

## Portraits in Space

Ellen Sylvarnes technique of mylar augmented with paint allows an eerie ethereality to her images of women that render them timeless. Echoes of the simplicity of Vermeer, the terror of Munch, and the sublime passivity of the noir photography of Charcot are suggested by these simple, powerful, renderings of female subjects in attitudes of apostasy and submission. The deliberate blankness of the white spaces surrounding their features invites us to fill in the blank screen with our own narratives. The women appear to be imploring and lamenting. Chekhov said that great drama succeeds in the minds of the theatergoer outside of the theater, on the sidewalk, in the café, if the dramatist has given enough space for the seeds of the story to take root and begin the process of haunting them. Sylvarnes succeeds in precisely this way, with raw simplicity that offers a narrative of implication that leaves the viewer curious and hungry for more.

## David Salvage