

FORT GANSEVOORT

WIDEWALLS

Zoë Buckman's Show at Fort Gansevoort Recalls 1970s Feminist Art

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September 12, 2019

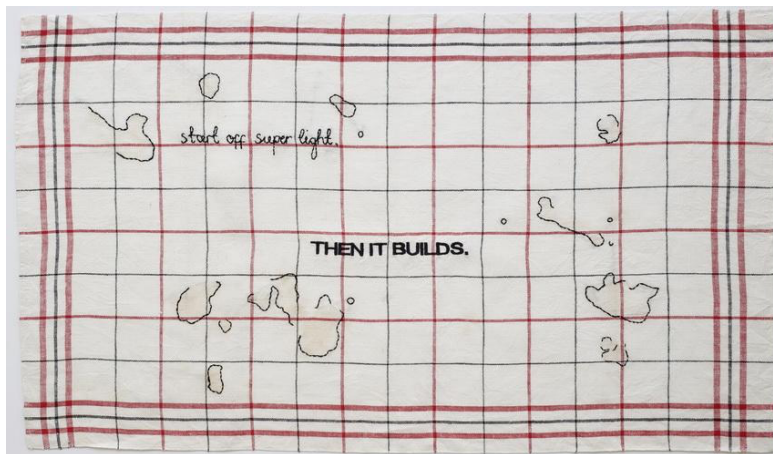


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One of the main characteristics of the women artists associated with the Second wave of feminism was **the appropriation of crafts traditionally performed by women** throughout the centuries such as embroidery, pottery, and quilting. By connecting with the past, they wanted to establish a firm continuity of women practices to underline the ideas of unity, understanding, and sisterhood.

Ever since, various women have been using the same crafts to express their inner states and explore socio-political implications of the same, **Zoë Buckman** being one of them. Her entire practice is based on the famous feminist maxim *personal is political*, meaning that she **articulates her own experience through the spectrum of everyday** framed by the social pressure constantly projected upon women.

Buckman's recent works are currently on display at **Fort Gansevoort**, marking her first solo show with the gallery entirely focused on women's work and the tension between strength and vulnerability.



Zoë Buckman – Then It Builds, 2018. Embroidery on vintage linen tea towel, 17 x 29 inches

The Exhibition Concept

Under the title *Heavy Rag*, the exhibition invites the visitors **to plunge in the artist's deliberation of physical spaces she felt committed to**. To be more precise, three floors of the gallery are devoted to home, the boxing gym, and Zoë Buckman's mother's kitchen table.

At a certain point, the artist found out about **her mother's terminal diagnosis**, so she started embracing various materials and techniques traditionally used by women such as quilting or embroidery. All the objects shown (clusters of boxing gloves, misshapen teacups, etc.) take **a form reminiscent of the female body** and reflect both the trauma and pleasure. The whole process is resonant to the works of feminist artists primarily the work of Louise Bourgeois, explained by Buckman in the following statement:

I found myself looking back at the women upon whose shoulders I feel I stand, as a way of processing impending loss. Louise Bourgeois and her textile works were a massive inspiration for this series.

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Left: Zoë Buckman – Fool, 2018. Embroidery on vintage linen tea towel, 24 1/4 x 16 inches. Framed 27 1/2 x 19 1/4 inches / **Right:** Zoë Buckman – For B, 2018. 2 boxing gloves, vintage linen, chain, 21 x 10 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches

The Objects Of Love And Loss

Buckman appropriates **everyday domestic objects** such as linens and crockery to honor the rituals performed by her mother. The ceramics function in a similar fashion – they evoke trauma and loss, as well as a series of tea towels with the embroidered text.

The artist is **constantly working with text**, and her inspiration comes from various sources spanning from her teenage years and the exploration of desire, the sentences expressed by her late mother who was a teacher and playwright.

The **boxing gloves** hanged at the standard height of a training gym operate as symbols of (female) strength. These symbols of masculinity are clothed differently and so their context changes – they become **the embodiments of female features** reminiscent of the works by the renowned American Minimal artist Eve Hesse.

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Zoë Buckman – Anything Blue, 2019. Porcelain, 3 1/4 x 4 3/4 x 4 3/4 inches

Zoë Buckman at Fort Gansevoort

Although it doesn't offer any kind of refreshed or surprisingly innovative perspective, the current exhibition surely **calls the visitors to rethink the strategies of grief, struggle and strength** expressed by the contemporary woman artist.

Zoë Buckman: Heavy Rag will be on display at [Fort Gansevoort](#) in New York **from September 12 until 12 October 2019**.

Featured images: Zoë Buckman: Heavy Rag – Installation views; Zoë Buckman – Init Though, 2019. Porcelain, 4 3/4 x 5 1/4 x 5 inches. All images courtesy Fort Gansevoort.