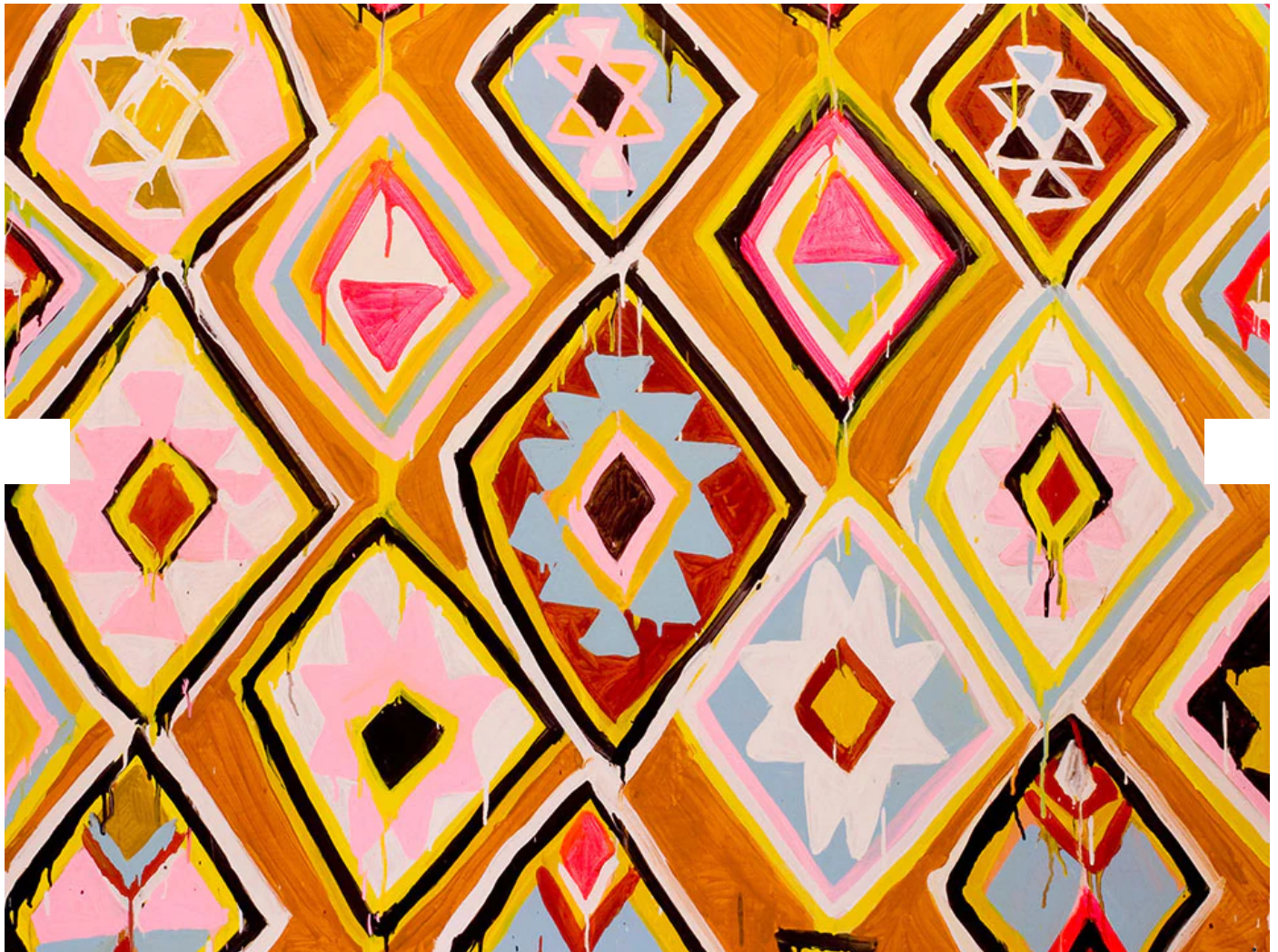




10.12.15 | CULTURE

# Meet the Artist: Katherine Bernhardt



*When artist Katherine Bernhardt came on the scene, nearly a decade ago, she did so with abstracted takes on fashion models pulled from magazine tears — a Valentino campaign or Giselle editorial, rendered in broad expressionist strokes. Then came a trip to Morocco in 2008 and, inspired by*

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*paintings — and launched an online shop, [Magic Flying Carpets](#), dedicated to those traditional rugs and textiles, to boot.*

*Still working in that graphic mode, Bernhardt has now turned her attention to Puerto Rico in her latest solo show [Pablo and Efrain](#), at the New York gallery [Venus Over Manhattan](#). Named after the artists behind the local art collective Poncili Creacion and inspired by her time spent on the island, the exhibit is a vibrant reminder of why Bernhardt has long been one to watch in the painting arena. Her works, still wonderfully gestural, are vibrant and boldly graphic, filled with everyday objects — cigarettes, Doritos, Sharpie markers, toilet paper rolls — as well as floral and fauna native to Puerto Rico, like toucans, plantains and sea turtles. They leap off the canvas and endure in the mind's eye.*

#### **First art love...**

A cassette tape that I found in the seat in front of me on an airplane. It was Michael Jackson's [Thriller](#). I listened to it over and over and over...

#### **I knew I wanted to pursue art as a career when...**

I never really thought of it as a career; it was more the only thing I knew how to do. I always made art as a kid. I just never stopped. It was the only thing I wanted to do.

#### **How I discovered my signature style for the new pattern paintings...**

I came across some graffiti

some modern-day hieroglyphics of a rainbow, a smiley face, an ice cream and popsicle and some other things — mixed with my idea of African wax Dutch printing. The first painting I made was smiley faces and bananas. It was so ugly I hid it for a while in my studio. After a while I took it out and the people who came to my studio for visits responded to it the most. I thought, "Wow, I'll try and make another one," so I did watermelon and telephones. The "style" is a kind of mixture between graffiti and painting and watercolor.

#### **The themes I return to again**

deli posters, African hair braiding signs, tires, tropical murals — so all these things are in my work. It's all based on a love of popular culture and daily living, objects within daily living, like coffee and cigarettes. It's a reflection of my surroundings.

#### **Artists and/or works that changed the way I see the world...**

[Instagram](#).

#### **Favorite room in a museum...**

I would have to say the [American Museum of Natural History](#)'s blue whale room. It's huge and impressive and dark

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**Must-read art publications...**

New York Times.

**The inspiration behind Magic Flying Carpets...**

MFC was inspired by traveling around Morocco and seeing all these amazing weavings and weavers and artisans, and

seeing the color and texture and amazing symbols within the weavings. It's a love of the handmade and love of color. It was a collecting addiction that had to be made sustainable by importing and selling as well.

**A good work of art should always...**

- A. Make you want to take a picture of it and post to Instagram!!
- B. Make you so happy you sing out loud.
- C. Make you cry.
- D. Make you jealous.
- E. All of the above.

Follow Katherine Bernhardt on [Instagram](#).

LABELS: ART, CULTURE, KATHERINE BERNHARDT, MOROCCO

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