the series for this reason. Mendieta then painted over her etched lines in a deep black pigment and photographed each of the works in high contrast black and white film using a medium format camera.⁷ Foliage creeps around the anthropomorphic form of *Bacayu*, propped up at an angle at the center of the photograph. Stark daylight hits both the figure and the rocks behind it, creating a dialogue between the sculpture and the materiality of its surrounding environment. According to Mendieta's niece, who gave a talk as part of the online programming for *ecofeminism(s)*, "the larger camera allowed her to, for the first time, present her work at the size she wanted, in a way that felt like you were there."⁸ The scale of the photographs can be seen in an image where Mendieta stands with another sculpture, *Guabancex* (1982), at the first exhibition of the *Rupestrian Sculptures* at A.I.R. Gallery only months after the series was created.⁹ The silhouette carved into the cave wall is about the same size as Mendieta's small frame.

Early ecofeminist art took root in the 1960s when women began to take action against their exclusion from the male-dominated art market.¹⁰ Alongside conceptual art and spiritual feminism, ecofeminist art emerged as an experimental sub-category of creative expression, pushing beyond the confines of the gallery walls.¹¹ Broad in historical scope yet thematically precise, *ecofeminism(s)*, curated by art historian Monika Fabijanska, brought together "pioneers" of ecofeminist art such as Agnes Denes, Barbara Kruger, and Betsy Damon, and a new generation of artists like Mary Mattingly, Carla Maldonado, and Jessica Segall.¹² Damon's *The Memory of Clean Water* (1985), a monumental cast of the dried Castle Creek riverbed in Utah dominates one wall; black and white photographs from Denes' performance *Rice/Tree/Burial* (1977-79), the first piece by a female artist associated with environmentalism, hangs inconspicuously to its right. Fabijanska includes these works and Kruger's exhibition catalog *We Won't Play Our Nature to Your Culture* (1983), to accompany *Bacayu* as foundational early ecofeminist works. In her curatorial statement, Fabijanska notes that the political climate of the early 1970s were charged with "growing concerns about limited resources, nuclearization, pollution, and over-population" which encouraged "new artistic languages" to come to the fore.¹³ As such, Fabijanska asks us to consider the following question: "If the ecofeminist art of the 1970s and 1980s was largely defined by Goddess art, ritual performances, ... and feminist land art, what makes female environmental artists working today ecofeminists?"¹⁴

Challenges arise when attempting to synthesize ecofeminist artistic practice: Fabijanska notes she struggled to "separate" the works in the exhibition from "Goddess art."¹⁵ Meanwhile, curatorial decisions were also made to open the exhibition to broader definitions. In her review for *Flash Art*, Linda Weintraub writes, "The lower case 'e' in the title provides insight into the curatorial premise....Fabijanska...employed this linguistic device to acknowledge that the term 'ecofeminism' may be too disparate to merit capitalizing as an art movement."¹⁶ Thus,

Fabijanska makes an effort *not* to define the term ‘ecofeminism’ as it is used in the exhibition, and instead lists four characteristics of ecofeminist art:

1. Subscription to the notion of spiritual feminism which proposes to end the dualism between nature and culture, body and mind, male and female, and traditional gender roles.
2. Rooting in the understanding that the abuse of women, native people, and nature are all grounded in the same patriarchal philosophy and religion.
3. Radical opposition to painting and monumentalism motivated by the rejection of women by the art market and inspired by ecological consciousness.
4. Abandonment of traditional art spaces in favor of creating works in situ.¹⁷

Noting how conceptions of gender have changed drastically since the 1970s, Fabijanska states *ecofeminism(s)* was conceived as a research project: rather than proposing one answer to what ecofeminism could be, she instead extends an invitation “to contemplate what women were saying fifty years ago [about gender] that we maybe did not listen to.”¹⁸ This framework, which serves as a technology of curation, “is particularly resonant in the era of the #MeToo Movement and Climate Change”; ecofeminist values become particularly relevant within today’s political climate.¹⁹ But what does Fabijanska’s framework include and exclude from the exhibition? It is possible her framework would omit earlier works by Mendieta such as *Untitled (Rape Scene)* which does not place woman’s association with nature at the center of its narrative. Using *Bacayu* as an entry point, I build on Fabijanska’s ongoing research project. The curation of *Bacayu* concerning the works in its immediate proximity in the gallery, and relative to the other artists in the exhibition, situate her work within the history of ecofeminist art, as well as the ecological and political climate of the present day.

