

Ana Mendieta

*Tropic-Ana*

15.02 > 18.04.2020

## Ana Mendieta

### Tropic-Ana

Exhibition dates: February 15th through April 18th 2020

Opening: Saturday February 15th from 12 to 3pm

Hours: Tuesday to Friday from 10am to 7pm, Saturday from 11am to 2.30pm

NoguerasBlanchard, Madrid

NoguerasBlanchard is pleased to present *Tropic-Ana*, the first solo exhibition of Cuban artist Ana Mendieta (1948-1985) in Spain since 1997. Curated by the artist Wilfredo Prieto (1978), the exhibition can be seen as a reunion: a return to Mendieta's work through the gaze of a Cuban artist. A series of selected films and drawings present a space of intimacy, addressing Mendieta's profound dedication to her body and the artistic process, gifted with a powerful ritual character.

Prieto's fascination with Mendieta's work appears during his early formation years, following the discovery of *Esculturas Rupestres* (1981), which Mendieta carried out at the Jaruco Caves, near Habana. And it's in Habana where, in 2019 going through the artist's personal archives, Wilfredo Prieto comes across *Tropic-Ana*: the signature that Mendieta used playfully when she maintained correspondence with her friends and family. The exhibition is articulated through a range of works materializing the presence of Ana Mendieta, transcending time, the elements and their physicality. The selection of films highlights the artist's interest in representation through absence, charged with a mystical, and transcendental aura, in a departure from the interventions where the body is directly involved. A group of drawings, most of which are shown here for the first time, were made during her stay in Rome between 1983 and 1985 and relate to the projects she was engaged with at the time showing a more intimate and personal side to her creative process.

The first film selected by Wilfredo Prieto, *X-ray* (c. 1975) — showing an x-ray scan of Mendieta's skull during a medical test — addresses a range of concerns in the exhibition: is it possible to reduce the body to an image? The deeper the science enquires into the human body, the more it becomes a technical image rather than an image with strong symbolic content. With this piece, Mendieta appears to separate the traditional image of the human being from the representation of her body and the 'I': it is no longer possible to understand the body in a binding image, Ana Mendieta conjures her presence in a paradoxical intimacy with a body that - even though it is her own- appears unfamiliar to us. On the other hand, *Flower Person, Flower Body* (1975) points to the ritual character of the artist's work in its maximum potential. In this film, one of her well-known silhouettes appears through a construction of sticks, velvet and flowers that are carried by a current of water and recalls one of the rites in Santería. *Flower Person, Flower Body* complements *X-ray*, making both technical image and symbolic image act as magical images; in both we know that it is Mendieta, we recognize her even though her body is not there.

Ana Mendieta, with her early and visceral concern to represent the human trace, did not aim to represent the body in a single image, and thus resolves the problem of incarnation: instead of referring to herself through the "work" she does so with her own body: she becomes image in her films. In the same way, the drawings do not present a contrast between the fixed image and the moving image of the films, but are understood as an 'open image' that is constantly proposing meanings through new connections. In Ana Mendieta's drawings, in the gestures drawn on the paper, movement frees itself from time, revitalizing the fixed condition of the image and connecting it to the film in a natural way, forming part of a whole.

Closing the show is the film *Weather Balloon, Feathered Balloon* (1974), in which a sphere, that reminds us of a celestial body, rises in the air for a few moments, until it explodes unveiling feathers hidden inside it, that float gently to the ground. The feathers, an element that was frequently used in her pieces, somehow personify Mendieta and her desire to return to the origin, alluding to the transformation of the terrestrial body into a celestial body but then returns to the earth to become one with it again.

Ana Mendieta (Habana, 1948 - New York, 1985) studied Fine Arts at The University of Iowa, in the United States. She was originally trained as a painter and soon turned to working with her body and created her well-known "silueta series", which she called earth-body works. In her short yet extremely prolific career, Mendieta established an exceptional personal synthesis of Body and Land Art through the introduction of the human and female body in the landscape. The realization of ritual performances, translated through all of her media, steep her own body into nature, thus emphasizing her physical and spiritual link with the Earth.

