Laid Bare in the Landscape
Anne Brigman penned these lines while reflecting on her journeys into the High Sierra, where she made groundbreaking photographs of herself laid bare in the landscape. One of Brigman’s earliest known self-portraits, The Brook, was made in 1905 at the dawn of the twentieth century, against the backdrop of a cultural shift in values from the late-nineteenth-century Victorian period to the modern era. American women were fighting for the right to vote and redefining their roles in society. It was during this time that Brigman courageously crafted her own voice and identity as a modern, independent woman. “Fear is the great chain which binds women and prevents their development, and fear is the one apparently big thing which has no real foundation in life,” Brigman asserted in a 1913 San Francisco newspaper interview on the topic of women and absolute freedom. “Call fear out of the lives of women and they can and will take their place ... as the absolute equal of man.” The paradigmatic cultural and political shifts in America during this time influenced art production as well—an outcome expressed in Brigman’s affirmation that between 1908 and 1927, “she slowly found [her] power with the camera.” Although the term “feminist art” was not coined until nearly seventy years after Brigman made her first photographs, the suggestion that her camera gave her the power to redefine her place as a woman in society establishes her as an important forerunner in the field. Writing in 1980, cultural critic Lucy Lippard asserted that feminist art “is neither a style nor a movement ... but an ideology, a value system, a revolutionary strategy, a way of life.” This definition is as easily applied to Brigman as it is to the numerous women artists and photographers who began making work in the late 1960s and 1970s in an effort to further women’s rights and assert a style nor a movement ... but an ideology, a value system, a revolutionary strategy, a way of life.” This definition is as easily applied to Brigman as it is to the numerous women artists and photographers who began making work in the late 1960s and 1970s in an effort to further women’s rights and assert a.

| I wanted to go and be free ... That was all I wanted. | —Anne Brigman |

Anne Brigman (née Nott) was born in 1869 into an influential Protestant missionary family with ties to Hawaii’s earliest Christian missions. Her formative years were shaped by the social customs of her race and traditions of her upper-middle-class world: obligations of daily prayer, a classical education, and purity, while asserting the constructed social role of women as passive, fragile, and decorative objects. The flower/woman metaphor began to appear. … In this new subject type, … the ‘floral-feminine painting,’ the artist placed one woman in a flowers garden setting and manipulated composition, color, texture, and form to make the woman look as much like flowers as possible. ... Floral-feminine paintings encoded a traditional Victorian definition of femininity ... and reassured that women and the activities of women artists belonged properly in the world of flowers. Through

CONFRONTING TRADITION

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One might assume that such disfigurement … would deter an emerging woman photographer from turning her camera upon herself. This was not the case for Brigman, who instead defied social norms, and began to make nude self-portraits of her own wounded body outdoors in the landscape.
Brigman made many such trips to the mountains over the next few years, always embracing the challenges of her medium, along with the “happy freedom … [and] comradship” she found among the women with whom she jour-
neled. Encouraged by her photographic successes, she grew more independent and confident in her own voice. By 1910, Brigman and her husband separated and she began to publicly critique conventional definitions of marriage, domesticity, and the gendered social expectations placed on women—she very things she had been personally negotiating in her own life:

Women are, and always have been, afraid, and ordi-
narily they do not know what they are afraid of. They fear that the little things of their domestic drudgery will go wrong and lead to some little incon-
veniences. They are afraid of their families when they are present and when they are absent. They fear to make changes and that is why they do not change … Part of the cure of fear in women is making changes. A man, with change by going down town to his daily work, but a lady at home woman does not and she suf-
fers and grows afraid of things being different than what they are, or what they think they are. 10

Up until this time, artistic representations of nude women were largely relegated to the domain of male artists who assumed the privilege of access to female models in academic art school settings or in their private studios and workshops. Writing in her seminal 1971 essay “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?,” art historian Linda Nochlin explained that “there exist, in the history of art, no historical repre-
sentations of artists drawing from the nude model which include women in any role but that of the nude model itself, an interesting commentary on the roles of propriety that is, it is all right for a woman to reveal herself naked as an object for a group of men, but forbidden to a woman to participate in the active study and recording of naked men as an object, or even of a fellow woman.” 11 There is no doubt that Brig-
man broke the rules of propriety in 1905—nearly sixty years before Nochlin made her observations about gender disparity in the art world. Brigman’s decision to focus her camera on herself, to confront her own fears, and to accept her flawed body as a suitable basis for her photographs are proof of this.

