

Refugio Nacional de Vida Silvestre

The use of depleted uranium weapons can be considered an international public health and environmental hazard.



Furthermore, we declare that repression or arrests will not weaken the determination of the people of the United States to support the United States and its territorial possessions that belong to the people of the world.

# Land Art in Parallax: Media, Violence, Political Ecology

Yates McKee

*The authentic artist cannot turn his back on the contradictions that inhabit our landscapes.*

— Robert Smithson<sup>1</sup>

1. Much of the most compelling art made over the past decade has been marked by a distinctive spatial turn. This turn is inflected to varying degrees with a concern for the intersection between the topographical formations and deformations of land, on the one hand, and the territorial determination of such formations in political, economic, and cultural terms, on the other. Emerging from a number of critical problem sets developed in the late 1990s and early 2000s (site-specificity, the archival impulse, the parafictional), this turn is evident in a wide spectrum of practices, ranging from the oblique spatial poetics of Francis Alÿs and Matthew Buckingham, to the experimental geographical research of the Center for Land Use Interpretation and Trevor Paglen, to the counter-memorial landscape investigations of Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla, Ayreen Anastas and Rene Gabri, and Andrea Geyer, to the activist program of “tactical cartography” put forth by the Institute for Applied Autonomy.<sup>2</sup> These internally variegated practices constitute neither a rejective break with nor a simple revival of “historical” Land Art, which has sometimes functioned as a perfunctory reference point in assessments of contemporary art that deals with landscape and land use.<sup>3</sup> With varying degrees of historical self-consciousness and polemical intent, contemporary practices are involved in a kind of art-historical parallax. As described by Hal Foster, parallax “involves the apparent

displacement of an object caused by the actual movement of its observer. This figure underscores both that our framings of the past depend on our positions in the present, and that these positions are always defined through such framings.”<sup>4</sup>

In the essay that follows, I will not be explicitly addressing contemporary practices. Rather, I will reconsider several important moments in the emergence of Land Art in light of the historical events and pressing conceptual problems to which contemporary spatial practices demand that we respond. Present-day Land artists are concerned with the imbrications of media technologies and terrestrial matter, the mnemonic, economic, and political inscription of territory, and the crises and conflicts surrounding ecological life-support systems at local and planetary scales. Their work simultaneously illuminates and interrogates certain questions inhering in the legacies of historical Land Art, which have often been downplayed, if not ignored altogether.

2. Historical Land Art has frequently been posited as the quintessence of site-specificity. Radicalizing the phenomenological here-and-now of, say, Robert Morris’s 1963 Green Gallery installation in New York (often cited as a landmark of Minimalism), works of Land Art are said to epitomize the grounded actuality of place and the irreducible physicality of land as

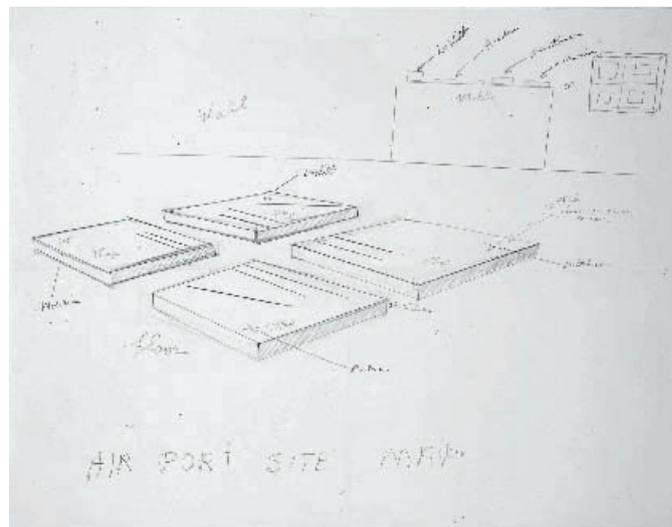
a “raw” material or process. They do so in opposition to two other models: first, the disembodied viewing subject posited by high modernism, and second, the contemporaneous project of conceptualist dematerialization. Though Land Art per se is curiously marginal to Miwon Kwon’s canonical discussion of site-specificity, her primary allusions to Land art (metonymized by “the Nevada desert”) place it firmly within an approach to site as “something grounded, bound to the laws of physics . . . an actual location, a tangible reality, its identity composed of a unique combination of constituent physical elements.”<sup>5</sup> This “classical” approach to site-specificity functions as a foil for Kwon’s account of the gradual “crisis” and “unhinging” of site, which she links to endogenous developments within artistic practice and to the cultural, political, and economic dynamics of capitalist globalization. Kwon’s narrative is avowedly heuristic, and she stresses that her phases of site-specificity (phenomenological, institutional-critique, and discursive) do not necessarily proceed in a linear fashion and may indeed overlap. Nonetheless, Kwon leaves the distinct impression that Land Art was concerned primarily with the “actuality of place,” and thus anterior to the problematic of “deterritorialization”—the inscription of the physical terrain of the earth into expanded networks of media technologies, policy regimes, and political economies that constitute all sites as nodal points of

historically uneven and politically contested exchanges, flows, and displacements.<sup>6</sup>

More recent research, however, has demonstrated that from its inception historical Land Art was engaged with issues of deterritorialization in ways that were variously symptomatic, critical, and, most frequently, ambivalent. Authors such as Jane McFadden point to the central role played by media technologies in the conception and realization of works of Land Art, a role that goes beyond the problem of simply documenting a site-specific work that would otherwise exist independent of its mediatic displacement, archival inscription, and public circulation.<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, the moniker “Land Art” first came into being as the title of a 1969 German public television program produced by Gerry Schum. The program featured a spectrum of sculptural and performative works by artists such as Walter De Maria, Michael Heizer, Richard Long, Robert Smithson, Dennis Oppenheim, and Jan Dibbets, addressed self-consciously to the film-camera and broadcast audience. Describing what he (correctly) perceived as a paradoxical or ironic structure emergent within the discourse of site-specificity, Dibbets remarked, “the whole thing is specially constructed for TV, so on the moment people are looking at this project on TV they have (during that time) an original artwork by Dibbets in their room.”<sup>8</sup>

Robert Smithson. *Airport Site Map*, 1967. Pencil, 48.3 × 61 cm (19 × 24 in.). © Estate of Robert Smithson, Courtesy of James Cohan Gallery, New York. Collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Gift of the Estate of Robert Smithson. Licensed by VAGA, New York, N.Y.



