

An aerial photograph of a modern urban plaza. A central feature is a long, vertical green wall made of various plants and shrubs. People are walking on the paved plaza, and a person is pushing a stroller. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

small scale
—
**CREATIVE
SOLUTIONS FOR
BETTER
CITY LIVING**
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→ A suspended fabric sculpture that activates public space

JANET ECHELMAN: *HER SECRET IS PATIENCE*

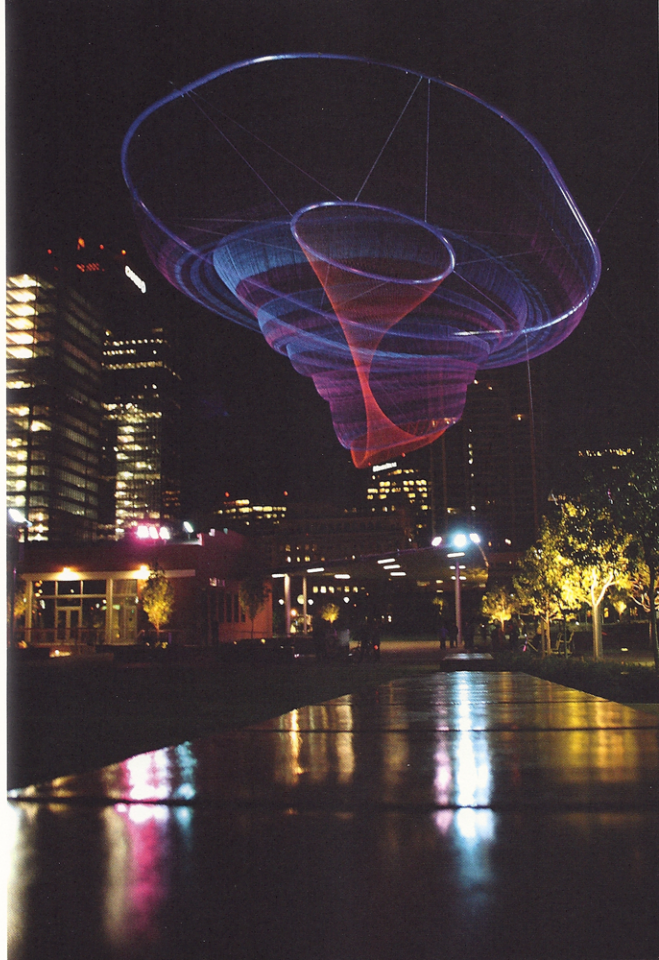
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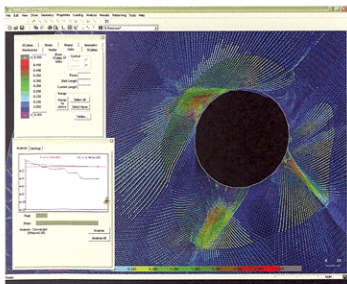
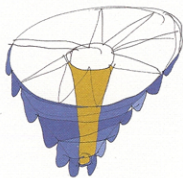
Program

Downtown Phoenix has never had a public gathering space where residents would spend time by choice. The new, two-city-block Civic Space Park is intended to create an enticing public space in order to foster a sense of community. Janet Echelman's sculpture *Her Secret is Patience* is suspended in the center of the park and acts as an iconic landmark of a new cultural identity for the city. The sculpture creates a sense distinct yet equally compelling environments during both day and night to visually attract people to the downtown civic areas.

Solution

The 145-foot-tall sculpture is monumental, yet also soft and flexible, with its semi-translucent weave. Its lightness allows it to be animated by "wind choreography," which engages people emotionally and kinesthetically, drawing many viewers to lie down on the grass underneath it for extended periods of time. The elevated location of *Her Secret is Patience* pulls the gaze up to the sky and optimizes a relatively small footprint for a downtown park by allowing the same area to be both recreational and iconic sculpture at the same time. Local curator Marilu Knode says that Phoenix "finally has a heart."





The sculpture's multilayered form was created with a combination of hand-baited and machine-loomed knotting, and is the result of a collaborative effort with an international team of award-winning engineers. During the day, the high-tenacity, polyester-net sculpture projects "shadow drawings" onto the ground, inspired by Phoenix's cloud shadows. The piece appears delicate and diaphanous, a unique quality for outdoor sculpture, and incorporates the surrounding landscape. *Her Secret is Patience's* visual form makes reference to local desert flora (such as night-blooming cacti), Phoenix's distinctive monsoon cloud formations, and the city's geologic history (the local fossil record shows evidence that this site was once an ocean filled with marine life). At night, the illumination program changes color gradually through the seasons, enhancing without overpowering the richness of the net's integrally colored fibers. The lighting design also changes what portion of the sculpture is illuminated, leaving parts obscured in mystery.

