

Blood and ritual: ancient aesthetics in feminist and social art in Latin America

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Introduction

The work of contemporary artists Regina José Galindo and Lorena Wolffer has been characterized by its harsh social criticism. While both are primarily known for their work against gender violence, they have also addressed other problems in their regions, such as oppressive governments, wars, and the imperialism they are subjected to due to the political, economic, and cultural intervention of the United States. Galindo was born in Guatemala and has worked there throughout her career. Her art has been exhibited around the world, including at the Venice Biennale, where in 2005 she was awarded a Golden Lion in the category of "artists under 30." Wolffer is Mexican and, like Galindo, she has had an international impact. Both have developed an art full of striking elements, including blood, aimed at disturbing the viewer, and both use very contemporary methods, including performance, video art, and complex art projects in which the audience interacts with the piece and where one single piece may consist of written, recorded, photographed, and theatrical elements.

This paper will examine the artists who have had the greatest impact on these two contemporary women in terms of theme, style, and symbolism. One performance each by Galindo and by Wolffer will be addressed in particular. The theme and many formal symbolic elements are common to both performances, which are characterized by a very strong critique of social problems in their countries, including the economic crisis, corruption, military interventions, rape, and the problems faced by the indigenous people of Guatemala.

The Mexican Muralists, who comprised the first modern art movement in Latin America, incorporated contemporary social problems --arising mainly from the rise of capitalism and American imperialist intervention¹ -- into their art. Although it emerged from a local tradition of political art, it was the first movement that dared to look beyond the policies of local governments. As part of this Mexican modern art movement, Frida Kahlo represents the evolution that led Latin American art to develop

a mature discourse against oppression. Both Kahlo and Ana Mendieta² denounced colonization in their time and used the same allegories that Galindo and Wolffer employ. Both also recuperated their cultural roots, which can be seen in some ways as a logical reaction to the imposition of foreign cultural values.

1. Frida: blood, culture, and body

Between 1922 and 1924, specialized journalists and an enlightened minority coined the term "The Mexican Renaissance" to describe a flowering of admiration, beliefs, and knowledge. This movement celebrated the appearance of the people (literally) with bright, shining images driven by the revolution and captured better by fine artists than by writers.³

Modern Latin American art was the first to deliberately return to its indigenous, in this case Aztec, roots. Primarily political in its intentions, it was closely linked to the revolutionary movement and the trade unions. It was characterized by its public nature, appearing on the walls of schools and public buildings and institutions. One of the few artists of the movement who dedicated herself to canvas art was Frida Kahlo, whose work was more personal and cathartic than political. Still, elements of the political and national culture were always present.

David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896-1974), along with a group of muralists composed mainly of José Clemente Orozco and Diego Rivera,⁴ was a pioneer in the creation of an indigenous Latin American art form. With them, especially with Diego Rivera, he toured Europe starting in 1919, first studying the latest trends emerging in Paris and then moving to Italy to admire and learn from the work of the great artists of the Italian Renaissance in the 14th and 15th centuries. They also associated themselves with European political movements, which deepened their political understanding of anarchism and Marxism.⁵ Influenced by both the Mexican Revolution and the art that was being developed in Mexico in the early twentieth century, upon arriving from Europe, they laid out the need to create public art that would serve the people rather than the elite few. They also saw this as a way to educate the people and represent the principles of the revolution in public places and trade union offices.

Siqueiros was the one who managed to articulate a particularly anti-imperialist discourse and develop a political theory on the need to rescue the iconography of the

region's indigenous ancestors for the sake of art. His travels and his political education forged him into a modern Renaissance man, making him "not only a painter. He was also a controversial person, an art theorist, a politician and a revolutionary."⁶ According to Siqueiros, artists should expose injustice and the roots of suffering. For this, art must be direct, using allegories with no abstractions. His art was shocking, striking. The style he adopted in his piece *Portrait of the Bourgeoisie* was intended to shock the viewer out of indifference.