Such questions had already been broached in what is arguably the foundational document of Land Art: Robert Smithson's 1966 essay, "Towards the Development of an Air Terminal Site," which was written in response to a commission extended by Tippetts-Abbett-McCarthy-Stratton, an engineering and architecture firm then working on a plan for the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport. Smithson was acutely interested in the airport as a construction site, especially the computational surveying techniques used by engineers to scale between abstract models and actual building processes on the ground. Smithson's exposure to the working methods of surveyors led to his realization that "all air and land is locked into a vast crystalline lattice" of cartographic technologies, electronic media networks, and aerial positioning systems, including those based on nascent satellite-imaging techniques.<sup>9</sup> Invoking a history of planetary telecommunications bookended by Alexander Graham Bell and Buckminster Fuller, Smithson recognized the irreducibly mediated character of space, whether by maps, diagrams, cameras, clocks, screens, or some combination thereof. In particular, he was intrigued by two interrelated artistic possibilities for the airport: that artworks might address an audience traveling thousands of feet above the surface of the earth, and that the construction of such works might be recorded and

broadcast via television cameras to passengers waiting in the terminal.<sup>10</sup> Smithson praised the "aesthetic potential" of "aerial photography and air transportation," which "brings into view the surface features of this shifting world of perspectives," transforming the landscape from a "rustic garden" into "a three-dimensional map."<sup>11</sup>

Smithson took the airport commission as an opportunity to extend a set of secondary commissions to three colleagues. In critical dialogue with the surveys, borings, excavations, clearings, fillings, and gradings involved in the airport's construction process, Robert Morris proposed an "earth mound" and a series of asphalt pavements, inspiring Smithson's remark that "Morris would like to use a bulldozer rather than a paintbrush." Sol LeWitt planned an iteration of his ironically non-visual 1968 project, *Buried Cube Containing an Object of Importance but Little Value*. For his part, Smithson suggested a large-scale version of his 1968 sculpture *Gyrostasis*, unfolded flat against the ground as an articulation of triangular pavements whose crystalline structure would be legible from an aerial perspective. (This prefiguration of *Spiral Jetty* retrospectively suggests the centrality of the helicopter-camera assemblage to his later work.) Whereas Morris, LeWitt, and Smithson's proposals, though heterodox, would in principle have been plausible for the (ultimately unrealized) airport project, Carl Andre adopted a

more sardonic tone. As recorded by Smithson in his 1969 article "Aerial Art," Andre called for "A crater formed by a one-ton bomb dropped from 10,000 feet/or/An acre of blue-bonnets (state flower of Texas)."<sup>12</sup>

Andre's project links the technologically enabled aesthetic shifts associated with Smithson's "three-dimensional" map to a politics of terrestrial destruction.<sup>13</sup> Aerial photography and air transportation are here associated not only with the increasingly ubiquitous perceptual reorientation of the airline passenger (to whom the emergent genre of "earthworks" might be addressed), but also with the airborne bombardier testing nuclear weapons in the Southwestern desert or flying sorties over Vietnamese villages. The second part of Andre's proposal—an acre of bluebonnets—evokes state iconographies linking geographical territory, biological life, and supposed regional character.

3. Andre's ironic "proposal," with its hyperbolic extremes of military obliteration and nostalgic preservation, was unique in early discussions of Land Art for its polemical insistence that the production and perception of landscape is bound up with historically specific forms of political control, technological deployment, and ideological overdetermination.<sup>14</sup> His proposal thus provides an urgent contemporary counterpoint to the

emergent landscape imaginary of Michael Heizer, which was itself marked by a certain dialectics of extremity shadowed by military violence.

To describe Heizer's work in terms of a "landscape imaginary" complicates the artist's obstinate appeal to the raw phenomenology of land, as in his famous axiom that "place is the material, and the material is the place."<sup>15</sup> Through Heizer's various procedures of displacement, excavation, subtraction, and incision, the status of place is decentered. The viewer is thus forced to encounter traditional sculptural problems of scale and perspective, volume and mass, figure and ground, line and color in terms of a fundamental void in the spatio-temporal coordinates of perception and consciousness.<sup>16</sup> It is important to note, however, that the logic of negativity operative in Heizer's work was sublated by the artist and many of his critical advocates into a set of highly problematic narratives, fantasies, and anxieties concerning the space of the desert. These narratives closely resonate with colonial-*cum*-primitivist discourses operative in art history specifically, and in social history more generally.

Heizer framed the Southwest desert as a space free of the European influences he still considered to be dominant in New York; it was thus the site of an authentically American art. For Heizer, like Jackson Pollock before him, America needed to

be understood in terms of its archaic, pre-Columbian essence, which he associated with a primordial intimacy with materials, sites, and environmental processes. In Heizer's words, "I think earth is the material with the most potential because it is the original source material. It brought up all kinds of things about the prehistorical or preliterate past, and referred to traditions about art that were more interesting than looking at works in the Louvre or the Metropolitan."<sup>17</sup> Heizer's appeal to pre-Columbian origins was directly related to his experience as a teenager accompanying his father, a prominent archaeologist, on site visits throughout North and South America, especially in the Nevada desert. Indeed, Heizer identified as something of a "native" himself vis-à-vis Nevada. His father, a descendant of the region's nineteenth-century European settlers, grew up in the state. Significantly, both of Heizer's grandfathers worked as professionals in the mining industry, one as a geologist and the other as an engineer.

Appealing to this biographical background, Heizer imagined his work as a synthesis of the grandeur of what he (erroneously) called "preliterate or prehistorical" mark-making and building practices (the Nazca Lines incised into the Peruvian desert, the petroglyphs found throughout North America, the Mayan city of Chichen Itza on the Yucatán Peninsula) with the large-scale physical transformations of the earth enabled by

new technologies of surveying and extraction. Among these technologies were explosives, whether for military or industrial purposes, which Heizer famously used in blasting out the first excavations for *Double Negative* (1969–70), the massive "cut" incised across a canyon that itself cuts between two mesas in Nevada.

For Heizer, then, the Southwestern desert was a Janus-faced realm suspended between historical extremes. "We live in a world that's technological and primordial simultaneously," he explained to an interviewer in 1984. "I guess my art starts from this premise."<sup>18</sup> Alluding to weapons testing in the Great Basin, Heizer told the same interviewer, "The H-Bomb, that's the ultimate sculpture; the world is going to be pounded into the Stone Age, and what kind of art will be made after that?"<sup>19</sup> Heizer's remark merges a rhetoric of what David E. Nye has called "the American technological sublime" with a kind of apocalyptic primitivism, an extreme iteration of the end-of-art narratives that proliferated, with varying ideological inflections, throughout the twentieth century.<sup>20</sup> For Heizer, this end of art — "the ultimate sculpture" — is also the end of humanity as we know it, a sublime act of technological self-destruction that would return the world to a Stone Age akin to the "prehistoric, preliterate" cultures from which he claims to take inspiration.<sup>21</sup> To be clear, Heizer does not simply celebrate the hydrogen bomb

in the Futurist fashion of war-glorification diagnosed by Walter Benjamin in 1936. In Benjamin's scenario, the artist "expects war to supply the artistic gratification of a sense perception that has been changed by technology," so that humanity "can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the highest order."<sup>22</sup>

