

A Thousand Knots

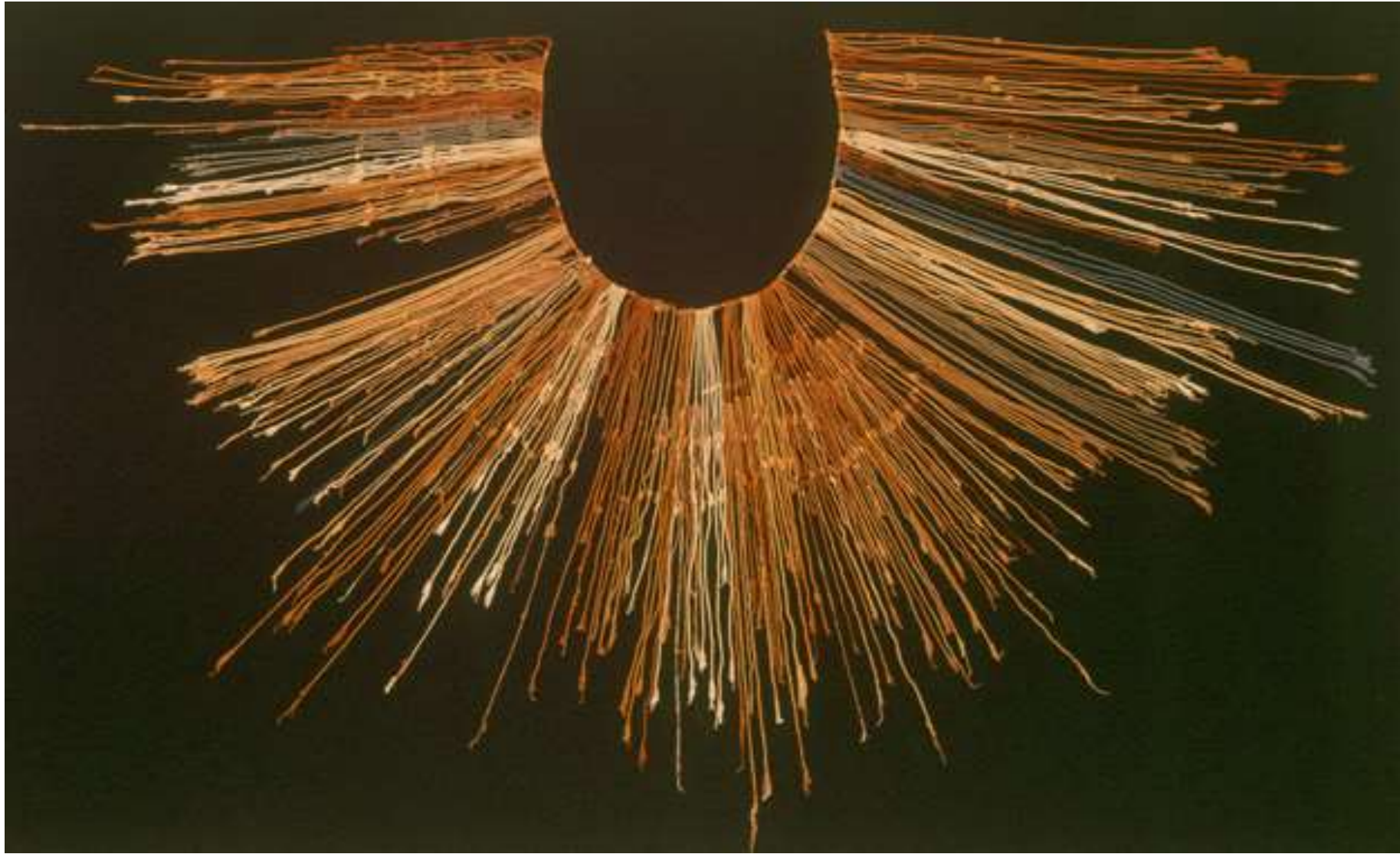
Knotted strings

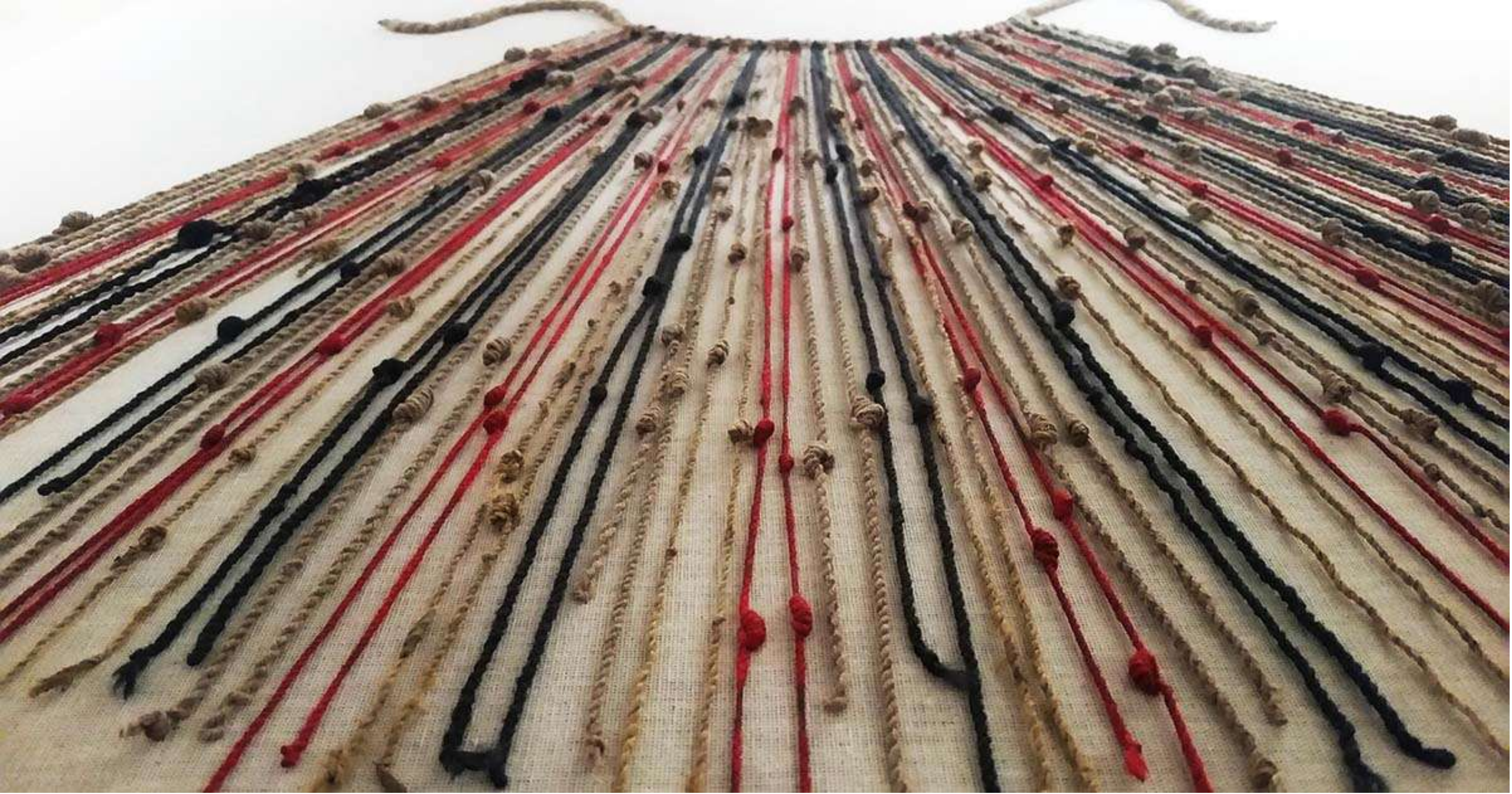
Quipu

A [quipu](#) ([khipu](#)) was a method used by the Incas and other ancient Andean cultures to keep records and communicate information using string and knots. In the absence of an alphabetic [writing](#) system, this simple and highly portable device achieved a surprising degree of precision and flexibility. Quipu could record dates, statistics, accounts, and even abstract ideas. Quipu are still used today across South America.

