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Garis & Hahn Presents:



Zoe Buckman, *Untitled 6 (Present Life)*, 2013, Neon, 70 x 40 In. Edition of 3

Present Life

A solo exhibition of work by Zoë Buckman

Exhibition Dates: February 24, 2015 - March 28, 2015

Opening Reception: Wednesday, February 24th | 6-8pm

New York, NY December 8, 2014— **Garis & Hahn** is pleased to announce the opening of ***Present Life***, a solo exhibition of sculpture, photography, embroidery and site-specific installation by British artist Zoë Buckman. *Present Life* will feature Buckman's on-going series of the same name, which the artist began in 2011, along with several new works from 2014. The gallery will host an opening reception at 263 Bowery from 6:00PM to 8:00PM on Wednesday, February 24, 2015.

Present Life is a collection of works that explore the liminal space between life and death and other cycles of genesis and decay. Photographs of floral arrangements just past their prime, reliefs depicting the placenta as life-giver and potential taker, and neon-illuminated sculpture investigate temporality. Buckman adds breadth to these works by capturing the nuance of natural sequences on the cusp of their transition from one state to the other—from non-existence to existence and back again—rather than focusing on the finality of their outcome.

This intention to capture an intermediate state is clear in Buckman's photographs of week-old flower arrangements wrapped like bodies in black plastic trash bags. These works are described as "the start of the end"; the time when "the flowers are still beautiful but have begun their descent." At first glance, the bouquets look lovely, but the large scale of the works allow the

viewer to become intimately acquainted with the markers of decay: the browning edges of an iris in *Untitled 2*; the wrinkled petals of a sunflower in *Untitled 4*; and the curling edges of the roses in *Untitled 5*. The photographs can be seen as a celebration of life and beauty, but also as a *memento mori*, a visceral warning of the inevitability of death and a call to cherish our limited time before it.

Buckman furthers her exploration of beauty and fragility in life through neon light sculptures in her works *Untitled 6* and *Untitled 7*. For Buckman, creating sculpture with neon is akin to painting; it allows her to create broad, gestural strokes in brilliant and alluring hues. *Untitled 6* is a six-foot geometric, neon outline of an hourglass that illuminates in pure white light, alluding to time and the shape of the female form. *Untitled 7*, a representational drawing of a placenta in salmon pink neon light strikes a more playful tone. Buckman began using the placenta as a symbolically significant object after she gave birth to her first child in 2011; the impetus for the Present Life series after learning that her placenta had started to deplete. In light of this revelation, she became fascinated with the duality of the placenta: an organ that nurtures life but can just as easily extinguish it.

Buckman extends the image of the placenta in two other works. In *Untitled 8*, the viewer can make out a placenta as an imprint in concrete slabs developed from photographs. The imprints map out the boundaries of the organ, simultaneously building and deconstructing the form of the placenta at the same time. In *Untitled 9*, the viewer is confronted with the artist's own plasticized placenta seated in a convex marble frame, a presentation typically reserved for religious icons.

Newer works in the series include hand-blown sculptural hourglasses, and several pieces using heirloom lace adding a dimension of nostalgia to Buckman's exploration of life, death, fragility and beauty. The threads of the lace connect the viewer to the intricate web of blood vessels and cells that make up the placenta, and floral patterns of the lace simplify the organic bouquets in Buckman's series of photographs. Buckman has taken her own hand to these pieces, a veil suspended in the window of the gallery, and a lace shawl draped delicately over a standing lamp, embroidering them with fragmented text taken from her vivid dreams about mortality.

This exploration of the artist's dreams, the ultimate 'in-between' space, is elaborated in a site-specific installation at Garis & Hahn. Using a table runner from her grandmother's vintage lace collection laid on a heavy wooden farm table, the artist invites visitors to engage in her dreamscape by sitting at the table and reading text pulled from her dreams, which she has embroidered on the length of the runner. Adorning the table are groupings of small, hand-blown glass ornaments also inspired by dreams. An audio track of her family's Sunday dinner plays from one end of the table, from the other the sound of the ocean. There is sand on the floor, as if the sand from the hourglasses in the main room of the gallery have tipped out and trickled down into the subconscious layer of the exhibition. The symbol of the family table is the physical place that connects past with present, where stories from the living convene with the memory of ancestors past, and embedding the piece with the celebratory and corporal nature of a feast, be it with our mouths, eyes, or imaginations.

About the Artist

Zoë Buckman (b.1985, Hackney, East London) lives and works in New York and is represented by WEBBCREATIVE. Her work has been shown in group exhibitions including *New Abstraction* at Leila Heller Gallery; *Contemporary Spotlight: TEXT*, Paddle8; the *Hidden Gems Project* for Christies, exhibited at The Getty Images Gallery, London, and *Small Is Beautiful*, a group show at Flowers Gallery in East London. Buckman presented the first installation of *Present Life* at PULSE Projects, New York in May, 2014.

About Garis & Hahn

Garis & Hahn is a gallery-cum-Kunsthalle that mounts exhibitions focused on conceptual narratives and relevant conversations in contemporary art. By displaying an array of carefully curated artists, the gallery endeavors to provide accessibility, education, awareness, and a market to the art while engaging both the arts community and a broader general audience.

Location

Garis & Hahn
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Gallery Hours

Tuesday – Saturday, 11-7