

## Luminaria Reflection

2013 was my 5th year to attend Luminaria. This time I went not as a spectator, but as a "juried-in" visual artist.



I stayed with my installation and interacted with the crowd. People were amazed, and not only looking at the pieces, but touching them.







I heard adults saying, "I wonder what material that is?" Children would run towards it, touch it and say, "It's plastic...and it's soft!". Most people were drawn to the colorful piece and then touched it. Then they tried to figure out what kind of plastic I used. I would explain to them that I only used plastic bags from newspapers: the

red ones were from the Wall Street Journal, blue and yellow from New York Times and all the others from the San Antonio Express News. I mentioned that it took about 5000 bags which had been collected by the community, mostly by word of mouth or Facebook.



People would just stare at me and ask: "How long did it take you to do this?" I explained that I had 2 months to get this project off the ground. Each panel from start to finish was probably 15 hours. Multiply that by 12 panels and you get 180 hours. The response was always, "You must be very patient."



Several young people asked about a deeper meaning. They wanted to know why I did this and what I wanted to say. I told them that it bugs me when I drive around and see plastic bags hanging in the fences. So I wanted to show something which could be

made with plastic bags. In this instance I used it for weaving, but my great hope is that people would figure out something on their own - that when they slide out their newspaper the next morning, they would see the plastic as something to use and not just throw away.

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I am writing this 36 hrs after the event, still in awe of the whole experience. All of those hours I put into the work (and wondering how it all would play out) were so worth it! I feel deeply touched and gratified by the response of the public.



I'd like to thank everyone who helped and supported me, those who made Luminaria possible, and those who showed up.

*Doerte*