

## Anton Kern Gallery

### Ellen Berkenblit

March 1 - March 31, 2012

Opening reception: Thursday, March 1 from 6:00 - 8:00 pm

In her fifth solo show at Anton Kern Gallery, New York-based painter Ellen Berkenblit presents a new body of intensely colored, energetic, figurative paintings. Layers of rawness and vulnerability are uncovered from densely built-up images of light, figure and a tangible sense of atmosphere and emotional depth.

Berkenblit applies a distinctive palette of vigorously mixed colors with assertive broad brushstrokes and some scraping of the palette knife. Her shapes are rough yet well-defined fields of color; occasional black outlines can define an object, an animal, or the features of a face. Out of the paintings' visceral physicality emerge certain themes, motifs and ideas: a head in profile featuring intense black lashes and long shimmering hair, lacy ribbons (painted as angular and deliciously awkward bands of paint that vigorously pull together the paintings' fore- and middle-grounds). Even purely atmospheric sensations such as clouds, bolts of sun light, rainbows and starry night skies find expression. These images simultaneously emerge out of the subjects' relevance and the visibly exuberant act of painting.

The paintings' spirit is bold, boisterous and forceful, sometimes mysterious, always deeply emotional. The interplay between figurative elements, the intense atmosphere created by color contrast and tonal palette, as well as the compositional devices create figurative paintings of great fluidity and openness without being narrowed by narrative.

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