

Crochet as Urban Art: Eva Pachecoâ??s Community Craft

Description



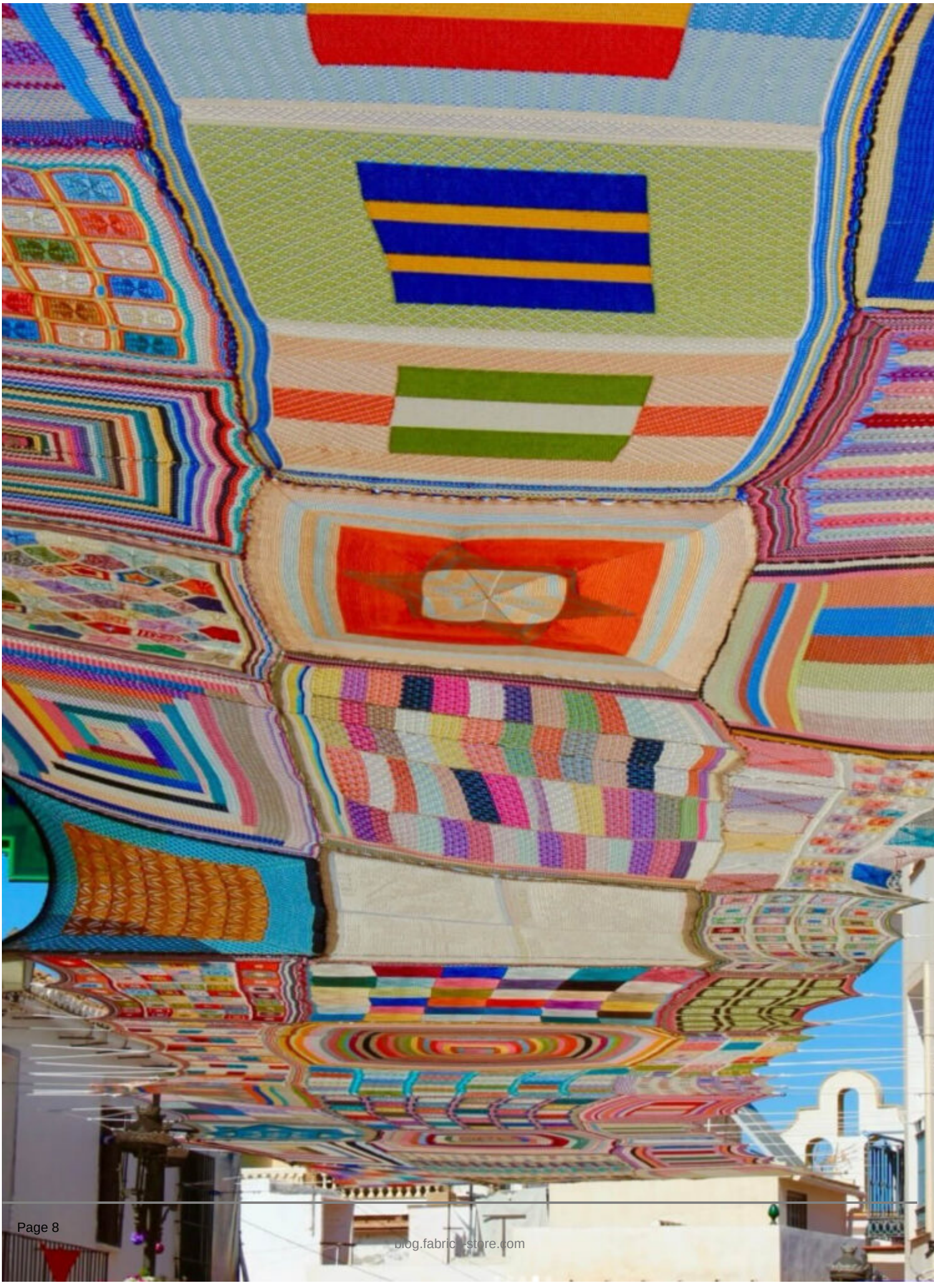
A remarkable enterprise began in 2019, spearheaded by crochet teacher and artist Eva Pacheco; to transform a sunbaked shopping district in the Spanish town of Alhaurin de la Torre near Malaga, with a colossal work of art. Pacheco worked closely with a group of her students and local residents to produce a monumental canopy made from great swathes of colourful woven yarn, which provides much-needed shade for shoppers in the busy, hot street. The project is an ongoing enterprise which is added to each year, demonstrating a playful fusion of art, craft, and practicality that spans more than 500 square metres.



This whimsical and playful, community-driven project came about in 2019, when the local councilâ??s Department of the Environment was seeking a more sustainable and durable solution for a sunshade to replace a large plastic tarp that once stretched across the areaâ??s shopping district. Pachecoâ??s ingenious idea was to bring together a group of highly skilled local women aged 48 to 94, all of whom had been making crocheted blankets for their families for years, and passing their skills from one generation to the next. Together, these women sourced handful upon handful of recycled and leftover fabric yarn, and began creating a richly vibrant, playful, and creative series of crocheted panels.


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When strung together, these hand-made panels can be stretched across large areas, resembling a larger-than-life patchwork quilt, (this time not for warmth, but for shade). The practicalities of the yarn are clearly evident; having it in place reduces the local temperatures by at least 5 degrees Celsius, and it provides a much-needed source of shade during the regionâ??s frequent summer heatwaves. Having this vast sunshade in place also encourages residents and tourists alike to enjoy the commercial district year-round, without fear of overheating. Its impact is also so visually arresting that it has put the local area on the tourist map, and invited worldwide admiration and praise. Several other Spanish cities have since adopted similar community-led initiatives to create woven sunshades, including El Aharal in Seville and La Linea de la Concepcion in the Andalusia Region.



When seen together, either from the buildings above, or below at street level, the panels form a stunning tapestry of colour and life that has literally transformed the area they occupy, creating a veritable feast for the eyes. But it is also worth admiring the skill and craftsmanship that has been devoted to each and every individual panel; each is a true work of art in its own right. The panel designs range from simple or complex abstract geometric patterns to intricate floral designs and even portraits of celebrated public figures.



But perhaps most significant is the community-driven nature of the project, which, at its heart, celebrates the colossal effort of a closely-knit community, and their ongoing spirit of collaboration. The entire project demonstrates what is possible when residents pool together their creativity, skills, and talents; they have successfully transformed the area where they reside in into a living, breathing work of art, as well as improving the living conditions, for them, and everyone who passes through.

CATEGORY

1. DISCIPLINES
2. WOMEN IN ART

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