

# Christo & Jeanne Claude

Born 1935. Wrappers of the Reichstag.

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# 1. Introduction

*The following chapter was archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the Wikipedia website at [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org).*

Christo Vladimirov Javacheff (1935–2020) and Jeanne-Claude Denat de Guillebon (1935–2009), known as Christo and Jeanne-Claude, were artists noted for their large-scale, site-specific environmental installations, often large landmarks and landscape elements wrapped in fabric, including the Wrapped Reichstag, The Pont Neuf Wrapped, Running Fence in California, and The Gates in New York City's Central Park.

Born on the same day in Bulgaria and Morocco, respectively, the pair met and married in Paris in the late 1950s. Originally working under Christo's name, they later credited their installations to both "Christo and Jeanne-Claude". Until his own death in 2020, Christo continued to plan and execute projects after Jeanne-Claude's death in 2009.

Their work was typically large, visually impressive, and controversial, often taking years and sometimes decades of careful preparation – including technical solutions, political negotiation, permitting and environmental approval, hearings and public persuasion. The pair refused grants, scholarships, donations or public money, instead financing the work via the sale of their own artwork.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude described the myriad elements that brought the projects to fruition as integral to the artwork itself, and said their projects contained no deeper meaning than their immediate aesthetic impact; their purpose being simply for joy, beauty, and new ways of seeing the familiar.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude met in October 1958 when he was commissioned to paint a portrait of her mother, Précilda de Guillebon. Their first show, in Cologne, 1961, showcased the three types of artworks for which they would be known: wrapped items, oil barrels, and ephemeral, large-scale works. Near Christo's first solo show in Paris, in 1962, the pair blocked an alley with 240 barrels for several hours in a piece called Iron Curtain, a poetic reply to the Berlin Wall.

They developed consistent, longtime terms of their collaboration. They together imagined projects, for which Christo would create sketches and preparatory works that were later sold to fund the resulting installation. Christo and Jeanne-Claude hired assistants to do the work of wrapping the object at hand. They originally worked under the name "Christo" to simplify dealings and their brand, given the difficulties of establishing an artist's reputation and the prejudices against female artists, but they would later retroactively credit their large-scale outdoor works to both "Christo

and Jeanne-Claude". They eventually flew in separate planes such that, in case one crashed, the other could continue their work.

The couple relocated to New York City, the new art world capital, in 1964. Christo began to make Store Fronts, wooden facades made to resemble shop windows, which he continued for four years. His largest piece was shown in the 1968 Documenta 4. In the mid-1960s, they also created Air Packages, inflated and wrapped research balloons. In 1969, at the invite of the museum director Jan van der Marck they wrapped the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art while it remained open. It was panned by the public and ordered to be undone by the fire department, which went unenforced. With the help of Australian collector John Kaldor, Christo and Jeanne-Claude and 100 volunteers wrapped the coast of Sydney's Little Bay as Wrapped Coast, the first piece for Kaldor Public Art Projects.

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## 2. Biography

*The following chapter was archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the School of Life website at [www.theschooloflife.com](http://www.theschooloflife.com).*

Traditionally, artists made small, lovely things. They laboured to render a few square inches of canvas utterly perfect or to chisel a single bit of stone into its most expressive form.



*Caspar David Friedrich in his studio; making a small bit of the world lovely.*

For several centuries, the most common size for art was between three and six feet across. And while artists were articulating their visions across such expanses, the large scale projects were given over wholesale to governments and private developers – who generally operated with much lower ambitions. Governments and the free market made big ugly things rather often.



We're so familiar with this divergence that we tend not to think about it at all. We regard this polarisation as if it was an inevitable fact of nature, rather than what it really is – a cultural failing.