Quipu use a wide variety of colors, strings, and sometimes several hundred knots all tied in various ways at various heights. These combinations can even represent, in abstract form, key episodes from traditional folk stories and poetry. In recent years scholars have also challenged the traditional view that quipu were merely a memory aid device and go so far as to suggest that quipu may have been progressing towards narrative records and so becoming a viable alternative to written language just when the [Inca Empire](#) collapsed.

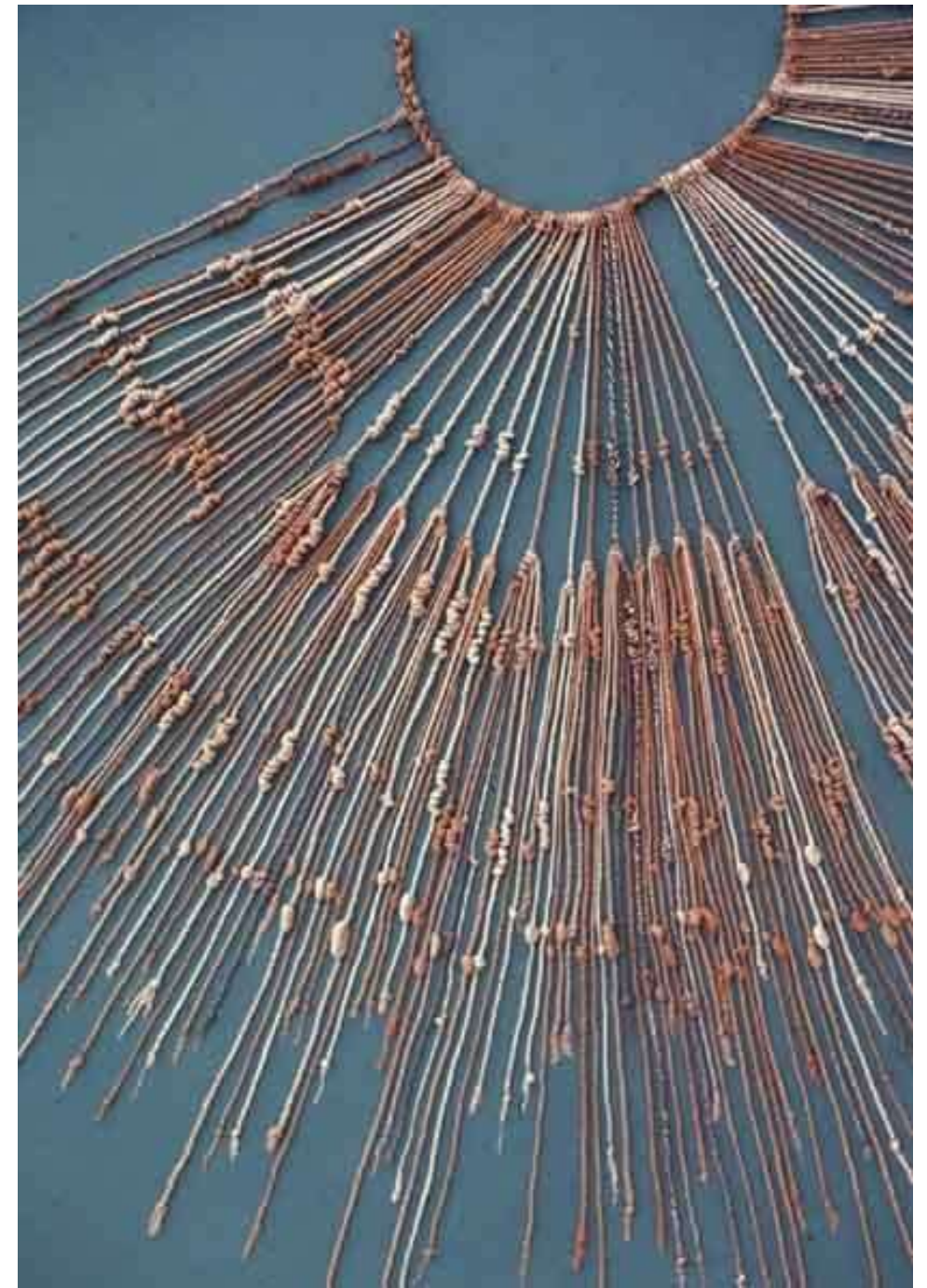
- [kWOU-w](#) (10 mins)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AmPyz1kCbOw> (3 mins NatGeo)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrfKOQKyffE> (8 mins—Use this)
- <https://liberalarts.wp.txstate.edu/2019/07/11/quipu-the-knot-language-of-the-andes/> (measuring time with a quipu 3:41)











