



Sky Dance

LOOK — UP IN THE AIR. FORGET bird or plane. Is it a colossal phantasmagoric jellyfish? A preternaturally beautiful UFO? A magnificent mass hallucination?

That diaphanous apparition billowing in the breeze is *1.26*, one of Janet Echelman's acclaimed aerial net sculptures. For the 2010 Biennial of the Americas, a gathering of leaders in art, business, and culture in Denver, the city asked the artist to create a work about the interconnectedness of the 35 nations of the Western Hemisphere. She used data from that year's earthquake

in Chile, an event so big it shifted the Earth's axis and shortened the length of each day by 1.26 microseconds. Built of industrial-strength polyester fiber and lit in colors at night, the piece debuted at the festival and has since traveled to cities on five continents, from Sydney to Singapore to Montreal, and recently to the Chilean capital of Santiago.

Originally a painter, Echelman started using openwork fabric to achieve buoyant form more than a decade ago, inspired by fishermen she saw bundling nets on a beach in India. Today, based in Brookline,

Massachusetts, she works with software developers and structural engineers to realize her dynamic visions on a skyscraper scale.

By transforming urban airspaces, her "oases of sculpture," as she has called them, lift us out of the daily grind. In her 2011 TED talk, Echelman spoke of a lawyer who coaxed co-workers to leave their desks and come outside to see a work of hers. "There they were in their business suits, lying in the grass, noticing the changing patterns of wind, beside people they didn't know, sharing the rediscovery of wonder."

Janet Echelman
1.26 Montreal, 2015,
Montreal, Canada