



Who is Ana Mendieta?

Christine Redfern , Caro Caron (Illustrator) , Lucy R. Lippard (Foreword)

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This fiery account of Ana Mendieta is also a snapshot of the turbulent times in which she lived. In exile from revolutionary Cuba, Ana Mendieta found in the 1960s US another kind of social upheaval: Frida Kahlo was finally being appreciated as an artist, not just a muse; Valerie Solanas wrote her manifesto, then shot Andy Warhol; Carolee Schneemann performed nude and pulled a feminist scroll out of her vagina. And Ana Mendieta began creating what she called "earth-body art," revolutionary work that explored issues of gender and cultural activity. In 1985, at the height of her success, she plunged to her death from the window of the New York City apartment she shared with her husband, artist Carl Andre. He was tried and acquitted of her murder.

These vibrantly drawn pages chronicle how the women's art movement changed the way we look at the female body in art and in the world. Redfern and Caron bring luminaries and the conflicts that inspired them to blazing life, telling us not only who is Ana Mendieta, but why we need to know.

Who is Ana Mendieta? Details

Date : Published June 14th 2011 by The Feminist Press at CUNY (first published November 1st 2010)

ISBN : 9781558617032

Author : Christine Redfern , Caro Caron (Illustrator) , Lucy R. Lippard (Foreword)

Format : Hardcover 56 pages

Genre : Art, Sequential Art, Graphic Novels, Feminism, Nonfiction, Biography, Comics, Graphic Novels
Comics, Comic Book, Art History

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From Reader Review Who is Ana Mendieta? for online ebook

Dan says

this graphic novel is really short. i ordered it online without actually thumbing through a physical copy, and when it arrived it was about 4 times shorter than i expected.

as much as i love the fact that this book exists and hope that women like redfern and caron will make hundreds more like it, it didn't add much to my understanding of mendieta's work (other than the fact that carl andre was apparently a disheveled-looking hippie - i always picture 70's minimalists looking like fuddy-duddies). for example, i wish there were a larger discussion of the role of ethnicity in her work - how non-western religious practices separate her performances from other "goddess" appropriations, or how her cuban-american identity shaped her politics and practice. i hate to say this, but the book doesn't seem all that rigorously researched (lucy lippard even distances herself from one of its quotes in her introduction), and while redfern is careful not to center the narrative on her untimely and mysterious death/potential murder, she doesn't offer anything of great substance in its place to focus my attention.

the drawings, on the other hand, are beautiful and lovingly rendered. caron does a nice job of balancing caricature with a real appreciation for mendieta's work as an artist. keeping track of the various critics and artists who comment on her story throughout is a bit confusing though - there's an odd glossary on the inside of the cover pages that would be un-necessary if she had simply included identifying placards for the speakers throughout. i'd also like to see a few more panels of context to accompany the quotes. i'm sure some reprehensible things were said about an artist like mendieta, but the ugliest quips appear exclusively as soundbites. and there's not a whole lot of positive press discussed either, save lippard's affectionate, slightly underwhelming introduction.

Noema says

I'll admit it: I had never ever heard of Ana Mendieta. And now I know enough to want to see her art in person. And I am angry, very, very angry.

l. says

I'm so angry.

Toni says

I'm angry that I knew very little of the information and history that is in this. But now I just want to know more. If anyone is reading this you should pick this graphic novel up. Also look up Ana's Silueta series because they are so beautiful and powerful.

AJ says

3.5 stars

Anna says

The drawings in this graphic novel are beautiful! This is a great introduction to Mendieta...my only criticism is that it's too short!

James F says

I came across this short Feminist Press book by accident at the ALA convention; I had never heard of Mendieta previously. It is in graphic format (does anyone know of an equivalent term to "graphic novel" for nonfiction?)

Ana Mendieta was a Cuban-born American performance artist and sculptor who did some interesting and apparently influential work in the 70's and 80's. Most of her work was impermanent, but documented on film. The book describes her life, works, and death (probable murder). It is written from a strongly feminist perspective.

The book motivated me to find examples of some of her work on the internet.

