

Head and shoulders above other portraits

By **JERRY CULLUM**
For the Journal-Constitution

Photographic portraits are much more than head shots, although some recent masters of the genre have turned even the head-and-shoulders pose into an art form.

Born in 1918, Arnold Newman was and is one of the pioneers in turning from close-up photos to so-called "environmental portraiture," putting his subject in context. His most famous, though, is a head shot with a difference, an expressive 1954 study of Picasso's face.

Another photo of Picasso shows him with one of his sculptures, and this is the strategy pursued in many of the portraits in this exhibition. Alexander Calder, Jackson Pollock and other great artists of the 20th century all appear next to finished work or in the studio.

Ansel Adams, on the other hand, appears in his garden in Carmel, Calif., a setting that evokes his own photographs rather than reproducing them. Newman has pursued other inventive options over the years; Willem de Kooning peers out from a paint-splattered hanging that refers to his paintings but isn't one of them.

Newman's portraits are typically black and white; the 1949 photo of Pollock is the only color image in this show, and it's as subdued as one would expect a color print of that vintage to be.

The large-scale color photography of Eric Weeks, on the other hand, is a distinguished example of the style of a younger generation of



"Million Dollar Mermaid" is one of the images from Eric Weeks' "Muse," a lovingly composed series of studies of his new wife and an intimate celebration of a face and a personality.

EXHIBIT REVIEW

"Arnold Newman: Portraits" and **"Eric Weeks: Muse"**

Through Jan. 3. Price range: \$1,200-\$8,500. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Jackson Fine Art, 3115 Shadowlawn Ave. 404-233-3739.

The verdict: A significant look at two important, related styles of portrait photography.

portraitists. His "Muse" series revels in the possibilities of the genre; a lovingly composed series of studies of his new wife, these photos explore the many ways of celebrating a face and a personality. Unusually composed

close-ups alternate with poses in a variety of evocative settings, from a storefront to a swimming pool.

Weeks, who teaches at New York's School of Visual Arts, is a 1994 Yale MFA graduate whose work fits prettily into the sort of dramatic yet intimate photography we have come to associate with Yale photographers.

"Muse," however, is distinctly in Weeks' own style, one that shows considerable awareness of the formal strategies of painting.

His color sense alone would make these major works; combined with an unerring sense of composition, the result is a sequence worth studying closely after first enjoying its sheer brilliance.