Frida Kahlo's work could be considered a direct precedent for the two artists discussed here. While she used her body in her work, advances in art up to that time confined her body to the canvas. Still, although she only ever painted on canvas, she herself was a walking work of art in that her clothing was a political and artistic proposal. Like Siqueiros, she was against the colonialism imposed on her country and the rest of the Americas. Linked to the muralist movement, artistically as well as sentimentally, for she was married to Diego Rivera, she agreed with the need for rescuing ancient indigenous traditions. That is why she wears tehuana clothing⁷ and accessories related to pre-Columbian Aztec art in her paintings.⁸ These pre-Hispanic elements were not only a way to approach indigenous popular culture and reject colonialism,⁹ they also served as a resistance to "Western standardization."¹⁰

In addition to Kahlo being a work of art unto herself, she uses her body in her painting because it was the pain of her body that she wanted to represent. In this sense, her work has ties to performance art. From birth, Kahlo had various health problems, but the most significant was polio, which she contracted at the age of six. This condition kept her right leg and foot from developing properly, and she had a severe limp all her life. Her dissatisfaction with this situation was reflected in the way she tried to hide it by wearing long skirts and pants and using shoes with higher heels on the right foot.¹¹ In 1925, at the age of 18, she was seriously injured when the bus she was traveling on collided with a tram.¹² Between her polio and this accident, which left her with back problems for the rest of her life, Kahlo went from one surgery to another, living with constant pain and hindered mobility. In the early 1930s, while pregnant, her doctor recommended she get an abortion because her hip, which had suffered a triple fracture in the accident, could not hold the fetus or withstand childbirth. Her first abortion was thus in July, 1932. She had a second abortion while she was in Detroit

with Diego Rivera, who had gone there on a commission. Her great desire to have a child, expressed not only in numerous letters written to doctors, but also in many of her paintings, make these abortions one more of the themes explored in her work as type of therapy.

She expresses her pain through blood and other elements that cause physical suffering. In Kahlo's work, however, blood does not merely represent pain, but also sacrifice and a form of healing. "In the Aztec belief system, blood is the most precious possession of man, the vital energy source, and food for the gods in the constant regeneration of the cosmos."¹³ Rewarding the gods with blood was thought to be a gesture of self-sacrifice. This is why Kahlo represents ritual by constantly offering a bleeding heart. In this way, the blood binds her to her ancestors and their culture, allowing her to bring out what she feels within herself, both physically and psychologically. In Western culture, blood is also afforded a redemptive significance in the passion of Christ. Kahlo's abortions were likewise expressed through blood, but in this case, the red liquid symbolizes the loss of life. Like Kahlo, both Galindo and Wolffer use blood in their work, but more as an expression of human suffering caused by wars, invasions, drug trafficking violence, and feminicide.

Like the majority of her contemporaries involved in the modern Mexican art movement, Kahlo was closely linked to the politics of her country. She joined the Communist Party in the 1920s like many other young, educated people of her time. Her rejection of colonial practices is also linked to the self-portraits that characterize her work. She is not necessarily physically present in these portraits, but they include symbols that allude to her presence, such as her striking clothes. Many of these portraits were painted while she was in the United States and can thus be interpreted as a longing for her homeland or an expression of her sensation of "foreignness" in that country. Janice Helland, author of *Culture, Politics, and Identity in the Paintings of Frida Kahlo*, makes the case that the use of bloody Aztec imagery forms part of Kahlo's political beliefs; thus, the skeletons, hearts, and other images not only speak of her suffering, but they also allude to the struggles and sufferings of the Mexican nation. Mexican nationalism, with its anti-Spanish and anti-imperialist sentiment, identified the Aztecs as the last independent rulers of a politically unified indigenous nation.

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Frida Kahlo was the first artist of the Americas to raise the issue of gender violence in her work. This set a precedent for others, including Ana Mendieta, who will be discussed below. Kahlo's piece "A Few Small Hacks" was a direct reaction to a newspaper article in which she read of a man who had murdered his wife with a knife. As in much of her work, blood is spattered all over the painting, even onto the frame that she made to go with the piece.

