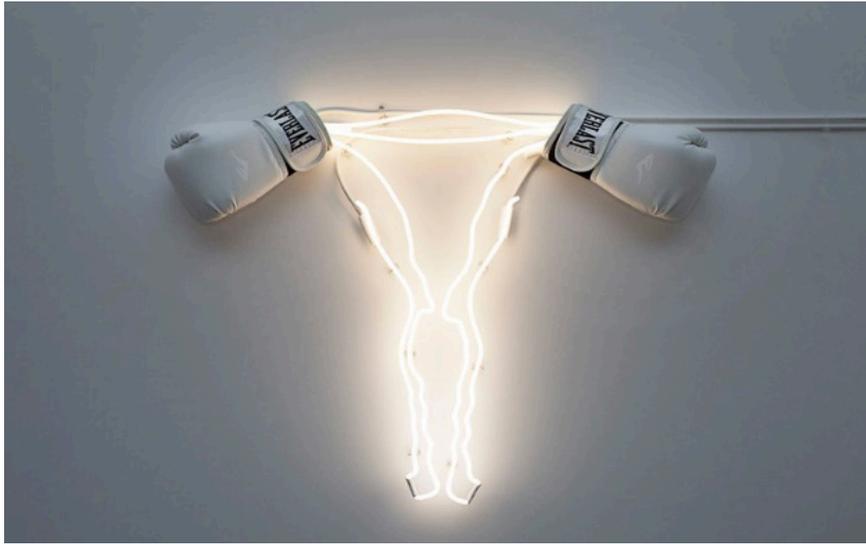


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In Hollywood, Another Sign of Women Punching Back

By Hilarie M. Sheets | January 2, 2018



The artwork by Zoe Buckman will slowly rotate at a height of 43 feet starting on February 27. Photo courtesy of APF

On the corner of Sunset Boulevard and Sweetzer Avenue in front of The Standard in Hollywood beginning on Feb. 27, a monumental white neon outline of a uterus — with fiberglass boxing gloves in place of the ovaries — will slowly rotate at a height of 43 feet. Well-positioned to be adopted as the logo of the #MeToo movement, this declarative image of female empowerment is the first public art project by Zoe Buckman, a 32-year-old British artist based in New York. Titled “Champ,” the kinetic sculpture was commissioned by the Art Production Fund and will remain on view for a year.

“I find Sunset Strip to be objectification overload, with all these advertising images and movie billboards of young women not only promoting the same standards of beauty but also images that can be quite sexually violent,” Ms. Buckman said, referring to the legendary stretch through West Hollywood with a long history of louche casinos, nightclubs and erotic businesses. She is interested in how her illuminated sign in this context “offers a completely different view of femininity” and will be prominently visible to passing cars.

A small-scale version of “Champ,” exhibited in the 2016 pop-up show “Truth to Power” during the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, among other venues, went viral on social media, said Casey Fremont, executive director of Art Production Fund. “It’s speaking to women for so many different reasons and getting conversations going that are so important,” said Ms. Fremont, who is working with Ms. Buckman on a series of public programs throughout the year addressing topics including sexual assault and rape, reproductive rights and women’s health awareness.

While the diagram of the uterus is anatomically correct, “I get some men who ask, Is that a ram’s head?” said Ms. Buckman. She likes how the ambiguity of the image can bring them into the discussion. The surreal juxtaposition of the neon uterus armed with boxing gloves “speaks to the fight and struggle we’ve been through and have ahead of us,” Ms. Buckman said. “But I also want it to feel celebratory and uplifting.”