

Pairs with: Ana Mendieta, *Ataybey*, 1981

[[Optional Description of audio]] Ana Mendieta carved this design in a cave and then documented it photographically. What does it mean to make a work of art out in nature? Educator Billy Franklin contemplates the implications.

[[Transcript]]

My name is William Gustavo Franklin Torres. I go by Billy. I'm a part-time educator at the Walker. I've been working here, in and out, but since 2019, I believe. I'm also an art history teacher at MCAD, Minneapolis College of Art and Design. And I also teach history of design and critical thinking for our neighbors, Dunwoody College of Technology.

I'm looking at Mendieta's Ataybey. An imprint, an incision onto a natural surface. I'm guessing it's sand, it could be a trunk from a tree, any terrain, but it's the natural environment. It's almost like I walk into a cave and I discover something.

It's good that it's been documented because these are durational works. You know, they destroy the cave, or they get erased by erosion, by time. And I think she's doing that with intent. She knows that these pieces are going to eventually decay or vanish. So it's the philosophical aspect that interests me here, that she's creating an imprint, and then time will let it go. Such as it does with our own lives. In a nutshell, she is using the earth, the soil, as canvas, and she's turning herself into the living brush, into the "activator," we say. And I find that revolutionary. That possibility that makes other artists wonder what they're doing buying all these other materials [laughs].