

Ars moriendi



NEW YORK. Artists, of course, are supposed to be used to struggle and adversity. When US artist Hannah Wilke knew she was dying of cancer she intensified a practice that had long occupied her: using the image of her body, via photography, to say things about being human, about being a woman and about living in the late twentieth century. The fact that she was, in the end, horrendously ravaged by her disease did not deter her in the least—quite the opposite: she redoubled efforts to document the relentless destruction of her body and even used the hair which fell from her head to make brushes for self-portrait watercolours. Before she died last year she selected a group of those watercolours and of the life-sized colour photographs taken over 1991-92 for a show which her long-time dealer Ronald Feldman has mounted this month (8 January-19 February). Called “Intra-Venus”, it stands as a tribute to a brave and unflinching eye. Photo Donald Goddard G.B.