



Amy Butowicz: *Boudoir Theatre*

November 21st, 2020 — January 10th, 2021

Private Viewing Sessions and Outdoor Opening Reception: November 15th, 1 — 8 PM



Boudoir Theatre's collection of domestically scaled sculptures stands together as a group of characters, both assertive and tender. The title of the show references the site of the Boudoir. From the French verb *boudoir*, to sulk or pout, the Boudoir was the first private domestic space designated specifically for women. The 18th Century Boudoir quickly became opulent, stuffed, and saturated with sexuality, both eroticizing and fetishizing female privacy as well as the feminine form. In 1753, the architect Nicolas Le Camus described how design can arouse physical sensations and instructed the boudoir to have a day-bed. The Boudoir became a place for women to recline in a pose of submission, it was a site for the convergence of pleasure and power.

The group of sculptures featured in *Boudoir Theatre* own their anthropomorphic qualities as a way to play with notions of sensuality and the feminine association of ornamentation, design, and haute couture. Some are split open, beckoning the viewer, while others are modestly zipped. Each sculpture comprises a wooden frame and is dressed in sewn canvas. Intricate grid patterns, ribbed and cinched material, and bulging cushion-like masses are meticulously hand-stitched over unconventional wooden structures. Simultaneously suggestive of bedding,

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352 Van Brunt Street
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vanities, corsets, and human anatomy, Butowicz's artwork exudes a carnal audacity which openly defies the disdain, fear, and repression frequently imposed upon feminine artforms, spaces, and bodies.

Butowicz's color palette of reds, magentas, acidic greens, and bright blues, reminiscent of vintage caricatures and illustrated fashion plates, asks the viewer to see the canvas draped over skeletal frames as costumed figures. The lively theatricality and ribaldry found in her sculptural works demonstrate the performative nature of gender, the sexualization and Othering of both ornamentation and domesticity, and the power structures that lie behind this marginalization.

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