

# ARTFORUM

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Hannah Wilke

RONALD FELDMAN GALLERY

Hannah Wilke is clearly involved with the sensualist approach to sculpture. In her first one-woman exhibition after years of crafts-world obscurity as a ceramist, she shows remarkable assurance and facility. Her sensibility and her material seem to have fused perfectly and immediately into one strongly expressive whole. Wall sculptures of fleshy pink latex sheets hang on pushpins, bunched in groups of overlapping, snap-fastened flaps. They are so lusciously tactile that it is all but impossible to resist the urge to run their soft, spongy petals through your fingers. The five works range in coloration from a rich lobster orange through a pink spectrum down to palest natural latex yellow. They are made by pouring dyed or undyed liquid latex out on a wide bed of plaster. The latex thus picks up the dusty white grit of the plaster on its downside and is smooth and shiny on the upside. The works are assembled in either horizontal or vertical massings of a few to a dozen or so units. The best advantage is taken of the tactility of their alternating texture and color, of their bumps, and bubble holes, tears and irregular edges.

The submissive sagging of Wilke's material, its natural liplike ruffling, and the unavoidability of vulvic connotations conjoin to create an almost mesmerizing state of sexual-visceral vulnerability. It is very honest work. Her problem may be that it is too effortless, too facile. But only time will tell.

—April Kingsley