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Kristie Arias

In Arequipa, Peru a modern art installation by artist [Kristie Arias](#) takes the Inca ancient knot-record or quipo and turns it into a record of the 'Soul in Thread'. Each thread represents a moment in her life and through color, size and texture she illustrates the emotions and state of being at that time.

The threads used in 'Almarios' are natural Alpaca fibers which are synonymous with the Andean culture. It makes sense that a native of Peru would use these native fiber as the representation of her soul.

The quipo or knot-record

The fibers are knotted similar to how the Incas created their quipo or knot-records. The inca had many layers and branches in their quipo that radiated out from various knotted strands.

- <https://kielydesign.com/the-inca-quipu-reimagined-into-a-record-of-the-soul-in-arequipa-peru/>









Cecilia Vicuna

Cecilia Vicuña is a Chilean poet and artist based in New York and Santiago, Chile. Her work is noted for themes of language, memory, dissolution, extinction and exile.

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cL_7MDuT8Xk (use this)











Tanya Aguiniga

The binational artist Tanya Aguiñiga pushes the power of art to transform the United States-Mexico border from a site of trauma to a creative space for personal healing and collective expression. Reflecting the cultural hybridity and community of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, the artist discusses her upbringing in Tijuana, her training as a furniture and craft designer, and her artistic beginnings with the Border Art Workshop/Taller de Arte Fronterizo collective. From her studio, the artist and her team produce objects like jewelry and housewares to fund their social-justice-based projects, workshops, and performances. Aguiñiga returns to the site of one of these projects, titled **“Border Quipu,” where she and her team recorded the stories of daily commuters from Tijuana to San Diego.** This segment also follows Aguiñiga as she prepares for “Metabolizing the Border,” a performance and personal reckoning with the pain caused by the border wall. The work is a demanding physical feat: the artist walks along the border wall in a glass suit that is designed to break, in order to express the effects of the wall as wounds on her body and to symbolize the struggle of the migrant experience. Aguiñiga demonstrates how art can be both a personal “physical and emotional outlet” and a vehicle to help others “empathize and think about how we’re all connected to each other.”

<https://smarthistory.org/tanya-aguiniga-borderlands/> (good—17 minutes)

<http://www.ambosproject.com/quipu>









Grimanesa Amorós

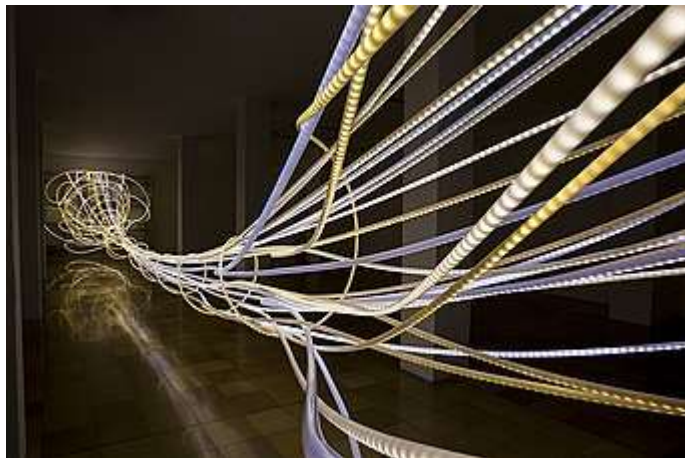


Grimanesa Amorós is a Peruvian-American artist known for large-scale light sculpture installations. Amorós draws inspiration from Peruvian cultural legacies and the communities surrounding her sculptures. She has exhibited in Mexico, Tel Aviv, Beijing, and New York's Times Square.

- <https://www.grimanesaamoros.com/interview/women-in-lighting/>
(2.5 mins)







Senninbari

A ***senninbari*** (千人針, "thousand person stitches) or **one thousand stitch** is a belt or strip of cloth stitched 1000 times and given as a Shinto amulet by Japanese women to soldiers going away to war.

