

## Nasher Sculpture Center Acquires Significant Group of Works by Artist Ana Mendieta

Collection of sculpture, photography, and video by influential Cuban-American artist made possible by the Kaleta A. Doolin Acquisitions Fund for Women Artists

DALLAS, Texas (July 26, 2016) – The Nasher Sculpture Center announces the purchase of a group of works encompassing sculpture, photography, and video by the highly influential Cuban-American artist Ana Mendieta (1948-1985), thanks to the generous support of the Kaleta A. Doolin Acquisitions Fund for Women Artists, established at the Nasher last year. In addition to expanding the Nasher's holdings in work by women artists, this acquisition further augments the representation of performance art in the collection, documented via photography and film. The scope of this acquisition ensures that the Nasher will be able to present a cross section of Mendieta's provocative and groundbreaking career in a variety of media, and provide a thorough presentation of her art.

"We are so fortunate to be able to add this important group of works by Mendieta to our collection," says Director Jeremy Strick. "While her influence on feminist art practice and performance art has been enormous, available works by her are very rare, so we are thrilled that the Kaleta A. Doolin Fund has made this special acquisition possible. We look forward to sharing this work by this powerful and compelling artist with the public."

"As an artist and a feminist," says Kaleta A. Doolin, "I applaud the Nasher for its acquisition of rarely seen works by Ana Mendieta. These pieces enhance the Nasher's collection and strengthen its narrative of contemporary sculpture."

The first part of the acquisition, Mendieta's 1975 film *Silüeta Sangrienta* (Spanish for "bleeding silhouette") is part of her *Silüeta* (silhouette) series—a series of earth body sculptures for which the artist combined the body (or its absence), performance, and the landscape. These works were commonly achieved by Mendieta inserting her body into the landscape—either lying in repose on a field of grass, beneath a pile of flowers; within an earthen outline of her form, dug out of the ground; or among a pile of rocks on the side of an ancient pyramid—or constructing a surrogate form of herself directly on the land. In early *Silüeta* works, Mendieta appears and uses her body to create the female form or imprint on the landscape; as the series progressed, her body was increasingly absent from the imagery, although its outline or imprint remained. These works garnered considerable critical attention and have been described as the core of her practice. This particular film, *Silüeta Sangrienta*, documents the action of Mendieta inserting her nude body into the landscape and elapses to show the cavity of her body's imprint on the land later filled with bright red blood. The work represents a transitional moment in Mendieta's career as the artist's body is both present and absent throughout the short silent film.

A pair of photographs titled *Untitled (Mayora)* of 1982 also have been acquired. Like many artists involved in Land Art, performance, and body art, Mendieta documented her actions via secondary media as a way to communicate the fleeting nature of her work. These two photos relate to later works from the *Silüeta* series with the repetition of the figure upon the landscape and the absence of the artist's body within the image. Between the two photographs, Mendieta has captured the action or making of the work (igniting a form shaped in gunpowder) and the resulting ephemeral silhouette (the cavity of the burnt-out gunpowder on the earth).

Last, the new acquisition includes *Untitled*, a wood and gunpowder sculpture from 1985, one of a group of six wooden slab sculptures the artist made while living in Rome in the final year of her life. Toward the end of her life, Mendieta had progressed from documenting fleeting actions and interventions in the landscape to making discrete objects. These objects retained many of the key attributes of her earlier art, notably the fusion of earth and body and the female form that dominated her visual vocabulary throughout her career. In *Untitled*, Mendieta imprinted a female form onto the surface of the tree trunk through the burning of gunpowder. The result is a powerful totemic sculpture that subtly references many of the key aspects of her previous work: performance (in the creation the sculpture), the female form as burned into the wood by gunpowder (a commonly used material in her art), and the connection to nature.

#### **About Ana Mendieta**

Born in Havana, Cuba in 1948 to a politically active family, Mendieta fled to the United States with her two sisters in 1961. She later studied painting and intermedia arts under Hans Breder at the University of Iowa. In 1978, she joined the Artists in Residence (A.I.R.) gallery in New York—the first gallery to be established for women artists in the United States—where she had a solo exhibition a year later. She was awarded the prestigious Rome Prize in 1983. She died in New York in 1985 at the age of 36. Since her untimely death, Mendieta has been recognized in solo exhibitions at museums such as the New Museum, New York; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, among others.

Mendieta's work is featured in many major public collections, including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; Metropolitan Museum of Art; Whitney Museum of American Art; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Art Institute of Chicago; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva; and Tate Collection, London.

**High resolution images available upon request.**

#### **Press contact:**

Lucia Simek  
Communications Manager  
+1 214.242.5177

[lsimek@nashersculpturecenter.org](mailto:lsimek@nashersculpturecenter.org)

Cassandra Emswiler Burd  
Social Media and PR Coordinator  
+1 214.242.5162

[cemswilerburd@nashersculpturecenter.org](mailto:cemswilerburd@nashersculpturecenter.org)

*Aston Martin of Dallas is the official car of the Nasher Sculpture Center.*

#### **About the Nasher Sculpture Center:**

In the heart of the Dallas Arts District, the Nasher Sculpture Center is home to the Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection, one of the finest collections of modern and contemporary sculpture in the world, featuring more than 300 masterpieces by Calder, de Kooning, di Suvero, Giacometti, Gormley, Hepworth, Kelly, Matisse, Miró, Moore, Picasso, Rodin, Serra, and Shapiro, among others. On view in the light-filled galleries of the Renzo Piano-designed building and amid the garden grounds is a rotating selection of works from the Collection, as well as important exhibitions of modern and contemporary sculpture. Conceived for the exhibition, study, and conservation of modern and contemporary sculpture, the Nasher Sculpture Center also presents a diverse array of educational and cultural programs in dialogue with the Collection and special exhibitions. It is also the home of the Nasher Prize, an annual, international award presented to a living artist in recognition of a significant body of work that has had an extraordinary impact on the understanding of sculpture. In addition to the indoor and outdoor gallery spaces, the

# Nasher Sculpture Center

## PRESS RELEASE

Center contains an auditorium, education and research facilities, a cafe, and a store.

**Location:** 2001 Flora Street, Dallas, TX 7520

**Hours:** The Nasher Sculpture Center is open Tuesday through Sunday from 11 am to 5 pm and until 11 pm for special events; and from 10 am to 5 pm on the first Saturday of each month.

**Admission:** \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$5 for students, and free for members, children 12 and under, and all members of police and fire departments with proper ID. Admission includes access to special exhibitions. For more information, visit [www.NasherSculptureCenter.org](http://www.NasherSculptureCenter.org).

2001 Flora Street  
Dallas, TX 75201

+1 214.242.5100