

"Sarah Fox: Bruisers" at grayDUCK Gallery

In this solo show, boys will be boys, sometimes, and sometimes also horses

REVIEWED BY WAYNE ALAN BRENNER, FRI., NOV. 22, 2019



The Story of the Pony Boys by Sarah Fox

"'Bruisers' is an exhibition about the nature of little boys and the men that they become," states the artist Sarah Fox in her comments on her new solo show. "It is an exhibition I made in an attempt to be a better mother and to create a safer world for my son."

"Bruisers" is an exhibition that's stallion-strong with representations of horses and men and boys – or, rather, striking anatomical mixes of those creatures – horses as men and boys, and vice versa – fantastic patchwork centaurs, as if seen on certain illustrated pages from some children's storybook version of *The Island of Doctor Moreau*: the one that Dave McKean never got around to creating, say. But of course, this Fox, so cunning and free, is no McKean behind a simple domino mask. She's long been working her own original mythos into illustrations of and for the actuality of our unsafe world – and here, as noted, she's also making them for her adopted son.

Note: Lucky kid.

These recombinant equine visions are rendered via collage and ink and paint, often manifested as large cyanotypes on cloth (which are then further defined by ink and paint) and (in the final room of this show) turned into a wall-obscuring animated video of slowly battling ponyboys, a fraught kinetic narrative that's as beautiful as it is creepy. And all of these many works are displayed, as ever, with thoughtful placement on the walls of the Eastside's expansive grayDUCK Gallery.

Note: Lucky us.

Fox's "Bruisers" makes for a powerful stroll through an enabled and compelling interior that acknowledges and sometimes accosts or subverts gender archetypes. "As with femininity," says the artist, "the truth about masculinity and little boys – I imagine – lies in the in-between. Humans are far more complex and beautiful than society's gender norms allow for." And Sarah Fox's personal graphic exploration of this truth is as complex and beautiful as any response you're likely to see, illustrated or otherwise, within the halls of academia or beyond.

Note: Goodbye, horses.

"Sarah Fox: Bruisers"
grayDUCK Gallery, 2213 E. Cesar Chavez, 512/826-5334
www.grayduckgallery.com
Through Dec. 15