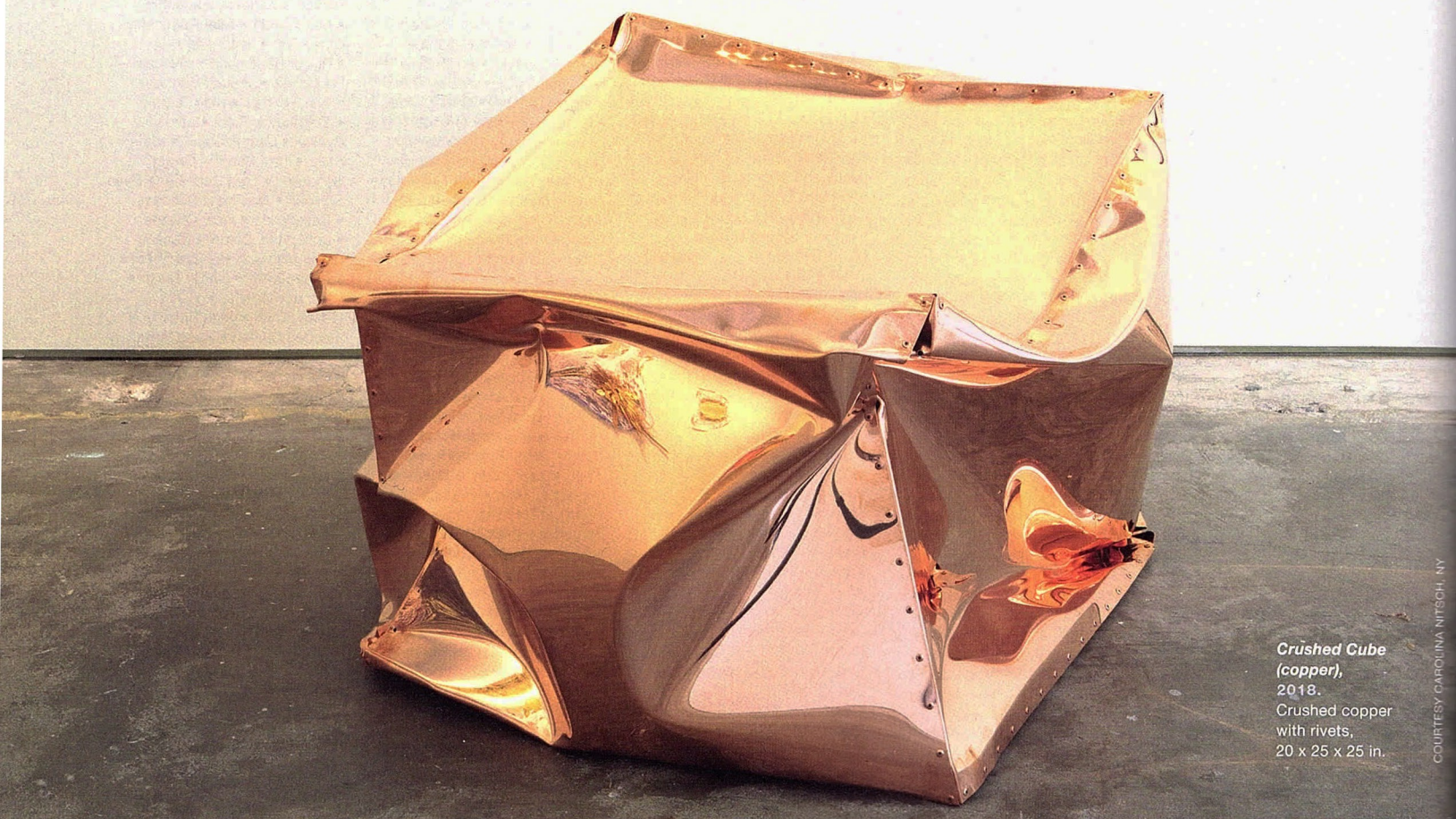
object lessons

Alyson Shotz

This is part of the "Crushed Cube" series. My last body of work was about expansion: I made a series of sculptures that packed flat but would become very large scale and volumetric once installed. In opposition to that idea, I became interested in compression, which so far has resulted in the idea of crushing. I was also interested in the properties of various metals and how they might each crush differently, so I've tried crushing carbon steel, stainless steel, copper, and bronze. I like to create situations in which various forces come together to make the object. In this case, I designed a machine based on a jerry-rigged printing press, which uses four car jacks to crush. Inside it, I place a perfect cube—which happens to be a sort of icon of '70s Minimalism. The finished object goes from geometric perfection to becoming unpredictable and organic because of the interaction between the crushing pressure on the cube and the material properties of the metal itself.



Crushed Cube (copper), 2018. Crushed copper with rivets, 20 x 25 x 25 in.

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