Senninbari were decorated with 1000 knots or stitches, and each stitch was normally made by a different woman.^{[1][2]} *Senninbari* were typically 15 centimetres (5.9 in) wide and ranged from 90 centimetres (3.0 ft) to 120 centimetres (3.9 ft) or more in length. Each end of the belt could feature strings, snaps or buttons that allowed it to be fastened around the waist; examples lacking these were often tucked into the waist. Other variations were never worn, but may have been folded and placed inside helmet liners, pockets or packs.

- <https://www.pbs.org/video/antiques-roadshow-bonus-video-2-japanese-internment-camp-art/>
- <https://www.janm.org/exhibits/sus-ito>









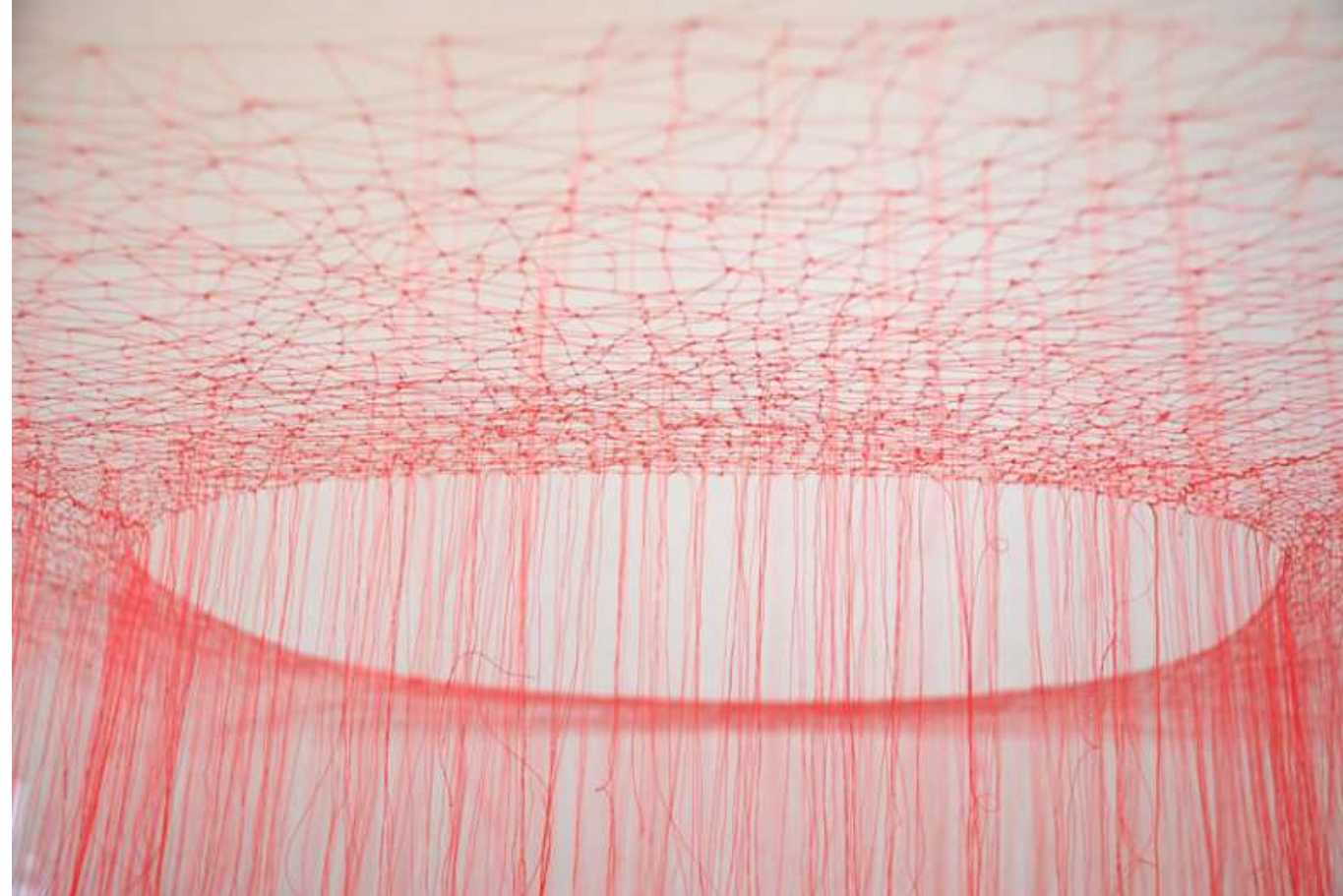
AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL



