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## Space Crush

Heather Cox will use the expanse of MOCA's atrium to contrast her organically odd figures



Heather Cox has created 75 figures, each consisting of 68 pieces, for "Crush." Photo: Samuel Stuart Hollenshead



Cox's three-dimensional "Crush" sculptures are made of Sintra, a type of rigid PVC board, and resemble human forms that stand about 20 inches tall. Photo: Heather Cox

By [Katelyn Leboff](#)

### PROJECT ATRIUM: HEATHER COX

Most artists who are given a giant gallery space might be tempted to fill it up.

But for her Project Atrium installation at the Museum of Contemporary Art, New York City artist Heather Cox will incorporate the unused space to create contrast.

In "Crush," 75 white sculptures will crisscross the massive atrium floors and walls, each one appearing to have gone through an egg slicer before being reassembled with missing pieces.

MOCA Director Marcelle Polednik, who was familiar with Cox's work, told MOCA Curator Ben Thompson about the sculptor. After viewing her other installments, they knew she was a perfect fit.

"We wanted someone who could work in a large scale installation environment and also someone who wouldn't show a pre-existing work," Thompson said. "We had seen her 'Migration' installment and were

really interested in the way she dealt with the space and figures."

"Project Atrium is intended to test and prove new ideas. We think Cox's new use of the space will be successful," Thompson said.

Project Atrium gives artists an unparalleled space to show their work. As soon as visitors enter MOCA, their eyes are immediately drawn to Haskell Atrium Gallery's three huge walls. Each featured artist is given a three- to four-month period to showcase a project. The third season of Project Atrium is funded by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

"The series is intended to promote upcoming and mid-career artists. We look for people who haven't quite made it big yet and can benefit from the challenge of a large space like the atrium," Curator Thompson said. "It all comes back to moving the artists' careers forward."

Cox's three-dimensional "Crush" sculptures are made from a type of rigid PVC board called Sintra and resemble human forms that stand about 20 inches tall. The project gets its name from the sculptures that resemble crushed human forms.

She meticulously traced MRI scans of human body sections she found online. The shapes were digitally cut, then sanded, stacked and glued together.

Each of the 75 sculptures consists of 68 pieces and weighs about 18 pounds. The gender-neutral sculptures are identical except for the direction of their heads.

This directional difference in the sculptures relates to the overarching theme of paths that Cox said will play a large role in this installment.

"I like working with large groups. It'll be cool to have a whole bunch to see what it feels like to be confronted by so many of these guys," Cox said.

Before Cox decided on the final environment for her "Crush" sculptures, she experimented with different locations and terrains. Cox left the sculptures in different locations around New York City to see how people would interact. She photographed people inspecting them.

"I put them in stairways, in the subway, outside on sidewalks. People are a little jumpy on the subway, though. I got some weird looks!" Cox said.

Cox's installation will also feature paintings and drawings used to create her sculptures.

The public is invited to watch Cox install the project starting July 11, but Thompson said prime viewing time will probably be July 15-19.

"It is such an amazing opportunity. There is so much space at MOCA; it is so unique," Cox said. "You get to stretch in a whole different way that I haven't really had the chance to do before. It will push me to the limits of what I can do."

Cox said she wants visitors to be filled with curiosity and questions.

"I'm not even sure how I will react yet. That's the exciting part: seeing it all finished and how it makes you feel."