



Net gains for Amsterdam: fiber art

Janet Echelman's floating, organic fiber structures illuminated by light have astounded viewers from Portugal to India to Australia with their serene and poetic motion in space. Her most recent work appeared at the Amsterdam Light Festival in January, where a colorful net hovering over the Amstel River and a more rigid seed-shaped form on shore seemed to communicate via light exchanges. Echelman calls the installation "1.26," following her analysis of lab data from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) showing that a 2010 earthquake in Chile shortened the Earth's day by 1.26 microseconds.

The sculpture's form is inspired by Echelman's mapping of tsunami waves, which follow underwater earthquakes. The materials used in creating 1.26 included Spectra® fiber, a bright white polyethylene fiber that is produced by Honeywell with a patented gel-spinning process; high-tenacity polyester fiber; and lighting. "The light reflections on the water's surface become a focus of the sculpture here, creating an opportunity for contemplation," says Echelman. "The sculpture invites you to pause and consider how we're knitted into a larger fabric." See more of Echelman's work at www.echelman.com.

The dimensions of Echelman's floating net are 200 feet long, 63 feet wide and 30 feet deep, a moving statement of interconnectedness suspended above the Amstel River in front of Amsterdam's City Hall and Opera House. Photo: Courtesy Studio Echelman, photographer Klaas Fopma