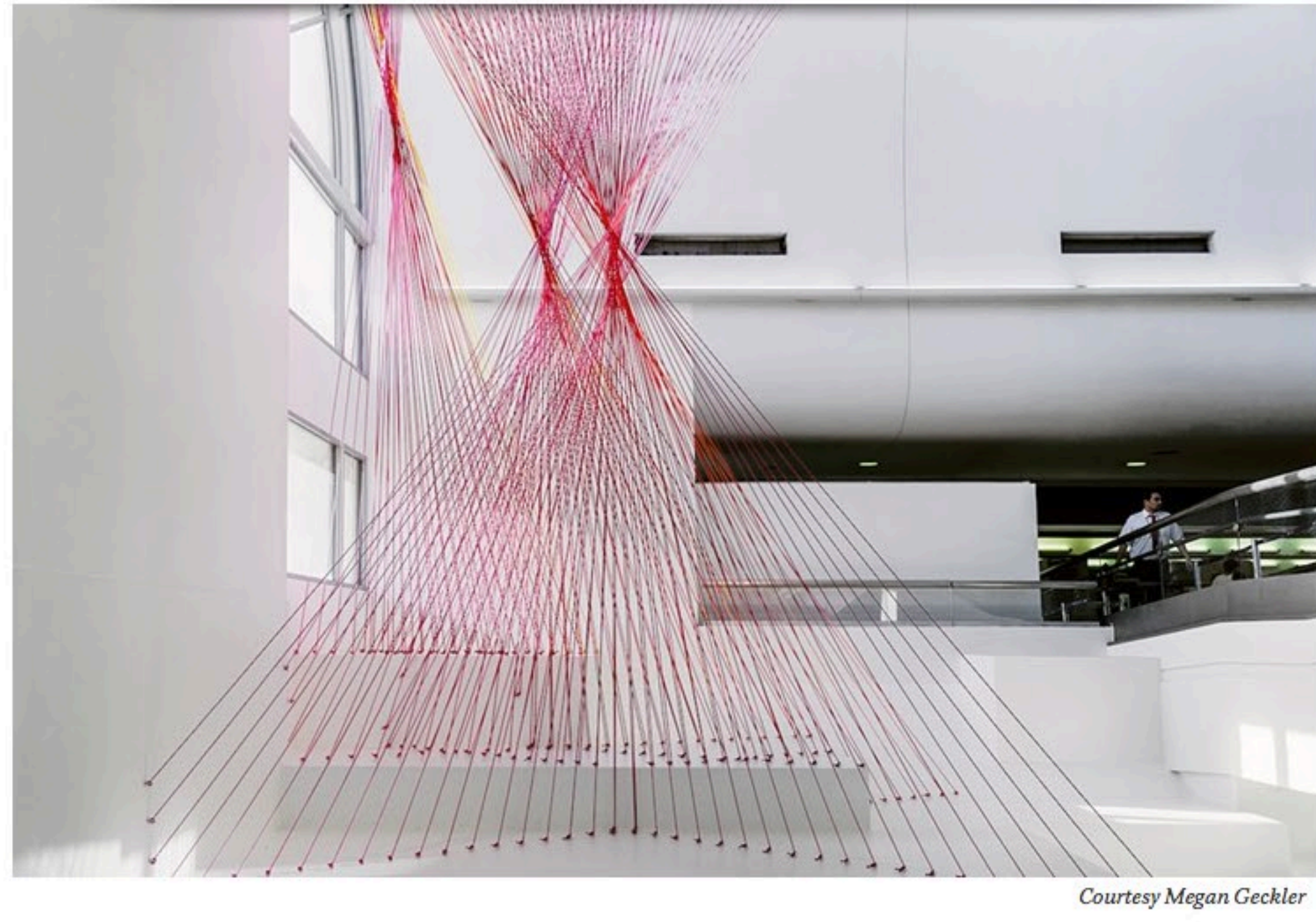


# A New LAX Installation is Meant to Distract You From the Misery of Airport Security

BY EVA RECINOS

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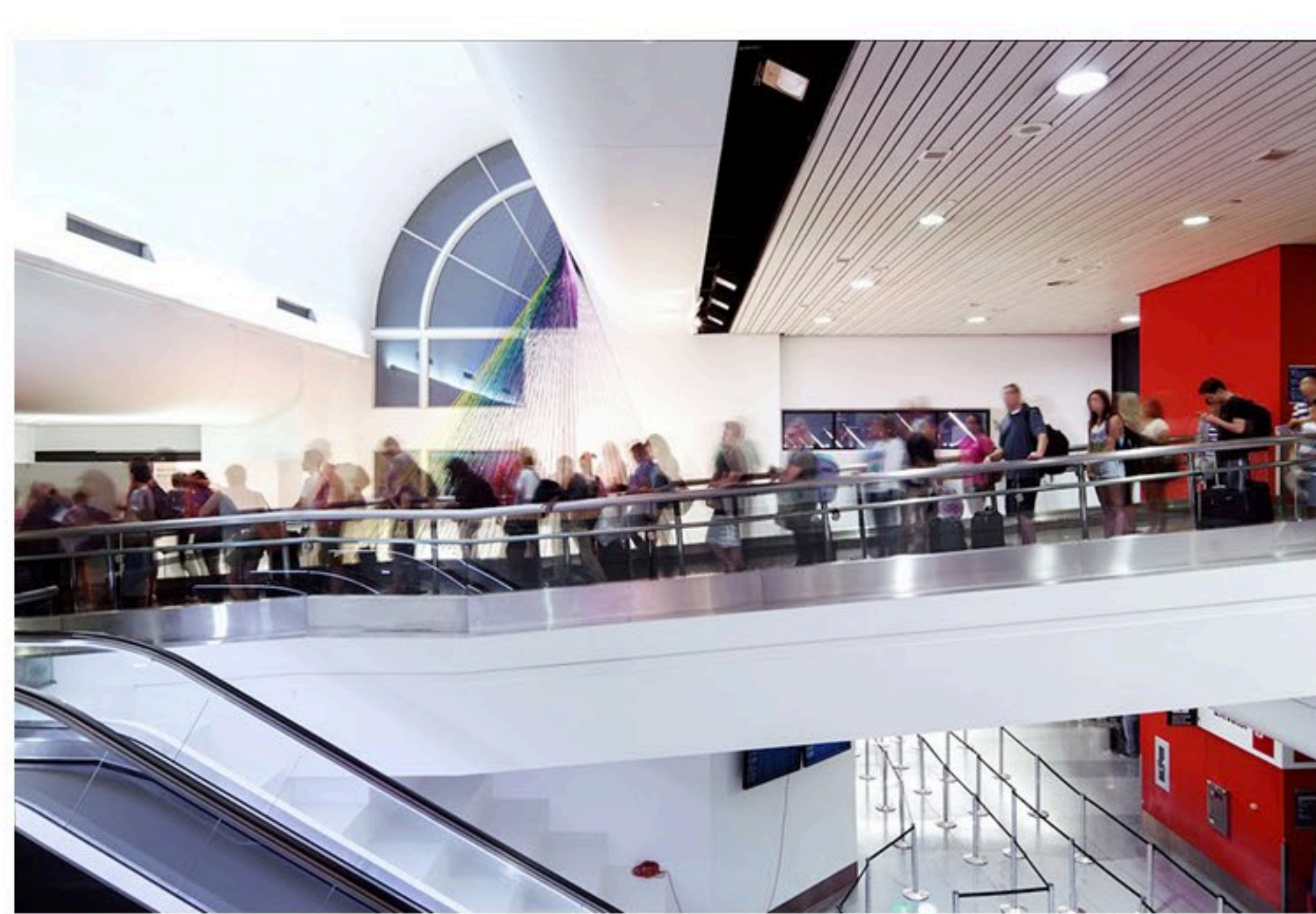
Courtesy Megan Geckler

In the distance between the boarding pass checkpoint and the security line, a traveler's eyes might lock on a few different things: her smartphone, her belongings, other travelers, the line of people ahead putting their shoes back on.