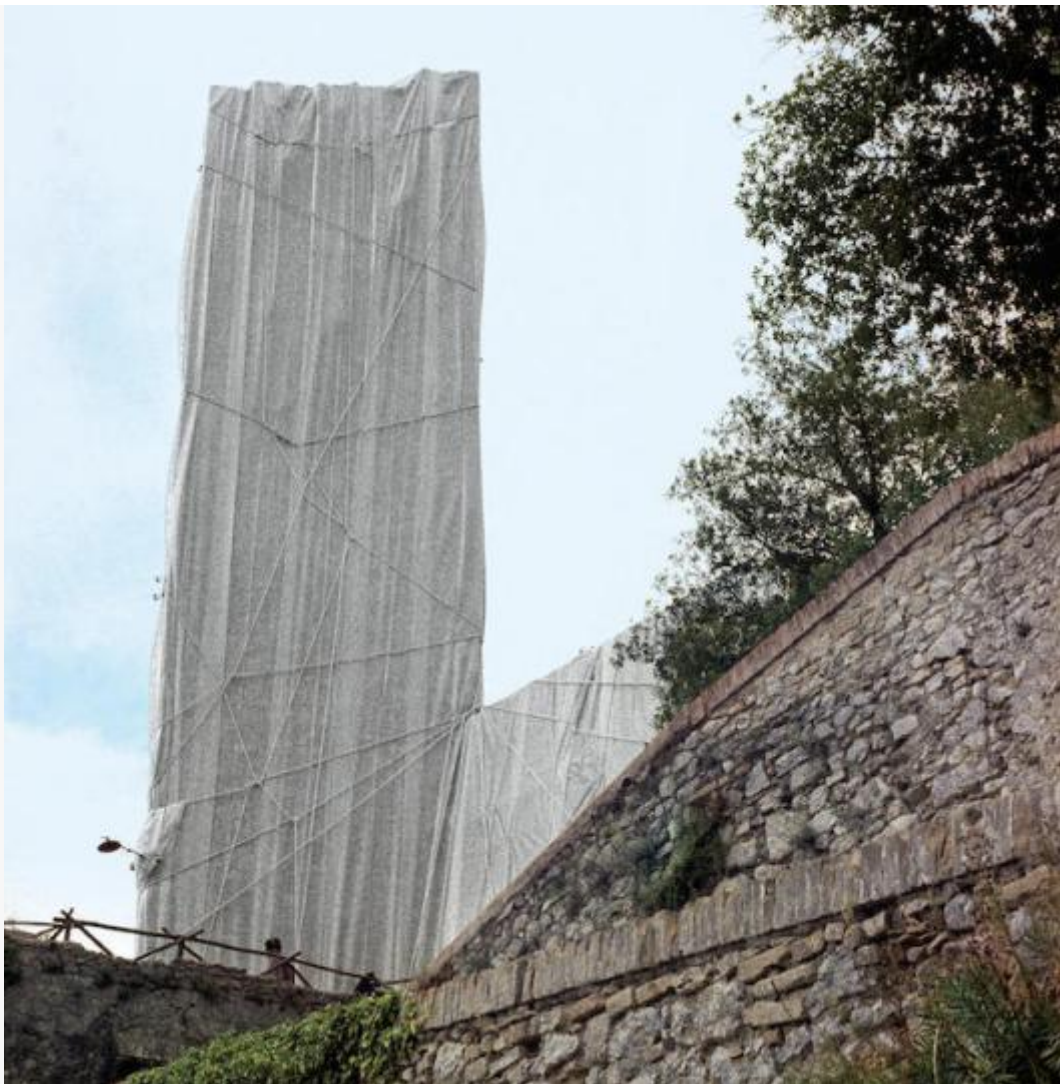
*Christo was born Christo Vladimirov Yavachev in northern Bulgaria in 1935, on the same day that Jeanne-Claude was born in Casablanca.*

It is because of this failing that the artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude (collectively known as Christo) stand out as quite so important. Christo points the way to a new kind of art and a new kind of public life. Christo

have been the artists most ambitious about challenging the idea that artists should work on a tiny easel – and keenest to produce work on a vast industrial scale.

Other artists have experimented more widely and addressed us more intimately. What's distinctive and important about Christo is that they want to make art that can fill the sort of expanses previously associated with airports, motorways, supermarkets, light industry zones, marshalling yards, factories and technology parks.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude started exploring the effect of having an impact on quite big things, around 1968, when they draped a medieval Italian tower.



*Wrapped Medieval Tower, Spoleto, Italy, 1968.*

The idea was pushed much further when they wrapped a whole bit of coastline in Australia.



Next they slung an enormous orange curtain across a valley in Colorado.



Then in 1983 they got around to surrounding some islands off the coast of Florida with 6.5 million square feet (603,870 square meters) of floating pink woven polypropylene fabric.



They then wrapped the Pont Neuf in Paris.





And in 1991, in a simultaneously project, installed thousands of umbrellas for forty miles along two valleys, one in the US and one in Japan.



*Umbrella Project, USA and Japan 1991.*



*Wrapped Reichstag, 1995.*

And in 1995, they carried out a monumental project in Berlin. They veiled the German Reichstag, which was the traditional seat of national authority and also the focus on intensely painful memories because of its association with the rise of the Nazi party. And then they spectacularly *unwrapped* it in an act of national renewal. Christo has gone far beyond even traditional architecture, the standard next step up from art: they occupy a space

normally occupied by city planners or civil engineers constructing a container port or landscape architects laying out parkland around a town.

Christo can look very innovative, but in a way their conception of art is deeply traditional. What they mean by art is making beautiful things. They might be wrapping things or surrounding them, or marking routes with flags and banners, but what guides them is the search to make the world more beautiful. Only not just a little bit at a time. The scale of their efforts to make the world beautiful has been stupendous – and inspiring.



*Curtain Valley, 1972.*

Curtain Valley, catching the sunlight, was visible for miles. Millions of people wandered through the enchantingly remade Central Park.





*The Gates, Central Park, New York City, 2005.*

Perhaps the biggest thing Christo has done, however, is to indicate a direction of travel, which doesn't stop with the great things they themselves happen to have done.