As a literary reference, I would venture to say that "A Few Small Hacks" was the first painting in the history of Western art in which a woman, a female Latin American artist, represented in an explicit and stark manner the ancient drama of patriarchal violence exercised on the female body.¹⁵ (15).

Such violence against women as a result of our patriarchal system is still happening today, sometimes in even cruder forms, all over the world, although in Latin America it has taken on specific characteristics. Kahlo's painting is thus as powerful now as it was then. It is for this reason that the artists who came after Kahlo continue to address the problem of violence against women as one of the social issues in need of the most attention.

2. Performance art and the leap towards the contemporary: the case of Ana Mendieta

If there is one direct reference, an influence difficult to hide in the work of Lorena Wolffer and Regina José Galindo, it is the Cuban artist Ana Mendieta. As with the Mexican artists discussed above, Mendieta felt that she had things to say, both politically and socially, which traditional art media did not allow her to express. She thus decided to use her entire body. Unlike Frida Kahlo, who places her body within the canvas, Ana Mendieta frees her body of this constraint, either painting on her own skin to cover it

with natural elements or creating shadows on the ground with the contours of her own body.

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Born in Cuba, Mendieta was taken to Iowa, in the United States, when she was twelve. As part of *Operation Peter Pan*, she was taken to live with strangers who did not belong to her family, which is why much of her work focuses on the feeling of being a stranger in a strange land. She studied painting at the University of Iowa, but soon realized that painting was not sufficiently expressive. Thanks to the initiative of Hans Breder, who would be an influence throughout many stages of Mendieta's career, the university set up a special center with a degree program in "intermedia" and the performing arts. After finishing her degree in painting, Mendieta enrolled in graduate studies at the center. In 1972, she gave up painting altogether and began working on what would be her most mature style.¹⁶

The need to reconnect with the country of her birth led her to dabble in *Santeria*, a religion practiced in Cuba, especially by people of color. A mixture of the Catholicism brought to America by the Spanish and the religion of the Yoruba of West Africa, who were brought to Cuba as slaves, Santeria rituals are inspired by the stories of the Catholic saints, but use natural elements such as animal blood, plants, fire, and earth. In this sense, Mendieta was emulating the modern Mexican approach of going back to one's roots. She thus began to incorporate *santero* elements in her work. One of the most obvious is the performance piece entitled *Death of a Chicken*, in which she decapitates a chicken and, holding it while it is still moving, lets herself be bathed in its blood. Standing naked, she views the blood as an element of purification, as in Santeria. This harkens back to the work of Frida Kahlo, who, thanks to the cultural

traditions of her native country, also viewed blood as an element of purification and healing. Because Mendieta travelled to Mexico almost every summer between 1971 and 1980, her collection of indigenous cultural elements includes cultural references from there as well. An example of this can be seen in the series *Ixchel*, which makes use of pre-Columbian imagery.¹⁷

As mentioned above, Mendieta makes frequent use of blood in her work, sometimes as an element of purification, as in those pieces that refer back to Santeria, and sometimes as a representation of pain. But unlike Kahlo, Mendieta does not use blood to express her own pain,¹⁸ but rather that of the people around her or of pain in general. The rape and murder of a Iowa college student inspired her to create two pieces in 1973. In both of them, she covered herself with blood and constructed a crime scene. The first performance was set in her college dorm room. She invited her friends over and when they arrived, they found her bent over a table with her hands tied, her trousers and panties pulled down, and her legs covered with blood. For the artist, the public reaction -- in this case of her classmates -- formed part of the work. The second piece was similar, but this time she performed it outdoors in the middle of the campus. The previous year, at *Womanhouse* in California, Suzanne Lacy and other artists had done a performance that likewise dealt with rape entitled *Ablutions*.¹⁹ Another piece that uses blood to depict violence against women is Mendieta's *Self Portrait with Blood*. This highly suggestive piece is self-explanatory: the blood grabs our attention and fills us with horror, which is the main reason blood is used when these artists deal with themes of oppression and violence. "She was also one of the first Latin American artists to talk about the issue of violence, sometimes associated with the idea of sacrifice, creating performance pieces inspired by the religious faith of her country of origin."²⁰

The circumstance of being a woman in a patriarchal system is present in most of Mendieta's works. In *Death of a Chicken*, the white, virginal chicken is stained with its own blood.