Akiko Ikeuchi

For over two decades japanese artist [akiko ikeuchi](#) has been creating room-sized vortices of silk, tying hundreds of small knots in colored thread to form elaborate gallery installations.

Beginning with intricate plans resembling architectural diagrams, Ikeuchi first lays a foundation structure using cotton thread. next, a second layer using fine silk thread is slowly knotted into a mesh, a process that spans nearly a month for an installation such as the one depicted. the resulting artwork straddles a interesting balance, appearing both imposing in scale yet almost completely weightless.





Chiharu Shiota

“Strings break, get tangled or tied together just like people cut relationships.” Join Japanese installation artist Chiharu Shiota on her journey to find meaning in life and death through her art. “In the moment people enter my works, I want them to understand what it is to live and what it is to die.” Chiharu Shiota, who’s been in Berlin for more than 25 years, grew up in Osaka, Japan. Observing her parents’ business, a factory that made wooden boxes, throughout her childhood, Shiota knew from a young age that she wanted something else in life: “I found this kind of life unsatisfying. I wanted to work with my mind and to be creative.” By the age of 12, she knew that she wanted to become a painter. She began studying at art schools in Japan, Australia, and Germany. But soon, she learned that painting wasn’t for her: “Painting with oil paint and a brush on canvas felt very limited,” Shiota remembers: “The more I painted, the more I felt that I was copying other artists. I didn’t feel any connection at all. I suffered from making art just for the sake of art.” Strings, which now have become a signature for the artist, were her escape from the canvas: “I started to make three-dimensional pictures with strings.” Feeling more connected to the string as a material than paint, Shiota started doing performance and installation art. “I create in space,” she says about her method and continues: “When you weave string, it’s a communication with the space. It’s like painting a picture in the air.” Often the strings are intertwined but also connected to human objects such as shoes, suitcases, and old photographs that she finds at flea markets and antique shops. Dresses also appear frequently in her work, latest at Cisternerne in Copenhagen: “My works’ theme is often about absence in existence,” Shiota explains. “I use dresses in my work because they are empty bodies,” she says and clarifies: “The theme of existence is very important to me. That’s why I often use dresses with no bodies in them.”

DRAWING IN AIR

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ULpxdHy0eZc> (25 mins)

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyDc7hU29gM> (22 mins)
- <https://www.thisiscolossal.com/tags/string/> (21 mins—good)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L51F-TLI_Tk (4 mins--good)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZ8z3VXd1gs> (2 mins)













