

VISIT TO FIERA DI VICENZA,

The annual Autumn Edition of the Fair run by Abilmente fell last year between 18 and 21 October 2012.

Unlike their Spring production in March this is the showcase for embroidery, lace, knitting and crochet – attracting about 47,000 visitors over the four days. Very particularly this is where you will find a substantial group of practitioners from the many embroidery and lace schools and associations from the length and breadth of Italy – twenty one in all in this instance – many of whom I was already familiar as a result of visiting Italia Invita's biannual shows*).

This year, for the first time, two invitational 'art' areas were incorporated – one showed the delicate bobbin or tombala lace of Thessa Schoenholzer Nichols – who also demonstrated throughout the show (as do all the schools and associations). These miniature works were inspired by various organic cellular structures. It is worth mentioning too that Thessa was one of the five founders of Italia Invita in 2003. The other artist, Luisa De Santi, in contrast, displayed bold colourful crochet both for the body and as pure sculptural pieces.

Running centrally the length of the halls was a major presentation of Patchwork from Japan – Japanese Sensibility. Another major display, Wide Horizons, occupied a corridor lined on each side by patchwork hangings by the SAQA group of Europe.

Of course there was the thrill of the trade stands – about 250 exhibitors of whom 50 were from other countries – a hugely tempting array of things to buy – kits, threads, materials, sewing machines, art products and much much more.

A unique exhibit, worthy of a special mention, was staged by the Italian magazine Casa facile. They had used a series of ordinary wooden wardrobes to show how you could create rooms such as a mini office, a mini sewing area or kitchen – none exceeding 4 sq m. Brilliant. For me a lasting memory of ingenuity.

Not to be missed was a very wonderful space which had been devoted to those with



Photo: Ben Visbeek



Photo: Laura Taylor

Janet Echelman's "1.26 Sculpture" at the Amsterdam "Light Festival 2012"

JANET ECHELMAN LIGHT SCULPTURE IN AMSTERDAM

From 7th December 2012 to 20th January 2013, a large light sculpture shaped like a net was suspended over the Amstel near the city centre. The title of the work, "1.26 Sculpture", relates to the 1.26-microsecond acceleration in our globe's rotation since the Chilean earthquake.

The sculpture consists of a net of Spectra® fibres, produced on an industrial netting machine using special software that allows the creation of traditional filet netting designs. The construction was then equipped with 'Color Kinetics' by the Philips company – an LED lighting system that generates constantly changing

colour hues. The sculpture was part of the 2012 Amsterdam Light Festival designed to make the city more attractive in the Christmas season.

We have featured Janet Echelman's work before, most recently in a review of an Australian lace exhibition published in TF 4/2011, page 29. The US artist began painting in India and encountered fishing nets in the 1990s. Working with fishermen, she used the nets to design three-dimensional sculptures by hand. When the Portuguese town of Porto commissioned a permanent fishing net sculpture, Echelman needed to source more

robust materials. This led to a co-operation with engineers who recommended using a material usually employed in the production of space suits, and who acquainted her with the industrial netting process.

The Spectra® fibres Janet Echelman employed in Amsterdam are among the most resilient and lightweight fibres currently available in the world. Ten times as strong as steel and more resistant than polyester, they have a specific tenacity 40 % higher than aramide fibres, and are highly resistant to moisture and UV light (website: <http://www.echelman.com>).