Undoubtedly, the artist identifies with the chicken: murder is displaced suicide, but at the same time it is a metaphor for sexual initiation. The

white chicken is stained red with its own blood. The artist is transformed into a white sheet, exposed to show the curious onlookers that at the time of her wedding, the bride was virginal beyond any doubt – as "clean" as the white sheet.²¹

Another piece entitled *Feathers on a Woman* alludes to the objectification of the female body. The woman, in this case a model, is bathed in blood and then feathers are stuck all over her body, transforming her from a woman into an animal. On this occasion, Mendieta uses a different symbol found in Santeria, namely feathers, which are used in healing rituals.

Apart from the cultural revival represented by her work, Mendieta has employed other artistic forms, for example, that of land art, to protest against the colonial policies imposed on the countries of Latin America. Using this art form, she created a broad series of works entitled *Silhouettes* in which she dug holes in the ground with her own body so that they would take on her shape. This becoming one with the earth is a reference to the idea of nationalities and xenophobia, for all of us belong to the earth. In this sense, the series attempts to eliminate borders, which are often simply barriers imposed by powerful nations to exploit colonized countries.

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It was obvious that in Third World countries, the direct violence of the past had been replaced by technological and cultural dominance, since these were much more fruitful and effective tools of submission. In her words,

the strategy was to "simplify, distort, and trivialize in order to impose a lifestyle."²²

"The earth body works she created, calling them *Silhouettes*, demonstrate her sensitivity to 'the plight of colonized peoples', making her a staunch advocate of the importance of cultural identity as a political force."²³ Marina Gutierrez, a Puerto Rican artist based in New York, was the first to compare Kahlo with Mendieta a year after Mendieta's death in 1985. Her homage to the Cuban artist, entitled *Ana Mendieta: A Return to Native Earth*, consisted of a series of seven works, one of which was a montage of various materials that portrayed Mendieta with features typical of Kahlo's art.

3. Symbols of oppression and violence

Given the current situation in Latin America, with the economic control of most countries in the hands of U.S. companies, poverty is rampant. In virtually the entire continent, the differences between social classes are striking, with the exceedingly rich and the very poor. The existing capital is concentrated in too few hands, leaving the majority of the population with no means to survive. The external debt to which many countries have had to resort because of this situation has made them even more dependent on the United States and other powers, a dependence that has led to economic crises such as that of Mexico in 1994. These invasions, which have taken place since the nineteenth century, are also driven by contempt for the native inhabitants of these countries. Contempt and genocide of the indigenous peoples of the Americas is still occurring more than five centuries after the Spanish and European invasions. This is yet another effect of imperialism, which by rendering the native population invisible, takes their land for the benefit of capital.

3.1. Lorena Wolffer, "Mexican Territory"

Wolffer's work discussed here, "Mexican Territory," could not have a better name since it is based on violence, not only that exercised against women, but also on political violence and violence tied to drug trafficking, all of which are prevalent in her country. We could actually call all her work, indeed her whole career, "Mexican territory."

Since 1993, violence against women in Mexico has become increasingly radical with the so-called feminicides of Ciudad Juarez. A series of murders of women carried out by men unknown to the victims has left a balance of more than six hundred women murdered and thousands missing. The artist, who declares herself a feminist, is associated with a movement that seeks to prevent these killings and solve cases in which the perpetrators have gone unpunished. With her performance "Mientras dormíamos" ("While We Were Sleeping"), she uses art to delve into the political and social claims surrounding this topic. From this particular piece she has created many other projects related to gender violence, including performance pieces, video art, surveys, and collections.

