



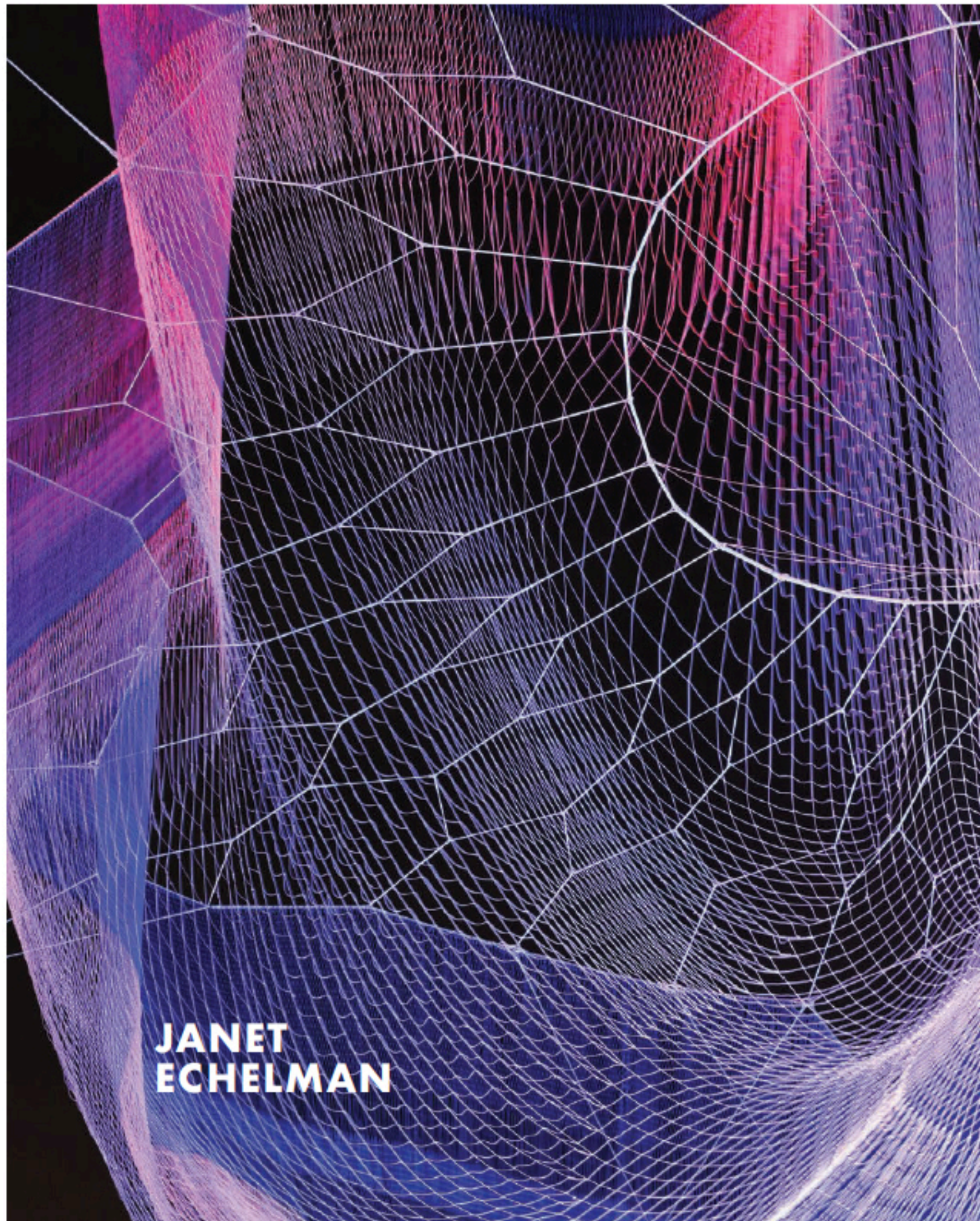
**WORK  
PAGES  
INSIDE!**

# **A BIG IMPOR- TANT ARTIST:**

**A WOMANUAL**

*Creative Projects and Inspiring Artists  
to Kick-Start Your Imagination*

**DANIELLE KRYSA,**  
FOUNDER OF THE JEALOUS CURATOR



## JANET ECHELMAN

B. 1966

USA

INSTALLATION

*You can't stumble upon something new and wonderful if you don't have time to stumble.*



Janet Echelman was raised in Tampa, Florida. She attended Harvard to study history and documentary filmmaking and later earned a master's degree in counseling psychology. So, no, Janet hadn't spent her childhood dreaming of creating huge public installations all over the world. In fact, she'd never even really made art until university, when she decided to take an elective drawing course mainly as a way to minimize her reading load.

Upon graduating, now ready and excited to be an artist, Janet applied to seven art schools and was rejected by all of them. Undeterred, she moved to Hong Kong in 1987 on a Rotary Club-sponsored scholarship and took the opportunity to study Chinese calligraphy and brush-painting. When her scholarship ran out,

she made her way to Bali with \$300 in her pocket and began learning how to combine traditional Indonesian batik with contemporary painting from local artisans. Sadly, her bamboo house was destroyed by a fire, so Janet returned to the United States. For seven years she taught and was an artist-in-residence at Harvard—until she was offered an opportunity to travel, which of course, she took. Janet returned to Asia, this time for a Fulbright lectureship in India.

Being a painter, her plan was to paint and exhibit during her time in India. Janet had her supplies shipped to Mahabalipuram, a small fishing village where she'd be staying. She arrived, but her paints did not. Janet didn't let this stop her from creating. Mahabalipuram was known for sculpture, and so Janet began working with the bronze casters in the village. Her Fulbright budget didn't allow for expensive heavy materials, so once again she would have to readjust her plan.

One evening, she was watching local fishermen bundling their nets on the beach. Could nets be the way to create volume without weight? Yes, yes it could. Janet spent her year in India collaborating with the fishermen. She used their traditional knot-tying techniques to create beautiful netted sculptures, but the final piece of the puzzle fell in place when the nets were hoisted up onto poles so Janet could photograph them. She was mesmerized when she saw their "delicate surfaces revealing every ripple of wind, in constantly changing patterns." Janet now had her sights set on a truly artistic horizon: to create massive works that could engage people and spaces.

Ever since, Janet Echelman has made beautiful billowing sculptures, creating breathtaking centerpieces for cities around the world. And Janet's nets were only the beginning. She has also started working with atomized water particles. She continues to push her ideas, creating artwork that—thanks to wind and light—constantly transforms itself right in front of your eyes. Janet collaborates with a huge range of people to make these pieces, often referring to public art as a "team sport."