

**Machiko Agano** spins elaborate room-scale webs, often using fishing yarn line. Her wondrous shadow-world works have been highlights of both the 2001's *Textural Space*, and now, mentoring the collaboration with **Anniken Amundsen**, the *Through the Surface* project

**I**f you happened to be in Brighton during the early summer of 2001, you might have happened upon the spectacle of a vast fibre form extending the length of the city's main gallery space, Fabrica. In the underlit ambience of the room, the gentle organic curves and waves of Machiko Agano's unfolding netting were apparent, along with the work's still, calm, sculptural combination of fishing wire, steel wire and handmade paper, an apt echo for its deconsecrated church location.

Agano's site-specific piece stood out as a highlight in the exhibition it was part of – *Textural Space*. In the last year, Agano's work has again been part of a textile exhibition showcasing this Japanese high craft-made art: *Through the Surface*. This time Agano has worked with the Norwegian, though British based, artist Anniken Amundsen, as explained in the accompanying interview (p107). Amundsen's concerns and connections with Agano are referred to, including Amundsen's awakening, while on her mentoring visit, to her Japanese peers receptivity to nature and the natural world. This seemed particularly the case with Agano, who wrote in one of her exhibition catalogues of her attraction to, 'the mysterious shape of nature: patterns made by the wind on desert sands; shapes of eroded rocks on coastal shores, clouds driven across the autumn sun'.\* This sounds like another way of talking about the invisible forces that Agano and Amundsen found as common ground, as discussed in their exhibition's internet diary collaboration. Indeed Agano's spatial textile sculptings seem to make palpably physical these invisible forces, overlapping with her primary relationship with nature.

In a short email correspondence, Agano acknowledges the centrality of nature, while seeing a tangible difference when comparing the central influence of 'natural landforms and reverence for some natural power' in her work to that of certain British land artists – for instance David Nash and Andy Goldsworthy, who have occasionally been related to the Japanese landscape perspective.

'I've never worked from the exact shape of natural landform,' she wrote, 'for I always got the feelings from the places, or feel some invisible power from the land and try to express the natural feelings in an abstract way of thinking for my works. But at the same time, these invisible forces have the primary relationships with my work to nature as you pointed out.' Expanding on this, in response to a question about how central the Shinto spiritual