

is's own relationship with her body. They read as simple, narcissistic exercises in self-examination.

The female form is abandoned in the boudoir setting of *Odalisque (The Origin of the World)*, replaced by a fainting couch with an ornate pillow upon an oriental rug. A mirror hangs above, drawing the viewer into the work. The success of this piece is the lulling hypnotic voice of Cypis's sister Johanna emanating from the pillow, softly intoning a variety of raw, carnal descriptions of women. The disparity between the warm surroundings and the cold words successfully question the perception of "woman."

While these pieces show Cypis's progressive development, the exhibition's coup is the new installation *Hungry Ghost (and the 7 Muses)*. Comparable to Cypis's installation in the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's 1991 exhibition "The Projected Image," in this work Cypis demonstrates her forté of establishing complex and interdependent relationships between the camera and female subjects. Unlike in her earlier work, however, she herself is no longer the subject matter. Instead, she chose seven images from late American photographer Garry Winogrand's '70s series "Women Are Beautiful" (a holding of the Krannert that was on display in another gallery during Cypis's show) to re-photograph, manipulate, frame, backlight, and hang on the walls of a gallery painted indigo blue. Cypis

recreated Winogrand's gaze upon these women in urban settings, obscuring the images with hot flashes of light and blurred boundaries. Cypis transcended a pretentious appropriation of Winogrand's work by using it to illustrate the universal female perception of the masculine viewpoint. Reversing contradictory gender roles, Cypis added an overshadowing word on the wall: "F A T H E R" (sic), created with white feathers, below which a small pile of feathers rests. Her own (mis)perception of her father is portrayed by the incongruity between the power of the word's overwhelming size and starkness upon the wall and the airy and fragile material: father as domination and soft tenderness. *Hungry Ghost* successfully reveals that Cypis recognizes conflicting gender perceptions on a universal and personal level, and that she has matured as an artist, as well as a person.

~Karen M. Randolph

ILLINOIS:

**DORIT CYPIS**

KRANNERT ART MUSEUM

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Dorit Cypis may be merely another female artist questioning her identity and the contradictory perceptions of women, another artist incorporating the debated medium of photography into her work, and another artist who appropriates the work of others in her own creations. But curator Cynthia Morgan has proven that there is much more to Cypis than this. As the third exhibition in the museum's Contemporary Art Series, Cypis's work and her examination of the female form and stereotype place her among such artists as Carolee Schneemann and Cindy Sherman.

The selection of four Cypis installations seemed targeted for the academic mind; the two earlier works creating the foundation of the artist's thematic interests. *Viewing My Father's Nudes*, a collection of 20 framed classical female nudes placed upon an antique table, is similar to leafing through the pages of an art-history text, pleasurable, yet insubstantial. The 16 C-prints of Cypis's own body comprising *On the Nature of Experience* contradict the classical, pure renderings of the former piece. Rather, these fragments are tactile, intimate images with self-directed questions, investigating Cyp-



**Dorit Cypis**

*Odalisque (The Origin of the World)*, 1991-95.  
Mixed media installation, dimensions variable.  
Photo by Andrew Christiansen.