However, Benjamin's citation of the Futurist slogan "Fiat ars — pereat mundus" (Let art be created — let the world perish) does resonate uncannily with Heizer's remark, which seems to grimly anticipate an unprecedented aesthetic opportunity in the self-induced reprimativization of humanity. Indeed, Heizer would shift during the mid-1970s from the subtractive procedures and ephemeral temporality of a work such as *Nine Nevada Depressions* (1968) to the ongoing production of a sculpture-edifice constructed from locally derived concrete entitled *Complex* (begun in 1972). Inspired by the ritual architectures of pre-Columbian cultures, *Complex* is a monumental "blast shield" erected on Heizer's private tract of land in the Great Basin in response to a nearby nuclear testing site. When asked by an interviewer in 1984 about the relation between these sites, Heizer responded, "Yes, it's a highly charged area, but I am reluctant to discuss it that much. . . . Part of my art is based on an awareness that we live in a nuclear era. We're probably living at the end of civilization."<sup>23</sup>

Unlike the performative irony of Andre's proposal for the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport, which aimed to warn the would-be land artist about the historical entanglements and complicities involved in engaging new scales and technologies, Heizer's evocation of bombing has a tone of deadly serious survivalism that transcends any such transitory political concerns. Heizer imagines the desert as a sublime emptiness that testifies to the ends of civilization (vanished pre-Columbian mark-makers, soon-to-be-vanished advanced technological society) and to the rebirth of art, "re-immersing [it] in the aura and sacrality of the archaic ritual typical of Mesoamerican religious cultures."<sup>24</sup> In such a fantasy scenario, Heizer *qua* artist would emerge as a post-historical demiurge, reestablishing civilization on the basis of an elementary affinity with the materiality of the earth itself.

In his approach to the desert as an exemplary site, "technological and primordial simultaneously," Heizer dehistoricizes the Southwestern landscape. He calls for us to read the landscape only in terms of its prehistorical origins and post-historical desolation, an eschatological master-narrative that effaces the contested histories of land use inscribed in the putatively empty sites in which Heizer made his interventions and onto which he projected his Janus-faced fantasies. These histories implicate Heizer's own ancestors in the development

Richard Long. *A Line in the Himalayas*, 1975. Silver gelatin print, 88 × 124 cm (34 7/8 × 48 3/4 in.). Sanders Collection, Amsterdam. © 2010 Richard Long/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/DACS, London. Courtesy of James Cohan Gallery, New York/Haunch of Venison, London.



of geological surveying, resource extraction, and even archaeological research in the region, all of which were intimately bound to the territorial expropriation of indigenous peoples by the United States government in the second half of the nineteenth century and beyond. Such events are obliquely inscribed in Heizer's apparently remote sites, such as Massacre Dry Lake, named for an 1863 attack by displaced Shoshone on a caravan of Euro-American settlers whose bodies were reportedly buried in an unmarked mass grave.<sup>25</sup>

4. The landscape imaginary of Heizer finds a counterintuitive echo in the work of Richard Long. The English artist has loudly proclaimed his distance from American practitioners of Land Art, whom he accused of adopting a technologically domineering, possessive, and ultimately destructive relation to the landscape. Against the use of giant earth-moving machines and the purchasing of sites for the realization of their works, Long claimed to tread lightly on the earth, using simple gestures of marking (sticks, small stones, footprints) to leave ephemeral trails across the grounds over which he passed on his walking exercises, which were then preserved as spare photographic documents. While sometimes deriving his routes from, or in relation to, ready-made road maps, in general Long has treated the supposedly natural landscape as a neutral surface for

the projection of a universal phenomenological exploration of time, space, and embodiment. Though his work is formulated in dialogue with Minimalism and Conceptualism, Long has supplemented the latter's concerns with material processes and automatic programs with a neo-Romantic desire for spiritual reconnection between a tragically alienated humanity and the primordial "being" of the earth. His subtle formal interest in inscription and erasure, presence and absence, appearance and disappearance notwithstanding, Long has arguably been complicit with a sense of the landscape and humanity alike as *unmarked* terms that somehow precede or transcend the violent histories inscribed into them. Consequently, he evades the ethical and political responsibilities that an avowal of such histories would entail. This becomes especially evident in his walking projects in locations such as the Saharan desert and the Himalayan mountains, which he treats as either "empty" sites of the non-human sublime, or as realms of a primitive ontological reciprocity between indigenous social groups and their physical environments.<sup>26</sup> In so doing, however, Long falls prey to what Johan Fabian famously diagnosed in his *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (1983) as the "denial of coevalness" on the part of traditional anthropology—the tendency to situate cultural systems that are geographically remote as somehow existing in a static, prehistorical era.<sup>27</sup>

While opposed at one level, artists such as Heizer and Long share an approach that proclaims an affinity with indigenous site-marking practices while participating in the erasure of the entangled, modern histories of existing landscapes. In her canonical 1979 account of “sculpture in the expanded field,” Rosalind Krauss disarticulated work such as Heizer’s and Long’s from humanist art-historical master-narratives understood on the scale of “millennia rather than decades. Stonehenge, the Nazca lines, Toltec ball courts, Indian burial mounds—anything at all could be hauled into court to bear witness to this work’s connection to history and thereby to legitimize its status as sculpture.”<sup>28</sup> Against the transhistorical horizons of these accounts, Krauss insisted that such work needed to be understood in terms of a logical permutation of a set of culturally specific terms—sculpture, architecture, landscape—as elaborated in Western art history since the eighteenth century. Krauss’s point remains methodologically irrefutable in terms of the structural and historical conditions of possibility for the emergence of post-Minimalism. Her dismissal of any relation to ancient or non-European practices of building and marking, however, fails to address the inconvenient fact that many of the artists she addresses did indeed express an intense interest in such phenomena, though with varying degrees of critical awareness. The danger of taking

such an interest at face value is evident in Lucy Lippard’s remarkable but highly flawed work *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory* (1983), which rehearses exactly the kind of transhistoricizing humanism that Krauss warned against five years earlier. The question for us today is: What would it mean to take seriously the question of indigeneity that haunts historical Land Art, and how would we then evaluate the various legacies of Land Art in contemporary work concerned with land, territory, and space?<sup>29</sup>

5. Dennis Oppenheim’s site-specific interventions in the Southwestern desert and elsewhere during the 1970s provide a provocative entry point to this set of questions. Rather than apocalyptic endgames (Heizer) or tread-lightly idealism (Long), Oppenheim articulated a more complicated understanding of the relay between technology, land, and territory. Along with Smithson, Oppenheim was arguably the only artist of his generation to acknowledge the irreducible mediation of any land whatsoever in terms of its technical and administrative inscription *qua* territory, no matter how apparently remote or desolate the site. In *Timeline* (1968), for instance, Oppenheim combined a moving snowmobile and a running chainsaw to inscribe an ephemeral cut through the middle of the frozen St. Johns River. The work marked the invisible latitudinal boundary between

Dennis Oppenheim. *Relocated Burial Ground*, 1978. El Mirage Dry Lake, Southern California. Asphalt primer, 2000 square foot intersection. Courtesy of the artist.



the United States and Canada, as well as the vertically oriented international line demarcating the Eastern and Central time zones. Oppenheim's incision was preserved as a photographic document and displayed in a kind of pin-up archival arrangement alongside a cartographic representation of the site and a photograph of an actual state-sanctioned boundary marker.