Like the artists discussed above, Wolffer's body is an important element in her work. With it she reveals herself, but she also bestows upon it the category of "territory," not only in the aforementioned work, in which her body takes on the role of the Mexican state, but also in many others such as "Soy totalmente de hierro" ("I am Completely Made of Iron"), which focuses on the power that the patriarchy wants to exercise on women's bodies and calls for women to realize that our bodies are our territory. In this piece, the protagonist is not Wolffer, but rather the body itself, represented here by a model. The body as territory is also present in the aforementioned piece "While We Were Sleeping," in which Wolffer draws images on her torso to evoke the desert where the bodies of the feminicide victims of Ciudad Juarez were found. Wolffer's art also refers back to Ana Mendieta and Frida Kahlo in that she repeatedly uses blood in her work. In the performance "Bañate" ("Swim"), the artist:

appears naked, sitting next to a bathtub full of blood, and with slow and gentle movements, she begins to spread the vital, viscous liquid on her body, ... thus vindicating the power of blood as a life-giving element... In her performance, Lorena seems to say that blood cleans and purifies.²⁴

In "Mexican Territory," described above, the artist also uses blood, but this time as a symbol of torture, sacrifice, and economic breakdown. In the words of the artist:

This "self-torture" in which my body serves as a metaphor for the territory of Mexico was a comment on the passivity and helplessness of Mexicans after the 1994 crisis. The work was based on images associated with extreme sexual experiences that made it both attractive and repulsive. The atmosphere was clinical, sterile and white. Naked on a surgical table with my hands and feet tied tightly to it, I received the continuous impact of drops of blood on my stomach for six hours.²⁵

It is obvious that Wolffer, like Mendieta in "Death of a Chicken", and, as we will see below, Regina José Galindo, is interested in the idea of purity as it is linked to sexuality. All three have dealt with the subject of rape and its link with blood, as well as purity and its associations with sex and virginity.

Both in "Mexican Territory" (1995) and "If She is Mexico, Who Beat Her Up?" performed between 1997 and 2001, Lorena Wolffer presents a reality imbued with female submission and violence. In both pieces, the Virgin of Guadalupe, an important figure in Mexican lore, "questions" the rules of behavior imposed on women. She is presented alongside *ranchera* music, which suppresses women's rights and augments machismo, and several soap operas or *telenovelas* that also question this model of behavior, subject as it is to a social pattern of patriarchal male dominance.²⁶

The influence of artists such as David Alfaro Siqueiros, who has dealt with the theme of oppression, is also clear. Siqueiros used the symbolism of bound hands and feet, together with that of a prone body, in his piece "Victim of Fascism." A person who is tied up is being forced, oppressed, or repressed while being in a prone position makes an individual that much more vulnerable. A bound person who cannot move often represents the passivity of someone who does not fight back. This is the case in "Mexican Territory," "Victim of Fascism," and Galindo's "While They are Still Free." In contrast, Ana Mendieta's performance "Tied-up Woman" represents the fight. Like those featured in the other pieces, the protagonist of "Tied-up Woman" is trying to free herself, but here she is not lying down and she appears to move. As such, she does not represent vulnerability.

3.2. "While They are Still Free," Regina José Galindo

As mentioned earlier, American imperialism has rendered the indigenous peoples of Latin America invisible in order to seize their land, destroy their culture, and have one less obstacle to the deforestation of tropical forests that are then used for arable land. In Guatemala, the attempt to do away with the indigenous tribes has reached barbaric levels in which military and paramilitary personnel systematically rape pregnant women to provoke miscarriages and thus decrease the population. This practice has been linked to the eugenics theories that led to the forced sterilization of hundreds of thousands of women in Latin America and among the African-American population in the southern United States during much of the twentieth century.

The Guatemalan artist Regina José Galindo seeks to vindicate these women, lambasting the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators in her performance "While They are Still Free." The artist, who was pregnant at the time of the performance, tied her hands and feet to a bed using umbilical cords as ropes, creating an allegory of abortion. The piece also alludes to rape and domestic violence. In the context of sexual practices and the oppression of women, Galindo also created the performance piece and video entitled "Hymenoplasty," for which she won a Golden Lion at the 2005 Venice Biennale. In it the artist undergoes a hymen reconstruction carried out with the same method that millions of young Guatemalan subject themselves to, often with no anesthesia and at the hands of uncertified doctors. The pressure to be a virgin until marriage and the obsession with purity and chastity imposed by the Catholic church in Central America is so strong that many who have sex before marriage choose to undergo these operations in order to marry. The reason they resort to unqualified doctors is that they lack the money for these otherwise expensive procedures. Thus, only high income women can afford an operation with all the guarantees of proper safety and hygiene.