Within *ecofeminism(s)*, *Bacayu* was placed on the wall behind *Cedar Forest* (1989), the minimalist sculptural work of Turkish artist Bilge Friedlaender, who shares a similar biography of exile with Mendieta. Mendieta’s life was marked by a tumultuous upbringing. Born in Havana in 1948, Mendieta and her sister were sent to the United States by their parents as part of Operation Peter Pan, a program that rescued Cuban children from the Castro Revolution.²⁰ After moving between foster homes and boarding schools for many years, Mendieta enrolled in the Multimedia and Video Arts Program at the University of Iowa where she studied under German American artist Hans Breder and experimented with body art, earth art, video, photography, and performance.²¹ There, she created *Untitled (Rape Scene)* (1973), a performance and series of photographs made in response to the rape and murder of a student at her university, and one of her first works to directly engage with violence against women. After graduating, she would make New York her home, working in circles which included the conceptualist writer and critic Lucy Lippard, her close friend Carolee Schneemann, Mary Beth Edelson of A.I.R. Gallery, and Minimalist artist Carl Andre, whom she later married.²² In 1981 Mendieta was finally permitted to return to Cuba where she carved the *Rupestrian Sculptures*. Similarly, Friedlaender created *Cedar Forest* for the Istanbul Biennial as representative of her return to Turkey after forty years in the United States²³ Fabijanska intentionally places the work of Friedlaender and Mendieta in

dialogue in *ecofeminism(s)* to highlight their biographies. In 1985, at age 36, Mendieta fell to her death from the 34th floor of her Mercer Street apartment in Manhattan.²⁴ Tried and acquitted, it has never been known for certain if Andre pushed her.

Mendieta's life and work have been studied and written about extensively. The breadth of material on Mendieta is likely the result of the influence of coinciding movements of performance art, land art, body art, conceptualism, feminism, and minimalism in her work, which allows for it to be written about in various subject areas of art history.²⁵ However, according to Olga Viso, curator of "Ana Mendieta: Earth Body, Sculpture and Performance 1972-1985," "her story has never been presented objectively."²⁶ Much of the scholarship on Mendieta centers around her ruptured childhood, marriage to Andre, and tragic death, which has contributed to the sensationalism of Mendieta's career. She chose the location of the *Rupestrian Sculptures* due to its rich history as both an important site during the civil war, and for Indigenous worship, and wanted to inscribe her own story within the landscape as well.²⁷ By etching out land once subject to the political unrest of the Castro Revolution, and naming the sculptures in the series after the goddesses of *Taíno*, Mendieta places her identity and the Indigenous people of Cuba at the center of her work.

The main criticism of ecofeminism (and ecofeminist art) is that it is essentialist. The theory aligns women with nature, and in many ways reinforces the male-female binary. Ecofeminist writer, scholar, and activist Greta Gaard writes, "Many believed ecofeminism would become feminism's 'third wave,' building on and transforming the anthropocentric critiques of first- and second-wave feminisms with an ecological perspective."²⁸ This was not the case. Despite its interdisciplinary foundations and breadth of definitions, ecofeminism became reduced by poststructuralist and other third-wave feminisms to merely an essentialist outlook equating women with nature.²⁹