Megan Geckler wanted weary travelers to be able to rest their eyes on something else: a colorful installation that breaks up the otherwise dull visual field of the Terminal 3 TSA checkpoint at LAX. Geckler typically works with flagging tape, weaving different colors of it together to create installations that are playful and visually complex. Just recently, she [displayed a 10-foot piece](#) called *Your escape from patterns your parents designed* at the Barnsdall Art Park.

In 2010, she was awarded an exhibition after the Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) put out a call for proposals. She later spoke with the Art Managers of LAWA about creating another piece.

Soon, she started custom-dyeing 21,000 linear feet of cotton rope for *We've got to cross this great big world somehow*. The rope is dyed 20 different colors, which Geckler did in collaboration with the Dharma Trading Company and Jacquard Products. In order to choose just the right colors, Geckler and team looked at more than 500 unique color formulas.

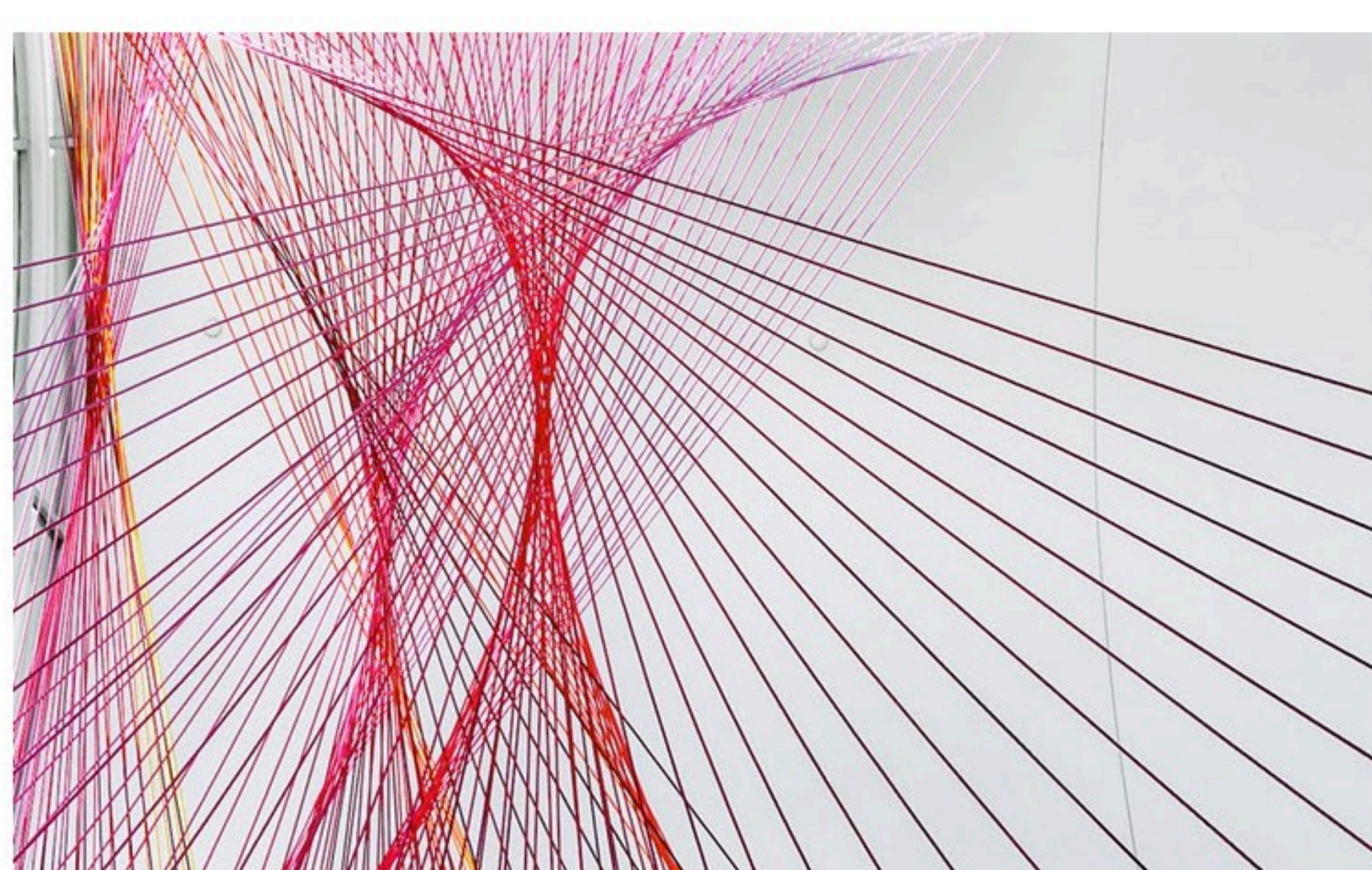


Courtesy Megan Geckler

*We've got to cross this great big world somehow* stands out from its surroundings. The ropes look almost like rays of light at first glance but as travelers wait to move up in the congested line, they can see the many ropes that come together to create this visual effect.

"The goal of this piece was to slow people down, to provide a 'wow factor' that would distract travelers from the stress of traveling," Geckler said in an email. "Especially in the TSA line, traveler anxiety can be very high. You are thinking about the liquids in your carry-on bag, emptying your pockets and wondering if you are going to be able to get through the line on time. I wanted to give people a reason to stop thinking about all of those things and transport them into a colorful world of wonder."

People were especially curious when Geckler and her team were installing the piece, a process that took several weeks. Imagine getting in the security line and seeing a team of people unspooling long pieces of cotton rope and arranging them in dizzying displays of color. In an [Instagram post](#) from five weeks ago, Geckler shows the ropes about to be hoisted to the top of the space before being tied down.

