



Ellen Berkenblit

✓ Critics' Pick

Anton Kern

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Profile

Ellen Berkenblit's dreamy, rigorously intuitive paintings exist in a gap between the visionary, the formal, and the psychic. A saucer-eyed girl with a pug nose and a circular mouth perpetually stares off-stage, forever turning her cheek to us so that we can stare at her without ever knowing her or her thoughts or the reason for her turning away. This incomplete narrative creates alluring visual feedback and a sense of voyeurism that takes Berkenblit's work to a highly formal plane—since you can never really "know" this girl, you begin to know the artwork. Berkenblit's medium-sized, black-and-white paintings are as slapdash as they are carefully composed. This leaves you occupying a cagey zone with no story and no overt style. Still, you're always in the presence of an elusive but knowing genie. — Jerry Saltz