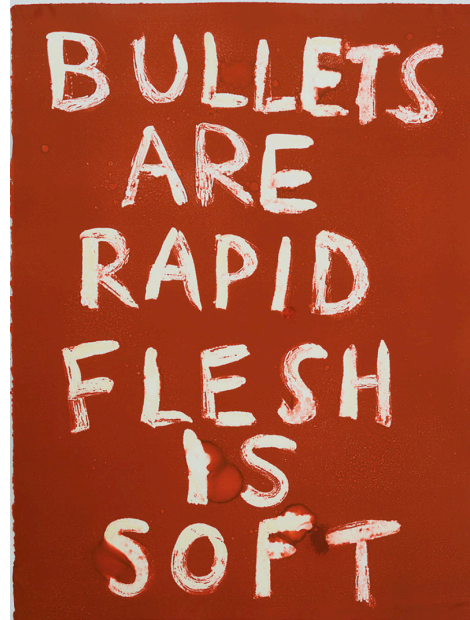


ARTFORUM

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Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds, *Surviving Active Shooter Custer* (detail), 2018, forty-eight monoprints on paper, each 30 × 22". From SITelines.2018.

SITelines.2018

SITE SANTA FE

For SITE Santa Fe's third biennial dedicated to art of the Americas, curators José Luis Blondet, Candice Hopkins, and Ruba Katrib chose a subtitle adopted from a short story by Julio Cortázar published in 1946. "*Casa tomada*" (House Taken Over) recounts the experience of a pair of bourgeois Argentinean siblings who are forced from their ancestral home by an unnamed force, characterized only by chaotic noises emanating from sections of the house. The tale is one of displacement whose overtones of government takeover allude to the writer's own conditions—Cortázar penned his story during the rise of Argentina's nationalist president Juan Perón.

The "house" in the biennial is at once the museum, the larger sociopolitical structures that control it, and those who work within the institution's walls, from curators to artists to administrators. This is made clear by a massive wallpapered graphic by Andrea Fraser—adapted from her co-authored 2018 book *2016 in Museums, Money, and Politics*—that adorns SITE's lobby: Pie charts trace the funding of contemporary art museum boards in every US state, as well as the political affiliations of their members in the lead-up to the 2016 election. The house, as it were, has been taken over.

But the metaphor quickly dissolves as one walks through the galleries. This house is not hospitable; there is little cohesion from work to work, artist to artist. Perhaps this is the curators' intention. Many of the

works address fragmentation and the inability of language to articulate fully the politics of history and of loss. Lutz Bacher's *Whiteboard*, 2018, is an object appropriated from a high school classroom. Partially erased underneath the heading KEY UNIT VOCABULARY are written words and phrases such as NATO, ON THE ROAD, and POLL TAXES, revealing an attempt to reduce the history of the twentieth century to a series of cultural touchstones. Efforts to disassemble while retaining legibility also appear in the prints of Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds. His monoprints of white text smeared through bloodred fields that comprise *Surviving Active Shooter Custer*, 2018, reference mass shootings and military operations that have occurred since the nineteenth century. Abandoning the catchphrases of the US-history classroom, Heap of Birds enlivens and memorializes these tragedies with fresh language. Tania Pérez Córdova's enigmatic multimedia sculptures return us to the frailty of the human subjects who both generate and suffer from policies and histories referenced by these and other artists. Her *Portrait of a Woman Unknown 1* and *2*, both 2018, are slight wooden structures with vibrant textile patterns painted in oil on parts of their surfaces (their labels list as materials "oil on wood, occasionally a woman wearing a dress").

As if to challenge the physical structure of the museum, many of the works in "*Casa tomada*" function as sub-museums: discrete and self-contained displays. NuMu, a former egg kiosk in Guatemala repurposed in 2012 by artists Stefan Benchoam and Jessica Kairé to become a traveling museum, features varying exhibitions at the entrance to SITE that will rotate throughout the run of "*Casa tomada*." In a rear gallery, Eric-Paul Riege's *diyín + hooghan and weaving dance (fig. 3) for Na'ashjé'íí Asdzáá, Retha, Effie, and Anglala*, 2018, is an imagined form of the Navajo *hooghan* (another "home") of a Diné holy figure and weaving teacher called *Na'ashjé'íí Asdzáá*, or Spider Woman. The dwelling he constructed for her incorporates elaborate woolen regalia and doubles as a series of looms. Finally, in a sort of miniature Crystal Palace, a glass structure displays Curtis Talwst Santiago's fifty-one miniature dioramas set into jewelry boxes. Each is a mobile narrative; the scenes of play, escape, languor, trauma, and mystery frame the artist's life, which is just one of twenty-three histories contained in this temporary house.

—Chelsea Weathers