It is rather easy to read *Bacayu* and much of Mendieta's work as essentialist. Throughout her career, Mendieta was heavily inspired by the visual culture of African, Afro-Cuban, and Taíno Afro-Cuban religiosity, and using this language, she frequently aligned the female body with the earth.³⁰ The *Rupestrian Sculptures* represent Mendieta's desire to "return to the maternal breasts" of her homeland; several of the caves even have a reddish interior from the limestone, arguably tying them to the womb of the maternal body.³¹ For Mark Cheetham and Elizabeth Harvey, professors of Art History and English at the University of Toronto, these factors cause us to read the carvings "as references to a universal maternal presence."³² In their text "Obscure Imaginings: Visual Culture and the Anatomy of Caves", Cheetham and Harvey put forth an argument that furthers an essentialist reading of not only the *Rupestrian Sculptures*, but of Mendieta's earlier *Silueta* series as well. They write, "we now consider Mendieta's *Rupestrian Sculptures* and her *Silueta* series in relation to the Kristevan anterior cave...and to Irigaray's call to represent the unsymbolizable mother-daughter relationship [...] She simultaneously invokes the materiality of the earth and the female body."³³ On the other hand, art historian Ellen Tepfer calls for a re-examination of the feminist work of Mendieta in order to illuminate the problems of the essentialism/anti-essentialism binary.³⁴ Tepfer notes that due to her engagement with imagery of the "Great Goddess", Mendieta has been assigned an essentialist role within feminist art history; her work is too often grouped with essentialist "goddess" works like the Fertile

Goddess plate in Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* (1974–1979).³⁵ Mendieta avoided being categorized in precisely this way, and by placing *Bacayu* within ecofeminism(s), Fabijanska attempts to separate her work from Goddess art once and for all.

In her text “Ana Mendieta and Carl Andre: Duet of Leaf and Stone,” independent curator Laura Roulet describes Mendieta as a “vanguard artist of multiculturalism who criticized American feminism for being ‘basically a white middle-class movement,’ which failed to recognize women of color.”³⁶ Denouncing the overt whiteness of second-wave feminism, Mendieta felt isolated and tokenized within New York’s feminist artist circles due to her ethnic identity, something that Roulet argues may have encouraged her to give up her membership at A.I.R. Gallery.³⁷ Despite being born into a “white” Cuban family, Mendieta’s lived experience as a displaced child in the U.S. “made her feel anything but white,” and she likely felt the repercussions of women’s exclusion from galleries more so than her white female contemporaries.³⁸ Furthermore, art historian Susan Best names Mendieta a subscriber to essentialist “feminized nature” which she utilizes innovatively: not only to condemn patriarchal culture but to resist “colonialist conceptions of land and territory.”³⁹ In this vein, it may be advantageous to understand Mendieta’s oeuvre using postcolonial feminist philosopher and literary theorist, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s notion of strategic essentialism.

According to Raksha Pande, Professor of Geography at Newcastle University, strategic essentialism “can be understood as a deconstructive strategy of representation that involves taking the risk of adopting an essentialist position with respect to identity categories...in order to mobilize a collective consciousness for achieving a set of chosen political ends.”⁴⁰ For Spivak, the use of essentialism becomes strategic because it is “self-conscious.”⁴¹ In other words, the intentional, temporary use of essentialism can drive home arguments put forth by advocates of multiculturalism, feminism, and other identity-based movements.⁴² Although Spivak no longer finds strategic essentialism productive, claiming that “like most strategies...it has served its purpose,” adopting a strategic essentialist standpoint when studying Mendieta’s work not only illuminates her desire to criticize oversights of second-wave feminism, it also reveals how she may have been employing essentialist dualisms to make a larger statement about her experience of displacement, her tokenization as a Latina artist, and the feeling of returning home.⁴³

In her article “Francesca Woodman’s Photography: Death and the Image One More Time,” Peggy Phelan includes a quote by the art critic Rosalind Krauss, who asks, “is it possible to photograph something that doesn’t exist?”⁴⁴ Though Mendieta and Woodman came from very different backgrounds, they share several intriguing biographical and practice-based similarities: both were working during feminism’s second wave, engaged with elements of performance, spent time in Rome, were enraptured by mysticism, angels, and deities, and both died prematurely in New York in the early 1980s.⁴⁵ Their deaths have been treated very differently — the mystery of Mendieta’s death tends to saturate all discussion of her career, while Woodman’s suicide has been tip-toed around by Krauss and Abigail Solomon-Godeau.⁴⁶

