



Karen LaMonte: Absence Adorned

Arthur C. Danto

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Karen LaMonte produces life-size dresses in glass, dividing her time between New York City and Prague. She has developed a meticulous glass casting technique that involves making two molds - one from an actual body that shapes the interior of the sculpture, the second from a garment, which shapes the exterior - and casting them together in one shell. The resulting dress reveals traces of the figure that once wore it - the curve of a breast, the slope of a back, the indentation of a navel. The ghostly translucent forms evoke the ephemeral quality of our corporal selves and the fragility of the human condition. LaMonte's sculptures are adorned, but they have a dual, both eerie and erotic, appearance as nudes. Undeniably sensual and beautiful, her pearlescent long gowns project ideals of appearance and wealth promoted by haute couture, while questioning the psychological and social implications of the way we dress. This volume illustrates her dresses as well as installations of mirrors cast in glass and works in other media, incorporating photography and printmaking.

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