



Ana Mendieta. *Burial Pyramid*, 1974. Super-8mm film transferred to high-definition digital media, color, silent.  
Running time: 3:17 minutes © The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC, Courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co.,  
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## ***Soft and Wet***

**Curated By:** Sadia Shirazi

**On View:** September 18–November 16, 2019

**Opening reception & curatorial walkthrough:** Wednesday, September 18, 5-8 pm

**Artists:** Arooj Aftab, Beverly Buchanan, Crystal Z Campbell, Caroline Key, Ana Mendieta, Andy Robert, Julie Tolentino, Zarina, and Constantina Zavitsanos

EFA Project Space, 323 West 39th Street, 2nd Floor, NYC, between 8th and 9th Avenues

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EFA Project Space is pleased to present *Soft and Wet*, curated by Sadia Shirazi. The exhibition features works by Arooj Aftab, Beverly Buchanan, Crystal Z Campbell, Caroline Key, Ana Mendieta, Andy Robert, Julie Tolentino, Zarina, and Constantina Zavitsanos.

The exhibition cites Prince's 1978 single, "Soft and Wet" and *Dialectics of Isolation: An Exhibition of Third World Women Artists of the United States*, which was co-curated by Ana Mendieta, Kazuko Miyamoto, and Zarina at A.I.R. Gallery in 1980. These citations serve as reference points to help us locate fleshy, formalist impulses in the practices of contemporary artists that echo those of artists from the 1970s. Working through sound, vision, vibration, touch, and breath, the artists in *Soft and Wet* activate multi-sensory responses that move beyond the linguistic registers of a singular voice and questions of individuated agency dominating discourses of representational art. The artists turn their formalism towards questions of flesh, fugitivity, and consent in relation to the nation-state, neoliberal capitalism, and the medical-industrial complex, while stretching formalism beyond the assumption of hegemonic subjects as the sole inheritors of its legacy. The works in this show are experiments in, and explorations of, what it means "to consent not to be a single being" as Édouard Glissant writes. The artists in *Soft and Wet* think with and through one another, invoking the artist whose song gives the exhibition its title, to feel out the contours of other ways of being in relation. They join him in saying—*We'd be so lost, in our mouths, the best, I feel it everyday (every way)*.

## Exhibition Events

- **Wednesday, September 18, 2019, 5–8 pm** – Curatorial walkthrough and opening reception (walkthrough begins promptly at 5 pm)
- **Saturday, October 19, 2019, 5 pm:** Lecture Performance by **Crystal Z Campbell**, followed by a conversation with **Sadia Shirazi**, **Caroline Key**, and guest speaker. The conversation will touch upon questions of flesh, fugitivity, and consent in relation to the medical-industrial complex, focusing on Campbell's work on Henrietta Lacks's immortal cells and Key's work on the technological gaze in her new video work *Khora*. (Note: this event takes place during EFA's [Open Studios Weekend](#).)
- **Friday, November 15, 2019, 6–8 pm:** Publication launch. Writers of commissioned texts will read excerpts from their writing, alongside readings of selected passages by artists included in the catalogue of *Dialectics of Isolation: An Exhibition of Third World Women Artists of the United States* from 1980, followed by a conversation.

All events are free and open to the public. Admission is first come, first served. For updates and more information on events at Project Space, please [visit our website](#).

## About the Curator

**Sadia Shirazi** is a writer, art historian, curator and sometimes architect based in New York. Her reviews, essays, and interviews have appeared in *Artforum*, *Bidoun*, *MoMA post*, *C Magazine*, *The Funambulist*, *Jadaliyya* and *ArteEast* and she has written monographic essays on Zarina and Jessica Vaughn. Shirazi has curated exhibitions internationally including *Three days in the desert* at the Lower East Side Printshop (2018), *welcome to what we took from is the state* at the Queens Museum (2016),

and *230 MB/Exhibition Without Objects* at Khoj Artists's Association in Delhi (2013). Her work has been shown at the 16th Venice Architecture Biennale, Performance Space New York and the Devi Art Foundation. Shirazi holds a MArch from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a BA from the University of Chicago. She is the Instructor for Curatorial Studies at the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program (ISP), teaches at The New School and Cooper Union, and is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Art History and Visual Studies at Cornell University.