Writing in the year *Bacayu* was created (also the year of Woodman’s death), Roland Barthes suggests in *Camera Lucida* that portrait photography “creates a rehearsal for death.”⁴⁷ If Mendieta’s *Rupestrian Sculptures* draw any similarity to her earlier *Siluetas* series, in that the

silhouettes are modeled off her female form, one might argue her photographs of the carvings can be understood as portraits of Mendieta herself. Best claims the *Siluetas* series “is not just concerned with traces of the body or the absence of the body...but it also includes the body itself.”⁴⁸ For Tepfer, Mendieta’s *Siluetas* are often “read as an eerie foreshadowing of her dead body lying still” after falling from her apartment window, allegedly at the hands of her husband, Carl Andre.⁴⁹ Furthermore, for Barthes “a photograph inserts the past within the present” and the simultaneous presence of past and present within a photograph “links it with theatre.”⁵⁰ Its theatricality comes from the viewer’s ability to see and be seen by the dead.⁵¹ In *ecofeminism(s)*, Fabijanska inserts Mendieta’s now-historical work within the context of a contemporary exhibition, and like photography’s theatricality, allows the “future viewer” to address, and be addressed, by Mendieta’s absence through death.⁵²

The act of vanishing serves as a powerful tool in feminist art. As a post-structural feminist, Phelan’s essay reveals Woodman and Mendieta’s shared success in staging “disappearing acts,” and their refusal to be summoned to “be still” for the male gaze.⁵³ Woodman negates the spectator’s gaze in *Some Disordered Interior Geometries* (1981) (Figure 2) while seeking out a “gaze that might help her square the unsolved equations on which she stages these images.”⁵⁴ Similar to Mendieta’s placement of female silhouettes with cavernous sites, Woodman too photographed herself climbing inside walls, headstones, and caves, to flee from the frame, from herself, and the viewer’s gaze.⁵⁵ In addition to ghostly visions of female goddesses or her silhouette, Mendieta’s *Rupestrian Sculptures* are “phantom vehicles for a history of a disappeared people.”⁵⁶

Not only does Mendieta negate the male gaze through the absence of her body, but the ephemerality of her sculptures also subverts the tradition of permanence established by (male) Land artists before her. As ephemeral ritualistic performances, Mendieta’s earlier *Siluetas* series, and the *Rupestrian Sculptures* too, were intended to disappear. However, the *Rupestrian Sculptures* have been afforded longer — but not quite eternal — lives in stone. Mendieta’s desire for her works to return to the earth, to leave no trace, differs from the motives of Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer, and other Land artists working in the U.S. throughout the 1970s and 80s. Mendieta was known to have drawn inspiration from Smithson in particular — introduced to his work while at the University of Iowa.⁵⁷ According to Cheetham and Harvey, the most influential element of Smithson’s work for Mendieta’s oeuvre “is his theory of the ‘non-site’, a place once occupied by something but which is emptied in the wake of its excavation or quarrying.”⁵⁸ In Mendieta’s case, the “entropic landscape is marked by loss, exile, eviction,” and for Cheetham and Harvey, “it is this sense of vestige and loss, rather than a sense of reunion with the national or maternal body, that distinguishes both the *Siluetas* series and the *Rupestrian Sculptures*.”⁵⁹ The latter persist, for they signify a long-awaited reunion, one Mendieta likely wanted to prolong for as long as the earth would allow.⁶⁰

Rather than moving 6,000 tons of earth as Smithson did for *Spiral Jetty* (1970) or spending over 50 years constructing Heizer’s *City* (1970-ongoing), Mendieta and other female land artists in *ecofeminism(s)* like Damon and Denes demonstrate an appreciation and respect for the earth.⁶¹ In line with Fabijanska’s aforementioned framework, these artists abandoned the gallery space in favor of creating site-specific works. Mendieta’s environmentally friendly earth art persists today

as a new branch of environmental art called eco art, represented in *ecofeminism(s)* in more recent works such as Mary Mattingly's performance, *Life of Objects* (2013) (Figure 3) in which she pushes her belongings through the streets to critique the mass-production of consumer goods. Like Mendieta's oeuvre, Mattingly's performance, documented in photos and a film, sits astride genres such as sculpture, film, and photography.