The groundbreaking travelling exhibition of her moving image works *Ana Mendieta: Covered in Time and History* culminated at the Jeu de Paume, Paris, in 2018. Mendieta has been the subject of numerous museum exhibitions, most recently: Martin-Gropius-Bau Museum, Berlin; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris and Metz; Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; MoMA, New York. Her works are part of numerous public collections, such as MoMA, New York; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (MNCARS), Madrid; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; y Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

With special thanks to The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC y Galerie Lelong & Co.

For further information and images please contact Cristina Spinelli  
+34 91 506 34 84 or [cristina@noguerasblanchard.com](mailto:cristina@noguerasblanchard.com)

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*Tropic-Ana*, 2020  
Installation view at NoguerasBlanchard, Madrid

Courtesy NoguerasBlanchard, Barcelona/Madrid  
Photography Roberto Ruiz

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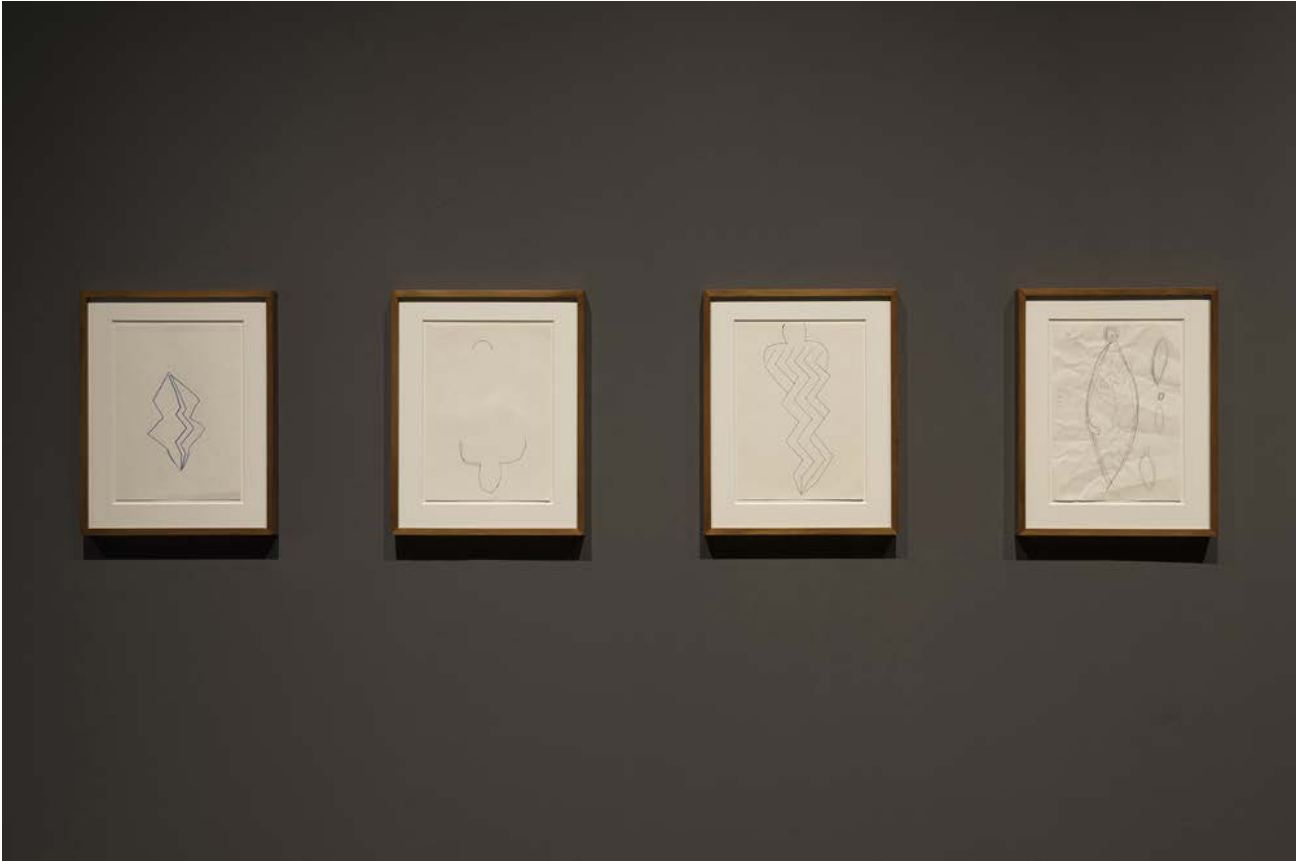
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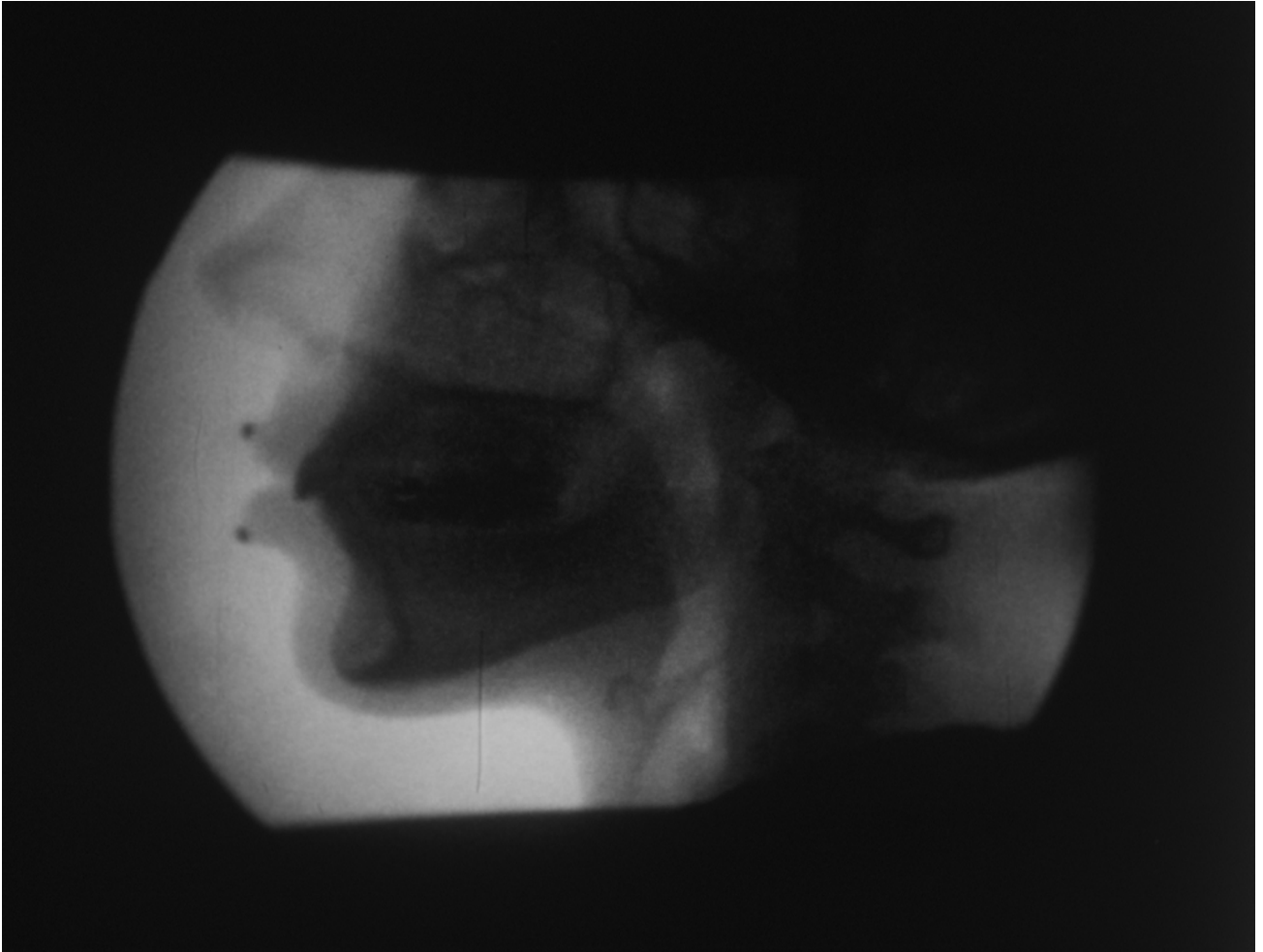
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Ana Mendieta

