

Multidisciplinary artist Zoë Buckman inside her New York apartment in DUMBO.



zoë buckman

at albertz benda

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Above: Zoë Buckman addresses motherhood and domesticity, and the power and oppression of each, in her practice. Below: Zoë Buckman (b. 1985), *Fool*, 2019, embroidery on vintage tea towel, 22.25 x 14.75 in. Courtesy of the artist and Albertz Benda.

Hand-embroidered tea towels extolling hearth and home often conjure realms of domestic bliss. In Zoë Buckman's work, however, objects such as these carry weighted meaning, frequently revealing domestic violence. At this year's Dallas Art Fair, Albertz Benda gallery will present Buckman's provocative work, which continues its exploration of traditional gender roles within the domestic sphere. Buckman views the female side of this dynamic as potentially empowering while simultaneously oppressive. "I am most interested in work that expresses the gray areas or nuances between two seemingly polarizing ideas," explains the British-born, Brooklyn-based artist.

Buckman's work comes from a very personal place. She began this series while caring for her terminally ill mother who passed away last year. "I wanted to make work about my mother, but it was still too raw," she says. Her mother's experiences as a survivor of sexual abuse, however, remain woven throughout the work. "Trauma doesn't just ruin one person's life. It's generational," she explains. Buckman's own experience as a victim of sexual assault also informs her creativity. In many ways, the artist speaks in a collective voice. The work, she adds, "is about what I've experienced, or people have spoken to me about."



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Having a daughter seven years ago added another dimension to Buckman's practice. "When I became a mother, that became a big focus of my work. I feel like I'm returning to those ideas right now. Looking back on things I've experienced in my life and the political climate becoming more urgent has led to my work about the female experience." Buckman also explores the double standard regarding child rearing that expects mothers to take full parental responsibility while fathers tend to get societal points for watching over their progeny. These, she says, are "the expectations of ours that need to be examined."

Buckman's thoughtful work is more reflective than reactive. It takes her about two years to create a new body of work, making it important to note that the Me Too movement dovetailed with her practice rather than informed it. By the time Buckman finished this labor-intensive series, the ideas she began exploring became part of the public discourse. It is more a function of coincidence, then, that her work seems to embody the current ethos of this larger cultural moment.

While the new pieces are relatively small, much of Buckman's sculpture is done on a large scale. One of the installation pieces

on view is a pair of boxing gloves. Made from vintage linen tea towels and embroidered with M F, these initials reference the title's profanity rather than the opposite sex. The elegant use of traditionally feminine elements belies the subject matter. "The past two years have been a personal exploration for me. Some of the text is actually text that comes from abuse and trauma. Most of it is about unwanted behavior," she says.

This will be Buckman's inaugural exhibition in Dallas. According to gallery co-founder Thorsten Albertz, "There is obviously an interest in younger voices and women's voices." He adds, "Zoë has been very vocal and very prominent over the last 18 months." He confides that there is already interest in her work from collectors and curators locally as well as nationally.

The Dallas Museum of Art's acquisition last year of work by another one of the gallery's artists, Brie Ruais, through the Dallas Art Fair Acquisition Fund, helped fuel the decision to show Buckman's sculpture this year. "The reason we like participating in the Dallas Art Fair is because the support the Dallas institutions give to the fair is incredible. Dallas is extremely supportive and that makes Zoë a perfect choice," Albertz concludes. **P**



The artist embroiders vintage tea towels.