

Biennial of the Americas, Denver, Colorado

Fact Sheet

Location:

Civic Center Park, Denver, Colorado
Suspended between Denver Art Museum and Greet Theater
For the Biennial of the Americas

Client: Denver Office of Cultural Affairs

Completion: July 2010

Artist: Janet Echelman, Janet Echelman, Inc., www.echelman.com

Press Contacts:

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Team:

City Project Coordinator: Kendall Peterson, DOCA; Chris Jahn, Fuse Studio Architects
Artist: Janet Echelman, Janet Echelman, Inc.
Art Project Manager: Mark Drummond Davis, Janet Echelman, Inc.
Engineer of Record: Charles Keyes & Shane McCormick, Martin/Martin Consulting Engineers
Design Engineer: Peter Heppel, Peter Heppel Associates
NASA Scientist: Richard Gross, Jet Propulsion Laboratory
NOAA Scientist: Christopher Moore, Center for Tsunami Research
Installation Management: Mike Mancarella, Junoworks
Lighting Designer: Joseph Gann, Richter Scale Productions
Book Designer: Peter Bergman
Donor of Spectra® Fiber: Honeywell

1.26

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Description:

Janet Echelman's 230-foot-long aerial sculpture "1.26" suspends from the roof of the 7-story Denver Art Museum above downtown street traffic to commemorate the inaugural Biennial of the Americas.

The City of Denver asked the artist to create a monumental yet temporary work exploring the theme of the interconnectedness of the 35 nations that make up the Western Hemisphere. She drew inspiration from the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory's announcement that the February 2010 Chile earthquake shortened the length of the earth's day by 1.26 microseconds by slightly redistributing the earth's mass. Exploring further, Echelman drew on a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) simulation of the earthquake's ensuing tsunami, using the 3-dimensional form of the tsunami's amplitude rippling across the Pacific as the basis for her sculptural form.

The temporary nature of the Biennial and its accelerated timeline precluded the artist's use of a permanent steel armature, as employed in the artist's previous monumental permanent commissions. Instead, "1.26" pioneers a tensile support matrix of Spectra® fiber, a material 15 times stronger than steel by weight. This low-impact, super-lightweight design made it possible to temporarily attach the sculpture directly to the façade of the Denver Art Museum, and this structural system opens up a new trajectory for the artist's work in urban airspace.

Because this monumental sculpture is made entirely of soft materials, it is animated by the wind. Its fluidly moving form contrasts with the rigid surfaces of the surrounding urban architecture. At night, colored lighting transforms the work into a floating, luminous form while darkness conceals the support cables.

"1.26" was commissioned by the Denver Office of Cultural Affairs Public Art Program for the inaugural Biennial of the Americas and realized through the artist's collaboration with a team of award winning engineers, architects, artists, fabricators, and installers.

A book about "1.26" includes an essay by Sanford Kwinter, Professor of Architectural Theory and Criticism at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, cofounder of the journal *Zone* and *Zone Books*, and author of *Architectures of Time: Towards a Theory of the Event in Modernist Culture*.

Materials: Spectra® Fiber, high-tenacity polyester fiber, lighting.

Size: Dimensions of net: 80 ft. x 63 ft. x 30 ft., suspended approx. 93 ft. in the air.

More Information:

www.denvergov.org/publicart

www.biennialoftheamericas.org

www.echelman.com

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Artist Bio:

American artist **Janet Echelman** reshapes urban airspace with monumental, fluidly moving sculpture that responds to environmental forces including wind, water, and sunlight. This year she premiered *Water Sky Garden* at the Vancouver Olympic Winter Games, and she completed 2009's largest US public art commission, *Her Secret is Patience*, a new civic icon for Phoenix that has been hailed for contributing to the revitalization of its downtown. Echelman's 160-foot-tall waterfront *She Changes* in Portugal was called "one of the truly significant public artworks in recent years" by *Sculpture Magazine*. Her art has been presented in Spain, Italy, Portugal, Lithuania, India, Japan, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Canada, Mexico, and the US. She graduated from Harvard College and completed graduate degrees in psychology and painting, yet is an autodidact in sculpture.

A recipient of fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts, Pollock-Krasner Foundation, Japan Foundation, Rotary International Foundation, Harvard Graduate School of Design Loeb Fellowship, Aspen Institute Henry Crown Fellowship, and a Fulbright Senior Lectureship, she currently serves on the national board of the Fulbright Association and the Aspen Institute Energy and Environment Awards.