If we view land art as the result of a type of performance, one that is created with the body at a particular site, then Mendieta's performances are often too fleeting, too impermanent to be comparable to the impenetrable structures of Smithson and Heizer. Arguably, the *Rupestrian Sculptures* turn this trend upside down. Feminist philosopher Mariana Ortega claims the incision in stone of the *Rupestrian Sculptures* exhibits more permanence relative to Mendieta's other works.⁶² For example, the passing between states of completeness in Mendieta's *Siluetas* series might be understood as representative of her identity in exile and the in-betweenness she felt throughout her life.⁶³ However, Viso notes that despite the use and reference to her body in her earthworks, despite their performative nature, Mendieta did not view her works as 'performance,' particularly because "she did not require an audience or public platform for the work to be activated or completed."⁶⁴ And although Mendieta "drew from land and performance art... she was clear that her work was neither."⁶⁵ In resisting categorization by crossing disciplines, she is awarded a legacy of disputes over categorization. Mendieta's intentionally absent body and refusal to be categorized persists beyond her death as a powerful protest.

But after all this time, do the *Rupestrian Sculptures* still exist? This is the question research-based artist Elise Rasmussen found herself asking in 2011 after reading sources from the Guggenheim Museum, Cuban scholar José Quiroga, and the Ludwig Foundation from the mid2000s which stated the sculptures had been destroyed.⁶⁶ In 2012, Rasmussen traveled to Cuba in search of the sculptures, or at least some remnant of their existence. To her surprise, she found several of the works, including *Bacayu*, to be very much intact. The result is *Finding Ana* (2012)

(Figure 4), a series of large-scale color photographs of the caves at Jaruco. Aware of Rasmussen's project, the Estate of Ana Mendieta finally requested that the Guggenheim change the language on their website to include the correct information in the Spring of 2020. This project reveals discrepancies in authoritative literature on Mendieta, which has no doubt influenced public perception about the impermanence of the *Rupestrian Sculptures* for almost two decades.⁶⁷

Nonetheless, the sculptures will disappear in time, and all that will remain are the photographs to document the work's existence in stone. Tepfer writes, "Mendieta used the effect of the photographic image to transform the moment of the temporary structure into something still and permanent, while at the same time insisting on its transiency and imminent disappearance."⁶⁸ Like many Land and performance artists, Mendieta relied on photographs to serve as both documentation and display of her work. Due to its dimensions and date of production, *Bacayu* is likely a gelatin silver print — an analogous process involving the use of chemicals and elements that speak to the natural subject matter in the image. The possibility also exists that this is an archival inkjet print, entailing a highly automated development process that is at odds with the

materiality of the original work. It is difficult to be certain without viewing the photograph in situ, and Mendieta's estate does not specify.

Although ecofeminism emerged more than fifty years ago, it remains one of the lesser-known areas of contemporary art.⁶⁹ The strategies of absence, ephemerality, and a reluctance to be categorized, employed by Mendieta, persist in the work of today's generation of ecofeminist artists. Not only does *Bacayu* exemplify ecofeminism's early foundations, but Mendieta's biography and uncategorizability also reverberate throughout the exhibition. The desire to exist beyond conventional categories of art is precisely what Fabijanska's curatorial framework signals. Using Spivak's postcolonial feminism and Phelan's post-structural feminism to analyze *Bacayu* makes it clear that "radical opposition" and "abandonment" are part of Mendieta's playbook. The timing of *ecofeminism(s)* is no coincidence. As the climate remains in crisis and a global pandemic rages, Fabijanska invites us "to contemplate what women were saying fifty years ago that we maybe did not listen to," encouraging us to remember ecofeminism's foundations and recognize its value for the present moment.⁷⁰