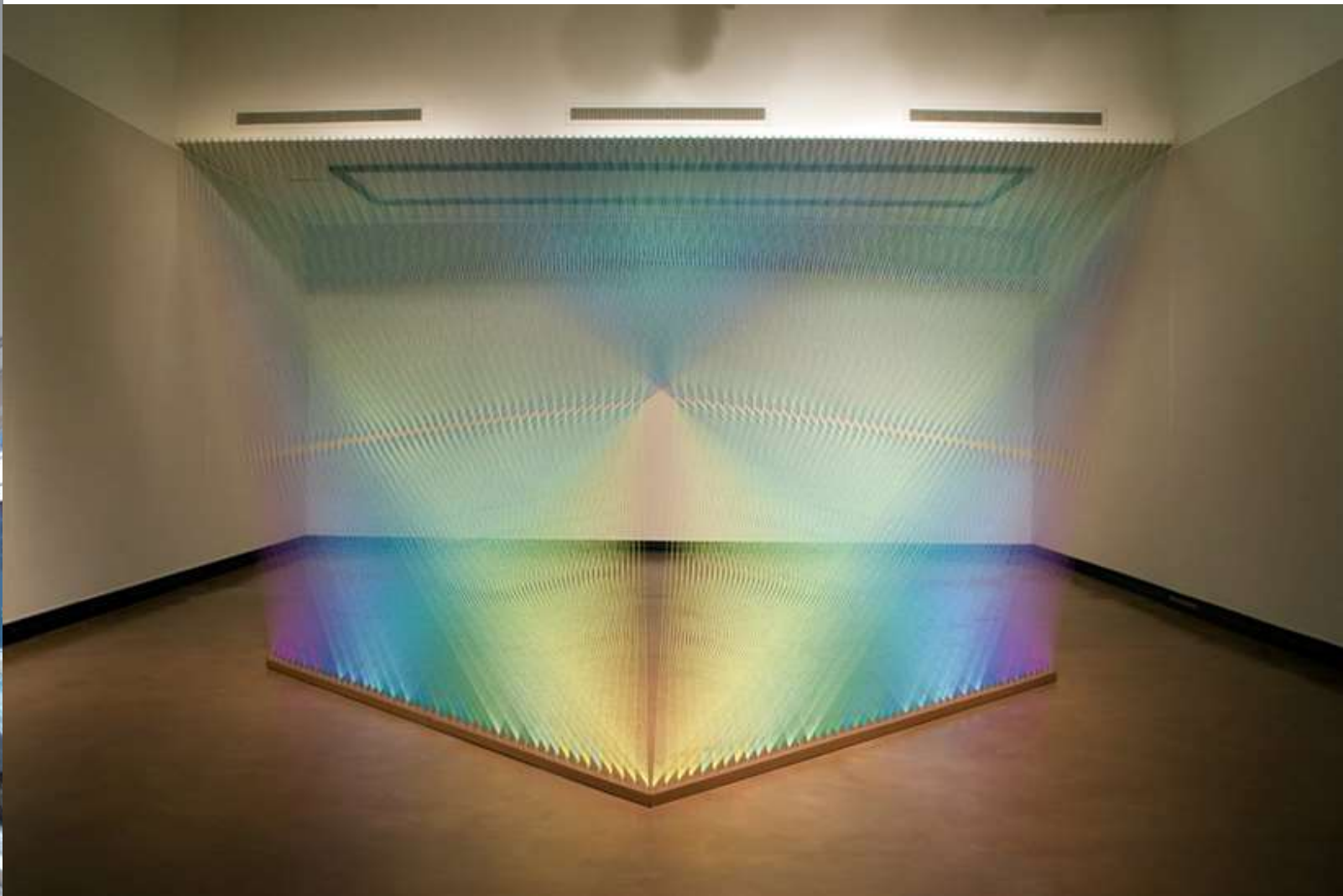


Gabriel Dawe

Gabriel Dawe is a Mexican-born artist living in Dallas, Texas, whose work is based on investigations of the visible spectrum of light. He has gained renown for his large-scale Plexus series of installations of sewing thread, though he also creates works on paper as well as other media.

- <https://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/wonder/online/gabriel-dawe> (2 mins)
- <https://virginiamoca.org/exhibition/gabriel-dawe-plexus-no-28/> (3 mins)













Anne Patterson

Anne Patterson is an American multi-disciplinary artist based in Brooklyn, New York. She has synesthesia, a neurological condition in which stimulation to one sensory pathway triggers involuntary stimulation to another sensory pathway. This mix of sensory experiences is reflected in her art.

<https://www.annepatterson.com/about> (2:50)









Tomas Saraceno

Tomás Saraceno is an Argentine contemporary artist whose projects, consisting of floating sculptures, international collaborations, and interactive installations, propose and dialogue with forms of inhabiting and sensing the environment that have been suppressed in the Capitalocene era.

Argentinian artist and architect Tomás Saraceno discusses his installation at SFMOMA, Stillness in Motion—Cloud Cities (2016). He describes how the piece illustrates his vision of “future flying cities” built in collaboration with spiders and other nonhumans, inviting visitors to imagine radical, alternative ways of living on Earth.