Marie says

Extraordinary. Beautifully drawn graphic novel, telling the compelling story of the Cuban-American artist, Ana Mendieta. Her feminist art, political and artistic influences, and the terrible ending to her life. A sharp, deeply affecting work that underscores the culture of violence against women and racism that pervades society. The black and white images, starting from the arresting first panel which fluidly gels scenes from the lives of male artists such as Norman Mailer and William S. Burroughs, create a narrative that is riveting and so very sad. A must-read.

Jenny Gonzalez- Blitz says

Short graphic novel about the life and death of radical Cuban feminist artist Ana Mendieta. If you haven't heard of her you need to get off of this site and get onto Google. Ana and her sister were sent from Cuba to live in the the US foster care system in Iowa, and she quickly realized she could either become "an artist or a criminal", to paraphrase her own words. Her work, which could range from very confrontational to esoteric is depicted amidst a backdrop of art-world bullshit and misogyny. Her mysterious and suspiciously under-investigated death may or may not have been at the hands of her ridiculously arrogant artist husband, or he may have just driven her to it with incessant gloating and infidelity.(I have much faith in what a lesser talented but better PR'ed person's incessant gloating could drive a feminist Cuban artist to do...) The book takes a great mocking swipe at the general nonsense of both critics and institutionalized sexism and art world

schmoozing and BS, and cameos from folks ranging from Castro, to Valerie Solanas to William Burroughs have little to do with the actual story, but are important nonetheless, as their caricatures swirling about the pages give a sense of the chaotic cultural zeitgeist of Ana's time.

Alison says

The best part of this book was Lucy Lippard's incredibly articulate introduction. While I thought the narrative was engaging and well-researched, and the illustrations were quite evocative, I really think the pacing was off here. I wish Mendieta's amazing and complex story got the chance to be a little longer.

Jane Hammons says

Reading this book was like running into someone you knew briefly but adored and then kind of forgot about. As a college student in the 70s, I was very active in the feminist movement. At the Univ of New Mexico, there was a very active feminist art community, and Mendieta's work was highly regarded, exciting and very present. Her style felt both strange and familiar at the same time. I recognized the image on the cover of the book before I remembered her name. I shouldn't have forgotten her name. I'm glad I have been reintroduced to her, her art, and her complex, tragic story. If you don't know who Ana Mendieta is, it's worth the 45 minutes or so it will take you to read this to find out.

Emilia P says

Protest art! Women's art! Middle finger to the establishment! I loved that aspect of this! Also the illustrations themselves were fantastic and dynamic and pretty f-you-ish in a great way. But! It was too short! The second half of the book was pretend newspapers and that was weird! I'm glad I found it but I wish there were more books or stories on crazy lady artists. Let us make them!

Vivienne says

A short, powerful graphic 'novel' (actually a graphic biography) covering the all-too brief life and work of artist Ana Mendieta.

I was first introduced to Ana Mendieta's work as a case study during a course on Modern Art offered by The Open University. I fell in love immediately with her passion and its expression and longed to know more.

As a result I own longer works about her but I was curious about this particular approach using the graphic format. I wasn't disappointed. The art work here is bold and beautiful. Lucy Lippard has written a strong introduction.

Underlying the narrative was a strong streak of anger - about Mendieta's death and the events in its wake as well as the way in which her work has been marginalised.

eimn says

The story of the art-land and feminist artist Ana Mendieta told in three different mediums (essay, graphic novel, newspaper). The book includes the work of Mendieta's contemporary female artists and women who have been injured or killed during art performances. The art style was not the kind I like but it did its job well. A significant part is about the trial following her mysterious death.

Allie says

Recommended. I really love Ana Mendieta, but I totally think that she (and SO MANY other women artists) get short changed. This graphic novella was rrrrrreally short (not a bad thing, just a thing) and the images were all over the place, but it still made a lot of sense. The end pages are sort of a gallery of all the people, famous and not, featured in the images. I had to keep referencing that guide because there's no classic-comic narration.

I did not know that Mendieta died under sort of suspicious circumstances (murder? The person who was accused of murdering her, her husband duh, was acquitted, and a lot of the details are still unknown/unresolved). I can't imagine how hard it must have been to move from Cuba, where you lived with your well-off family, to moving to Iowa and living in foster homes and boarding schools with your sister. And the parallels between her life and Eva Hesse, mentioned in the introduction, were very interesting.