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- ¹ Howell, "Ecofeminism: What One Needs to Know," 232.
- ² Monika Fabijanska, "ecofeminism(s): Zoom Conversations - Part III | moderated by curator Monika Fabijanska," Thomas Erben Gallery, July 22, 2020, YouTube video, 1:32:08, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvVp0mi2xXQ>.
- ³ Howell, "Ecofeminism: What One Needs to Know," 232.
- ⁴ Monika Fabijanska, "Curator's Essay: ecofeminism(s)," *Thomas Erben Gallery*, June 2020, <https://www.thomaserben.com/exhibitions/ecofeminisms/>.
- ⁵ Bonnie Clearwater and Ana Mendieta, *Ana Mendieta: A Book of Works* (Miami Beach, Fla: Grassfield Press, 1993), front cover.
- ⁶ Monika Fabijanska, "ecofeminism(s): Zoom Conversations - Part IV | moderated by curator Monika Fabijanska," Thomas Erben Gallery, October 3, 2020, YouTube video, 1:30:41, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJumsHw69_k.
- ⁷ Fabijanska, "ecofeminism(s): Zoom Conversations - Part IV."
- ⁸ Fabijanska, "ecofeminism(s): Zoom Conversations - Part IV."
- ⁹ Fabijanska, "Curator's Essay: ecofeminism(s)." ¹¹ Fabijanska, "Curator's Essay: ecofeminism(s)."
- ¹² Fabijanska, "Curator's Essay: ecofeminism(s)."
- ¹³ Fabijanska, "Curator's Essay: ecofeminism(s)."
- ¹⁴ Fabijanska, "Curator's Essay: ecofeminism(s)."
- ¹⁵ Fabijanska, "ecofeminism(s): Zoom Conversations - Part III."
- ¹⁶ Linda Weintraub, "'ecofeminism(s)' Thomas Erben Gallery / New York," *Flash Art*, August 4, 2020. <https://flash---art.com/2020/08/ecofeminisms-thomas-erben-gallery-new-york/>.
- ¹⁷ The above list has been paraphrased from: Monika Fabijanska, "ecofeminism(s): Zoom Conversations - Part IV."
- ¹⁸ Fabijanska, "ecofeminism(s): Zoom Conversations - Part III."
- ¹⁹ Fabijanska, "Curator's Essay: ecofeminism(s)."
- ²⁰ Monika Fabijanska, "Thomas Erben Gallery Presents Exhibition Walkthrough with Curator Monika Fabijanska." Thomas Erben Gallery, July 20, 2020, Instagram video, 54:14, <https://www.instagram.com/tv/CC2ySuaFMDg/>.
- ²¹ Ellen Tepfer, "The Presence of Absence: Beyond the 'Great Goddess' in Ana Mendieta's *Silueta Series*," *Women & Performance* 12, no. 2 (January 1, 2002): 239; Ben Tufnell, *Land Art*, (London: Tate, 2006), 70.
- ²² Kat Griefen, "Ana Mendieta at A.I.R. Gallery, 1977-82," *Women & Performance* 21, no. 2 (July 1, 2011): 171.
- ²³ Fabijanska, "Curator's Essay: ecofeminism(s)."
- ²⁴ Galerie Lelong & Co., "Press Release: ANA MENDIETA: *La Tierra Habla (The Earth Speaks)* October 17 – November 16, 2019," accessed 10 October 2020,

<https://www.galerielelong.com/exhibitions/ana-mendieta5/installation-views?view=slider>.

²⁵ Laura Roulet, "Ana Mendieta and Carl Andre: Duet of Leaf and Stone," *Art journal (New York. 1960)* 63, no. 3 (September 1, 2004):

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²⁶ Leslie Camhi, "ART; Her Body, Herself," *New York Times*, June 20, 2004,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/20/arts/art-her-bodyherself.html?pagewanted=3&src=pm>.

²⁷ Fabijanska, "ecofeminism(s): Zoom Conversations - Part IV."

