



## Review: Anna Betbeze's shaggy works beguile at François Ghebaly



Anna Betbeze, "Sunspot," 2012, resembles a gangly, hirsute sunflower. (François Ghebaly Gallery / June 13, 2012)

By Sharon Mizota  
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If one were to flay a wayward Muppet — perish the thought! — one might end up with something like an Anna Betbeze painting. Ragged and furtively riddled with holes, her large, shaggy expanses of woven wool are distressed and stained in myriad colors from earthy to acid. The four works on view at François Ghebaly are beguiling, not only because they evoke monsters and shag carpeting, but because they so thoroughly fuse the grotesque with the Arcadian.

A circle of mottled rust and green shag ringed in an almost-sunny yellow, "Sunspot" is a much more tactile version of the cosmic phenomenon suggested by its title; it also resembles a gangly, hirsute sunflower. Then again, the work's blotchy surfaces are a bit repellent, recalling Cindy Sherman's vomit-strewn photographs, with their implicit jabs at the unbridled spew of Abstract Expressionism.

Other pieces evoke landscape painting. In "Tower," a tall rectangle of wool that flows from the wall onto the floor, the upper third is relatively untouched, forming an off-white sky of sorts over dense swathes of blue-green and magenta below. "Labyrinth" takes this reference even further: a swirl of purplish wool resting on a high glass table, it literally forms a miniature, otherworldly landscape. With a view to the macro in the micro, Betbeze's swirling modern tapestries remind us that the off-putting and the lovely are thoroughly intertwined.