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ARTnews

The Most Important Artworks of the 2010s

The Editors of ARTnews

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Over the past decade, the number—and size!—of museums, galleries, art fairs, and art schools around the world has grown dramatically, and it feels safe to say that more art was made in the past 10 years than at any other time in the history of humanity. Picking the 20 works that definitively defined that stretch of time is a fundamentally impossible project, but as the decade ends, the editors of ARTnews have taken a stab at it, below. Each listed work pioneered a style, exemplified a scene, shaped a trend, or expanded the bounds of art. Some did all of those things. From the vantage point of today, these works seem likely to endure. But time will be the final judge. —The Editors



Hock E Aye Vi Edgar *Heap of Birds, Surviving Active Shooter Custer, 2018*, 24 monoprints, 24 ghost prints.
Installation view at SITE Santa Fe, New Mexico.

MAXIMILIANO DURÓN/ARTNEWS

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11. Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds, *Surviving Active Shooter Custer*, 2018

Indigenous peoples in the United States have long been subjected to brutal violence—both physical and metaphorical—and their stories have been erased from this nation’s history. In a commissioned work for the 2018 SITElines Biennial at SITE Santa Fe in New Mexico, Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds (Cheyenne/Arapaho) presented a series of 24 monoprints and 24 ghost prints collectively titled *Surviving Active Shooter Custer* that made clear just how painful—and how pervasive—these forms of erasure have been. (The following year, the piece traveled to New York for an exhibition at MoMA PS1, and was subsequently acquired by the Museum of Modern Art.) The prints present phrases in white set against various shades of reds and oranges. Their words are a mix of fragments from pop songs and common sayings, along with some of Heap of Birds’s own declarations on the topic of mass shootings. Gun violence is not a new phenomenon, explains Heap of Birds—one need look no further than the massacres of Native populations throughout American history, he has said. One telling print, the namesake for the series, reads “STOP / ACTIVE / SHOOTER / CADET / AUTIE / CUSTER”; it repositions General Custer as an active shooter, upending the longstanding perception that he was a Civil War-era hero. —Maximiliano Durón