Regardless of her radical method of making art reflected a deliberate pro-
cession of undoing the patriarchal value system that had helped to define gender roles in the field of photography well into the twentieth century. On America’s West Coast, Brigman’s work developed along a parallel trajectory to that of photographer Imogen Cunningham (1883–1976), who made her first nude self-portrait in a grasp of field of dan-
delions on the University of Washington campus in 1906 (Fig. 6). After seeing Brigman’s nude landscapes in various photo-
graﬁcs journals, Cunningham followed suit with a series of images depicting nude ﬁgures—including her husband—in various outdoor settings such as the upper elevations of Mount Rainier. When the photographs were published in a regional newspaper, they were controversial and described by one critic as “insanely vulgar” and a “bellowal portrait of shame” (see page 203). 12 The critics went even further: “If these pictures were posed in the open air, and there is a sus-
picion that one of them was, the whole gang of moral perverts who participated in the orgie [sic] should be arrested.” 13 The harsh criticism shows just how daring it was for a woman to photograph the nude figure—whether male or female—in the first decades of the 1900s. Brigman’s influence is also felt in the work of photographer Louise Dahl-Wolfe (1902–1961), who worked on a series of images depicting nude ﬁgures—including her husband—in various outdoor settings such as the upper elevations of Mount Rainier. When the photographs were published in a regional newspaper, they were controversial and described by one critic as “insanely vulgar” and a “bellowal portrait of shame” (see page 203). 12 The critics went even further: “If these pictures were posed in the open air, and there is a sus-
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tial periodical Camera Work and awarded her membership in the Photo-Secession in 1903. In her letters and writing, Brig-
man often referred to Stieglitz as “The Man,” deferentially acknowledging his role as the powerful individual who shaped the canon and could make or break her reputation and career in the art world. Brigman’s decision to focus her camera on herself, to confront her own fears, and to accept her flawed body as a suitable basis for her photographs are proof of this. Despite Brigman’s radical ambitions, however, she navigated the art world of her era by producing finished prints that con-
formed to the romantic sensibilities of her peers and critics To do this, she employed extensive darkroom editing and manipulation of her negatives to conceal and enhance the figures and form in her photographs. This meant that the gen-
eral viewer would not likely have even detected Brigman’s scarred breast. “The etching tool is one of my closest allies,” she admitted. “With it, all that is useless is etched away. … So line of harmony is rendered more perfect and the motive, or underlining thought, enabled to appeal more clearly to the observer who understands and responds according to his abil-
ity.” With this statement, Brigman acknowledges the balance she felt she had to strike between photographic convention and her progressive desire to “see … from the item path of [photography’s] iron-jawed ancilaces.” 14 Nevertheless, Brig-
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the photography of Louise Dahl-Wolfe (1895–1989), a San Francisco–born artist who described meeting Brigman in 1921 as a “wonderful accident.” After their encounter, and on seeing her prints, Dahl-Wolfe immediately purchased her own camera, and later wrote of being so “bowled over” by Brigman’s nudes that she engaged a group of friends to “do Anne Brigman’s” outdoors in the landscape. Dahl-Wolfe went on to become one of the first women to establish herself in the male-dominated field of fashion photography. Working for Vanity Fair and Harper’s Bazaar in the 1930s and ’40s, she was known as a groundbreaking perfectionist who reworked the male gaze in the fashion industry. Proclaiming that she hated “arty nudes in daisy fields,” Dahl-Wolfe’s images, such as Night Bathing (1939), provoked continued discourse around definitions of what constituted idealized feminine beauty in the modern era (Fig. 7).

