

FANTASY PHOTOGRAPHS

By Grace Merritt

Whatever secret notion of yourself you may have can be immortalized by Daphne Nichols' camera lens. Be it a sleek, cosmopolitan model or a Victorian gentlewoman, your fantasy can be recorded in a photograph.

A professional photographer from Boston, Nichols custom designs unique portraits on film. Spending the day with each client in her Newbury St. studio discussing ideas and scanning art books and magazines, she searches for a theme for what she calls a "fantasy photograph."

"Most people are embarrassed or shy about discussing their fantasy," says Nichols. "Some women may want a nude or semi-

nude picture done but they're afraid that they'll be made fun of...The basic feeling I try to establish is trust."

After establishing the special look the client is after, Nichols arranges the clothing, props and poses for the shooting session. She may contract make-up artists and hair stylists, on request, for a more glamorous appearance. Then, using strobe lighting, she shoots a roll of film either in the studio or at any location desired. After the film is developed, the client selects one photo to be enlarged and perhaps transferred onto canvas.

On the walls of Nichols' studio hang various fantasy portraits of sombre faced

Photo by Michael Romanos



Daphne Weld Nichols displays some of her portraits.

children, bare shouldered women with hair blowing wildly and semi-nudes discretely draped in silk. One portrait of a dark haired woman wearing a black, wide-brimmed hat and face veil, gazing off into the distance, catches the eye. "That's Joyce Kulhawik, the entertainment reporter for WBZ TV," explains Nichols. "She sees herself as a romantic woman from the '30s."

Most faces in these photos are illuminated by diffused light. "I try to use northern

light whenever I can. It's non-directional and very flattering," she says. She employs soft focus techniques and uses an airbrush liberally to further enhance the misty quality of the prints.

Besides creating fantasy photographs and canvas portraits, Nichols frames and hangs photos for clients as well. She runs two Synergism studios, one in Ogunquit, Maine, and one in Boston