

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

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HANNAH WILKE

PERFORMALIST SELF-PORTRAITS AND

VIDEO/FILM PERFORMANCES 1976-85

INCLUDING *SO HELP ME HANNAH*, *THROUGH THE LARGE GLASS*, AND
RELATED WALL WORKS

SEPTEMBER 21 - OCTOBER 19

The Feldman Gallery will present video/film performances by Hannah Wilke from 1976-85 including *So Help Me Hannah* (1978) and *Through the Large Glass* (1976). The exhibition will also include photographs and other wall works related to these performances.

Hannah Wilke has played a seminal and innovative role in the history of performance art and remains an important influence on contemporary art today. Throughout her career, and even before it formally started in the early 1960s, Hannah Wilke periodically created work -- drawings, photographs, live appearances, videotapes, audiotapes, film, advertisements -- that involved her own performance. They began with photographs in childhood and adolescence and continued through the videos and photos that recorded her final illness with lymphoma.

None of this was calculated. It simply happened as a natural extension, or aspect, of her art. The early performalist pieces are rather simple compared to the later: a photograph, an 8mm movie, a videotape of Hannah cutting her lover's hair, another of her reacting to her brother-in-law's death. Gradually the performances and their offspring grew in their drama and complexity.

There are several performances during Hannah's career that are linked to series of works in different mediums, none of which can be said to be the primary one. Two major performances and related works are featured in this exhibition; others will be shown later. The two are "So Help Me Hannah," extending from 1978 to 1985, and "Through the Large Glass," which touches on work done from 1976 to 1991. Those dates are not definitive; details keep reappearing.

On view for the first time in the current exhibition is the full 10-monitor video piece *So Help Me Hannah*, which Hannah planned but was only able to exhibit on a smaller scale during her life due to lack of funds. It brings together videotapes of Hannah's five separate performances of the same piece in Washington, D.C., New York, London, Ontario, and Windsor, Ontario, each of which was recorded by two video camerapersons. Accompanying the video work is the original multimedia photo performance of "So Help Me Hannah" that occupied a classroom in P.S. 1 in fall 1978, monumental photos and texts derived from that series, and the photographic diptych *Portrait of the Artist and Her Mother*.

Through the Large Glass, on view in the gallery's second room, is a ten-minute film of Hannah's performance in the Philadelphia Museum of Art behind Marcel Duchamp's *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*. The film is accompanied by *Philly*, a video documenting the filming; *Suit Suite*, photographs of Wilke's apparel for the performance; posters for the film, and *I Object: Memoirs of a Sugargiver*, the cover of Hannah's autobiography. This work was first exhibited by Ronald Feldman Fine Arts in 1978.

There will be a reception on Saturday, September 21 from 6 - 8. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 - 6..