From the late 1960s through the late 1970s, Oppenheim created a series of works that combined terrestrial, photographic, and cartographic site-marking, thereby complicating any appeal to the "actuality of place as a physical location," as Kwon describes it in her history of site-specificity. The most resonant piece for our purposes is one of Oppenheim's last earthworks, *Relocated Burial Ground* (1978). Here, the artist inscribed an enormous letter *X* in asphalt primer in the middle of the dry El Mirage Lake in California. With each arm of the *X* measuring 610 feet, the complete work was only visible from an aerial viewpoint, as imagined by Smithson in his 1969 essay "Aerial Art." The *X* serves both to indicate or point to the spot, and to negate or cancel it, simultaneously preserving it for memory and consigning it to oblivion. Marking the spot as the target of a future attack or a past violation, *Relocated Burial Ground* questions the site's spatiotemporal identity and our relation to it. This sense of site-insecurity is compounded by the title of the work, which evokes the cultural sacrality of the

burial ground *qua* place while suggesting its profane dislocation, uprooting, or disinterring. *Relocated Burial Ground* does not overtly comment on the specific histories of the region, but it does imply that every square inch of the American Southwest is the "scene of a crime" (to paraphrase Walter Benjamin).<sup>30</sup> Such a forensics of territory reads "site" as a traditional resting place of the people who once lived there at the same time that it evokes their violent displacement and effacement.

*Relocated Burial Ground* can thus be seen as a counter-monument informed by a post-Minimalist concern with entropy as well as an ethical concern, however oblique, with bearing witness to the absent traces and marks of others in the landscape. As one critic described it, "the asphalt primer would not have left an indelible mark on the landscape; instead, it disappeared in the same way that ancient burial sites may have been erased or buried as the forces of nature erase man-made markings on the land."<sup>31</sup> Rather than posit a transhistorical affinity—whether apocalyptic or nostalgic—between the post-minimalist marked site and the site-markings of the original inhabitants of the American Southwest, the mnemonic play between appearance and disappearance, inscription and effacement, indication and negation at work in *Relocated Burial Ground* stages a kind of ambivalent violence, implicating us in a scenario of profane disinterment and sacred witness-bearing.



Ana Mendieta. *Untitled (Silueta Series)*, July 1976. 1 of 9 chromogenic prints, each 33.7 × 50.5 cm (13¼ × 19⅞ in.). © The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection. Courtesy of Galerie Lelong, New York.

With these questions of media, witnessing, and violence in mind, a final figure to consider with respect to the contemporary genealogy of historical Land Art would be Ana Mendieta. In her famous *Silueta* series (1973–80), Mendieta impressed her own body into the ground of various unspecified “natural” landscapes (beaches, swamps, meadows), then photographed the ephemeral aftermath of this indexical process: outlines or traces of a body that was no longer present.<sup>32</sup> Mendieta has often been assimilated to a primitivist ideal of ecofeminism that would posit an essential affinity between the supposed maternal generativity of the female body and the bounteous plenitude of Mother Earth, defined over and against the alienating forces of technological modernity.<sup>33</sup> Mendieta herself often appealed to certain primitivizing tropes in both her own words and in her frequent, if oblique, incorporation of feminine iconographic forms evocative of prehistoric or non-European goddess worship (the Venus of Willendorf, for instance, or pre-Columbian and Afro-diasporic deities drawn from her own Cuban heritage).

Mendieta’s primitivist inclinations, however, were constantly checked by her interest in the indexical sign, examples of which included stains, shadows, footprints, wakes from boats, ashes, and smoke. Distinguished from a symbolic representation by the “absoluteness of its physical genesis” and bearing a “causal relation to its referent,” according to Rosalind Krauss, the

indexical sign testifies to a “trauma of signification” that speaks to an irrecoverable absence or loss rather than to any spiritual vitality.<sup>34</sup> Mendieta doubled this sense of absence or loss by insisting on a dialogue with the double indexicality of the photograph. In other words, her work consists of indexical marks (photographic traces of light bouncing off physical surfaces onto light-sensitive film) of indexical marks (bodily impressions in the earth) otherwise destined to oblivion or effacement. Rather than original bodily events centered on the physical site of their enactment, Mendieta’s *Siluetas* were media events in their very conception. Structured by and addressed to the camera, the *Siluetas* “leave their site,” as Benjamin might put it, anticipating their own mediatic dislocation, public circulation, and archival accumulation beyond the auratic here-and-now of the indexical impression itself.<sup>35</sup>

Indeed, Mendieta’s interest in the indexical sign in the *Silueta* series is arguably marked by a forensic impulse first indicated in *Untitled (Rape Piece)* of 1972.<sup>36</sup> Responding to a newspaper report concerning a rape at the University of Iowa, where Mendieta was then studying, the artist issued an open-ended invitation to attend a performance at her home. Entering the room, viewers encountered Mendieta unclothed and bent over a table with what appeared to be blood running down her thighs and legs, as if she had just been sexually violated. This

media event thus functioned as a kind of performative supplement to the cursory media coverage of the actual rapes that had been occurring at the university, suggesting the inadequacy of typical forms of publicity in the face of the ongoing reality of sexual violence.<sup>37</sup>

Without effacing the irreducible specificity of rape as a criminal act, it is possible to extend the general forensic concern of *Untitled (Rape Piece)* to the overall interrogation of landscape in Mendieta's *Siluetas*. Like Oppenheim's *Relocated Burial Ground*, Mendieta's work extends beyond its local instantiation to frame every square inch of the earth as the scene of a crime in which we are implicated as viewers or witnesses. While problematic in its essentialism, Mendieta's feminist appeal to the alterity of "non-Western" mark-making systems — and her attention to the simultaneous effacement and preservation of those systems via technical reproducibility — resonates with what Craig Owens famously called the "discourse of others" in his 1983 critique of the ethnocentrism and androcentricism of Western art criticism.<sup>38</sup>

6. The counter-memorial forensic ethos at work in Oppenheim's *Relocated Burial Ground* and Mendieta's *Siluetas* indirectly relates to a remarkable text by Robert Morris entitled "Art and/as Land Reclamation." Delivered at a meeting of the King

