

# ARTFORUM

## ELLEN GRONEMEYER

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[www.artforum.com](http://www.artforum.com); critics's picks

11.01.05-01.14.06 Galerie Karin Guenther, Hamburg

Ellen Gronemeyer's images are usually small and somber, yet full of crystalline colors. Her „paste-like“ paintings appear strangely compressed: stories seem jammed together and moods waft in and out, with nothing becoming more than a suggestion. A sallow radiance, a kind of cold fire, glows in these nighttime landscapes. One can see an eternal (and at times mythical) nature occasionally populated by human forms. Often these figures are faceless—not individuals, but placeholders for the imaginary. Though they grow out of the colored space around them, they seem curiously isolated; in *Der Schwarzweiß-Freund verneint Sicht* [The Black-and-White Friend Denies Vision], 2005, nature is a closed-off terrain. These figures embody the same sense of alienation emanated by their surroundings. Gronemeyer uses painterly conventions discreetly—placing specific colors around a particular gray to leaven its darkness, for example—to create surreal suspense. Some images allude to the past: contoured, transparent coloring evokes Chagall, while the Fauve-like creation of colorfulness from a dominant black recalls Georges Rouault. This is less a direct comparison than a palpable affinity. While atmospheric, Gronemeyer's canvases address the larger question of man's connection with nature.

- Jens Asthoff

Translated from the German by Jane Brodie.