## About the Artists

**Arooj Aftab** is a composer, singer and sound artist. Her minimalist work draws from varied influences, the South Asian forms of the ghazal, khayal and qawwali, jazz, soul and electronic music. Aftab is also the curator of "Suave" a showcase of sound artists working with analog and modular synthesizer music. In 2018, she was named among NPR's 200 Greatest Songs by 21st Century Women, and *The New York Times*'s 25 Best Classical Songs of 2018. Aftab has opened for Mitski at the Brooklyn Steel, has performed at MoMa's Summer Series, Brooklyn Museum's First Saturday, and Lincoln Center Out of Doors. She is a graduate of Berklee College of Music.

**Beverly Buchanan** is noted for her exploration of Southern vernacular through her art. Buchanan grew up in Orangeburg, SC where her father was dean of the School of Agriculture at South Carolina State College, which was the only state school for African-Americans in South Carolina. In 1962, Buchanan graduated from Bennett College in Greensboro, NC with a degree in medical technology. She attended Columbia University where she received an M.A. in Parasitology in 1968 and an M.A. in Public Health in 1969. In 1971, she enrolled in a class taught by Norman Lewis at the Art Students League in New York City, where Romare Bearden became her friend and mentor throughout the 1970's. Buchanan decided to pursue her art exclusively in 1977 and moved to Macon, GA. In 1980, Buchanan was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship (NEA). In 1990, she received another NEA Fellowship in sculpture. She was chosen as a Georgia Visual Arts honoree in 1997. In 2002, she received an Anonymous Was a Woman Award. In 2005, she was a distinguished honoree of the College Art Association Committee for Women in the Arts. Buchanan was also featured as one of 27 artists in the recent Georgia Council for the Arts publication: "Georgia Masterpieces: Selected Works from Georgia Museums" and the MOCA GA exhibition, *Twenty Georgia Masters*.

**Crystal Z Campbell** is a multidisciplinary artist and writer of African-American, Filipino & Chinese descents who excavates public secrets through performance, sound, and film. An Oklahoma native, Campbell has exhibited internationally at The Drawing Center (US), Nest (Netherlands), ICA-Philadelphia (US), Artissima (IT), Studio Museum of Harlem (US), Project Row Houses (US), and SculptureCenter (US), amongst others. Selected honors include: Pollock-Krasner Award, MacDowell Colony, Skowhegan, Rijksakademie, Whitney ISP, Sommerakademie, Smithsonian Fellowship, MAP Fund, M-AAA Interchange Grant, and Flaherty Film Seminar Fellow. Campbell is a concurrent Drawing Center Open Sessions Fellow and fourth-year Tulsa Artist Fellow, who lives and works in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

**Caroline Key** is a Korean-American filmmaker and artist currently based in Brooklyn, New York. She received her MFA in Film/Video from the California Institute of the Arts and her BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Caroline was a Fulbright Research Fellow in South Korea in 2010 and a fellow at the Whitney Independent Study Program in 2012. Her works have shown internationally, including the Arsenal Cinema in Berlin, the Smithsonian Hirshhorn Museum, the Seoul Independent

Film Festival, and the Margaret Mead Film & Video Festival. Her feature film, *Grace Period*, premiered at the New Museum in May 2015.

In a brief yet prolific career, the Cuban-born artist **Ana Mendieta** created groundbreaking work in photography, film, video, drawing, sculpture, and site-specific installations. Amongst the major themes in her work are exile, displacement, and a return to the landscape, which remain profoundly relevant today. Her unique hybrid of form and documentation, works that she titled “siluetas,” are fugitive and potent traces of the artist’s inscription of her body in the landscape, often transformed by natural elements such as fire and water. The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC, in collaboration with Galerie Lelong & Co., recently catalogued and digitized the entirety of Mendieta’s moving image works, discovering that the artist remarkably made more than 100 in the ten-year period in which she worked in the medium. The groundbreaking exhibition of her moving image works, *Covered in Time and History: The Films of Ana Mendieta*, was organized by the Katherine E. Nash Gallery, University of Minnesota in 2014, and has since travelled to several institutions worldwide, including NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, Florida; University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; Bildmuseet, Umeå, Sweden; Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin; and the Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris. Mendieta’s work has been the subject of six major museum retrospectives, the most recent of which, *Ana Mendieta: Traces*, was organized by the Hayward Gallery, England, in 2013, and travelled to the Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Austria, and the Galerie Rudolfinum, Czech Republic. *Ana Mendieta: Earth Body, Sculpture and Performance 1972–1985* was organized by the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., in 2005 and travelled to the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Des Moines Art Center, Iowa; and Miami Art Museum, Florida. Mendieta was born in Havana, Cuba, in 1948, and died in New York City in 1985.

