

# #17 Heather Gordon: Cinnabar

## Audio Description Script by Debbie Hippler

“Cinnabar,” by Durham artist Heather Gordon, covers the glass on the two-story entrance and foyer of the east building of the museum. It consists of a geometric pattern of 1-inch wide solid white and tan vinyl tapes, plus a semi-transparent red tape, with a video playing on the wall just inside the entrance.

Cinnabar is the bright scarlet form of mercury sulfide, a combination of mercury and sulfur. This mineral is known as a twinning crystal which creates two crystals, connected, but each different. It has a refractive property that causes light to bend as it travels through. Using the concepts of chemistry and alchemy, the artist encourages us to consider how the push and pull of the materials mirrors our own complicated existence.

Heather Gordon used an origami mapping of the atomic make-up of each element to transfer the outline to the glass using a grease pencil. Sulfur is depicted on the outside glass of the foyer. The stripes of 1-inch wide tape, white then changing to tan, start at the lowest point on the east wall, extending upwards to fill in the glass on the two stories. At each outline, the angle of the tape changes to reflect the crystal properties. On the inside of this glass wall of the foyer, the white and tan tape represents separate, twinning crystal angles. When viewed as one, the patterns of both sides create a fractured look, as if different panes of glass are pieced together. You are free to touch the tape on the windows. Feel for the angles.

The interior glass wall of the foyer is a set of three double doors separated by glass panes on the north side, and one set of doors with windows on the east, transom panes above all. Red vinyl tape on both sides of this glass is patterned representing mercury, in the same style as described earlier. This again looks like geometric panes of glass, each with stripes of red at different angles, creating a pieced-together effect similar to stained glass.

As you step inside the museum, a video is playing on the wall to the right of the customer service desk. The video shows salt on a black metal plate creating geometric patterns as the plate vibrates with different sounds. You can hear these sounds through headphones hanging on hooks on the wall.