

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

HANNAH WILKE

For Immediate Release: August 19, 2007

Intra-Venus Tapes, 1990 – 1993

September 8 – October 13

Tape 14, Reel 1, starting at 03:47:25: Fall 1992

“So we have everybody coming up...saying hello...relatives, children, friends. It’s really nice. Then all of a sudden you get the disaster in the hospital, then you get a friend, then you get another disaster of me nude in the bathtub, me 180 pounds or something, and losing away to nothing...I must have 30 hours – so you can look at anything you want...Pick out good sound.”

Hannah Wilke from the *IntraVenus Tapes*

The Feldman Gallery will premier the *IntraVenus Tapes*, a video installation of sixteen monitors revealing the last two-and-a-half years of Hannah Wilke’s life, along with monotypes, watercolors, and photographs from 1987 to 1993. Wilke, who died in 1993 of lymphoma, recorded all aspects of her life in the presence of her illness, compiling more than 30 hours of tape. Almost from the beginning, she thought of these tapes, shot by herself, her husband Donald Goddard, and others, as a video installation, and she developed specific ideas about how it should be realized. Completed in 2007, fourteen years after her death at 52, this is Hannah Wilke’s last, and most personal work, at a time when her influence as a pioneering Conceptualist and early feminist continues to grow.

Inventing a “female iconography” based on organic, vaginal shapes in the late 1950s and early ‘60s, Wilke became involved with video performance, body art, photography, and film, frequently focusing on her body in a series of works dating from the 1970s. This video installation is related to *IntraVenus*, a series of photographs, exhibited posthumously at the Feldman Gallery in 1994, in which Wilke continued to use her body, now ravaged by illness, as a central image, providing a new context for her life’s work.

Powerful and sad, the videos are interlaced with Hannah’s humor and politicized intelligence, providing insight into the force of her personality, as we hear her voice and see through her eyes. The tapes begin in Easthampton, Long Island and end in Houston, her illness becoming more and more evident, including her times with friends, her show in Boston, the ocean, birds, trips to relatives, her bone-marrow transplant, her wedding, and final days.

Based on discussions with the artist and her sketch indicating a grid format with roving sounds, the installation uses all 30 hours of tape, almost two hours on each monitor, so that chronologically the first two hours are in the upper left-hand corner of the monitor grid and the last two hours in the lower right-hand corner. Following her instructions, the simultaneous showing of all sixteen tapes, unedited except to eliminate blank spots, creates a compression and an overlapping of time and space; the sound tracks from all sixteen tapes are not heard at the same time but are structured in a comprehensible and evocative way.

From September 5 to October 6th, the Alison Jacques Gallery in London will have a Hannah Wilke exhibition of selected works from 1966 to 1980.

In 1994 and 1996, Hannah Wilke exhibitions at the Feldman Gallery, which has represented her since 1972, were awarded *First Place for Best Show in an Art Gallery* by the International Association of Art Critics (United States Section). Major one-person exhibitions have recently been mounted by the Nikolaj, Copenhagen Contemporary Art Center in Denmark; the Umea Kunstmuseum in Sweden; the Helsinki City Art Museum in Finland; the Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst and Haus am Kleispark in Berlin, Germany; and the Atrium-Centro Museo Vasco de Arte Contemporaneo in Vitoria, Spain.

There will be a reception, September 8 from 6 – 8. Gallery hours are 10 – 6, Tuesday through Saturday. Monday by appointment. For more information contact Sarah Paulson at (212)226-3232 or sarah@feldmangallery.com.