The progressive conversations engaged by these female photographers around visual representations of women remained relatively isolated until midcentury. This was due in large part to a wave of post–World War II social conservatism that placed renewed emphasis on traditional family values and women’s domestic obligations. Although Brigman achieved recognition for her work and was well known in pictorialist photography circles before the war, she fell into relative obscurity after her death in 1950. The civil rights movement and Vietnam War protests of the 1960s gave rise to feminist art movements that placed new emphasis on the voices of female artists. However, while women artists began to revisit some issues raised by their proto-feminist predecessors, they largely did so without knowledge of Brigman’s pioneering work. Nevertheless, echoes of Brigman reverberate in the feminist work of both East and West Coast artists like Cindy Sherman, Mary Beth Edelson, Judy Chicago, Barbara Kruger, and Hannah Wilke—who, with renewed energy, sought to challenge what they perceived as the tired narratives of a patriarchal art history.

Within this context, nude self-representation via photography, performance, and film became a powerful vehicle for such confrontation—particularly when employed in outdoor landscape settings. For example, Barbara Kruger’s We won’t play nature to your culture (1983) overlays text onto a photograph of a woman who appears to recline in an outdoor landscape—with leaves covering her eyes—as though modeling for a male artist (Fig. 8). Kruger’s work calls visible attention to the art world convention of objectifying women’s bodies. Her statement reads as a declaration, asserting that women would no longer be complicit in a gendered scheme reinforcing male artists’ power over representations of women. Around the same time, the female activist-artist group known as the Guerrilla Girls, founded in 1984, highlighted the widespread and ongoing issue of gender disparity in the art world with their poster campaign that asked: Do women have to be naked to get into the Met Museum? (1989; Fig. 9). The poster relied hard data on the predominance of paintings depicting nude women made by male artists hanging in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

For many pioneering feminist artists, the natural landscape was an obvious place to make work that resisted conventional patriarchal strategies of representation. Cuban-born Ana Mendieta, who was exiled to America at the age of twelve, began making experimental outdoor work with her body in the early 1970s while studying at the University of Iowa. “The turning point,” explained Mendieta, “was in 1972, when I realized that my paintings were not real enough for what I want the image to convey and by real I mean I wanted my images to have power.” After that, Mendieta began to engage physically and actively with the landscape. For example, in her self-portrait film, Creek (1974), Mendieta revisited the story of the Shakespearean character Ophelia—the archetypal Victorian woman who was rendered voiceless, vulnerable, and near death in a pastoral body of water by the artist John Everett Millais in 1851–52 (Fig. 10). Mendieta upended that narrative by...
It is not a stretch to describe Anne Brigman’s photographic outings in the wilderness as antecedents to the type of experimental performance art that emerged in the art world in the 1960s and 70s.

