

FORT GANSEVOORT

FIGHTING FORM

Artist Zoë Buckman and a crew of model-activists champion women's rights
By Alison S. Cahn

FOUR MODELS in boxing gloves are standing in a corner of the ring at New York's Doggound gym. They're flanking artist Zoë Buckman, who is perhaps best known for *Chupa*, a 43-foot-tall neon sculpture of the female reproductive system with fibreglass boxing gloves in place of ovaries. Her latest body of work includes a series of textile-based pieces made from leather boxing gloves swathed in delicate bits of crochet and embroidered tea towels. It will be featured in her exhibition "Heavy Bag," on view at Fort Gansevoort gallery this month.

You might recognize the models—Sira Sampaio, Adena Sosa, Hereth Paul, and Jourdana Phillips—from the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show, but you may not know that they're all activists. Sampaio has been outspoken about workplace harassment; Sosa is a champion of diversity; and Paul and Phillips are education equality advocates. Their attire for this shoot—and the rugged industrial space where they got fit—is in marked contrast to the crystal-embellished bras and feathered wings they wear on the runway. That's also a central theme of Buckman's art, which, she says, "explores the complexity of being a woman and our capacity to be both really soft and really hard."

Buckman's colleagues in the art world expressed their concern when she first started training up with black eyes at gallery openings after boxing training. But sparring served as a kind of therapy for the artist during the run-up to the 2016 presidential election. "All the talk about rape and abortion and paving women was making me really angry and frustrated," she says. "As someone who's had an abortion and survived sexual assault, I take that shit personally." The models agree that boxing offers catharsis and community. "Doggound is such a positive environment, and everyone's very supportive of one another," Sampaio says. Adds Sosa, "No matter what language you speak or what race or sex you are, we are all fighting for the same rights."

Photograph by Jennifer Livingston



On the ropes. On Zoë Buckman (center): jumpsuit, Stella McCartney; Boots, Gianvito Rossi. Jewelry, her own. For fashion credits for (from left) Sira Sampaio, Adena Sosa, Hereth Paul, and Jourdana Phillips, see Where to Buy BEAUTY BAZAAR Girl Hereth's dewy glow with Maybelline New York FaceStudio Master Strobing Liquid Illuminating Highlighter in Deep Gold (\$9.99). Hair: Nicolas Edin; makeup: Asami Matsuda; event production: Tiffany Bloomfield. Special thanks to Doggound. FASHION EDITOR: Joanna Hillman