

FORT GANSEVOORT

Zoë Buckman

Heavy Rag

Public Opening: Thursday, September 12, 6 – 8 PM

On View: Friday, September 6 - Saturday, October 12, 2019



Fort Gansevoort is pleased to present Zoë Buckman, *Heavy Rag* opening Thursday, September 12th, 2019. Buckman's first solo show with the gallery is explicitly linked to women's work. Culled from deeply personal experience, the exhibition embraces the domestic archetype by balancing an ambiguity between vulnerability and strength.

Occupying the three floors of the gallery, the bodies of work are interconnected by the manifestation of the artist's relationship to physical spaces—the home, her mother's kitchen table, the boxing gym. After learning of her mother's terminal diagnosis, Buckman began to employ a variety of techniques and materials traditionally adorned by women; embroidered tea towels, quilting and pottery. The works which take form as misshapen tea cups, clusters of boxing gloves, and framed flatworks are intrinsically referential to the bodily form; all at once unveiling a complex dichotomy of trauma and pleasure and the slippage in between.

Buckman uses everyday domestic objects such as crockery and linens as a nod to the rituals that galvanized the bond between herself and her mother. Having a cup of tea at the kitchen table, wiping away a spill, the attempted removal of blood, are common everyday moments that gain both personal and universal dimensions. The ceramics emulate a feeling of loss and trauma from their decaying non-functioning form, while the series of tea towels present a moment of stability and strength through the embroidered text and formal presentation.

Text is omnipresent in Buckman's work, yet the meaning of these words and their implications are not straightforward. The verses are derived from multiple sources ranging from teenage trauma and her exploration of domination and submission; to the very words penned by her late mother, playwright and teacher, Jennie Buckman. For example, the piece entitled *The Curse*, is a flatwork of a hand embroidered vintage tea towel which reads "For this you need thick bleach and euphemisms." By layering her mother's words with her own response to life encounters, the artist pays homage to the collective memory of shared experience.

To that end, in an attempt to articulate her own grieving Buckman also sought inspiration and solace in the work of feminist artists before her.

"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."

Banter, the duo of boxing gloves which hang from the ceiling at the standard height of a training gym, moves the conversation towards emotions that lie beyond language. The piece presents a metaphor of aggression versus support. The two boxing gloves, both a protective and harmful tool in a male dominated sport, are clothed in differing dish cloths. Perhaps opponents, the gloves are at a glance delicately balanced on top of one another, simultaneously bringing to question whether they are holding each other up or tearing each other down. *Heavy Rag* is a journey through the hauntingly beautiful reality of grief, struggle and strength resulting in a multi-generational portrait of the contemporary female experience.

Zoë Buckman was born in 1985 in Hackney, East London. She studied at The International Center of Photography (GS '09) and was awarded an Art Matters Grant in 2017. She has shown in solo exhibitions at Gavlak Gallery, Los Angeles; Papillion Art, Los Angeles; Project for Empty Space, Newark; Garis & Hahn Gallery, Los Angeles; and Milk Gallery, New York. Group exhibitions include Camden Arts Centre, London; The Studio Museum in Harlem, The Children's Museum of the Arts, New York; Paul Kasmin Gallery, New York; The Tarble Arts Center, Illinois; Goodman Gallery, South Africa; Jack Shainman Gallery, New York; Unit London; NYU Florence, Grunwald Gallery of Art Gallery, Indiana University; The Democratic National Convention, Philadelphia; The National Center for Civil and Human Rights, Atlanta; and The National Museum of African-American History & Culture, Washington, D.C.; The Visual Arts Center of New Jersey; and The Centre Regional D'Art Contemporain, Sète, France. Public art installations include For Freedoms "50 State Initiative", "Inaction is Apathy" billboard at 21c Museum Hotel Bentonville, Arkansas and "Champ" at The Standard, Downtown LA with Art Production Fund Buckman currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Image: Zoë Buckman, *According To Grandma*, 2019, 12 boxing gloves, vintage linen, chain, 29 x 19 x 15 1/2 inches.

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