



WHAT'S NEW

HELP
FEEDBACK
SEARCH
SITEMAP

GEMINI G.E.L.
HENRY MOORE

planning a visit
the collection
exhibitions
online tours
education
programs & events
resources
gallery shop
ngakids

National Gallery of Art

WASHINGTON D.C.

NEWS RELEASE

12 November 2001

For Press Inquiries Only
(202) 842-6353

THE FIRST SURVEY IN THE UNITED STATES ENCOMPASSING FOUR DECADES OF ART BY CHRISTO AND JEANNE-CLAUDE ON VIEW AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

Washington, D.C. -- The first survey mounted in the United States encompassing four decades of work by Christo and Jeanne-Claude will be on view at the National Gallery of Art, East Building, 3 February through 23 June 2002. *Christo and Jeanne-Claude in the Vogel Collection* presents 61 works, including preparatory drawings, collages, scale models, and photographs of the artists' large-scale projects, as well as several of Christo's early packages and wrapped objects. The show draws its contents from the collection of Dorothy and Herbert Vogel at the National Gallery of Art, an important collection of contemporary art acquired in 1991. The show also includes works given and promised to the nation in honor of Dorothy and Herbert Vogel.

"The Christos have created some of the most visually breathtaking works of the 20th century using fabric in, over, through, and around natural and constructed forms," said Earl A. Powell, director, National Gallery of Art. "The Gallery is grateful to Dorothy and Herbert Vogel, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, and a private collector for generously pledging these inspiring works to the nation."

The Exhibition

The variety of media and the breadth of the work offer a unique overview of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's career, tracing the development from the contained forms toward the freer, more open structures that approach tensile architecture. As the Christos have created an individual expression using fabric, their art has transcended the traditional boundaries of painting, drawing, sculpture, and architecture.

The exhibition opens with several of Christo's earliest packages and wrapped objects, including *Package 1961*, a wrapped and intricately bound mass of objects, and *Package 1974*, made for the Vogels, whom Christo and Jeanne-Claude met in 1971. The installation continues with drawings and collages for most of the artists' monumental projects and includes large-scale photographs of the completed works.

The first of the artists' temporary projects in a rural setting, *Wrapped Coast, One Million Square Feet, Little Bay, Sydney, Australia, 1968-69* entailed wrapping a portion of the Australian coastline with one million square feet of erosion control synthetic mesh fabric the color of straw and 35 miles of rope.

Valley Curtain, Grand Hogback, Rifle, Colorado, 1970-72 marked a significant development in the artists' oeuvre, signaling the first time they used fabric in an open, noncontaining manner. *Valley Curtain* was also the first work by the artists situated in the American landscape. For the installation, a bright orange curtain of nylon was suspended in a V-shaped valley between two mountains and set against the blue Colorado sky. The vertical veil format of *Valley Curtain* evolved in a logical, though ambitious, progression into a white, ribbon-like structure (24 miles long and 18 feet high) in *Running Fence, Sonoma and Marin Counties, California, 1972-76*.

In *Wrapped Walk Ways, Loose Park, Kansas City, Missouri, 1977-78*, Christo and Jeanne-Claude covered 2.7 miles of walkways and jogging paths with 135,000 square feet of saffron-colored nylon fabric. This work provided a more intimate experience, for visitors to the park actually walked on the fabric.

Considered for its planarity as their most painterly project, *Surrounded Islands, Biscayne Bay, Greater Miami, Florida, 1980-83* involved floating 6.5 million square feet of bright pink woven polypropylene fabric on the water around 11 islands in Miami's Biscayne Bay. The last project the Christos conceived that involved wrapping a pre-existing structure was *The Pont Neuf Wrapped, Paris, 1975-85*. For this work, the artists covered the 16th-century Pont-Neuf--the oldest bridge in Paris--with 440,000 square feet of golden sandstone polyamide fabric and eight miles of rope.

The only project to introduce more than one color into the landscape was *The Umbrellas Japan--U.S.A., 1984-91*. It was simultaneously installed in two locations on opposite sides of the Pacific Ocean, with 1,340 blue umbrellas in the Ibaraki Prefecture of Japan and 1,760 yellow umbrellas in Los Angeles and Kern Counties, California. These colors represented the respectively wet and dry environments in which they were installed.

Wrapped Reichstag, Berlin, 1971-95, the most ambitious of the artists' wrapped buildings, represents perhaps the greatest challenge and achievement in the career of Christo and Jeanne-Claude. *Wrapped Trees, Fondation Beyeler and Berower Park, Riehen, Switzerland, 1997-98*, an idea Christo and Jeanne-Claude had tried to realize since 1966, was their last completed project.

Three projects are in varying states of progress: *The Mastaba of Abu Dhabi, Project for the United Arab Emirates*, begun in 1977; *The Gates, Project for Central Park, New York City*, begun in 1979; and *Over the River, Project for the Arkansas River, Colorado*, begun in 1992. *The Gates* emphasizes the footpaths in a park setting and underscores the organic design of Frederick Law Olmsted's plan for Central Park. In this project, translucent saffron-colored fabric will be suspended from 15-foot

steel gates along the pathways to form a 26-mile golden passage.

With *Over the River, Project for the Arkansas River, Colorado*, seven miles of fabric panels will be suspended horizontally above the Arkansas River over a 40-mile stretch (with interruptions) from Salida to Cañon City. The project may be seen from above (by motorists on the road that runs along the river and by hikers on the footpaths leading to the water) and from below (by rafters and kayakers on the river).

Christo and Jeanne-Claude

Christo was born Christo Javacheff on 13 June 1935, in Gabrovo, Bulgaria, of a Bulgarian industrialist family. From 1953 to 1956 he studied at the Fine Arts Academy in Sofia. In early 1957 he escaped from Prague to the West, stowing away on a freight car carrying medical supplies to Vienna. There he continued his studies, and by 1958 he had made his way to Paris via Geneva. In Paris he met Jeanne-Claude de Guillebon, who had been born on the same day of the same year in Casablanca, of a French military family. Jeanne-Claude grew up in Tunisia, France, and Switzerland, earning her degrees in Latin and philosophy at the University of Tunis in 1952. In 1964, Christo, Jeanne-Claude, and their son Cyril moved to New York City.

Organization, Curator, and Catalogue

The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and curated by Molly Donovan, assistant curator of modern and contemporary art. It will travel to the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, from 22 September 2002 through 5 January 2003.

An illustrated catalogue will be available in the Gallery Shops and through the Web site at www.nga.gov/shop/shop.htm. To order by phone, call (800) 697-9350. A range of educational programs will be offered in conjunction with the exhibition, including a series of 11 films documenting the work of Christo and Jeanne-Claude shown in chronological order from 6 February through 22 June. To celebrate the opening of the exhibition, Christo and Jeanne-Claude will give a public lecture on Sunday, 3 February at 2 p.m. followed by a book signing.

General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden, located on the National Mall between Third and Ninth Streets at Constitution Avenue, NW, are open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., and are closed on 25 December and 1 January. Admission is free. For general information, call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176. To receive the Gallery's free bimonthly Calendar of Events, call (202) 842-6662 or e-mail calendar@nga.gov

[planning a visit](#) | [the collection](#) | [exhibitions](#) | [online tours](#) | [education](#) | [programs & events](#)
[resources](#) | [gallery shop](#) | [NGAkids](#) | [search](#) | [help](#) | [feedback](#) | [site map](#) | [what's new](#) | [home](#)

Copyright ©2001 National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.