

BONNER  
KUNSTVEREIN

**ALEXANDRA BIRCKEN**

**17. April – 25. November 2012**

**Sonntag, 15. April, 12 Uhr, Eröffnung**

This year's foyer exhibition displays the large-scale wall relief by ALEXANDRA BIRCKEN (\*1967 in Cologne; lives and works in Cologne): Uknit Bonn, 2012. The work, designed specifically for this site, is a captivating and unorthodox treatment of its material. Metal, which stretches web-like across the foyer wall of the Bonner Kunstverein, is woven into a dense knitting pattern: alternate rows of knit and purl stitches in metal.

The mostly sculptural works by the Cologne artist have been shown in numerous group and solo exhibitions: among others, at Barbican Art Gallery, London; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York. In the coming months her work, besides in Bonn, will be on view at Hamburger Kunstverein, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, as well as in the group exhibition Made in Germany 2, Hannover.

It is above all BIRCKEN's unusual use of textile materials that has attracted international attention. As early as during her studies at Central St. Martins College of Art and Design in London, which the artist concluded with a degree in fashion, her fabrics took on an increasing autonomy and have since followed their own objectives. Wool yarn turns into landscapes, is woven into branches, stones, boxes, found objects and knitted into offbeat textures. Her installations react sensitively to the respective space and form hybrid constellations within the exhibition context. BIRCKEN uses both handcrafted fabrics and techniques and aligns herself with an art-historical tradition that manifests her engagement with artists like Eva Hesse or Rosemarie Trockel and the theme of a woman's social status.

The metal work for the foyer wall of Bonner Kunstverein points to BIRCKEN's new treatment of the work medium's own tradition. Not without a subversive tongue-in-cheek, the steel — a material of the Industrial Revolution that proverbially exudes masculinity — is presented in a knitting pattern. Thus Uknit Bonn both links and breaches one-dimensional role clichés and translates cuddlesome wool into a rigid fabric, whose glossy steel strands are woven to an abstract ornament in the room. Whereby the naked sheet steel will reflect the changing fall of light over the course of months and become integrated with the light-colored foyer and its visitors.