

## 'It's like a computer threw up in space': Sydney's next big thing

■ Peter Munro

"If I have done my job right it should look like a computer threw up in space," she says, staring up at the ceiling. And if the world's largest PC had to heave, it just might look a smidge like this. Several hundred strands of wiry tape stretching down from the canopy of Customs House, cloaking the atrium in colourful streams.

For three weeks, American artist Megan Geckler has been busy stapling each piece in place inside the heritage building at Circular Quay. There are 720 rainbow strips of about 20 metres each - together, some 14 kilometres of plastic flagging tape bought in bulk from an Australian mining supplier.

Of all the really big things she has made, this bombastic kaleidoscope may be just about the biggest. Or second biggest. Definitely top three. "I once did a six-storey installation on the Strand in London but I feel like you have much higher ceilings, so this might be the tallest," she says. "The tape stretches, so who knows how much is up there."

Geckler hopes that her first

Australian installation, for Art & About Sydney, the City of Sydney's program of temporary art in unusual places, will rock people off their regular routine. "For me, it is about giving you this moment of joy and awe, so you turn a corner and get this 'whoa' moment, and I think that is easier to do with a large-scale work."

The Los Angeles-based artist started making site-specific installations with flagging tape in 2000, after finding two rolls in the bottom of a hardware store bin.

She likes how tape lets her start with a single strand in space and to see where it might go.

Her new installation boasts six layers of tape twisting in different directions, each piece's position plotted precisely with a computer program. She's called it *A million things that make your head spin*, after a line in a pop song by Brisbane band The Jungle Giants.

Her Sydney installation is on show within Customs House until April 30. She has recently started working with rope, in the interests of making installations that last longer term. Flagging tape is firmer than it seems, but fragile still. "My worst nightmare is a drunk child with scissors," she says.



'My worst nightmare is a drunk child with scissors': Artist Megan Geckler

looks out from 14 kilometres of flagging tape. Photo: Steven Siewert