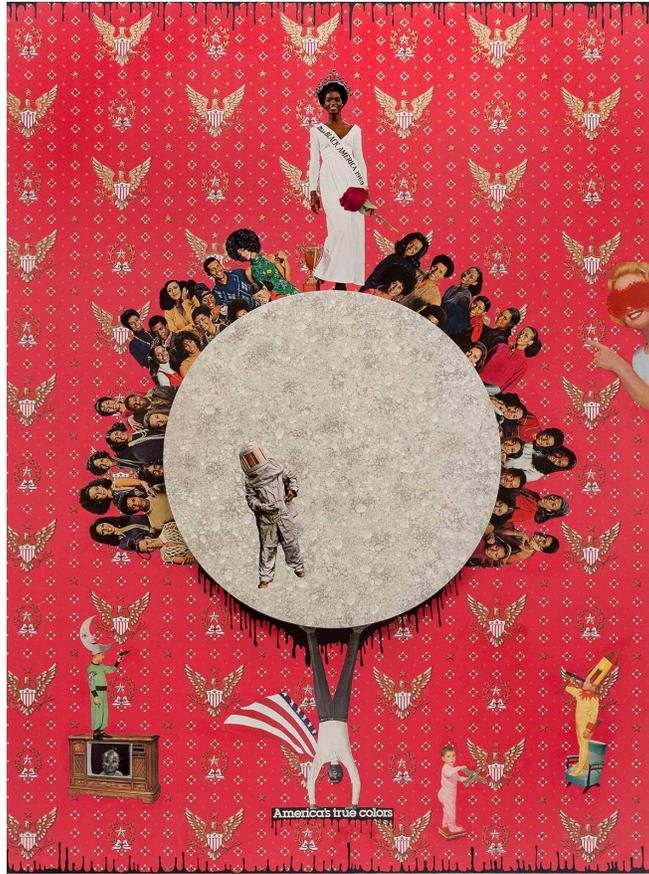




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Genevieve Gagnard,  
*A Walk In The Park Is A Shot In The Dark*, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago

In deromanticizing white Americana and bridging the imagined gap between private politics, popular culture, and institutional oppression, Gagnard employs familiar imagery: objects and photographs which for some may seem initially innocuous. But this is exactly the point. In creating the installation, Gagnard said, “For me, the interesting part is hearing viewers respond and say, ‘That’s like my grandma’s house,’ or ‘I had this object when I was a kid,’ but it’s my hope that, with closer inspection, the viewer realizes just how inappropriate or charged these objects are.”

“I’ve gone to people’s houses that have the mammy dolls, and they think it’s cute and nostalgic because it was passed down to them. They think it’s okay because it’s familiar, and they grew up around it. When making this work, I’m almost pointing a finger at the viewers to say, ‘Is this you?’”

In the installation, symbolically modelled after the home of an abuser, Gagnard imagines a domestic environment which figuratively evokes an intergenerational cycle of patriarchal and racial dominance, over both a gendered, racialized individual and American public life. The 1970s wallpaper design depicts a slave family looking on towards a steamboat and upper-class white family. As Gagnard

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repeatedly shows us, the past isn't past. The domestic sphere becomes a site for reenacting the histories of domination and perpetuating them into oblivion.

"It's literally written on the walls. The antebellum-themed wallpaper is surrounded by red walls," she said. "It's saying stop, there is something to unpack here. I'm screaming at you. I'm thinking about red as blood, red as republican, red as fear, red as love, red as a rose. It's all of these things. It's torture. It's passion."