

ARTnews

Crimp, Douglas. *ARTnews*.
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Hannah Wilke

Hannah Wilke's wall pieces of rubber latex forms dyed pink/orange, snapped together and pinned to the wall provoke an irrepressible desire to touch them: touching them confirms their sensual appearance, achieved through luscious colors, all on the hot sexual side of the spectrum: and the latex feels organic, if not actually fleshy. Their vulnerability is underscored by their snapped-together structure; it can obviously be undone. The unsettling idea occurs that if you pulled the pieces apart, you'd never get them back together again. Yet beyond wanting to touch, one wants to unsnap – to violate. This metaphor of sensuality mixed with vulnerability is frank and touching.

Of a different character is a wall piece of natural latex units reinforced with parallel lengths of twine. Each of the 14 units has a built-in strength. One has a sense of multiple possibilities of arrangement and extension, and thus a sense of fecundity.

Wilke also shows drawings whose only relationships to the sculptures are pictorial concerns and feminist metaphor. Each of them employs a single collaged piece of memorabilia: greeting cards, advertisements, postcards from the early part of this century. I suspect that their little-girl/little-old-lady insipidity is meant sarcastically, as are their "insipid" pastel stripes. Wilke acknowledges her taste for the "feminine" with a vengeance, harnessing that taste to make tough ambiguous drawings.