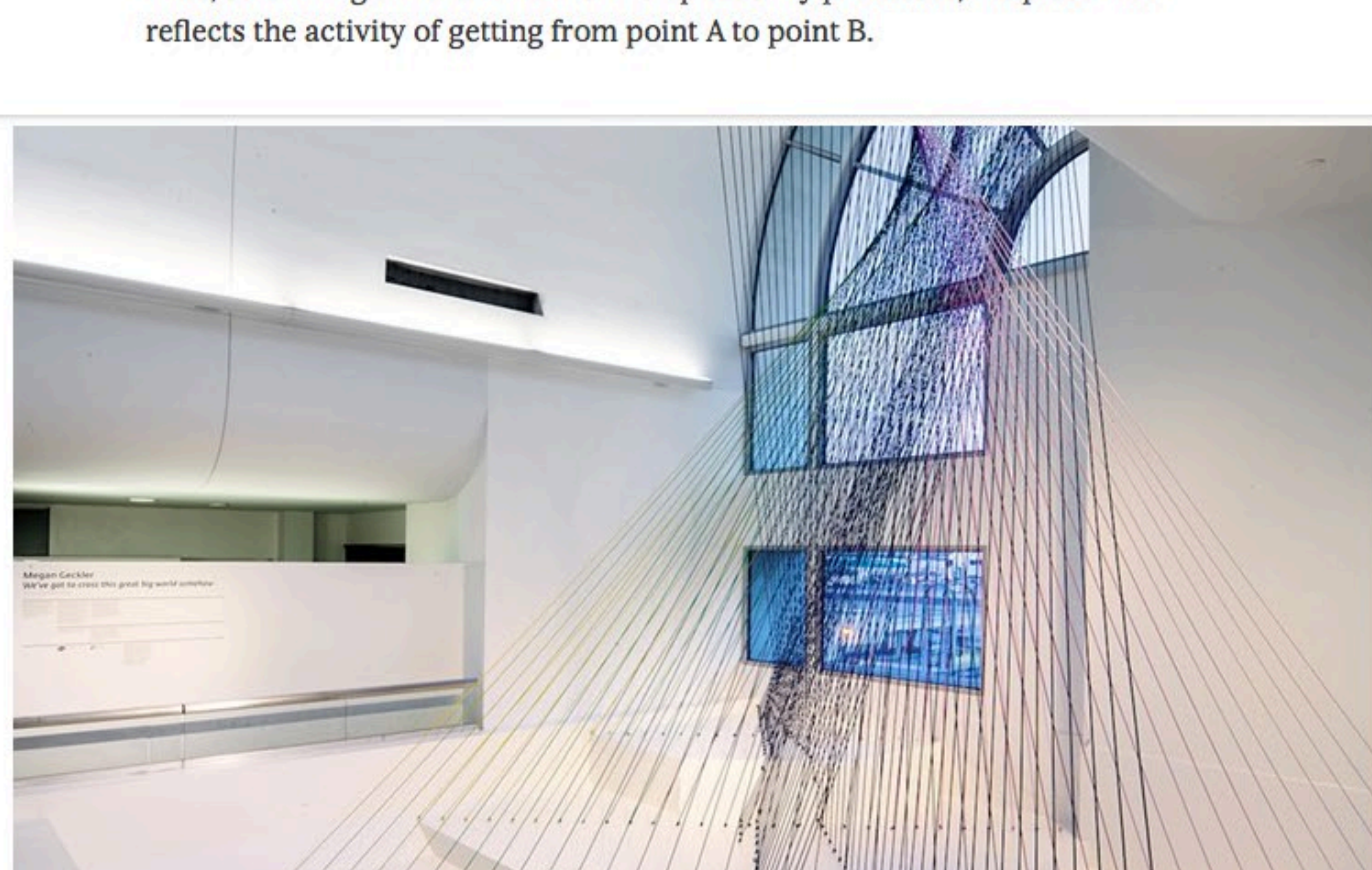


Courtesy Megan Geckler

For Geckler, that made the installation even more satisfying and important. The interactions between travelers and her team were unique to the process of installing a piece in such a high-traffic public place.

"While we were installing, many passengers engaged with the installation team, asking all sorts of questions and offering encouragement and praise," Geckler says. "It's really great, making large works of art directly in front of your audience, engaging them during in the process of creation. That experience is different from working in a gallery or museum because they are normally closed during installation."

The significance of the piece being installed at the airport is not lost on Geckler. Besides seeing the piece as a way to distract travelers from the anxiety of long lines, screaming children and multi-step security processes, the piece also reflects the activity of getting from point A to point B.



"I was thinking a lot about how we illustrate traveling between two points; mainly the way that a line will be drawn between destination points and Xs are used to mark those points," Geckler says. "Using only Xs and lines, I developed a spatial relationship between each platform and the clerestory window above, drawing an X of points from corner to corner on each of the platforms. This was the beginning of the design, and was our point of departure, pun intended."

Large arcing and clerestory windows let in plenty of natural light, which amplifies the color of the cotton ropes. Geckler thought about the space between these windows, walkways and platforms. After the initial design, she and the LAWA team decided to "redesign the platforms in the alcoves on either side" to in turn "increase the span of architectural elements." This made for a larger and much more dynamic piece overall.

The wait time might not go by faster but at least the surroundings are a lot more interested for travelers in that checkpoint. People have been sharing their own snapshots of the piece with #artatlax, making for a separate experience on social media. Once travelers get their shoes back on, at least they've experienced something colorful to keep them going until the next flight.

*"We've got to cross this great big world somehow" is on display until at least July 2018. It is located in the Terminal 3 TSA checkpoint.*