County Arts Commission in Washington State in 1979 and later published in the journal *October*, Morris's statement programmatically aims to open the formal concerns and procedures of post-minimalist Land Art to questions of ecological remediation and environmental justice. In so doing, it extends the anti-idealist model of ecology put forth in Smithson's 1973 account of the "dialectical landscape" of Central Park. Constituted by geological and biological processes as well as socio-economic histories and technologies of mapping, photographic surveying, and infrastructural maintenance, Central Park served as the foundation of Smithson's critique of what he called ecological "spiritualism."<sup>39</sup> In contradistinction to the latter, which posited nature as something preceding or transcending the realm of human activity to then be "preserved," Smithson called for an ecological art that would acknowledge the immanent mediation, artificiality, and impurity of any landscape whatsoever. He himself presented a series of proposals for large-scale sculptural remediation projects to mining companies in Utah and Ohio towards the end of his life. While he was never able to realize them, he gave visual form to their underlying concerns in his Pop-Surrealist collage *King Kong Meets the Gem of Egypt* (1972). Here a giant earthmoving machine (GEM) at work in a strip mine in Ohio's Egypt Valley is juxtaposed with the robotic ape "Mechani-Kong" from the post-Hiroshima Japanese



Robert Morris. *Untitled Reclamation Project*, 1979. Kent, Washington. Photographed in 1979 by Greg Skinner. © 2010 Robert Morris/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

remake *King Kong Escapes* (1967).<sup>40</sup> Critically ironizing the rhetoric of the “American technological sublime” that Heizer had taken as the deadly-serious horizon of his own practice, Smithson’s collage suggests his ambivalent desire to engage the material and psychic aftermath of monstrous-*cum*-monumental environmental destruction.

At once extending and complicating his late friend’s project (Smithson died in a plane crash in 1973), Morris’s statement ruminates on the possibility that art concerned with ecological remediation could very well become an aestheticizing alibi for the very forces it claimed to oppose. In other words, earthworks could end up performing a clean-up operation for environmentally destructive corporations and government agencies. By suggesting the viability of “healing” the landscape on a site-by-site basis, earthworks might work to legitimize further harmful activities instead of questioning the socioeconomic structures that gave rise to the destruction in the first place.

Morris opens the article by calling for close attention to the multiple agencies and forces at work in the discourse of land reclamation: “The issue of art’s potential involvement in land reclamation can only be focused through a perspective on the history, conflicts, and confusions involved in that admittedly broad cluster of topics related to land abuse: technology, mining, governmental policy and regulations, ecological

concerns, and public opinion.”<sup>41</sup> Morris goes on to perform an inventory of the environmental impacts of various forms of mining, along with statements by mining companies concerning their supposed commitment to pursuing reclamation programs.

Morris focuses on the work of Peabody Coal, a transnational energy company that “began operations at Black Mesa, Arizona in the 1960s. Leased from the Navajo and Hopi Indian tribes, 400 acres a year are to be mined for 35 years.”<sup>42</sup> The artist cites a claim by then-CEO Edwin J. Phelps to “make the land more useful than it was originally” through nutrient-intensive revegetation of exhausted mining sites. As a counterpoint to Phelps’s statement of corporate benevolence, Morris invokes the following testimony by Ted Yazzie, an indigenous resident of the region: “It’s terrible when they work. Since they started, people began to change. The air began to change. It is something we have not known before. The plants seem to have no life. When the wind blows our way, the coal dust covers the whole ground, the food, the animals, the hogans, the water. The dust is dirty, it is black. The sun rises, it is gray. The sun sets, yet it is still gray. I imagine the night is gray.”<sup>43</sup>

Morris proceeds to relate Yazzie’s testimony concerning the deleterious effects of coal mining in Black Mesa to broader networks of energy production and its toxic byproducts, linking this specific site to an overall ecological crisis in the

United States and beyond. Citing Hans Magnus Enzenberger's prescient 1974 article "A Critique of Political Ecology," Morris lists among the "unintentional side effects of the industrial process" not only air and water pollution, but also "changes in climate, irreversible changes to rivers and lakes, and oceanographic changes." Countering accounts of ecology that would take as their ethical horizon the so-called purification of the natural environment over and against the activities of a generic Man, Enzenberger calls for a political analysis that would link ecological crises to capitalist resource extraction, military-industrial activity, and social inequalities (such as the disproportionate levels of environmental risk to which indigenous groups are exposed).<sup>44</sup>

What role could art play in relation to such political-ecological entanglements, other than superficially restoring devastated landscapes and neutralizing the marks of destruction left behind by corporations and governments? For Morris, a critical art of land reclamation would need to highlight the violent history of the landscapes in question. He himself only undertook one such project, which involved the sodding and concentric terracing of a nearly four-acre (1.6 hectare) abandoned gravel-pit in Kent, Washington. In this way, the extracted site was transformed into a phenomenologically dynamic amphitheater suspended between the naturally occurring

topography and the mechanically determined contours of the quarry, deranging any traditional sense of scale, horizon, and ground as dictated by the history of Western landscape aesthetics. Though this project does little to commemorate the specific social, economic, and political dimensions of the site in question, Morris's insistence on preserving the perceptually jarring crater-like depression of the industrial quarry—rather than smoothing it over in favor of a spuriously original topography—reads as an ambivalent compromise of his provocative suggestion that "such aesthetic efforts are incapable of signaling any protest against the escalating use of nonrenewable minerals and energy sources." Citing one of the world's largest man-made excavations, the Bingham Canyon Mine in Utah (managed by Kennecott Utah Copper), Morris asks: "What, one wonders, could be done for the Kennecott-Bingham site, the ultimate site-specific work of such raging, ambiguous energy, so redolent with formal power and social threat, that no existing earthwork should even be compared to it? It should stand unregenerate as a powerful monument to a one-day nonexistent resource."<sup>45</sup>

In this passage, Morris seems to take a certain masochistic pleasure in the sublime environmental scale and devastating ecological footprint of the mine. However, as with Smithson's *King Kong Meets the Gem of Egypt*, we should heed the



Enei Begaye, indigenous peoples' rights advocate, and Wahleah Johns, co-founder of the Black Mesa Water Coalition, speaking at Power Shift '09, March 6, 2009. Screen shot from video posted on YouTube ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2f1nzY6\\_ro](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2f1nzY6_ro)).

aggressively ironic tone marking his appeal to catastrophic monumentality, and place it in relation to his earlier evocation of the voice of Black Mesa resident and activist Ted Yazzie.