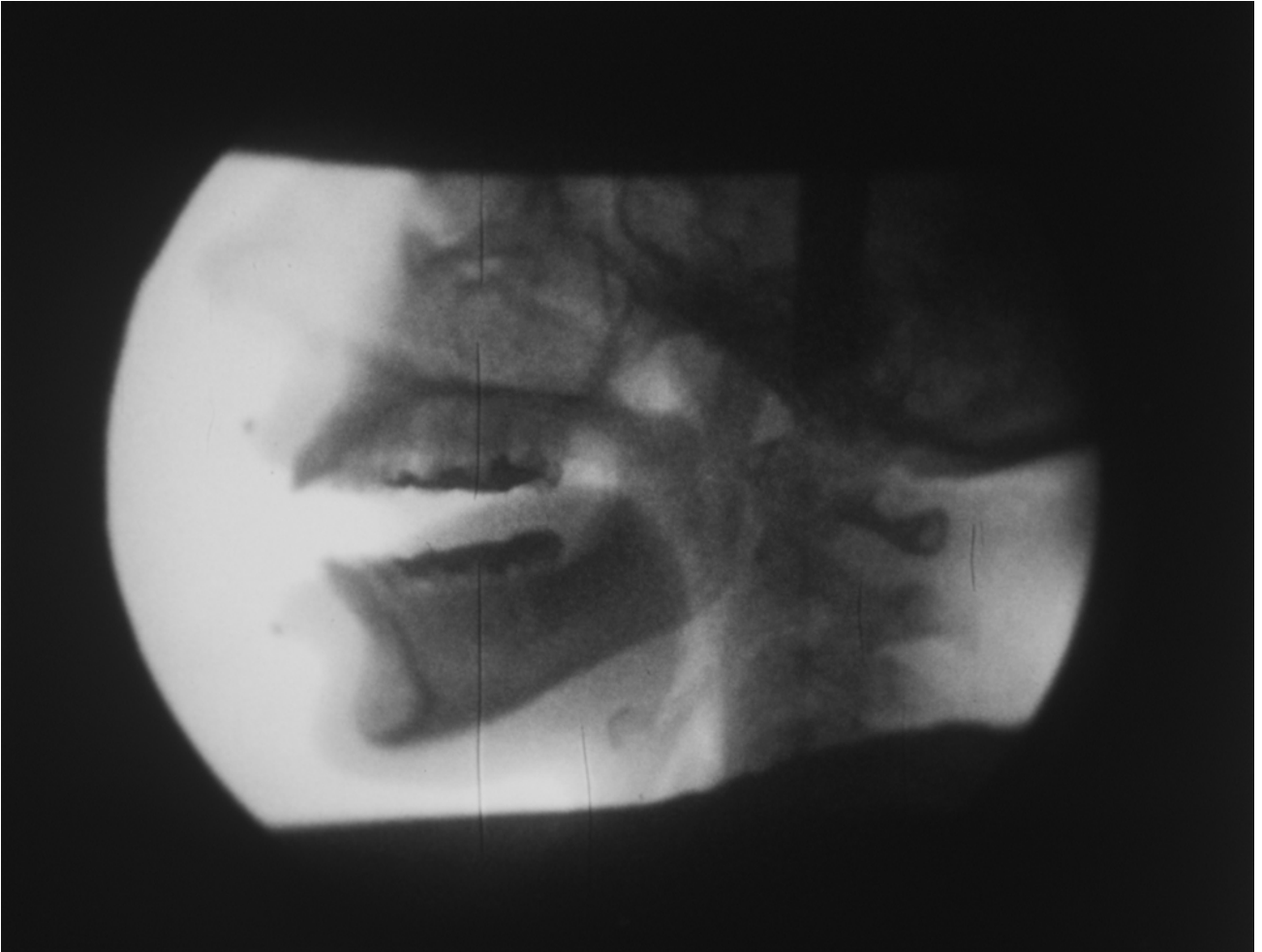
*X-ray*, c. 1975

16mm film transferred to high-definition digital media, black and white, sound  
1:36 minutes

Courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co.

