Cirrus Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of Impermanence - a group show featuring works by the artists Barbara T. Smith, John Coplans, and Hannah Wilke. The exhibition probes the themes of change and transformation, using the body as a common site for discussing our human state of flux.

The exhibition debuts a new print edition by Barbara T. Smith, Signifiers. Throughout her career from the early 1960’s until today, Smith has explored feminine identity and the use of the body as a language to communicate ideas beyond ourselves as well as human nature, our physicality and mortality. With Signifiers, Smith has continued her tradition of using her body and new technology in order to explore the passage of time. Smith’s work is highly personal and self-aware. She invites the viewer to see images of her hands as the subject, as well as the process by which the work is made. With Signifier 1 we can see an image of Smith from her 1960’s Xerox portraits, veiled behind her hands from the present day. The powerful presentation of her aged hands in these works builds upon her larger investigation into the enduring strength and fragile nature of identity and humanity.
Like Smith, John Coplans’ photographs show the passage of time as it manifests in the body as it ages. The three works included in this exhibition keep with Coplans’ career-long treatment of the body as both subject and object. Selected from a series that was created over a 20-year span, these self-portraits present parts of his body in stark, black-and-white detail. These photographs are closely cropped, mapping his joints and skin with a thoroughness and attention to detail more akin to how one would document a monument or art object rather than one’s own body. The result is a frank scrutiny of the temporariness of the body as it relates to artistic traditions of display.

For Impermanence, Hannah Wilke widens the consideration of our temporary state. Hannah Wilke is best known for her works exploring feminism and sexuality, frequently using her body as her template throughout the 1970s, and in the 1990s, she chronicled her body’s changes while undergoing cancer treatment in life-size, full color photographs. Courtesy of the Hannah Wilke Collection & Archive, Los Angeles, selected photographs from Wilke’s Intra Venus Series, her final project before her untimely death from lymphoma in 1993, bravely confront the temporality of youth and health while challenging feminine ideals of representation with humor and courage. In addition to the photographs on display, two artist catalogs will be available--the original exhibition catalogue Intra Venus, and A Breathed Yes, a posthumous compilation of art by Wilke and poetry by her sister, Marsie Scharlatt, which Wilke proposed in the 1970s.

Barbara T. Smith lives and works in Los Angeles. Cirrus is delighted to once again show Smith’s work. Our first exhibition together was in 1971 when the artist first installed her enormous fiberglass environment, Field Piece at Cirrus in Hollywood. Throughout her career, her work conveyed powerful representations of her fears and anguish over the conflicting pulls of being a wife, mother, and artist. These highly personal and intimate works are indicative not only Smith’s use of the body as an artistic medium, but also the emergence of both feminism and performance art in Southern California in general. Smith has had recent solo exhibitions at The Box Gallery, Los Angeles; Galerie Parisa Kind, Frankfurt; and Maccarone Gallery, New York. Her work has been reviewed in publications such as the Los Angeles Times; New York Times; Frieze; Art in America; Artforum; Flash Art; Spike; High Performance; Der Lowe; Die Lowen; Avalanche; among others.
John Coplans was born in London in 1920 and was educated in England and South Africa. In addition to his practice as a visual artist, his career has encompassed teaching (University of California, Berkeley), writing (as a founding editor of Art Forum), curating and advocacy for contemporary art. As Senior Curator for the Pasadena Art Museum (1967-1970) he curated *Serial Imagery*, a seminal exhibition featuring works by Warhol, Kelly, Duchamp, among others. He received two John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowships and four fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, authoring numerous books and articles on art criticism, and curating and advocacy for contemporary art. His art museum positions included senior curator of the Pasadena Art Museum from 1967-1970 and director of the Akron Art Museum from 1978-1980.

Hannah Wilke (1940-1993), a pioneering feminist conceptual artist, worked in sculpture, drawing, assemblage, photography, performance and installation. Innovative and controversial throughout her life, Wilke is considered the first feminist artist to use vaginal imagery in her work, and her place in 20th century art continues to be established since her death. Wilke received many awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship and NEA Grants, and she taught art at the School of Visual Arts, New York, gave workshops as a visiting artist, participated in panels and conferences about women's art, and lectured extensively. After she was diagnosed with lymphoma in 1987, Wilke continued to make art until her death. *Intra Venus*, performalist self-portraits with Donald Goddard, the group of monumental photographs documenting her final illness and treatment, was exhibited posthumously at Ronald Feldman Fine Arts in 1994 and traveled to several museums including Yerba Buena Arts Center, San Francisco; Santa Monica Museum; Weatherspoon Art Gallery, Greensboro, NC; Woodruff Gallery, Atlanta, GA; Nikolai Contemporary Art Center, Copenhagen; and the Tokyo Museum of Photography. *Intra Venus* received First Place Award in 1994 and 1996 for best show in an art gallery from the International Association of Art Critics (U.S. Section).

The exhibition opens on July 8th and will remain on view until August 19th, 2017.

Contact: Jean R. Milant
Gallery Hours Tues-Sat, 10am-5pm
www.cirrusgallery.com • cirrus@cirrusgallery.com
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2011 South Santa Fe Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90021 • T 213.680.3473