While Yazzie's voice plays only an incidental role in Morris's overall article, it can be read as a testimonial trace of the contemporary subaltern populations that unevenly bear the brunt of ecological risk from past and present capitalist land use. This trace significantly reorients the problem of indigeneity that haunted discourses of historical Land Art, as represented by the work of Heizer, Long, Oppenheim, and indeed Morris himself, whose slightly later essay "Aligned With Nazca" (1975) participated in a primitivizing fantasy about the supposed formal affinity between the Peruvian Nazca Lines and minimalist understandings of space.<sup>46</sup> Rather than frame the desert as an apocalyptic wasteland (Heizer), a realm of primordial reciprocity with nature (Long), or even a site of cryptic violence (Oppenheim, Mendieta), Yazzie's voice reminds us of the deep integration of the Southwestern desert in contemporary political economies and ongoing conflicts over the territorial expropriation of indigenous landscapes and resource bases (including air, water, and soil).<sup>47</sup> Indeed, Peabody Coal's Black Mesa operation continues to be a major nodal point in indigenous struggles concerning land claims and human rights. In recent years, activists have begun to advocate for a broader vision of a post-

carbon energy economy, one that mitigates global warming and provides development opportunities for low-income areas and communities (including, for instance, tapping into the potential wind-power resources of many reservations). Black Mesa activists have come to articulate their demands for ecological remediation in terms of "climate justice," linking their site-specific grievances to those of other subaltern groups around the world suffering from the adverse effects of global warming and the regimes of resource extraction and consumption that lie behind it.<sup>48</sup>

7. Historical Land Art has traditionally been associated with "actual location" (as Kwon calls it in her heuristic account), over and against both the sitelessness of modernist art and the nomadic networks of global biennial culture. The thesis of the present text has been that Land Art was never simply grounded in actuality. Rather, it was always already involved (with varying degrees of historical self-consciousness) with questions of media, violence, and political ecology that extend far beyond either the phenomenological investigations of perception or the structuralist mapping of the expanded field put forth by Krauss. This essay also represents a departure from Lucy Lippard's position, as expressed in her book *Overlay*. Lippard's ecological primitivism and New Age mysticism tended

to idealize rather than interrogate the political, environmental, and territorial concerns running through the altered landscapes of historical Land Art. Indeed, it is arguably because of the “nostalgic” tendency of Lippard’s writing (as later diagnosed by Kwon) that many of the post-Land Art practitioners whom she advocated, including Agnes Denes, Helen and Newton Harrison, and Alan Sonfist, largely fell outside the purview of advanced critical writing in the 1980s and 1990s — as did their ecological concerns.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, such work and the criticism surrounding it often fetishized nature as pure exterior or ideal, thus disavowing — if not programmatically resisting — the post-modern insight that “nature,” in Frederic Jameson’s words, “is gone for good.”<sup>50</sup> Rather than proposing an apocalyptic endgame, however, Jameson was simply pointing out that every square inch of the earth has long been marked by the forces of global-capitalist resource use, and that any appeal to something or somewhere untainted by its constituent dynamics and conflicts would be highly irresponsible in ethical, political, and ecological terms. The intensive displacements, crises, and conflicts concerning territories and life-support systems under post-Cold War globalization have brought this long-existent condition into relief. The realization that “there is no outside”<sup>51</sup> retroactively reframes our sense of the problems and stakes involved in historical Land Art in terms of an “aesthetics of

critical habitat” (as formulated by Emily Apter), in which “media and environment are increasingly difficult to disentangle as a semiotic system.”<sup>52</sup> The best contemporary art concerned with space, land, and territory — by Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla, Andrea Geyer, Eyal Weizman, the Center for Land Use Interpretation, and others — offers crucial insights into this project of reframing. In turn, art-historical research can itself become a resource for the future extension and radicalization of contemporary practice.

## Notes

- 1 Robert Smithson, "Frederick Law Olmstead and the Dialectical Landscape," (1973) in *Smithson: Collected Writings*, 164.
- 2 For general statements on the spatial turn in contemporary art, see Nato Thompson, *Experimental Geography* and Institute for Applied Autonomy, "Tactical Cartographies," in *An Atlas of Radical Cartography*, ed. Lize Mogel and Alexis Baghat (Los Angeles: Journal of Aesthetics and Protest Press, 2007), 29–36. On the archival impulse, see Foster "An Archival Impulse," and on the parafictional, see Carrie Lambert-Beatty, "Make Believe: Parafiction and Plausibility." On Alÿs and Buckingham respectively, see Godfrey, "Walking the Line" and "The Artist as Historian." On the Center for Land Use Interpretation, see Sarah Kanouse, "Touring the Archive, Archiving the Tour: Image, Text, and Experience with the Center for Land Use Interpretation," *Art Journal* 64:2 (Summer 2005): 78–87, and Matthew Coolidge and Sarah Simons, eds., *Overlook: Exploring the Internal Fringes of America with The Center for Land Use Interpretation* (New York: Metropolis Books/Distributed Art Publishers, 2005). On Trevor Paglen, see Karen Beckman, "Telescopes, Torture, Transparency: Trevor Paglen and the Politics of Exposure," *Art Journal* 66:3 (Fall 2007): 62–67. On Anastas and Gabri, see T. J. Demos, "Means Without End: Camp Campaign," *October* 126 (Fall 2008): 69–90. On Andrea Geyer, see Geyer, *Spiral Lands*. On Allora and Calzadilla, see Yates McKee, "Wake, Vestige, Survival: Political Ecology and Sustainability in Allora/Calzadilla's *Landmark*," *October* 133 (Summer 2010).
- 3 See, for instance, Jeffrey Kastner, "There, Now: From Robert Smithson to Guantánamo," in Andrews, *Land, Art: A Cultural Ecology Handbook*, 22–31. While cursory statements such as Kastner's are crucial in their linking of past and present practices in light of contemporary political concerns, they forego a certain dimension of art-historical analysis that would shed light on the often contradictory and ambivalent relations between different generations of artists. That said, Kastner's overall work has been foundational for much contemporary practice concerned with the politics of and landscape, as exemplified by his ground-breaking survey, *Land and Environmental Art*. See especially Brian Wallis's "Survey," 18–43. The tendency to emphasize historical continuity rather than disjunction is rectified to some degree in the special issue of *Artforum* (Summer 2005) entitled "Inside Out: Land Art's New Territory," especially the roundtable convened by Tim Griffin with critics Pamela Lee and Claire Bishop, among others (Griffin et al., "Remote Possibilities").
- 4 Hal Foster, *Return of the Real*, xii. Foster relates this nonlinear temporality to the psychoanalytic notion of "deferred action" in which "one event is only registered through another that recodes it."
- 5 Miwon Kwon, "One Place After Another: Notes on Site-Specificity," *October* 80 (Spring 1997): 85.
- 6 "Deterritorialization" is the term famously coined by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their 1980 book *Milles plateaux*. See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 2004). Among the most influential applications of the term in the humanities and social sciences has been Arjun Appadurai's discussion of the unmooring of cultural systems and geographical locations in "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" (1990) in *Modernity at Large*, 27–47. David Joselit invokes Appadurai's typology of "scapes" — mediascape, financescape, ethnoscape, and so forth — in "Navigating the New Terrain."
- 7 See Jane McFadden's "Toward Site," which discusses Walter de Maria's *Mile Long Drawing* in relation to both the dematerialized event-scores of Fluxus and Gerry Schum's interest in televisual broadcast.
- 8 Jan Dibbets, cited in Michael Lailach, *Land Art* (Cologne: Taschen, 2007), 6. On the paradoxical spatiotemporal suspension of television between sites of production, transmission, and reception, see Samuel Weber, "Television: Set and Screen," in *Mass Mediauras: Form, Technics, Media* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996), 108–28.
- 9 Robert Smithson, "Towards the Development of an Air Terminal Site" (1966), in *Smithson: Collected Writings*, 54.
- 10 In "Aerial Art," Smithson writes that "the terminal complex might include a gallery (or aerial museum) that would provide visual information about where these aerial sites are situated. Diagrams, maps, photographs and movies of the projects under construction could be exhibited — thus the terminal complex and its entire airfield site would expand its meaning from the central spaces of the terminal itself to the edges of the airfields." "Aerial Art" (1969), in *Smithson: Collected Writings*, 117. In the earlier text, "Towards the Development of an Air Terminal Site," Smithson had suggested that "remote places such as the Pine Barrens of New Jersey and the frozen wastes of the North and South poles could be coordinated by art forms that would use the actual land as a medium. Television could transmit such activity all over the world" (*ibid.*, 56).
- 11 Smithson, "Aerial Art," (1969), 116. Smithson's work on the airport project provides a crucial background not only to his insistence on the tripartite non-site structure of *Spiral Jetty* as a sculpture, text, and film, but also his later theorization of Central Park as a "dialectical landscape" suspended between earthen materiality and media technologies. See "Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape."
- 12 Smithson, "Aerial Art," 117.
- 13 Smithson, "Towards the Development of an Air Terminal Site," 52–62.
- 14 The authoritative theorization of landscape along these lines is Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*.
- 15 Cited in Germano Celant, *Michael Heizer* (Milan: Fondazione Prada, 1997), xxvii.
- 16 See Rosalind Krauss's canonical phenomenological reading of *Double Negative* in Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1977), and Mark C. Taylor's deconstructive analysis in "Rend(er)ing," in Heizer and Taylor, *Michael Heizer: Double Negative* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art; New York: Rizzoli, 1991). In Taylor's words, "The play of figure and ground staged in *Double Negative* creates a clearing that allows disappearance to appear."

