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Ruth Estévez is a writer and curator based in Boston and Mexico City. She is Senior Curator at Large at Brandeis University's Rose Art Museum in Waltham, Massachusetts and Cocurator of the 34th São Paulo Bienal, which opens in September 2020.



Teresa Margolles, *El capital te culea* (Capital Screws You), 2019, ink-jet print, 59 × 88 1/2".

**TERESA MARGOLLES (MUSEO DE LA SOLIDARIDAD DE SALVADOR ALLENDE,
SANTIAGO, CHILE; CURATED BY ANDREA PACHECO GONZÁLEZ)**

On Friday, October 18, I arrived in Santiago. Because I'd accepted a conference invitation at the last minute, I found myself a witness to a radical situation. The fatigue of the Chilean people after decades of abuse and precarity erupted into a massive protest against the financial violence of a capitalist system that is running out of alternatives. What a horror that declaring a state of emergency, as the government did in Chile, has become the default global method for pacifying angry citizens. It's an authoritarian solution that represses ideas and public imagination, encourages police impunity, and criminalizes dissent. On the marquees of the Cine Garín and Teatro Chile in Santiago, in an intervention that was part of her first solo institutional show in Chile, Margolles had written EL CAPITAL TE CULEA, a line borrowed from an anonymous aphorist who scrawled it on a wall in San Antonio de Táchira, Venezuela. It means "Capital screws you."



Fritzia Irizar, *Sin título (Desde Cleopatra)* (Untitled [Since Cleopatra]), 2016, still from the 2-minute 13-second color video component of a mixed-media installation additionally comprising a shell, an X-ray in a light box, certificates, two additional videos, and ink-jet prints.

**FRITZIA IRÍZAR (MUSEO UNIVERSITARIO ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO, MEXICO CITY;
CURATED BY HELENA CHÁVEZ MACGREGOR AND VIRGINIA ROY LUZARRAGA)**

For more than a decade, Irizar has been exploring the sociocultural myths associated with precious materials and tracing their connections to the colonial past. Her exhibition at MUAC told tales of South Sea pearls and other famous treasures. In the video component of the multimedia work *Sin título (Desde Cleopatra)* (Untitled [Since Cleopatra]), 2016, Irizar dramatizes a legend in which the Egyptian queen dissolves a pearl in vinegar and drinks it. The artist took this process to its limits: She asked the performer who ingested the pearl to cry, then bottled the tears, making the liquefied gem a thing again, transforming it into a new but contaminated object.



Naomi Rincón Gallardo, *Sangre pesada* (Heavy Blood), 2018, HD video, color, sound, 21 minutes 37 seconds.

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NAOMI RINCÓN GALLARDO (MUSEO EXPERIMENTAL EL ECO, MEXICO CITY; CURATED BY DAVID MIRANDA)

With *Sangre pesada* (Heavy Blood), 2018, a video projection that commanded a gallery at Museo Experimental El Eco this past summer, Rincón Gallardo delved into violent imperial histories, narrating what the artist calls a mythical-critical fable where blood is a metaphor for the colonial regime that intoxicates the world.



Mercedes Azpilicueta, *Un mundo raro* (A Rare World), 2015, three-channel video projection, color, sound, 10 minutes.

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MERCEDES AZPILICUETA (MUSEO DE ARTE MODERNO DE BUENOS AIRES; CURATED BY LAURA HAKEL)

Azpilicueta presented recent performances and moving-image works that experiment with the liberatory potential of voices in everyday space. The three-channel video projection

Cuerpos pájaros (Body Birds), 2018, suggests that tone, gesture, and breathing may be means of resisting or evading forces of regulation.



María Salgado and Fran MM Cabeza de Vaca, *Jinete último reino frag. 2* (Rider Last Kingdom Frag. 2), 2019. Performance view, La Casa Encendida, Madrid, May 10, 2019. María Salgado and Fran MM Cabeza de Vaca. Photo: Sara Navarro.

