

# The New York Times

## Alexandra Bircken: 'Think of Me'

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*Kimmerich*

*50 White Street, TriBeCa*

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Alexandra Bircken's second solo show in New York departs from the colorful and funky sculptures, made foremost of sticks and crocheted yarn, that dominated her first, at the Gladstone Gallery in 2007. The works here strike out across more ambitious sculptural and conceptual terrain in the vicinity of the textile arts, where they become somewhat over-extended and suffer from a general lack of color.

Still, Ms. Bircken's latest efforts move with impressive ease among the found, the fabricated, the natural and the photographed. They even touch a bit on performance, in the form of wall hangings knit from audiotapes of music or events, including the opening of this very exhibition.

The show's best piece is "Runner in the Woods," which consists of a crude grid made of sticks bound together by mortar-soaked cloth with a small delicate sprig made of copper hanging from its center (actually the stem of a bunch of grapes dipped in copper). The combination suggests a kind of parasitic relationship, or the vulnerability of art fed by the rugged vitality of life. Other works that impress include a scaled-up boxing bag in handsome brown leather that is appropriately titled "Demolition Ball" and "In Mud I Trust," a coarse collage made of different rags held together with mortar.

Ms. Bircken leaves few stones unturned. "Uknit I," a large sheet of steel covered with shiny, magnetized steel loops reminiscent of knitting stitches, reads like a belated challenge to Post-Minimalist sculptors like Richard Serra. In contrast, "Reel Deal," five big, tassel-like clumps of hemp rope hanging from the ceiling, evokes Sheila Hicks at her most fiber-arts traditional. The effect is of substantial, restless, not entirely focused talent; the show is a scattershot, you might say, fired over the New York art world's bow. Stay tuned.