²⁸ Greta Gaard, "Ecofeminism Revisited: Rejecting Essentialism and Re-Placing Species in a Material Feminist Environmentalism," *Feminist Formations* 23, no. 2 (2011): 31. ²⁹ Gaard, "Ecofeminism Revisited," 31.

³⁰ Muñoz, "Vitalism's after-Burn," 194.

³¹ Galerie Lelong & Co., "ANA MENDIETA"; Mark Cheetham and Elizabeth Harvey, "Obscure Imaginings: Visual Culture and the Anatomy of Caves," *Journal of Visual Culture* 1, no. 1 (April 1, 2002): 110. doi:10.1177/147041290200100111.

³² Cheetham and Harvey, "Obscure Imaginings," 110.

³³ Cheetham and Harvey, "Obscure Imaginings," 110.

³⁴ Tepfer, "The Presence of Absence," 237-238. ³⁵ Tepfer, "The Presence of Absence," 238.

³⁶ Roulet, "Ana Mendieta and Carl Andre: Duet of Leaf and Stone," 91.

³⁷ Roulet, "Ana Mendieta and Carl Andre: Duet of Leaf and Stone," 91.

³⁸ José Esteban Muñoz, "Vitalism's after-Burn: The Sense of Ana Mendieta." *Women & Performance* 21, no. 2 (July 1, 2011): 192. DOI: 10.1080/0740770X.2011.607596.

³⁹ Susan Best, "The Serial Spaces of Ana Mendieta," *Art History* 30, no. 1 (February 2007): 58.

⁴⁰ Raksha Pande, "Strategic Essentialism," in *International Encyclopedia of Geography* (Oxford, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2016), 1.

⁴¹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography," in *Selected Subaltern Studies*, edited by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 13.

⁴² Pande, "Strategic Essentialism," 3.

⁴³ Pande, "Strategic Essentialism," 4-5; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "In a Word: Interview," in *Outside in the Thinking Machine* (London: Routledge, 1993), 17.

⁴⁴ Peggy Phelan, "Francesca Woodman's Photography: Death and the Image One More Time," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 27, no. 4 (June 2002): 988.

⁴⁵ Phelan, "Francesca Woodman's Photography," 983, 989. ⁴⁶ Phelan, "Francesca Woodman's Photography," 984.

⁴⁷ Phelan, "Francesca Woodman's Photography," 980.

⁴⁸ Best, "The Serial Spaces of Ana Mendieta," 62-63.

⁴⁹ Tepfer, "The Presence of Absence," 237.

⁵⁰ Phelan, "Francesca Woodman's Photography," 981.

⁵¹ Phelan, "Francesca Woodman's Photography," 981.

⁵² Phelan, "Francesca Woodman's Photography," 981-982.

⁵³ Phelan, "Francesca Woodman's Photography," 985; Conrad James, "Ana Mendieta: Art, Artist and Literary Afterlives," *Revista Canadiense De Estudios Hispánicos* 41, no. 3 (2017): 570.

⁵⁴ Phelan, "Francesca Woodman's Photography," 998.

⁵⁵ Phelan, "Francesca Woodman's Photography," 999. ⁵⁶ Cheetham and Harvey, "Obscure Imaginings," 112.

⁵⁷ Cheetham and Harvey, "Obscure Imaginings," 110.

⁵⁸ Cheetham and Harvey, "Obscure Imaginings," 110.

⁵⁹ Cheetham and Harvey, "Obscure Imaginings," 110.

⁶⁰ Cheetham and Harvey, "Obscure Imaginings," 110.

⁶¹ "Robert Smithson, Spiral Jetty," Dia Art Foundation, accessed December 8th, 2020,

<https://www.diaart.org/visit/visit-our-locations-sites/robert-smithson-spiraljetty#:~:text=Robert%20Smithson's%20earthwork%20Spiral%20Jetty,the%20shore%20into%20the%20water>.

