

Katherine Bernhardt and Youssef Jdia: 'Holiday Services'

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The Hole



Katherine Bernhardt and Youssef Jdia's exhibition "Holiday Services" includes "High Life," one of a series of collage-paintings with scraps of cheap fabric.

312 Bowery, near Bleecker Street, East Village

Through Dec. 28

Katherine Bernhardt is a fearless painter who has not received her due. Tending toward ostensible tackiness or ugliness, yet endowed with an ineffable sense of style, she is probably best known for Pop-Expressionist paintings of fashion models alive with slashing strokes, drips and sharp elbows that parody fashion illustration and touch on the business's psychic dark side.

After a trip to Morocco in 2008, Ms. Bernhardt returned with a semiabstract vocabulary of bright, loose geometries — inspired by the array of handmade rugs available there — that she dashed off with characteristic verve and malice.

In 2011, she married Youssef Jdia, a Moroccan in the rug trade.

They have now collaborated on a series of biggish collage-paintings that use rough-edged scraps of all kinds of cheap fabric (stripes, solids, African prints, black lace and imitation fur), images of models torn from magazines and occasional pieces of damaged rugs.

These works proffer jangling, loosely symmetrical compositions and geometric shapes that are free of paint and seem glued in place with barely a second thought. They look drastically unhinged (either torn apart or waiting to be assembled), are drawn from sundry textile vocabularies and reprise Pattern and Decoration though the 1980s collage aesthetic. It is important that these works are strikingly, almost cartoonishly flat, as if pictorial space has been sucked out of them.

There is a basic joy in seeing something so visibly flimsy give off such palpable visual power, and walls papered with labels from cans of Goya beets and peas or handouts from hair-braiding salons add to the effect. While some are better than others, the best of their joint efforts are giddily forthright and hilariously beautiful.

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