

Case study

# Artist transforms ROCKWOOL® HVAC pipe into modular sculpture

Erratics Exhibition, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA)



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Photographer: Rachel Deakin.



## The project

### A life less ordinary - ROCKWOOL® heating and ventilation pipe transformed into stunning giant modular sculpture.

An exciting new exhibition by artist, Lubna Chowdhary, features an impressive 6.5m by 5.5m sculpture fabricated using ROCKWOOL RockLap heating and ventilation pipe (H&V) sections.

The "Erratics" exhibition was commissioned by the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA) and features a sculpture made possible by a ROCKWOOL donation of 320 metres of its RockLap H&V pipe sections, measuring 140mm in diameter and 25mm thick.

Artist, Lubna, has previously created many commissioned architectural works and the ROCKWOOL piece, "Modular 4", continues the tradition of her site-specific work, playing with scale, repetition, modularity, and geometry to occupy the expansive gallery space at MIMA.

Her sculptural objects and installations combine industrial manufacturing technologies with highly developed hand-making techniques. Lubna is interested in images and symbols that are pervasive in our environment and raise questions about values and meanings that shape our lives today.

Inspiring the Erratics exhibition, Lubna recognised that simple, modular structures referenced the systems and infrastructures of our built environment. The material is drawn from the physical environment of industry and the city and its aesthetic communicated the industrial standardisation of our age.

The ROCKWOOL RockLap used for the sculpture consists of pre-formed sections of stone wool insulation with a layer of factory-applied foil on the surface. Traditionally used for heating and ventilation pipes in a range of settings, RockLap sections have been proven to deliver high performance thermal insulation in a range of settings with varying climates and degrees of exposure for over 60 years.

Lubna first discovered ROCKWOOL whilst on an artist's residency in Sweden. Without access to her usual materials and equipment, she began to experiment with standardised ready-made components, including plastic ducting and pipe insulation, which were readily available from local hardware stores.

Speaking about her repurposing of ROCKWOOL for Modular 4 and treating it as an unconventional sculptural material, Lubna, said: "My work continuously investigates the relationship between the industrial and hand-crafted, and the industrial precision and modular system of

"The industrial precision and modular system of ROCKWOOL was something I could work directly and immediately with."

Lubna Chowdhary

ROCKWOOL was something I could work directly and immediately with. It was a material that could be easily formed and constructed into more complex shapes with minimal tools and processes."

Commenting on the use of ROCKWOOL RockLap, Paul Barrett, Head of Product Management at ROCKWOOL, said:

"Our HVAC products are often deliberately left exposed in modern commercial, retail and leisure projects to provide an attractive and interesting focal feature that blurs the line between function and aesthetics. It is fascinating to see how Lubna has taken this one step further and transformed RockLap into such a stunning and imposing piece of art. ROCKWOOL was pleased to be able to donate these materials and see them transformed into something so special."



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