

DENVER art MUSEUM

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NEWS FROM THE DENVER ART MUSEUM

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Ana Mendieta Films to be Featured at the Denver Art Museum

Immersive installation to present two films created by the famed Cuban-American artist Mendieta in connection to the cross-departmental exhibition The Light Show

DENVER – Dec. 3, 2020 – The Denver Art Museum (DAM) today announced *Ana Mendieta: Suspended Fire*, an immersive installation featuring two films created by Cuban-American artist Ana Mendieta. The installment will be the newest addition to the DAM’s cross-departmental exhibition [The Light Show](#) and will showcase remastered versions of *Anima, Silueta de Cohetes (Firework Piece)*, 1976, and *Untitled: Silueta Series*, 1978. The two films portray the primordial element of fire, connecting thematically to *The Light Show* exhibition’s exploration of physical and symbolic representations of light in art. Organized by the DAM and curated by Laura F. Almeida, Curatorial Fellow for Modern and Contemporary Art at the DAM, *Suspended Fire* will be on view Dec. 6, 2020, through March 7, 2021, on level 4 of the Hamilton Building.

Active as an artist throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Mendieta used her body as a way to explore ideas of identity and displacement and its connection to the earth. For *Anima, Silueta de Cohetes (Firework Piece)* and *Untitled: Silueta Series*, Mendieta created silhouettes of her body from firecrackers and a fallen tree, respectively. She set the silhouettes against darkened landscapes and lit them. In these two films, Mendieta explores fire as a symbol of renewal and transformation, creation and destruction, and presence and absence. The artist invites viewers to meditate upon life, death and the passage of time as the burning flames mesmerize us. The



silhouettes, which appear suspended in space, also represent her *anima*, or soul. By placing them outdoors as the only source of light, Mendieta encourages viewers to think about the association between the female body and nature.

Suspended Fire is presented in a darkened space, with the two videos projected onto separate screens hanging from the ceiling, mimicking the suspension of the silhouettes on fire. The screens will be placed diagonally, slightly facing each other, creating an immersive and intimate space where viewers can connect with Mendieta’s art by standing between the two screens.

“One of Mendieta’s legacies is that she was extremely bold in using her own body as a medium to talk about issues of gender, violence, race, identity and belonging,” curatorial fellow Almeida said. “She was also among the first female artists

who experimented with unconventional organic and ephemeral materials, such as blood, earth, plants, fire and more, fusing landscape with film, performance and body art.”

Suspended Fire will be included in general admission, which is free for museum members and youth 18 and under every day. For the latest on new visitation, safety and cleaning procedures, please visit denverartmuseum.org.



EXHIBITION SPONSORS

The Light Show is organized by the Denver Art Museum. Support is provided by the generous donors to the Annual Fund Leadership Campaign, and the residents who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). Promotional support is provided by *5280 Magazine* and CBS4.

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ABOUT ANA MENDIETA

Ana Mendieta was born in Havana, Cuba, in 1948. She and her sister were sent by their parents to the United States during Operation Peter Pan in 1961, one of many waves of migrants fleeing Fidel Castro’s government. After spending time in orphanages, Mendieta settled in foster homes in Iowa. During her studies at the University of Iowa, Mendieta began experimenting with performance and films, using her body as her medium. The *Siluetas* series (1973–80), a group of drawings, photographs and films in which Mendieta placed silhouettes of her naked body into different landscapes, addresses issues of race, identity and

nostalgia for her homeland, all themes central to the artist’s practice. In 1985, Mendieta’s career was cut short by her death. Though her husband, Minimalist sculptor Carl Andre, was acquitted of her murder in 1988, Mendieta’s loss remains controversial to this day.

THE DENVER ART MUSEUM

The Denver Art Museum is an educational, nonprofit resource that sparks creative thinking and expression through transformative experiences with art. Its holdings reflect the city and region—and provide invaluable ways for the community to learn about cultures from around the world. Metro residents support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), a unique funding source serving hundreds of metro Denver arts, culture and scientific organizations. For museum information, call 720-865-5000 or visit www.denverartmuseum.org.

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Image Credit Lines:

Image 1: Ana Mendieta, *Anima, Silueta de Cohetes (Firework Piece)*, 1976. Super-8mm film transferred to high-definition digital media, color, silent. Running time: 2:23 minutes. Edition of 6 with 3 aps. © 2020 The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC. Courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co./Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Image 2: Ana Mendieta, *Untitled: Silueta Series*, 1978. Super-8mm film transferred to high-definition digital media, color, silent. Running time: 6:31 minutes. Edition of 8 with 3 aps. © 2020 The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC. Courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co./Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.