

[< Announcements](#)

MIT Museum Unveils Janet Echelman Installation Visualizing the Earth's Climate, From the Last Ice Age to Potential Futures

August 7, 2025

Opening September 18, the installation, commissioned by the MIT Museum as part of an extended collaboration with MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology, brings significant research into artistic practice.

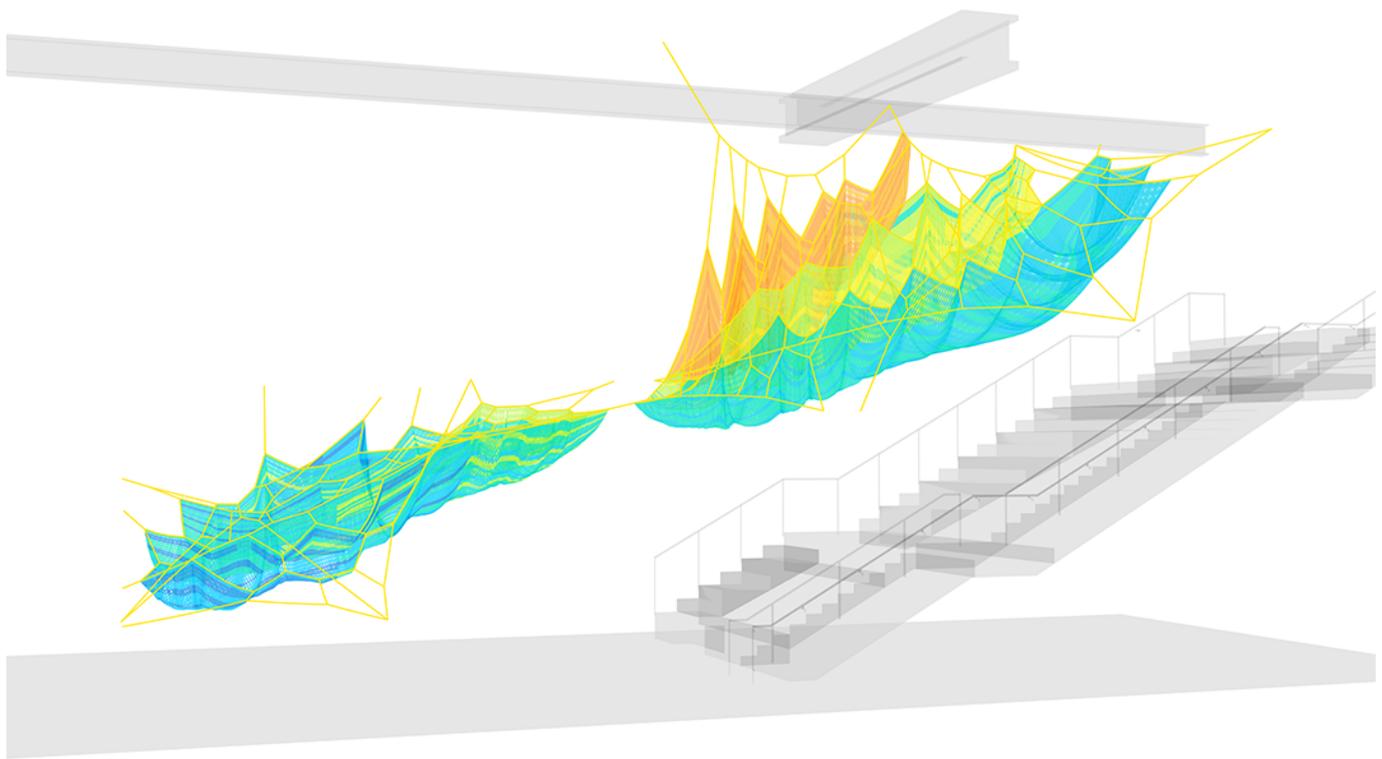
Cambridge, MA, August 7, 2025 — Today, the MIT Museum announces the opening of ***Remembering the Future***, a large-scale installation by the 2022-2024 MIT Distinguished Visiting Artist Janet Echelman, developed during her residency at the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST). Architect, engineer and MIT Associate Professor Caitlin Mueller collaborated with Echelman on its development, creating a new technology which expanded the possibility for geometric complexity of the form. The installation will be on view beginning September 18, 2025, through Fall 2027, in the Museum's lobby, which is free and open to the public.