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Ana Mendieta  
*X-ray, c. 1975*  
Still

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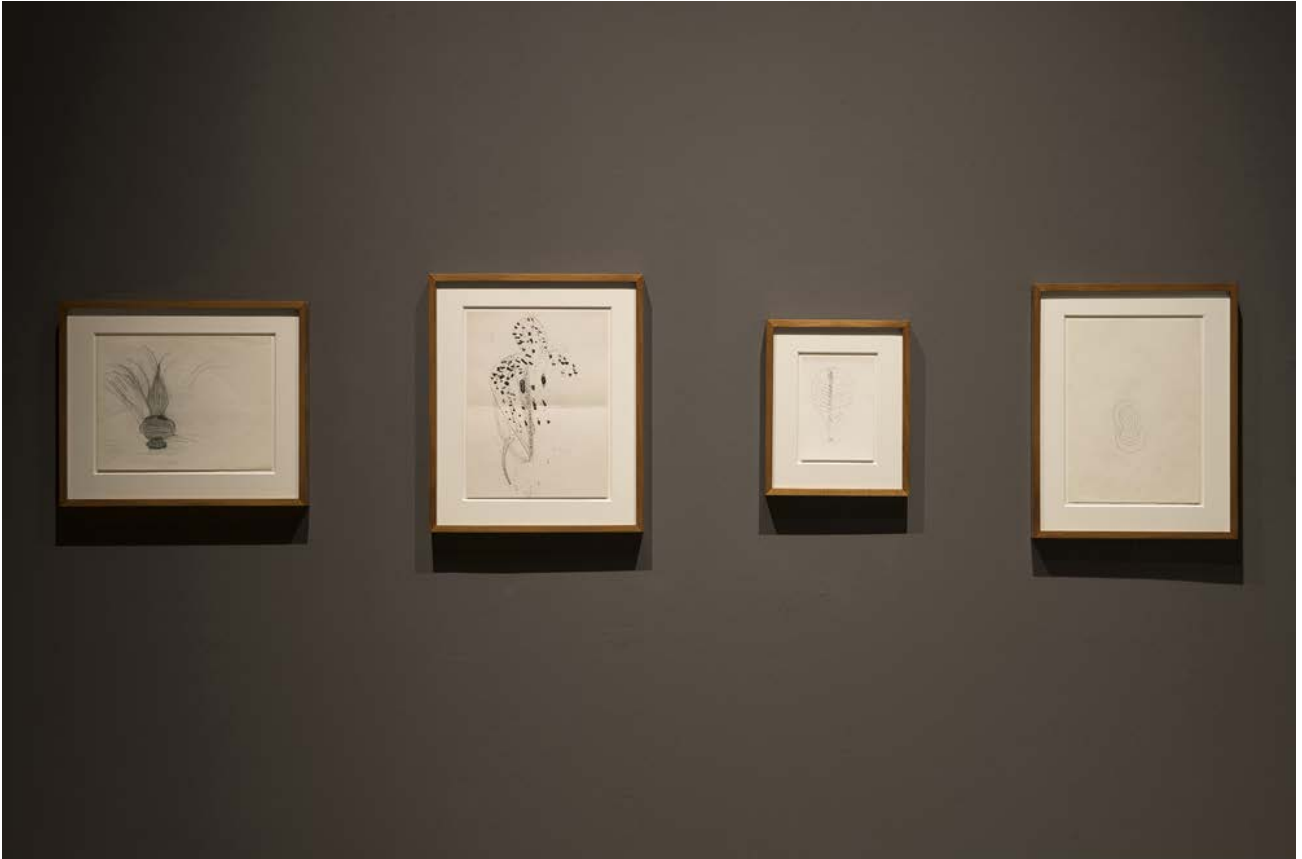
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Ana Mendieta

*Flower Person, Flower Body*, 1975

Super-8mm film transferred to high-definition digital media, color, silent

6:20 minutes

Courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co.

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Ana Mendieta  
*Flower Person, Flower Body*, 1975  
Still

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Ana Mendieta

*Weather Balloon, Feathered Balloon*, 1974

Super-8mm film transferred to high-definition digital media, color, silent

3:42 minutes

Courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co.

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Ana Mendieta

*Weather Balloon, Feathered Balloon*, 1974

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Ana Mendieta

*Weather Balloon, Feathered Balloon*, 1974

Super-8mm film transferred to high-definition digital media, color, silent

3:42 minutes

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*Weather Balloon, Feathered Balloon*, 1974

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