



Where Is Ana Mendieta?: Identity, Performativity, and Exile

Jane Blocker

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Ana Mendieta, a Cuban-born artist who lived in exile in the United States, was one of the most provocative and complex personalities of the 1970s' artworld. In *Where Is Ana Mendieta?* art historian Jane Blocker provides an in-depth critical analysis of Mendieta's diverse body of work. Although her untimely death in 1985 remains shrouded in controversy, her life and artistic legacy provide a unique vantage point from which to consider the history of performance art, installation, and earth works, as well as feminism, multiculturalism, and postmodernism.

Taken from banners carried in a 1992 protest outside the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the title phrase "Where is Ana Mendieta?" evokes not only the suspicious and tragic circumstances surrounding her death but also the conspicuous absence of women artists from high-profile exhibitions. Drawing on the work of such theorists as Judith Butler, Joseph Roach, Edward Said, and Homi Bhabha, Blocker discusses the power of Mendieta's earth-and-body art to alter, unsettle, and broaden the terms of identity itself. She shows how Mendieta used exile as a discursive position from which to disrupt dominant categories, analyzing as well Mendieta's use of mythology and anthropology, the ephemeral nature of her media, and the debates over her ethnic, gender, and national identities.

As the first major critical examination of this enigmatic artist's work, *Where Is Ana Mendieta?* will interest a broad audience, particularly those involved with the production, criticism, theory, and history of contemporary art.

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