Visitors to the MIT Museum will be greeted by Echelman's draped, vibrant monumental sculpture inspired by climate data from the last ice age and into multiple potential futures, suspended from the ceiling and cascading above the grand staircase of the MIT Museum's lobby. Constructed from multi-colored fiber which is braided, knotted and hand-spliced to create a three-dimensional form, the immersive artwork greets visitors with its grand scale presiding over the lobby. Featuring a transforming from orange to blue, *Remembering the Future* provides a dramatic gateway into the museum, and when illuminated at night, it creates a sculptural beacon and focal point in MIT's Kendall Square campus.

The title *Remembering the Future* was inspired by the quotation commonly attributed to Søren Kierkegaard: "The most painful state of being is remembering the future, particularly the one you'll never have." As the culmination of three years of dedicated research and collaboration, this site-specific installation explores Earth's climate timeline, translating historical records and possible futures into sculptural form.

This theme is further activated through an interactive twin created by Mueller, that enables visitors to learn about designing lightweight, efficient structures that utilize tension for stability. Mueller's digital kiosk invites visitors to directly engage a version of the technical tools developed by Mueller's Digital Structures group, digitally adjusting *Remembering the Future's* netted ropes, illuminating the engineering forces involved, and highlighting how equilibrium is achieved in real time.

The exhibition includes large-scale video, providing visitors with views of Echelman's civic installations and soft structures on five continents which provide a new model of cityscape forms.



Rendering of Remembering the Future by Janet Echelman; Courtesy of Studio Echelman

The development of the installation was guided by climate scientist MIT Professor Raffaele Ferrari, co-director of the MIT Lorenz Center using an application programming interface that links En-ROADS, which can predict regional changes in climate variables. With a climate model emulator developed as part of MIT's *Bringing Computation to the Climate Challenge* project, *Remembering the Future* leverages this technology to visualize Earth's climate futures.

Remembering the Future is the first in a series of four new exhibitions that launch the MIT Museum's inaugural thematic season, TIME, a year-long focus bringing together programming that provides a conceptual, educational and thoughtful look at our ever-changing understanding and complex relationship with the subject.



Above: Artist Janet Echelman and MIT Associate Professor Caitlin Mueller; Courtesy of Heidi Erickson

The Mark R. Epstein (Class of 1963) Director, MIT Museum Michael John Gorman said: “Janet Echelman’s new work, designed with the aid of Caitlin Mueller’s extraordinary soft structural engineering, is a subtle yet pressing invitation to contemplate our own agency in shaping possible climate futures at a pivotal moment for our planet. Do we really want to remember the future that we will never have? This suspended structure marks the beginning of a new era of investigation for the MIT Museum and invites us to cross the threshold into designing more sustainable futures.”

Artist Janet Echelman said, “The seed for this artwork grew from my own need to contemplate our climate within a larger context of time. This installation is a focal point for silent contemplation. I believe that accepting the magnitude of past and ongoing losses is a step towards gaining agency to shape the future we want. The deep expertise and innovative mindset within the MIT ecosystem were essential to realizing this project. I am especially grateful to the generosity of my collaborators: Caitlin Mueller and the Digital Structures Lab, the MIT Museum and CAST, and the MIT climate science research community.”

Caitlin Mueller, MIT Associate Professor from the Departments of Architecture and of Civil & Environmental Engineering Associate Professor, said, “Collaborating closely with Janet Echelman and her studio has provided a powerful opportunity for our technical research in computational design to develop in original directions driven by artistic intent, with broader engineering and functional applications emerging from this creative process in surprising ways.”

Join us at the MIT Museum for a special celebration for artist Janet Echelman's new installation, Remembering the Future: Reception and Panel Discussion on September 17, 2025, from 6:30 - 8:30pm. Registration required, learn more [here](#).

MEDIA CONTACT:

Sasha Wallinger

sashaw@mit.edu

MIT Museum
314 Main Street
Gambrill Center
Building E-28
Cambridge, MA 02142
(617) 253-5927

Stay in touch    

Subscribe to our newsletter →

[Accessibility](#) 

[Arts@MIT](#) 

Site by Cogapp

