MoMA ANNOUNCES A MAJOR RETROSPECTIVE OF ANA MENDIETA, OPENING DECEMBER 2027

The First United States Retrospective of the Artist's Visionary Practice in Over Two Decades, Exclusively at New York City's MoMA, Featuring Rarely Seen Early Paintings and Newly Remastered Films

NEW YORK, November 18, 2026 — The Museum of Modern Art announces ***Ana Mendieta: A Retrospective***, a major exhibition of the interdisciplinary practice of Ana Mendieta (American, b. Cuba, 1948–1985), one of the most consequential artists of her generation. On view at MoMA from December 12, 2027, through April 15, 2028, the exhibition will include approximately 200 artworks and selections of archival material, with key loans from the Estate of Ana Mendieta. The first US retrospective to offer a comprehensive examination of Mendieta's oeuvre in more than 20 years, the MoMA presentation will include rarely exhibited works, from revelatory early paintings to newly remastered films and an in-depth representation of her drawings and sculptures. The exhibition will feature a number of works from MoMA's collection, one of the most distinguished holdings of Mendieta's work in a US museum. *Ana Mendieta: A Retrospective* is organized by Beverly Adams, The Estrellita Brodsky Curator of Latin American Art, Department of Painting and Sculpture, and Sophie Cavoulacos, Curator, Department of Film, with Caitlin Chaisson, Curatorial Associate, Department of Painting and Sculpture.

"Ana Mendieta rigorously investigated the physical, conceptual, and emotional potential of materials like soil, sand, water, blood, leaves, wood, and fire to create images that speak across time and geography," said Adams. "In doing so, she redefined the boundaries between sculpture and action, object and image, and private and public. This exhibition will introduce her groundbreaking work, in unrivaled breadth, to a new generation of audiences."

"The exhibition celebrates Mendieta's practice in the context of her time. Her innovative work in nature unfolded alongside an investment in artist networks across the places she lived and traveled, from the University of Iowa, to Latin American diasporic circles in 1970s New York, to the return to her motherland of Cuba in the early 1980s," said Cavoulacos. "From a contemporary perspective, her legacy remains at the center of conversations about migration, exile, race, gender, and identity, and it continues to inform artists working today."

Ana Mendieta: A Retrospective will be organized chronologically, following Mendieta's own creative trajectory and offering a unique opportunity to view iconic artworks alongside lesser-known works made throughout her career as she embraced new sites, processes, and mediums. The exhibition will begin with early figurative paintings from her time at the University of Iowa, such as *Untitled* (c. 1970–71)—which will be shown in New York for the first time—and will demonstrate Mendieta's shift to performative experiments in body art, as she became involved with the university's vanguard Intermedia program.

Mendieta developed her art-making in dialogue with nature, as exemplified by her best-known Silueta Series. She catalyzed the period's discourses about site-specificity and ephemerality in novel ways to communicate the power she felt in locations with personal and historical significance. Beginning in Mexico and Iowa, the artist created the Silueta

Series by staging her body, or its imprint, in the environment. The exhibition will trace the evolution of this series between 1973 and 1980 across a variety of locations, providing insight into the formal experimentation and cultural references through which Mendieta forged her signature visual language. Often developed serially, Mendieta's environmental sculptures and lens-based production flourished in tandem. She captured the vitality of her remote works in nature for wider audiences through photographs and film, such as *Volcán* (1979), which will be on view in the exhibition. Mendieta continuously adapted and experimented with scale, framing, and format, as seen in her largest scaled photographs of two landmark projects: the carved *Siluetas* produced in Oaxaca, Mexico, in 1980, and the breakthrough *Esculturas Rupestres (Rupestrian Sculptures)* created in Cuba's Parque Jaruco the following year. The latter are among the first artworks she created in her home country after being sent to the US in 1961 in the wake of the Cuban Revolution.

The exhibition will highlight the remarkable range of Mendieta's production from the early 1980s, from discrete art objects made with organic materials such as bark paper, ficus root, and leaves, to public commissions such as those in New York City, which will be represented through sketches and archival material. The exhibition will conclude with a spotlight on the artist's virtuosic output during her Prix de Rome residency in the Italian capital, where she embraced a studio-based practice. The presentation will bring together a breathtaking array of Mendieta's late sculptures, including works such as *Nile Born* (1984), alongside an extensive grouping of ink-wash drawings created between 1983 and her death in 1985. Mendieta's later practice is a testament to the constant experimentation of an artist dedicated to fundamental questions of how a body can find meaning and a lasting connection to place.

Ana Mendieta: A Retrospective will be accompanied by a richly illustrated catalogue, edited by Adams and Cavoulacos, that will present Mendieta's most iconic bodies of work alongside lesser-known facets of her oeuvre. Essays by curators, conservators, and scholars—including Carla Acevedo-Yates, Esther Adler, Caitlin Chaisson, Catherine Quan Damman, Lisa Le Feuvre, Lucy Lippard, Roberto Tejada, and Lynda Zycherman—will provide a timely reframing of her practice.

SPONSORSHIP:

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