Brigman’s favorite high-altitude destination was Desolation Valley, a place she described as “primeval … austere … forbidden … sinister … radiant and beautiful.” Working in such a setting involved more than snapping a scenic photograph; it demanded planning, patience, perseverance, and a desire to embrace the elements. She sometimes remained on location for days at a time, carefully orchestrating performances worthy of photography. “They are honest little negatives in their score” 15 of her deeply held beliefs about the interconnectedness between humans and the natural environment. Sometimes she undertook private rituals in the mountains, such as when she communed with an ancient juniper tree by building a fire on a rock outcropping near its trunk as “an offering to the Gods of the Mountain.” During her time spent in the high elevations, Brigman developed ongoing relationships and friendships with specific trees, which explains her eventual desire to intervene with human bodies in their natural forms. “In all of my years of work with the lens, I’ve dreamed of and loved to work with the human figure—to embody it in rocks and trees, to make it part of the elements, not apart from them,” Brigman wrote. 16 In photographs like Soul of the Blasted Pine, Invisibles, and Via Dolorosa, Brigman positions herself and her nude models in and among the trunks of trees. Human limbs and tree limbs become entangled, while shade blurs the forms of the human body with those of graffiti and contorted branches (Figs. 15, 16, and 17). The figures in Brigman’s photographs are not lamp or pasture observers of nature, but rather participants in nature—they are alive, strong, vigorous, engaged, and interconnected with their surroundings. “Rare human, rare in their minds as well as in their skin, fine bodies, have given me of their simple beauty and freedom, that I might weave them into the saga of these wind swept trees on high peaks.” 17 Brigman said of the way she composed her photographs to create a symbiotic union between the female human form and the surrounding flora and fauna. 18 Brigman’s performative ads in the Sierra publicize the work of the Sierra Nevada native. 19
The figures in Brigman’s photographs are not limp or passive observers of nature, but rather participants in nature—they are active, strong, vigorous, engaged, and interconnected with their surroundings.
Many of them embraced the outdoors as a grand stage upon which to evoke ancient rituals to convey the idea that female power was deeply rooted in the natural world. For example, beginning in the 1960s, East Coast feminist artist Mary Beth Edelson frequently ventured to isolated outdoor places like caves and ruins to perform rituals and other solo nude performances that she documented using time-lapse photography. By interweaving her body together with artifacts from nature, she effectively evoked female goddess archetypes in her works of the early 1970s. For example, Edelson photographed herself nude in a rocky canyon with her arms outstretched to convey a sense of power and strength (Fig. 18). She manipulated her final image using a method called photomontage to overlay a spiraling seashell onto her own body, further alluding to primeval creation myths and female interconnectedness and interdependence with nature.