⁶² Mariana Ortega, “Exiled Space, in-Between Space: Existential Spatiality in Ana Mendieta’s Siluetas Series: Special Section.” *Philosophy and geography* 7, no. 1 (February 1, 2004): 25–41. ⁶³ Ortega, “Exiled Space, in-Between Space,” 25–41.

⁶⁴ Olga M. Viso and Ana Mendieta, *Unseen Mendieta: The Unpublished Works of Ana Mendieta* (Munich: Prestel, 2008), 8.

⁶⁵ Camhi, “ART; Her Body, Herself.”

⁶⁶ Information gathered from a phone conversation with Elise Rasmussen on December 7th, 2020; José Quiroga, *Cuban Palimpsests* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

⁶⁷ Information gathered from a phone conversation with Elise Rasmussen on December 7th, 2020.

⁶⁸ Tepfer, “The Presence of Absence,” 235.

⁶⁹ Fabijanska, “Curator’s Essay: ecofeminism(s).”

⁷⁰ Fabijanska, “ecofeminism(s): Zoom Conversations - Part III.”

Figures



Figure 1. Ana Mendieta, *Bacayu* (Esculturas Rupestres) [*Light of Day* (Rupestrian Sculptures)], 1981/2019, Black and white photograph, edition 2/3 + 2AP, 40 x 55 inches. © The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC. Courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co.

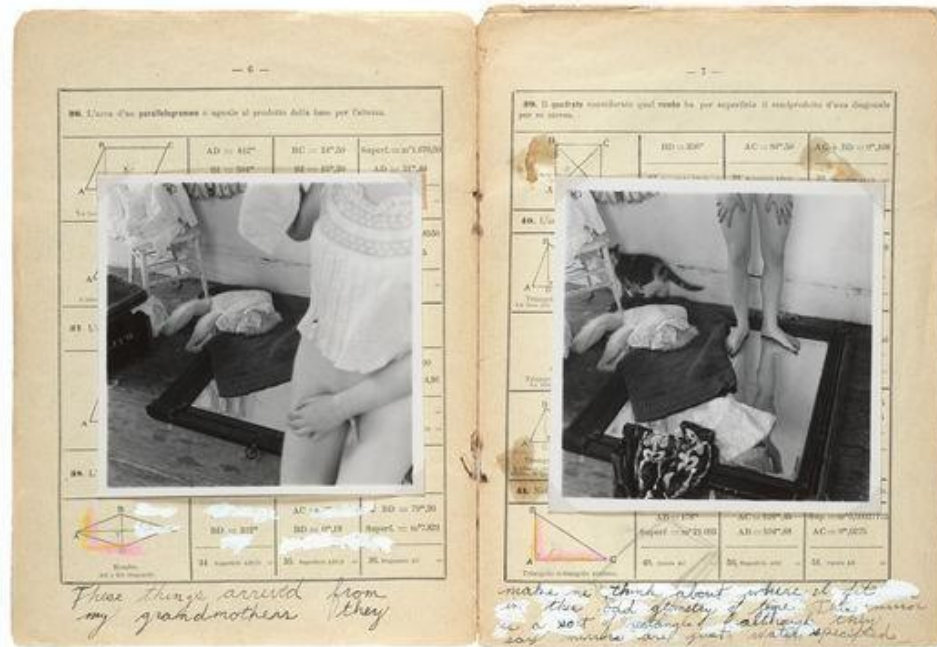


Figure 2. Francesca Woodman, *Some Disordered Interior Geometries*, New York, 1980-81. Artist's book with 16 gelatin silver prints, 22.9 x 16.5 cm. Courtesy George and Betty Woodman © George and Betty Woodman.



Figure 3. Mary Mattingly, *Production still from the series "New York Close Up"* © Art21, Inc. 2013. Cinematography: Rafael Salazar Moreno. Courtesy of Wesley Miller/ Art21.



Figure 4. Elise Rasmussen, Photograph of Ana Mendieta's *Esculturas Rupestres* (Rupestrian Sculptures), Jaruco Park, Cuba, 2012", C-Print, 48 x 63 inches, 2012-1

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