**Andy Robert** is a painter who balances abstraction with recognizable imagery, and enjoys the experimentation and tinkering that comes with painting pictures. Robert views the world critically as a contradiction of mass-communication and increased voicelessness. His work relies on the idea that images are to be bent and folded, taken apart and put back together again; a belief that art is a philosophical means to look at and examine things—to question, test ideas, and engage with the world. And that in painting a picture something is being taken apart to put back together; there is an inherent risk in breaking it.

**Julie Tolentino** is a Filipina-Salvadorean artist whose practice explores durational performance, movement, and sensual practices within installation environments as a way to continually explore the interstitial spaces of race, gender, relationality, and the archive. Her collaborative projects extend into video, object and scent-making, soundscapes, and texts drawn from the “outside” learning spaces of activism, advocacy, loss, and caregiving.

Tolentino's work has been presented at museums, galleries, and festivals both domestically and internationally. Works include *Conversation Piece (from .bury.me.fiercely.)* at EFA Project Space, New York (2019); *After The Future* for the Thessaloniki Biennial, Thessaloniki, Greece (2018); *Queer Mestiza* at Manila Contemporary, Makati, Philippines (2014); *Honey* at New York University Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, and TheatreWorks, Singapore (2013); *Raised By Wolves* at Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles (2013); *The Sky Remains The Same* at the New Museum, New York (2013); *Cry of Love* at the Broad Art Center, University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, and Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Germany (2010); *A True Story About Two People* at Participant Inc., New York (2005); *The Bottom Project*, The Kitchen, New York (2000); *Mestiza-Que*



*Bonitos Ojos Tienes* at The Green Room, Manchester, United Kingdom and Tramway, Glasgow Scotland (1998).

Tolentino is the Provocations co-editor for *TDR (The Drama Review)*, and since 2008 has hosted one-to-one and small group artists and writer residencies at Feral House\*Studio in the Mohave Desert. Tolentino contributed to the group-published essay "The Sum of All Questions: Clit Club" in *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* (Winter 2018) in preparation for a book of recollections of the Clit Club entitled *Guard Your Daughters - Clit Club 1990-2002* (forthcoming with Josh Lubin-Levy) and is featured in the 2019 Visual AIDS Duets: Kia Labeija and Julie Tolentino. With Pati Hertling, she re-staged Ellen Cantor's 1993 exhibition *Coming To Power: Twenty Five Years of Sexually X-plicit Art By Women*, and edited the catalogue *ELLEN CANTOR: I'm Still Coming* (Capricious, 2016). Throughout the 1990s Tolentino ran queer club spaces in New York such as Clit Club, Dagger, and Tattooed Love Child; was a member of ACTUP NY, Art Positive and House of Color Video Collective; and co-created the Safer Sex Handbook for Women for Lesbian Aids Project/GMHC with Cynthia Madansky. Creative partnerships include projects with Ron Athey, Robert Crouch, Stosh Fila, Aldo Hernandez, Lovett/Codagnone, David Rousseve, Abigail Severance, and Mark So.

Tolentino has received grants and support from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts (2019); *Pieter Dancemakers Grant* (2018); Choreographers in Mentorship and Exchange (2012 with Jmy Kidd and 2010 with Doran George); Art Matters (2010 and 2015); and the Franklin Furnace Fund for Performance Art (1999). She was an artist in residence at BOFFO Fire Island Artist Residency, Fire Island, NY (2018); Hope Mohr Dance's One Year-Community Engagement Project, San Francisco (2017); Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (2014), New Museum, New York (2013), PACT Zollverein, Essen, Germany (2012); and Artsadmin, Toyne Studios, London, United Kingdom (2002). She is a Dean's Distinguished Fellow researching interdisciplinary performance and pedagogy at University of California at Riverside.