Around this same time, Judy Chicago embarked on a series of elaborate outdoor performances on the West Coast called Atmospheres. Working with a group of women in the desert and other outdoor settings, participants stripped off their clothes, painted their bodies in bright colors, and used flares to release smoke of various hues into the air. In one self-portrait from the series, Chicago stands in a rocky canyon as bright orange smoke pours into the space around her. Referring to herself as a Smoke Goddess (1972) in this performance, Chicago evoked the practice of ancient fire rituals often associated with the creation of the earth (Fig. 19). Through their performances, both Edelson and Chicago transformed themselves into symbolic and empowered goddess figures, establishing women as agents of creation rather than passive observers of nature. With a similar ongoing focus on the female body in nature, Ana Mendieta frequently made work incorporating her nude body as a strategy for reclaiming her cultural origins and underscoring her connectedness to the earth. In Arbol de la Vida (Tree of Life), a 1976 performance resembling ancient creation rituals, Mendieta covered her nude body in brown mud that seamlessly blended with the trees around her (Fig. 20). A photograph documenting the performance bears an uncanny resemblance to the work that Brigman made nearly seventy years earlier. In another instance, as part of her Silueta series, Mendieta crawled into a sunken stone depression and buried her nude body in a field of delicate white flowers, leaving visible only her silhouette. Although the recessed space resembled a shallow grave, Mendieta’s physical insertion of her body into the earth established her as an active agent of renewal and regeneration in nature. Mendieta’s Siluetas eventually evolved into a series of sculptural works referring to ancient goddess figures that she carved into stone, sand, and clay. Feminist artists working outdoors at this time also frequently juxtaposed the nude female form against rocks and stones, sometimes with an aim toward acknowledging vulnerability, and at other times as a metaphor for strength. Brigman engaged this metaphor in her work as well (Fig. 21). “Stones touch human beings because they suggest immortality, because they have so patiently survived,” Lucy Lippard has written. “Visually every culture we know has attributed to
pebbles and stones, rocks and boulders, magical powers of intense energy, luck, fertility, and healing. Working in the 1970s, Judy Dater acknowledged these associations in her nude desert self-portraits. In Self-Portrait with Snake Petroglyph (1981), Dater overlaid her body onto an ancient indigenous mark etched onto a large rock (Fig. 22). While we cannot be certain of the ancient symbol’s meaning, the position of Dater’s body establishes her as a life-giving force, linking her to the earth and primordial creation images. In another photograph, Self-Portrait with Stone (1981), Dater positioned her nude body in an open desert expanse, assuming the physicality of a rock as she asserted her place as a woman in the natural environment (Fig. 23). More recently, female artists of color have relied on performative and photographic strategies in the landscape to encourage conversations about social issues such as race, body politics, and gendered power relations. Guatemalan-born Regina José Galindo, for example, frequently stages nude performances around the world to critique violence and the exploitation of women. With her nude body covered in pigment made from black coal, Galindo physically embodied a rock during her performance Piedra (2013; Fig. 24). While she crouched in a fetal position in a public square, viewers watched Galindo unflinchingly tolerate the violence against her—an homage to the strength of thousands of women who have endured exploitation in Latin America’s coal mining industries. “Bodies are fragile only in appearance,” Galindo asserted in her artist statement, underscoring that by metaphorically transforming her body into a stone, she and her female counterparts would find a way to survive and endure. Acknowledging human resilience and strength are also key messages of photographer Laura Aguilar, who began photographing her nude body in the landscape in the 1980s. Using an approach and style similar to that of Judy Dater, Aguilar situated her body among boulders, in rocky ravines, and near waterways in Southern California and New Mexico. However, because she is Latina, lesbian, and large-bodied, Aguilar’s photographs invite a more complicated analysis of beauty, gender, and identity. Aguilar frequently images herself alongside large rocks and boulders, and inUntitled #111 (2006–7), she sits with her back to the viewer before a large boulder that echoes the shape of her own body (Fig. 25). Aguilar’s photographs show her as continuous with the earth and an embodiment of its natural elements. Interestingly, however, whereas other feminist artists have embraced their relationship with nature as a positive identification, queer theorists Dana Lascaro and Maf Y. Chen suggest in their essay “Has the Queer Ever Been Human?” that Aguilar’s self-identification with stones may actually reflect the dehumanizing treatment she has endured during her lifetime:

“As in other feminized self-portraits, the female body [in Aguilar’s work] refuses either to open itself to appropriation by the viewer or to position itself as the effigy of the male gaze. Ironically, though, Aguilar performs this refusal not by intensifying her apparent thesis as subject . . . but by running away from the demand for recognition within the circle of humanity. By mimicking a boulder, Aguilar enters the very humanist fold where some would place her, effortlessly deflating the centrality of the human self.”

By embodying a boulder in her photographs, Aguilar acknowledges the marginalization she has experienced as a queer Latina, but also celebrates the beauty of her body as a part of nature. While her practice may not resolve the ongoing struggles with the depression, fear, and self-doubt that she has faced since childhood, her images are nevertheless empowering and encourage those who are typically defined as the “other” in Western society to embrace their own realities and express their unique voices. Like Brigan’s, Aguilar’s images call into question traditional Eurocentric definitions of female beauty and ask viewers to reconsider how we, as humans, interpret and define our relationship to nature.