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MARÍA SALGADO AND FRAN MM CABEZA DE VACA, *JINETE ÚLTIMO REINO FRAG. 2*, 2019

Azpilicueta's work has affinities with that of Salgado and Cabeza de Vaca, whom I saw perform this past May at Madrid's Casa Encendida. *Jinete último reino frag. 2* (Rider Last Kingdom Frag. 2) is a lyrical concert that encourages its audience to challenge language itself, to detach from words that conflate desire and repression.



Lorenza Böttner, untitled, 1980, acrylic on canvas, 21 5/8 × 18 7/8".

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LORENZA BÖTTNER (VIRREINA CENTRE DE LA IMATGE, BARCELONA; CURATED BY PAUL B. PRECIADO WITH VIKTOR NEUMANN, PERE PEDRALS, AND ANDREA LINNENKOHL)

Lorenza Böttner's art and persona transcend classification. The self-portraits on view in this solo show, aptly titled "Requiem for the Norm," modeled a transgender subjectivity that repudiates received notions not only of gender but also of the "disabled" body.



Ximena Garrido-Lecca, *Botanical Readings: Erythroxylum coca*, 2019, coca plants, hydroponic system, galvanized steel ducts, lighting. Installation view, Proyecto AMIL, Lima, Peru.

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XIMENA GARRIDO-LECCA (PROYECTO AMIL, LIMA, PERU; CURATED BY FLORENCIA PORTO-CARRERO AND JOEL YOSS)

Living specimens of the coca plant thrived in Garrido-Lecca's installation *Botanical Readings: Erythroxylum coca*, 2019, reminding us that the proscribed leaf may have multiple functions and meanings, articulating transversal dialogues between Peruvian vernacular culture and modern science. It is “a project that cannot travel anywhere” (as the artist put it): Since the plant is illegal across most of the globe, it can only be shown in the nation where it is produced—confined as if its mere existence were a crime.



View of “**Mapa Teatro: Of Lunatics, or Those Lacking Sanity,**” 2018–19, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid. Photo: Joaquín Cortés/Román Lores.

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MAPA TEATRO (MUSEO NACIONAL CENTRO DE ARTE REINA SOFÍA, MADRID; CURATED BY MANUEL BORJA-VILLEL, RAFAEL GARCÍA, AND TERESA VELÁZQUEZ)

Blurring the boundaries between performance and installation, the Colombian theater group Mapa Teatro (siblings Heidi and Rolf Abderhalden) transformed the Reina Sofía’s basement with a program of guided tours and performance, resurrecting the sleeping architecture of the museum and, with it, its sleeping histories. Originally a hospital, the stately building was partially financed with gold expropriated from the Americas.



Mette Edvardsen, *Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine*, 2010–. Performance view, Public Library, Oslo, October 2019. From osloBiennalen. Photo: Niklas Lello.

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METTE EDVARDSSEN (OSLOBIENNALEN; CURATED BY EVA GONZÁLEZ-SANCHO BODERO AND PER GUNNAR EEG-TVER-BAKK)

Another type of memory exercise is practiced by the “living books”—people who memorize and act out works of literature—in Edvardsen’s ongoing performance *Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine*, 2010–. The quasi-utopian project of learning a book by heart shares the logic of the rehearsal: Reaching the end gives us a reason to start over.



Cover of Margo Glantz's *Y por mirarlo todo, nada veía* (And for Looking to It All, She Couldn't See Anything) (Unam/Sexto Piso, 2018).

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MARGO GLANTZ, *Y POR MIRARLO TODO, NADA VEÍA* (UNAM/SEXTO PISO, 2018)

In her new book, Mexican writer Margo Glantz, born in 1930, gathers together newspaper clippings and tweets. The information is brutal, evanescent yet ceaseless, and forgotten all too easily. Among the banal events and bland commentary are fleeting stories of refugees, border struggles, femicides. Glantz's title is drawn from a 1692 poem by the ever-subversive Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648–1695). Translation: "And for looking to it all, she couldn't see anything."