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land. In Guatemala, the attempt to do away with the indigenous tribes has reached barbaric levels in which military and paramilitary personnel systematically rape pregnant women to provoke miscarriages and thus decrease the population.

Again, a contemporary Central American artist resorts to the use of blood as a social and political symbol. Protesting against gender violence, she performed the piece "Perra" ("Bitch"), in which she uses a knife to write the word "bitch," which was found written on the corpses of women murdered in Guatemala, victims of femicide. In her lecture given at the International Congress on Women, Art and Technology at the Polytechnic University of Valencia, Dr. Irene Ballester analyzed the allegorical meaning of blood in the work of these two artists, a symbolism comparable to that found in the works of Frida Kahlo and Ana Mendieta.

The ability to take her body to the absolute limit through blood makes Galindo's work intersect with that of Marina Abramovic and Gina Pane, but unlike cutting as a self-mutilation ritual, the blood in Lorena Wolffer's work dovetails with that used in Galindo's work by virtue of its political basis as a liquid that resignifies, resymbolizes, and recontextualizes.²⁷

Blood is also present in the performance piece entitled: "¿Quién puede borrar las huellas?" ("Who Can Erase the Traces?") from 2003, in which she wets her feet in blood and then walks with bloodstained feet from the Constitutional Court to the Presidential Palace in the Guatemalan capital to protest against former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt who was up for reelection, even though he had been found responsible for the massacres and burning of villages from March 23, 1982 to August 8, 1983 [28].

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This piece, like "Mexican Territory," features indigenous people, but this time they constitute a symbol of ancestral roots and past freedoms rather than victims of their present plight. Indeed, these pieces point to the need for vindication, both on behalf of indigenous peoples and from their own self-assertion. The native peoples in both countries still exist, but they continue to be trampled. As Galindo notes, in her country, business interests want to appropriate land at the expense of the natives' human rights.

[...] the representation of pain and oppression is joined with aboriginal religious practices that claim to cure and heal. In this way, the pain can be eliminated not only by alluding to it, but also by self-sacrifice to eliminate it. The protagonists thus show themselves as survivors rather than victims, which is important since victimization often leads to passivity on the part of the oppressed and charity on the part of the oppressor.

Conclusions

This article has attempted to trace the trajectory of social art practices in Latin America, specifically those concerned with major issues like imperialism and violence. In this artistic milieu, the representation of pain and oppression is joined with aboriginal religious practices that claim to cure and heal. In this way, the pain can be eliminated not only by alluding to it, but also by self-sacrifice to eliminate it. The protagonists thus show themselves as survivors rather than victims, which is important since victimization often leads to passivity on the part of the oppressed and charity on the part of the oppressor. This is a discourse of struggle that alludes to the links between the artists discussed here and political and feminist movements. Their sense of loss for their culture and their roots has also led to the vindication of these traditions through the incorporation of indigenous elements in their work.

The influence of both Lorena Wolffer and Regina José Galindo on younger artists is also obvious. It is no coincidence that their art is so similar, especially the two pieces discussed in detail here. The symbolism and methods used come from a rich tradition of modern and contemporary art created by individuals well-trained in their craft, artists who were at the forefront not only of artistic trends, but also of policies concerning human rights.

Footnotes

1. This paper refers to U.S. imperialism because although all the countries listed have been a colony of either Spain or Portugal, a fact which has had an impact on their current problems, it is continued U.S. intervention, either through the military or through private companies, which sustains the economic problems and instability in Latin America.