CLAIMING SPACE

Anne Brigan recognized the significance of creating her own space to nurture and develop her voice as an independent thinker and artist. One need not look further than her studio, which she frequently described as her “cave” and adorned with artworks, prints, and other objects of personal meaning. Although she was known to hold small gatherings for friends and artists in her home and studio, photographs of Brigan there show her focused and absorbed in her labor, establishing it as a private place for work. (see pages 196, 310 and 361) Brigan immersed herself in the progressive intellectual conversations of her day, and was especially drawn to the writings of English socialist poet Edward Carpenter, whose philosophies of free love, natural living, nudism, and socialism she admired. One wonders whether she modeled her simple dwelling in Oakland on that of Carpenter’s home in England, which was...
considered a pilgrimage destination for thinkers and artists challenging the customs of Victorian society in the 1890s. In a photograph of her standing outside her studio, she is framed by the foliage of her lush garden, which was similar to a widely circulated postcard of Carpenter (Figs. 26 and 27). Whether the similarities were intentional or not, Brigman clearly defined her home and studio as a place for community that also functioned as a space of her own. Brigman’s urban oasis, however, did not fully satisfy her hunger for “the wilds.” She yearned for the freedom that the backcountry offered and ventured into spaces that were, during her time, traditionally considered the domain of men. This included the Sierra—a storied mountain range encompassing both Donner Pass and Yosemite—which had come to be associated with America’s nineteenth-century frontier expansion and Manifest Destiny.

Since the 1850s, American pioneer landscape photographers like Timothy O’Sullivan and Carleton Watkins had taken commanding photographic views of these same places (Fig. 30). Their sublime vistas of America’s newly acquired lands intentionally included symbols of progress, like railroad bridges and industrial structures, celebrating the nation’s discovery, mapping, colonization, and possession of these places. In nineteenth-century literature it was common for writers to use gendered language when referring to such places—the wilderness was often feminized as a “virgin” place before it was developed or cultivated by predominately male pioneers. Access to such remote frontier destinations in the second half of the nineteenth century was generally limited to the elite handful of privileged male photographers who had been hired by the United States government and private companies to celebrate expansionist progress. In the same way that male artists gazed on, and by extension objectified, the bodies of nude female models during the Victorian era, the underlying perspectives of these men toward the land and their control over its representation came to define what is known as the male gaze in the field of landscape photography. The images of these pioneer photographers remained the primary vehicle for imagining the American frontier at the turn of the twentieth century.

By 1901, the Sierra Club—an organization founded by John Muir to “to explore, enjoy, and render accessible the mountain regions of the Pacific Coast”—held its first summer outing in the Sierra.36 While women were welcome to join and a handful participated in the early outings, membership in the club remained mostly male. Brigman likely knew about the outings from active members living near her in Oakland and Berkeley; however, she never joined the group’s excursions. When women did join the ranks of hikers in the Sierra in the first decades of the 1900s, they typically adhered to traditional Victorian conventions and dress codes such as those shown in one of Brigman’s early family outings to the Sierra (see page 194). The long, layered, high-collared climbing dresses worn by women and recorded in hundreds of amateur mountain-climbing photographs were the norm. This historical context makes Brigman’s first hiking excursion to the Sierra in 1905 all the more groundbreaking. During that summer trip and those that followed in the next decade, Brigman continually defied gendered social expectations. She seemed innately aware that her self-portraits—both clothed and unclothed—helped

Often posing with a hand on her hip, or her back toward the camera, she inserts herself into pioneer narratives that had been traditionally reserved for men.
Rather than focus on the man-made railroad tunnels and snowsheds as male photographers had in the past, Brigman positions her nude body in the foreground of her image as if to reclaim the legendary summit as her own.
narratives. For example, feminist artist Carolee Schneemann, working almost sixty years after Brigman made *Dawn*, picked up the conversation about reversing power relations in gendered landscapes. In her work from the 1960s, Schneemann was one of the first women artists to ask: “Could a nude woman artist be both image and image maker?” In *Nude on Tracks, Parallel Axis* (1975), Schneemann catapults herself across a pair of receding railroad tracks (Fig. 34). The double-stacked image calls to mind the railroad photographs of American pioneer image-makers whose pictures of tracks receding into the distance were interpreted as symbols of expansion. Schneemann’s nude body, however, blocks the tracks, and by extension, expansionist progress. While her photographs allude to the clichéd cinema trope of the helpless “damsel in distress” tied up in the path of an oncoming train, Schneemann clearly needs no male hero to rescue her. Her nude body is a free and active subject in the otherwise masculine landscape setting. Like Brigman’s placement of her body on Donner Summit in *Dawn*, Schneemann claims this industrialized space for women by forcing viewers to confront her presence and reconsider misplaced definitions of women as passive objects.

