

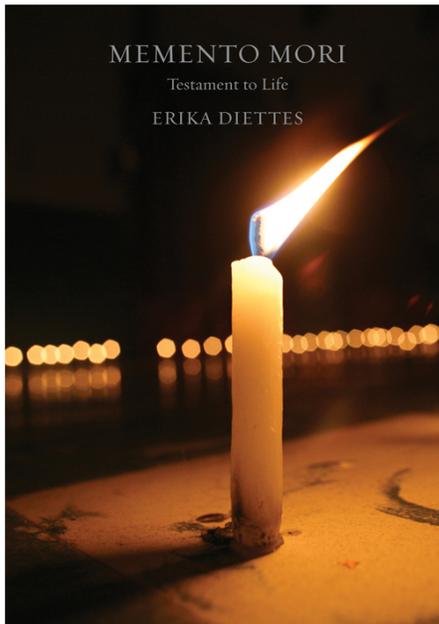
Memento Mori: Testament to Life

Photographs and text by Erika Diettes

Essay by Ileana Diéguez (translated by Rowan Ricardo Phillips with Becky Ortiz)

Interview with the Photographer by Anne Wilkes Tucker (translated by Becky Ortiz)

An emotional documentary tribute to the more than 250,000 “disappeared” in Colombia, as presented in a fine-art, bi-lingual edition (English and Spanish).



\$60.00 U.S. (trade discount)

Hardcover (two volumes) with slipcase

248 pages with 126 color and 20 duotone photographs
by the author

8.25” x 11.5” (upright/portrait)

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Memento Mori: Testament to Life is a poignant tribute to the victims of Colombia’s armed conflict that has claimed more than 250,000 people during the last fifty years. The book is presented as four bodies of photographic work in a two-volume, bi-lingual edition: English and Spanish.

The first volume includes hauntingly beautiful images of Diettes’s photographic work on display at museums and at memorials in areas where the victims “disappeared,” a moving statement by the artist herself, an essay by Mexican scholar Ileana Diéguez, and an extensive conversation with the artist by Anne Wilkes Tucker, former Curator of Photography at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

The second volume showcases the plates from three photographic series: *Sudarios* (*Shrouds*), photographs printed on linen of women who have witnessed atrocities committed against their loved ones, *Río Abajo* (*Drifting Away*), images of articles of clothing of “the

disappeared,” photographed in water and embedded in glass, and *Relicarios (Reliquaries)*, three-dimensional works of polymer containing mementos and personal effects of the victims.

At once majestic, accessible, and deeply moving, this book makes a significant contribution not only to documentary art, contemporary Latin American studies, and social anthropology but also to those wanting to understand, at a very basic level, the human cost of terrorism. As Anne Wilkes Tucker writes, Erika Diettes’s unforgettable book speaks “of universal loss from violent death.” And it is through her art that we learn how to grieve from such loss.

Praise

“Some artists are by vocation gravediggers. Much of Erika Diettes’s work can be regarded as the fabric of an extensive and intimate shroud with which to wrap, consecrate, bid farewell, and provide a final resting place for bodies not yet laid to rest. . . . Despite the dark background from which [the photographs] emerge, these images project a kind of radiance in that they transmit the agony of an era and accounts of life in that era.”

— Ileana Diéguez, from “Erika Diettes: Images in Mourning”

About the Author

Erika Diettes is a Colombian visual artist and social anthropologist who explores issues of memory, pain, absence and death in a variety of mediums. Her work has been exhibited in unique spaces linked to re-memoration processes developed by the victims’ movements in Colombia, as well as at other venues including the Museums of Modern Art of Bogotá, Cali, Medellín, and Barranquilla in Colombia; the Museum of Contemporary Art in Santiago de Chile, at the Museum of Fine Arts and the Fotofest Biennial in Houston, the Festival de la Luz in Buenos Aires, the Ballarat Foto Biennale in Australia, the Malta Festival in Poznań, Poland, and at CENTER in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Her work is part of the permanent collection of the Museo de Antioquia (Colombia) and the Museum of Fine Arts Houston.

About the Essayists

Ileana Diéguez is a research professor in the Humanities and Social Sciences Department at Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (UAM) in Mexico City, where she works on issues of modern and performing arts, as well as the processes pertaining to performativity and disassembly. She has curated exhibitions on these themes in Mexico and South America, and is the author of several books including *Cuerpos sin duelo. Iconografías y teatralidades del dolor/Bodies Without Mourning. Iconographies and Theatricalities of Pain* (Document A, 2013), and *Escenarios Liminales. Teatralidades, performances y política/Liminal Stages/Scenarios. Theatricalities, Performances and Politics* (Atuel 2011).

Anne Wilkes Tucker is the former Gus and Lyndall Wortham Curator of Photography at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. From 1976, when she founded the Department of Photography at MFAH, until her retirement in June 2015, she organized or co-organized more than forty exhibitions of photography, including retrospectives on Brassai, Louis Faurer, Robert Frank, George Krause, Ray K. Metzker, Richard Misrach, and, most recently, “WAR/PHOTOGRAPHY: Images of Armed Conflict and its Aftermath,” and expanded the museum’s photographic holdings from 141 images to more than 29,000, representing work by some 4,000 artists from all seven continents. In 2001, she was named America’s best curator by *TIME* magazine.