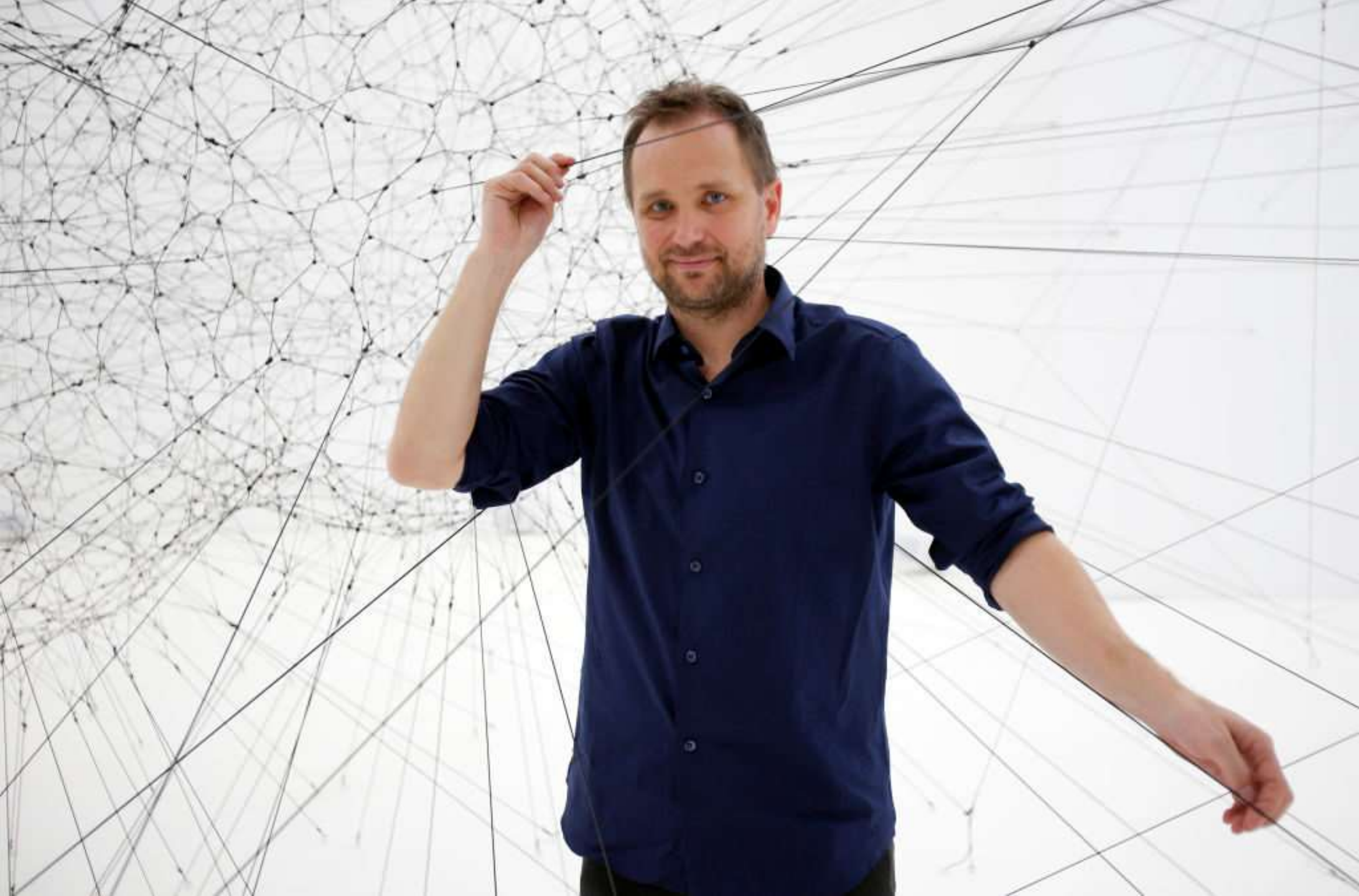
This video originally appeared on [sfmoma.org](https://www.sfmoma.org) as “Tomás Saraceno: Building “future flying cities” with spiders”

- https://www.sfmoma.org/artist/Tom%C3%A1s_Saraceno/ (3.30 mins)









Assignment Suggestions...

- Create your own quipu from different strands of knotted string.
- Draw in the air with string and photograph your work from different perspectives.
- Use a thousand dots in an artwork (or thereabouts)
- Create wearable art inspired by a quipu