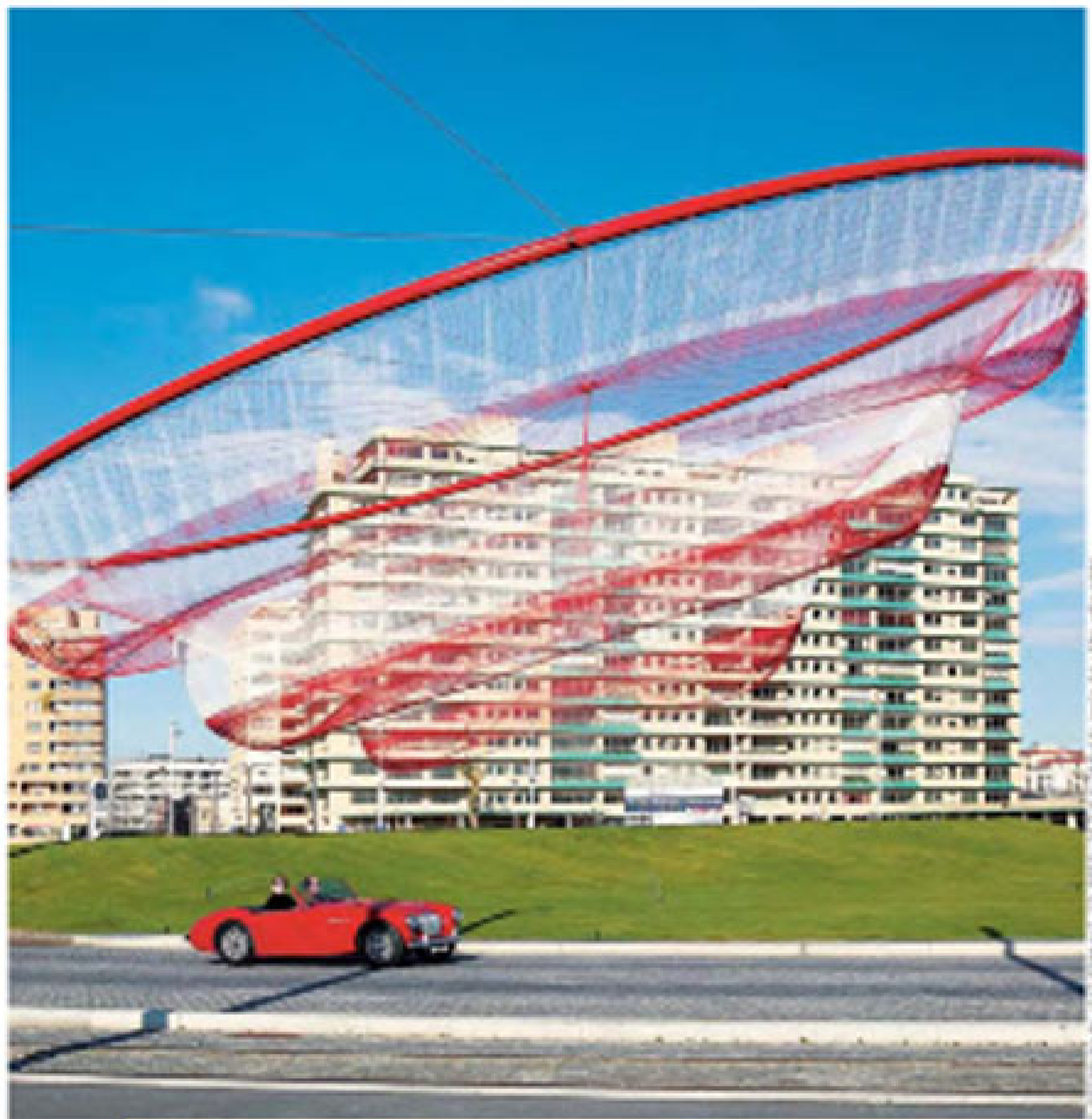


ing evidence that Tell Brak had developed at the same time as the earliest Mesopotamian cities, such as Uruk in southern Iraq. Emberling sees the dwelling as “the house of a sheik—not a ruler, but a lower-level political figure who gave feasts for his followers.” Even now, he says, “When I go to visit a local sheik, he’s sitting at the end of a long narrow room, and visitors sit on the sides of the room. The architectural form is identical.”

As he alternated between Syria and the Met, Emberling learned the museum trade. He quickly determined that the Met valued art over history: it showcased fascinating objects but included “nothing about the people who made and used them.” So when Amy was offered the bakery position in Ann Arbor in 2000, he was ready to return to the Midwest. He became an independent scholar, teaching Near Eastern studies at Michigan, publishing articles, and writing grant applications for Tell Brak. But in 2003, when the Iraq war began, funding was held up and the University of Michigan, weathering the U.S. recession, canceled his adjunct-teaching position. “I had absolutely no income, no ability to carry out my work in the field.” He went back on the job market and, when employment seemed elusive, even contemplated leaving archaeology. Then the OC’s Stein, who’d known Emberling professionally (“The world of Near Eastern archaeology is fairly small,” Stein says), encouraged him to apply for the museum directorship.

THE MUSEUM had closed its galleries in 1996, so workers could install climate-control systems. Since then, the refurbished, redesigned galleries have reopened, one at a time—Egyptian (1999), Persian (2000), and Mesopotamian (2003). When Emberling arrived, planning was well underway for the Assyrian, Syro-Anatolian, and Megiddo galleries, which opened last January. His museum knowledge proved valuable: Stein credits him



PHOTOGRAPH BY JACQUES-LOUIS VASSILLOU FOR THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Sculptural Forms

She Changes, by artist Janet Echelman '87, is a giant multilayered mesh net suspended above a traffic circle next to a beachside promenade on the Atlantic Ocean in Porto, Portugal. The permanent public sculpture—which was still being installed at press time—spans 300 feet and stands 164 feet high. Steel poles, painted red and white to echo area lighthouses and smokestacks, support a 20-ton steel ring from which the three-tiered net is hung. The membranous sculpture appears to float at the whim of the winds, constantly assuming different forms and colors as the day unfolds. At night, the setting is illuminated. “Wind patterns are usually invisible to the human eye,” says Echelman. “My sculpture makes visible the choreography of the wind.” The materials used also reflect the site’s history as a fishing and industrial center. Echelman has seen her public sculptures installed around the world, including recent works in Spain and the Netherlands, as well as at Harvard. She and her team of architects and engineers won the September 11th Memorial Competition for Hoboken, New Jersey—just across the river from where the World Trade Center towers stood. The memorial is designed as an island in the Hudson River with a hole cut through its center; groundbreaking is set for September 11, 2006. Echelman splits her time between New York City and Boston, where she lives with her husband, David Feldman, M.B.A. '94, and their two children.