

Marisa Kula, "Diana Cooper - Profile," *Surface Magazine* # 54, Summer 2005

**The Medium:** Diana Coopers intricate, sprawling installations - " a cross between drawing and sculpture, with neither element privileged," she says – are crafted with topographical precision. "It may have the look of a circuit board or an architectural or biological system, but everything is handmade, so it deals with humanizing these systems."

**Material Girl:** Cooper, who studied literature and history at Harvard, retired her oil paints in the mid-'90s and took sharpies to her canvases. Today her art supplies range from corrugated plastic and fabric to pipe cleaners and Velcro. "When I started using felt and pink pom-poms, there was something I found repulsive and almost embarrassing about it. But I like the challenge of putting materials that are considered less important or frivolous in a large scale piece, with its epic, heroic associations."

**So size matters?** " I want visual surround sound, the sense that you're entering an alternate world, where you're physically engaged and aware of your own presence, " she explains - much like the experience of being in a big city like New York, where Cooper has lived on and off since 1988. "But the work doesn't just speak to urban dwellers," she says. "It has an almost participatory role for the viewer, where they can imagine themselves in it, or imagine the creative process rather than the product. Up close there is a makeshift feeling to it like it's been jerry – rigged."

**Urban outfitter:** Lately fascinated by transportation systems like the Tube in London, Cooper's at work on a "quite architectural" piece for a June 2006 solo show in Cleveland. "The human ingenuity that is part of our daily life fascinates me," she says. "I'm very impressed with how easily things can go awry, and yet most of the time they function."