2. Cuban by birth, she lived in Iowa (USA) from early childhood.

3. Monsiváis, Carlos, "Frida Kahlo, de las etapas de su reconocimiento," *Cuerpos sufrientes*, Year 19, vol. 37, April 2008, p. 4.

4. In addition to Siqueiros, two other artists were an important part of the Mexican muralist movement: José Clemente Orozco (1883-1949) and Diego Rivera (1886-1957). While this movement was directly influenced by the Mexican Revolution, that does not mean that the topics it dealt with were solely revolutionary or historical themes. Rather, the revolution was what formed these artists politically, and that formation later emerged in their paintings as real concern for social issues such as workers' struggles, the gradual disappearance of indigenous Mexican culture, and imperialism from the north. They were interested in the mural because they thought that traditional canvas was too academic and not suited to the needs of modern art since principled revolutionary art should be public and for everyone.

5. Rafols, J.F., "La pintura en América," *Historia del arte*, Barcelona, Editorial Optima, 1999, p. 512.

6. De Micheli, Mario, *Siqueiros, David Alfaro (1896-1974)*, New York, Harry N. Abrams, 1968, p. 1.

7. Her tehuana dresses, the traditional clothing of women from Tehuantepec Zapotec, were one of the few indigenous icons Kahlo used which did not come from the Aztecs. See: Helland, Janice: "Culture, politics, and identity in the paintings of Frida Kahlo," in Norma Broude; Mary D. Garrard, eds., *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History*, New York, Harper Collins. 1992, p. 399.

8. Monsiváis, *op. cit.*, p. 6. 9. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

11. Álvarez Enamorado, José Antonio: "Frida Kahlo (1907-1954)," http://www.ieslaarboleda.net/ficheros/Materiales_generales_centro/Frida/Biografia%20Frida%20Kahlo.pdf. Consulted on January 11, 2012, p. 2.
12. Kettenmann, Andrea, *Frida Kahlo, dolor y pasión*, Cologne, Tashen. 1999, p. 17.
13. Codreanu, Florin, "Dynamics of blood in Frida Kahlo's creation," *Bulletin of the Transylvania University of Başov*, Num. 51, Vol. 2, 2009, p. 253.
14. Helland, Janice, op. cit., pp. 397-99.
15. Norandi, Elina, "La representación de la violencia en las artistas latinoamericanas: los desaparecidos del Cono Sur y las muertas de Juárez," <http://www.noraancarola.com/docs/Rio-de-la-plata-Elina-Norandi.pdf>. Consulted on December 20, 2011.
16. Fischer, Peter, *Ana Mendieta: body tracks*, Luzern, Kunstmuseum Luzern. 2002, p. 36.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
18. Or so it is believed, because it is not clear whether her death, caused by falling out the window of her apartment in Manhattan, New York, was an accident or a murder by her lover (Carl Andre). If the latter is the real cause of her death, it is likely that her life may have been a torment that no one knew the extent of.
19. Irish, Sharon, *Suzanne Lacy. Spaces Between*, Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press, 2010, p. 36.
20. Norandi, op. cit., p.3.
21. Moure, Gloria, Ana Mendieta, *Santiago de Compostela*, Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea, 1996, p. 35.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
23. Sabbatino, Mary (1997), "Ana Mendieta: la identidad y la serie Siluetas," *Ana Mendieta*, Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, p. 137.
24. Alcázar, Josefina, "Mujeres, cuerpo y performance en América Latina," Araujo, Kathya; Prieto, Mercedes (eds.), *Estudios sobre sexualidades en América Latina*, Quito, Flasco, 2008, pp. 345-46.
25. Wolffer, Lorena, "Territorio mexicano," http://www.lorenawolffer.net/dossier/01obra/performances/05tm/tm_frames.html, Consulted on January 5, 2012.
26. Ballester Buigues, Irene, "Desde el empoderamiento. Imágenes extremas contra el capitalismo patriarcal globalizador: combatividad y resistencia frente al feminicidio mexicano y la desterritorialización chicana," *Arte y políticas de identidad*, Murcia, Universidad de Murcia, Vol. 3, 2010, p. 46.
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28. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

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