

AROUND THE GALLERIES

By HOLLY MYERS

Special to The Times

Challenging bodily perceptions

Naida Oslina's last show at Acuna-Hansen Gallery, two years ago, was an unsettlingly elegant catalog of horrors. A collection of Polaroids detailed a daunting assortment of bodily mutations, prosthetically constructed and photographed with terrific delicacy.

In her current show, she takes the risky turn of trading physical prosthetics for digital manipulation. But the results are equally rigorous and no less creepy.

The format is more or less the same — a single figure or body part positioned against a solid background, though the backgrounds are only black or white in this case (the previous included color) and the prints are much larger (up to 33 by 25 inches), which gives the work a starker impact.

The underlying preoccupations seem to have less to do with disease — the earlier work was filled with bolls, gashes, wrinkles, protrusions and the like — than

[See Galleries, Page E25]

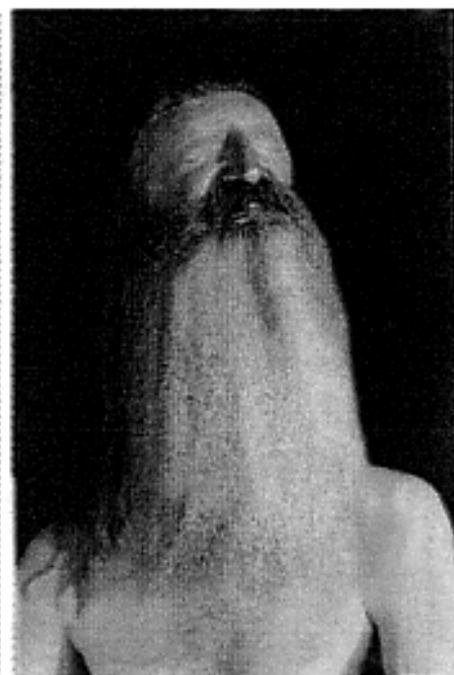
[Galleries, from Page E24]
with aging and sexuality.

In the former category, we find a gray-bearded man with an impossibly long neck and no eyeballs; a pair of craggy feet with 20 uneven toes between them; and two skeletal hands graced with as many as five joints per finger.

On the erotic side is a headless torso with a taut, sexy belly but an unsettling total of four nipples; a vertical column of orange-ish flesh resembling an elongated abdomen, marked with several belly buttons and tied up like a piece of meat; an anemone-like tangle of fingers; and a mysterious pucker of skin emerging from a pool of shadow.

The fact that the latter group is no less grotesque than the former says a great deal about the whole project. It reflects a desire to push past dominant perceptions associated with the body and dig into the fears and pleasures that lie beneath.

Acuna-Hansen Gallery, 427 Bernard St., Los Angeles, (323) 441-1824, through Feb. 12. Closed Sundays through Tuesdays.



Acuna-Hansen Gallery

UNTITLED: By Naida Oslina, at Acuna-Hansen.