Working in the early 1980s, photographer Jo Spence began a project with Terry Dennett to continue this critique of the male-dominated history of landscape photography. The pair called their series *Remodelling Photo History* and made images that deconstructed and revisualized conventional photographic representations of subjects like industry and colonial expansion. In *Remodelling Photo History: Industrialization* (1979–82), Spence photographed a heavily developed landscape marked by large-scale utility poles (Fig. 33). Rather than make the industrialized space the primary focus of her image, however, Spence disrupted the landscape by boldly inserting a nude woman (Dennett) into the foreground. Made not even a decade after the celebrated *New Topographics* exhibition, these images appear to challenge the predominant trend among male landscape photographers of the 1970s and ’80s to exclude the human figure in their images of the altered landscape. But even as photographers like Spence and Dennett continued to define a space for women in the field of landscape photography in the second half of the twentieth century, they still remained in the minority. While the emergence of large-format color photography brought renewed interest to the field, and the rise of environmentalism made photographs a valid place for social and political critique, women photographers continued to push against the weight of photographic history to claim a space for themselves in the canon. Interestingly, some of the most progressive female voices in the field of landscape photography in the twenty-first century come from across the globe where women have taken up the camera and photographed their own nude bodies in the landscape to critique social and political injustices.

Regina José Galindo, for example, the artist who staged the aforementioned performative work *Piedra*, frequently uses her body as a form of political protest. Her performance *Tierra* (2013), which she also documented using film and still photography, begins with the artist standing naked in a pastoral field as a bulldozer excavates the earth around her (Fig. 35). Galindo made the piece in
response to the atrocities initiated by a former Guatemalan president who was accused of murdering innocent civilians and burying them in mass graves. Toward the end of her performance, Galindo stands alone and on an island-like precipice in the middle of the excavated field. By positioning herself in the path of a powerful and formidable machine, Galindo asserts her presence and resists the injustices she and the people of her country have endured at the hands of a violent governmental regime.

Nigerian-born Oteobong Nkanga also photographed her own body to directly implicate the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of humans on the landscape. Her large-format triptych, “The Canary Islands,” which is featured in Altering the Landscape: A Pictorial Definition, asserts her presence and resists the injustices she and the people of her country have endured at the hands of a violent governmental regime.

The work of many female artists who remained relatively unknown in the 1960s and 1970s—as well as their predecessors from earlier generations—are now being reconsidered and celebrated by major museums, newspapers, and new audiences. It is perhaps Anne Brigman, reflecting on her own transformational making journeys into the mountains, who best characterizes the ongoing struggle for women artists, as well as the collective desire for change that their work calls forth.

You remember, too, the long steep trails that lead zigzag, mile after mile, away from trees and brooks, up into the heart of wildflowered valleys, where your lungs ache and your heart beats from the struggle—and then you find it—the Vision!—the glory of the things beyond. The memory and the wonder of it goes on. You remember, too, the long steep trails that lead zigzag, mile after mile, away from trees and brooks, up into the heart of wildflowered valleys, where your lungs ache and your heart beats from the struggle—and then you find it—the Vision!—the glory of the things beyond. The memory and the wonder of it goes on.

FINDING FREEDOM

For more than a century, women have sought direct engagement with the landscape as a strategy for navigating the patriarchal conventions and gendered social inequities that they have perceived and experienced, particularly in the art world. For Anne Brigman, and the women who followed in her footsteps, freedom came by way of leaving the civilized world behind—of only a short time—to enter into a thoughtful and creative dialogue with nature and the environment. While the journeys of these individual artists have taken different paths, they are united by a shared desire to liberate themselves from the expectations placed on them by others and to create a space for women in the broader historical space of art.

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