The appearance of disappearance occurs not only in the *between* created by the walls of the cut but also transpires in the midst of the empty center between which the two tears on either side of the canyon are suspended. The deeper one digs, the more negation proliferates" (*ibid.*, 17–18).

17 Cited in Celant, *Michael Heizer*, 60.

18 Julia Brown and Michael Heizer, "Interview," in *Michael Heizer: Sculpture in Reverse*, ed. Julia Brown (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984), 8.

19 See Alessandra Ponte's discussion of Heizer in relation to nuclear testing in "Desert Testing," in *Architecture and the Sciences: Exchanging Metaphors*, ed. Ponte and Antoine Picon (New York: Princeton Architectural Press; Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University School of Architecture, 2003), 81–115.

20 See David E. Nye, "Atomic Bomb and Apollo XI: New Forms of the Dynamic Sublime," in *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), 224–56. On the "ends" repeatedly announced by artists and critics alike in twentieth-century art, see Hal Foster, "This Funeral is for the Wrong Corpse," in *Design and Crime: And Other Diatribes* (London: Verso, 2002): 123–43. On the dialectic of apocalyptic self-annihilation and redemptive self-realization on the part of a universalized "Man," see Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man" (1968), in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 109–36.

21 Further, Heizer's choice of the phrase "pounded into the Stone Age" echoes the infamous remark by U.S. general Curtis

Lemay during the early years of the Vietnam War: "My solution to the problem [of North Vietnam] would be to tell them frankly that they've got to draw in their horns and stop their aggression, or we're going to bomb them back into the Stone Age. And we would shove them back into the Stone Age with Air power or Naval power — not with ground forces." Lemay, *Mission With Lemay: My Story* (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 565.

22 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility: Second Version" (1936), in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings: Volume 3: 1935–1938*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 122.

23 Brown and Heizer, "Interview," 11. Cited in Ponte, "Desert Testing," 99–100.

24 Celant, *Michael Heizer*, xx.

25 See Margaret M. Bryant, "Nevada Names," *American Speech* 49 (Aug.–Winter 1974): 288. Bryant, writing as a pre-postcolonialist cultural historian, did not address the ideological implications of the term "massacre," which mainstream American historians had traditionally reserved to denote the savage violence of Indians as opposed to the supposed civilizing march of Manifest Destiny. For an important redress of such problems in the study of American art and visual culture, see the chapters "Native Americans in the Popular Press: *Harper's Weekly* and the Washita Massacre" and "The End of the Ghost Dance" in Frances K. Pohl's magisterial textbook, *Framing America: A Social History of American Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2008), 236–37. On photographic landscape surveys and the politics of settler-colonial site-naming,

see Alan Trachtenberg, "Naming the View," in *Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Mathew Brady to Walker Evans* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 1990), 119–63. Here it is important to consider Matthew Buckingham's *The Six Grandfathers, Paha Sapa, in the Year 502,002 C.E.* (2002), which investigates the colonial violence of place-marking at the site known in settler-nationalist parlance as Mount Rushmore, formerly a site sacred to local indigenous people. Consulting with geologists, Buckingham juxtaposes the predicted state of decay to which the monumental presidential portraits of Mount Rushmore will have succumbed in a half-million years with a timeline detailing conflicts between indigenous people and settler-colonialists over the site's naming, control, and usage. See Godfrey, "The Artist as Historian" and Buckingham, "Muhheakantuck — Everything Has a Name," *October* 120 (Spring 2007): 173–81.

26 Referring to Long's procedure of "brushing" locally specific footpaths in the Himalayas so as to "unveil" their status as indexes of a primordial encounter between the human body and the Being of the natural landscape, Herman Rappaport asks "if in lifting the veil by brushing the path in Nepal Richard Long does not walk in the footsteps of others in order to forget beings? The photograph by Long, like the vast majority of his photographs, is devoid of people. And no doubt because of this, his photographs are also devoid of nightmare, hallucination, and phantoms. It is as if in detaching us from beings by an attentiveness to the erasure of the trace, Long has cleared the way for a return of the aesthetic in the persistence of that which has withdrawn from the human." Rappaport, "Brushed Path, Slate Line, Stone Circle: On Martin Heidegger, Richard

Long, and Jacques Derrida," in *Deconstruction and the Visual Arts*, ed. Peter Brunette and David Wills (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 164–65.

