

Rhona Bitner

Howard Yezerski

All the world is a stage in Rhona Bitner's large-format photographs, but her protagonist is light. Shot in theaters in Europe and the United States, the limpid four-foot-square prints seize the tantalizing moment between the house lights' dim-



Rhona Bitner, *ATH1*, 2005,
Fujiflex mounted on aluminum, 48" x 48".
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ming and the curtain rising. Stagelights create nearly abstract geometries of color here.

Surrounding her rich, bright tones with a universe of black, Bitner transforms a stage into a shimmering, weightless veil of light in *ATH1* (2005). In *MARI* (2004), two swaths of violet illuminate diagonal patches on the rippled drapes as a flood of blood-red light oozes from beneath. In *NVI* (2004), a row of side curtains takes on the volume of marble columns as a white spotlight streams between the curtains and across a scuffed floor.

Bitner's photographs find their meaning by freezing a moment of anticipation, allowing the viewer to hold onto the sense of drama about to unfold. And like the drama that is to come, her work is able to stir up real emotion in response.

—Ken Shulman