

PULSE

Karin Nelson

A Runway Show by the House of Berber

KNOwn for her vibrant, dripping, wildly expressive portraits of models ripped straight from fashion magazines, Katherine Bernhardt paints like a person infatuated with her subject. And she is. "I paint what I'm obsessed with," she admits. "At the moment, it's Morocco."

Case in point: she has traveled there three times in the last six months, and her new show, "Tombouctou 52 Jours," now at Canada gallery, takes its cues from Morocco's rugs, murals and women. She is also releasing a book that is part travelogue, part catalog, and has started a rug-importing company called Magic Flying Carpets of the Berber Kingdom of Morocco (magicflyingcarpets.com).

Not that she has forsaken her first love. Scattered among the Moroccan works are a few fashion portraits — this season's YSL ads; a Marc Jacobs look as seen in Nylon magazine — all realized in a rather tribal manner. "My obsession with magazines and models isn't going away anytime soon," she said.

Katherine Bernhardt, "Tombouctou 52 Jours," is at Canada, 55 Chrystie Street (between Canal and Hester Streets), through May 23; (212) 925-4631. There will be a book signing at the gallery on May 9.



KATHERINE BERNHARDT, VIA CANADA GALLERY