

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

HANNAH WILKE

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EARLY DRAWINGS

September 11 - October 30

... throughout her [Wilke's] graphic oeuvre, the issue of beauty is as central as it is in her photographic self-portraits.
Nancy Princenthal, *Hannah Wilke*, 2010

The Feldman Gallery will present more than fifty drawings from the '50s through the '70s by Hannah Wilke, few of which have ever been exhibited before. Wilke, an early feminist whose photographic self-portraits and sculptures have become icons of contemporary art history, also made drawings throughout her career which are original in their own right. The early drawings confirm Wilke's talent as a draftsman and colorist and foretell themes and practices that she would continue to explore until her death from lymphoma at the age of 52 in 1993.

The earliest drawings in the exhibition include abstractions of vaginal and phallic forms from the late '50s and early '60s when Wilke was barely in her twenties. Pastel drawings, playful and exuberant, depict a profusion of polymorphous shapes in Pop and muted colors on a variety of paper surfaces, including quality art paper, Artboard, perforated pads, and small cards. Larger charcoal drawings, graphically sexual and, at the same time, elegantly formal, mirror her sculptural concerns to invent a new "female iconography" that began with box-like shapes and later evolved into the open, gestural forms of her latex, ceramic and gum sculptures.

Wilke's subsequent drawings become more decorous. *Stanley Landsman* and *This Was Once My Mother's Plate*, both from 1966, include delicate line drawings and refer to Wilke's personal history, which informs her later photographic works. Collages from the '60s and '70s combine vintage postcards of sentimental subjects with geometric lines and fields of soft color. *Self-Portrait as Angel for the Museum of Modern Art* (1976) parallels Wilke's performative self-portraits that enact the ways in which the female body is consumed culturally. *Crucifixion Complex* (1978) combines word-play with doodles of her signature "gum" sculptures, and *Criminal Fingerprint Record* (1977) merges performance and real life.

The gallery will host a book-signing on September 22 (6:00 - 8:00PM) for the monograph *Hannah Wilke* by Nancy Princenthal, published by Prestel, which will be released in the United States in September. *Gestures*, a catalogue accompanying Wilke's one-person exhibition at the Neuberger Museum of Art, was recently published.

The Feldman Gallery has represented Hannah Wilke since 1972. Future concurrent New York group exhibitions that will include her work are "The Talent Show" at PS 1 opening in late November and "The Deconstructive Impulse: Women Artists Reconfigure the Signs of Power, 1973 - 1992," at the Neuberger Museum of Art opening January 15, 2011. Her work is currently on view at the Museum of Modern Art in "The Original Copy" through November 1 and is also included in "Contemporary Art from the Collection of The Museum of Modern Art" through September 12 and "Off The Wall" at the Whitney Museum through September 19. Wilke is represented in many museum collections, including The Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Guggenheim Museum, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, the Centre Pompidou, Paris and the Verbund Collection, Vienna.

There will be a reception on Saturday, September 11 from 6:00 - 8:00PM. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00AM - 6:00PM. Monday by appointment. The gallery will be closed Saturday, September 18. For more information, contact Sarah Paulson at (212) 226-3232 or sarah@feldmangallery.com.

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