27 Hal Foster cites Fabian in "The Artist as Ethnographer," but his primary point of reference is the model of 1990s "fieldwork research" by post-conceptualist artists such as Mark Dion and Rene Green rather than the naive — and often pernicious — invocation of cultural alterity by artists such as Long and Heizer. See Foster, *Return of the Real*, 177.

28 Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," in *Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), 279.

29 Lucy Lippard, *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory* (New York: New Press, 1983).

30 See Anthony Vidler, "X Marks the Spot: The Exhaustion of Space at the Scene of the Crime," in *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), 123–32.

31 Unattributed image caption in Kastner, *Land and Environmental Art*, 78.

32 For a crucial revisionist reading of Mendieta that foregrounds questions of loss and absence, see Miwon Kwon, "Bloody Valentines: Afterimages by Ana Mendieta," in *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of Twentieth Century Art in, of, and from the Feminine*, ed. Catherine de Zegher (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996), 164–71. For a reading of Mendieta that emphasizes photographic meditation and displacement — rather than self-evident somatic presence — see Kelly Baum, "Shapely

Shapelessness: Ana Mendieta's *Untitled (Glass on Body Imprints—Face)*, 1972," in *More than One: Photographs in Sequence*, ed. Joel Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press; Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Art Museum, 2008), 80–93.

33 See Lippard's discussion of Mendieta in *Overlay*, 49–50.

34 Rosalind Krauss, "Notes on the Index, Part 1" (1979), in *Originality of the Avant-Garde*, 196–209.

35 "Technological reproduction can place the copy of the original in situations which the original itself cannot attain.... The cathedral leaves its site to be received in the studio of an art lover.... These changed circumstances... devalue the here-and-now of the artwork." Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," 103.

36 On the forensic impulse, see Ralph Rugoff, ed., *Scene of the Crime* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997).

37 For an account of *(Untitled) Rape Piece*, see Julia P. Herzberg, "Ana Mendieta's Iowa Years: 1970–1980," in *Ana Mendieta: Earth Body: Sculpture and Performance, 1972–1985*, ed. Olga B. Viso (Washington, D.C.: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2004), 155–56. Herzberg discusses another "forensic" tableau by Mendieta entitled *Clinton Piece: Dead on Street* (1973). As the audience of this performance-event exited the auditorium, "they discovered Mendieta lying motionless in a pool of blood as though she were an accident or crime-scene victim. She asked a fellow performer to stand over her taking pictures with a camera, as would a police or tabloid photographer at the scene of an accident" (156).

38 Craig Owens, "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, Wash.: Bay Press, 1983): 57–82.

39 Smithson, "Frederick Law Olmstead and the Dialectical Landscape," 164.

40 Taking as our starting point Smithson's remark that Olmsted's "before" photograph of Central Park "reminds me of the strip-mining regions I saw last year in southeastern Ohio.... a man-made wasteland" (*ibid.*, 158), Matthew Friday and I are currently developing a Critical Regionalism Initiative at Ohio University that will explore the local, national, and global legacies of coal mining in the Appalachia. See McKee, "Ohio University School of Art Critical Regionalism Initiative: Political Ecology Research Sites," in *... In a Most Dangerous Manner*, ed. Steven Lam and Sarah Rogers (Cleveland: SPACES Gallery, 2010).

41 Robert Morris, "Art as/and Land Reclamation," *October* 12 (Spring 1980): 87.

42 *Ibid.*, 90.

43 *Ibid.*, 94.

44 *Ibid.*, 94–95.

45 *Ibid.*, 99. See <http://www.kennecott.com/> for the company's current self-presentation as an innovator of environmental remediation. Thanks to Jane E. Boyd for this reference.

46 See Robert Morris, "Aligned With Nazca," *Artforum* 14:2 (October 1975), reprinted in Morris, *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), 142–72, and Gayatri Spivak's

critique thereof in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 347–51.

47 Janet Catherine Berlo provides the following information concerning the Black Mesa region, drawn from historian John Redhouse: "From the colonial Ternary of Guadalupe Hidalgo to the Navajo Hopi Land Settlement Act, the United States of America has repeatedly violated the human rights and territorial integrity of the Navajo and Hopi people living on Black Mesa and throughout the former Joint Use Area. The executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the American state have separately and in concert aided and abetted this process by robbing the two tribes of their sovereign status and dispossessing them of their aboriginal land base. Seeking to divide and conquer, a coalition of special interests ranging from government-paid claims attorneys to multinational energy corporations have succeeded to a fine legal degree in alienating the two peoples and ending their joint tenure of the shared soil. Failing to resolve the dispute it helped create, the U.S. government through its Relocation Commission is now bent on clearing the land for large-scale mineral and water expropriation that will follow Indian removal in the late 1980s." Berlo, "Libraries of Meaning and of History": *Spiral Lands* and Indigenous American Lands," in Geyer, *Spiral Lands*, n. 66, 131.

48 See the website of the Black Mesa Indigenous Support Group at <http://blackmesais.org> and the Black Mesa Water Coalition at [www.blackmesawatercoalition.org](http://www.blackmesawatercoalition.org). On the theory and practice of post-colonial environmental justice in the United States and beyond, see Robert Bullard, ed., *The Quest for Environmental Justice:*

*Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2005), especially Al Gedicks, "Resource Wars Against Native Peoples," 168–187. See too Van Jones, *The Green Collar Economy: How One Solution Can Fix Our Two Biggest Problems* (New York: HarperOne, 2008).

49 For Kwon's critique of Lippard's appeal to the "lure of the local" in the mid-1990s, see *One Place After Another*, 157–60. It is important to note, however, that in *On the Beaten Track: Art, Tourism, and Place*, Lippard devotes much attention to the work of contemporary Native American artists involved in a postcolonial critique of precisely the type of landscape primitivism informing her own writing in *Overlay*.

50 Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1991), xi. For an exemplary misreading and rejection of such a "postmodern" position that ends up reaffirming the harmonious equilibrium of "nature" as the ideal foundation of ecological art, see Eleanor Heartney, "Ecopolitics/Ecopoetry: Helen and Newton Harrison's Environmental Talking Cure," in *But is it Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism*, ed. Nina Felshin (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 140–64. As Heartney defensively puts it, "post-modern theory relegates nature to the junk heap of outmoded concepts" (*ibid.*, 140). The crucial counterpoint to such an anti-postmodern stance is Mark Dion, whose work explores the culturally and economically contested status of "nature" as a horizon for thought and action under conditions of capitalist globalization. On more recent developments in the relation between art and ecology, see McKee, "Art and the Ends of Environmentalism" and "Wake, Vestige, Survival."

51 Paraphrasing Derrida's famous axiom that "there is no outside the text," Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri posit that "any postmodern liberation must be achieved within this world, on the plane of immanence, with no possibility of any even utopian outside." Hardt and Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 65.

52 Emily Apter, "Aesthetics of Critical Habitat," *October* 101 (Spring 2002): 21–44.