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ReflectSpace Showcases Kozak's Portrayal of Domestic Violence

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Image courtesy ReflectSpace Gallery

ReflectSpace Gallery will exhibit "He Threw the Last Punch Too Hard," an evocative and emotional exhibit by acclaimed photographer Hannah Kozak from Sept. 30 to Dec. 10. This profoundly powerful collection details the artist's mother, Rachel, through her life and journey with domestic violence. Through her lens, Kozak shares a poignant narrative of strength, resilience and healing.

"I began photographing my mother in December 2009 as a way to process my feelings towards a mother I had never truly known and hoped by photographing her, I could bring closure to an open wound I had my entire life. In the process, I grew to love my mother and this project, 'He Threw the Last Punch Too Hard,' was born. I think her story could inspire others to leave an abusive relationship before it's too late."

Kozak's work has received widespread acclaim for its raw and unflinching portrayal of domestic violence and the generational impact of abuse. Her images capture the emotions, struggles and ultimate triumphs

of her mother's adversity and the path to forgiveness between child and parent.

When Kozak was 9, her mother left their family after falling in love with another man. The man she left them for turned out to be violent: He beat Rachel so badly that she suffered permanent brain damage and had to be moved into an assisted living facility at the age of 41, where she lived for 35 years. It wasn't until Kozak suffered physical trauma of her own that she began visiting her mother and saw her in whole, allowing her to dissolve her judgments and anger. "Forgiveness happens when you care more about the love in a relationship than the logic of your ego. I no longer pity my mother. She continually inspires me teaching me to live by my heart, not my head."

In addition to the exhibit in ReflectSpace Gallery, "The Clothesline Project," presented by YWCA of Glendale and Pasadena, will be on display in Central Library's PassageWay Gallery. "The Clothesline Project" is a visual display of violence statistics that often go ignored. Each shirt is made by a survivor of violence or by someone who has lost a loved one to violence related to assault and abuse. The color of each shirt represents a different type of violence.

An opening reception will be held on Saturday, Sept. 30, from 6-8 p.m. at ReflectSpace Gallery, located inside Central Library (222 E. Harvard St., Glendale 91205). The exhibit will be on display through Dec. 10. Free parking is available with validation at the Marketplace parking structure across the street from the Harvard entrance. ReflectSpace is co-curated by Ara and Anahid Oshagan.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kozak was born to a Polish father and a Guatemalan mother in Los Angeles. At age 10, she was given a Kodak Brownie camera by her father, Sol, a survivor of eight Nazi forced labor camps. She began instinctively capturing images of dogs, flowers, family and friends that felt honest and real.

As a teenager growing up in Los Angeles, Kozak would sneak onto movie lots and snap photos on the sets of "Charlie's Angels," "Starsky and Hutch" and "Family," selling star images to movie magazines and discovering a world that was far from reality. Kozak has turned the camera on herself, her life and her world. She continues to look for those things that feel honest and real, using her camera as a means of exploring feelings and emotions.

Kozak is an autobiographical photographer. Her subjects are the people and places that touch her emotionally. She has been photographing people and places for four decades.

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