



NATURALLY STYLISH From left: Artist Paula Crown; Crown's sleek new workspace, designed by Jeanne Gang.

# THE ART OF SCIENCE

ACROSS FROM MILLENNIUM PARK, PAULA CROWN GETS TO WORK IN HER STUNNING NEW STUDIO.

By Katie Anne Orr

"We're not making splashy statements; we're focused on real-world concerns," says artist Paula Crown of her recent collaboration with Jeanne Gang, principal of Studio Gang Architects. In the creation of Crown's artist studio in the Loop, the duo mingled art and architecture—and form and function—in an effort to give new meaning to sustainability (and safety) while keeping each of their signature aesthetics deeply imbued. "I remember Ellsworth Kelly saying you should see X-rays of his lungs because they looked like Swiss cheese from breathing in all of the turpentine, or Chuck Close saying flies were literally dropping from all of the solution [he used]. So it was important to both Jeanne and I to come at this from a different perspective," Crown says.

They salvaged ash wood, which would have been turned into chips, and repurposed it into studio flooring. They

incorporated entirely recycled, organic, low-toxicity materials and fabrics, and natural lighting. An exhaust hood resembling an enormous blue caterpillar swallows up paint fumes and other harmful vapors. And a library anchors the space because, "for me, the studio is always a place for learning and reference," says Crown. "I'm an innately curious, perceptive person, and I want another way of knowing our world, of understanding our world."

This September, she and Gang will unveil *Wall-Space*, a special installation at Expo Chicago, whereby a 9-by-20-foot replica of Crown's studio wall will literally be transported into another space. Incorporating spatially skewed portions—blown-up electrical wires and off-scale pieces of the ceiling and grates—it will be a *trompe l'oeil*, as viewers can experience the studio through window reveals, cavities and voids.

Such unexpected approaches are Crown's vernacular. In January, the Dallas Contemporary art museum opened an exhibit featuring actual MRI scans of her brain, reimagined and manipulated for an immersive experience titled, aptly, *Inside My Head*. "Exploring the depths of our minds and quantum physics are interesting parallels that artists can connect on," she says. "It can be part of an interesting dialogue between science and art." In February 2015, Crown will have her first solo show at the Marlborough Gallery in New York—an unimaginable feat for a newly emerged artist. Then again, turning the unimaginable into reality is what happens in the studio every day. [paulacrown.com](http://paulacrown.com)

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