The work of **Zarina** is defined by her adherence to the personal and the essential. An early interest in architecture and mathematics is reflected in her use of geometry and her emphasis on structural purity. While her work tends towards minimalism, its starkness is tempered by its texture and materiality. Her art poignantly chronicles her life and recurring themes include home, displacement, borders, journey and memory.

Best known as a printmaker, Zarina prefers to carve instead of draw the line, to gouge the surface rather than build it up. She uses various mediums of printmaking including intaglio, woodblocks, lithography, and silkscreen, and she frequently creates series of several prints in order to reference a multiplicity of locales or concepts. For example, her seminal work *Home is a Foreign Place* consists of 36 woodblock prints, each of which represents a particular memory of home. Each subject is inscribed in Urdu beneath the print to signify the vital role language plays in her work, as well as to pay homage to a mother tongue in decline. Other works such as *These Cities Blotted into the Wilderness (Adrienne Rich after Ghalib)*, *Countries*, and *Dividing Line* explore geographical borders and contested terrains, particularly those areas which are scarred from political conflict. She has long been interested in the material possibilities of paper and in addition to printing on it, she creates works which entail puncturing, scratching, weaving and sewing on paper. Zarina also creates sculpture using a variety of media such as bronze, aluminum, steel, wood, tin, and paper pulp.

Zarina (b. 1937) was born in Aligarh, India and currently lives and works in New York. After receiving a degree in mathematics, she went on to study woodblock printing in Bangkok and Tokyo, and intaglio

with S. W. Hayter at Atelier-17 in Paris. She has exhibited at numerous venues internationally including representing India at the 2011 Venice Biennale, and her retrospective exhibition entitled *Zarina: Paper Like Skin* was presented at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles in 2012, and at the Guggenheim, New York, and the Art Institute of Chicago in 2013. Her work is in the permanent collections of Tate Modern, London; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; and The Menil Collection, Houston. Upcoming projects include a solo exhibition at the Pulitzer Arts Foundation, St. Louis, MO in fall 2019.

**Constantina Zavitsanos** works in sculpture, performance, text, and sound. Zavitsanos's work deals in the material re/production of debt, dependency, and means beyond measure. Zavitsanos has exhibited at the New Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, The Kitchen, and Artists Space in New York; at Arika Episode 7 in Glasgow, Scotland; and at Fri Art Kunsthalle in Fribourg, Switzerland. With Park McArthur, they co-authored the texts "Other Forms of Conviviality" in the journal *Women and Performance* (Routledge, 2013), and "The Guild of the Brave Poor Things" in *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility* (MIT Press, 2017). Zavitsanos lives in New York and teaches at The New School.

## PRESS INQUIRIES

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## GENERAL ACCESSIBILITY

EFA Project Space is located at 323 W. 39th Street, 2nd Floor, between 8th and 9th Avenues, in Manhattan. The building is wheelchair accessible, with two accessible elevators in the lobby. Guests are asked to sign in in the lobby, but no ID is required for entry. Nearest accessible subway station is 42nd Street/Port Authority, 1 block north on 8th Avenue.

## FAMILIES & ACCESSIBILITY

EFA Project Space is committed to nurturing an intergenerational environment and we encourage 'kid noise' at our events. Please notify us of any accessibility needs by email [projectspace@efanyc.org](mailto:projectspace@efanyc.org), or give us a call at (212) 563-5855 x 233.

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**EFA Project Space**, launched in September 2008 as a program of **The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts**, is a collaborative, cross-disciplinary arts venue founded on the belief that art is directly connected to the individuals who produce it, the communities that arise because of it, and to everyday life; and that by providing an arena for exploring these connections, we empower artists to forge new partnerships and encourage the expansion of ideas. [www.projectspace-efanyc.org](http://www.projectspace-efanyc.org) The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts (EFA) is a 501(c)(3) public charity. Through its three core programs, **EFA Studios**, **EFA Project Space**, and **EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop**, EFA is dedicated to providing artists across all disciplines with space, tools and a cooperative forum for the development of individual practice. EFA is a catalyst for cultural growth, stimulating new interactions between artists, creative communities, and the public. [www.efanyc.org](http://www.efanyc.org)

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