That it was Echo, not Narcissus, who became an archetype of femininity underscores the anomalousness of the female narcissist, who, beautiful by and for herself, approximates the dandy's perfect aloofness. As such, while Colette's extravagant costumes and environments might at first be dismissed as no more than a shallow infatuation with frills, their exaggerated artifice protests reductive definitions of femininity. Barbara Bloom takes this one step further. She closely traces the transfer of feeling for personal beauty onto such mutely hieratic accoutrements as place settings, stemware, monogrammed shirts, even watermarks. By simultaneously parodying and reenacting acts of connoisseurship, she asserts, in most genteel terms to be sure, women's authority to determine or to undermine prevailing standards of beauty. At times, she bares the fallacy of substitute gratification without remorse. In her installation *The Reign of Narcissism*, 1989, a cloistered roomful of furniture and curios reverberates with ghostly images of their maker. And yet, in their promise to somehow embody her, these commemorative objects exude a morbid pathos. For they only point up Bloom's absence. The virtual epitaph for the installation is literally inscribed on a small tombstone: “She travelled the world to seek beauty.”