One key move is not to stop with imagining something wonderful but to work out how to make the imagined thing come real. Rather than picture a revitalised central Park, they revitalised it. Rather than imagine Germany renewing its feelings about its historic centre of government, they made it happen. The ideal task of the artist isn't just to dream of a better world, or complain about current failures (though both are honourable); rather it is to actually make the world finer and more elegant.

The primary identity of Christo is an artist. But to operate realistically on a large scale, they needed to deploy many of the skills traditionally associated with business and which we think of as the domain of the entrepreneur.



*One Million Square Feet, Little Bay, Sydney, Australia 1969.*



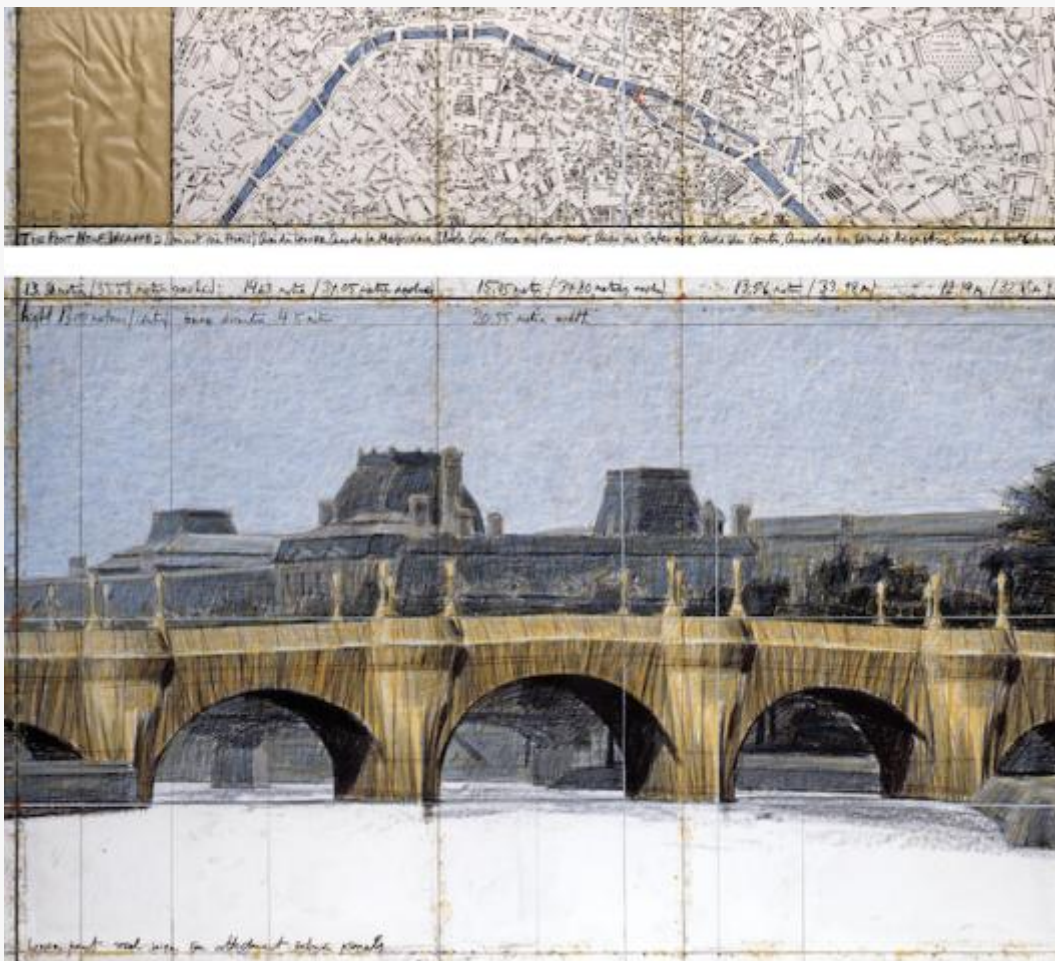
*Heavy engineering: the Japanese umbrella project.*

Christo had to negotiate with city councils and governments; they had to draw up business plans, arrange large scale finance, employ the talents and time of hundreds even thousands of people, coordinate vast efforts and deal

with millions of users or visitors. And all the while, they held on to the high ambitions associated with being an artist.

Furthermore, crucially, Christo worked out how make a profit while doing all this. Profit wasn't the primary goal. But profitability meant it was possible to go onto the next project (they have never received private or public subsidy). Christo has made a fortune out of what they have been doing.

The way they made money was fascinating: they financed a project by selling the plans and drawings for it. It was like Plato financing a new state by selling copies of the Republic (except, unlike Plato, Christo made their utopia happen).



*The plan financed the real work.*

Christo is a key exemplar of the crucial proposition that the creation of beauty isn't a commercial luxury, but potentially a central plank of good commerce. They hint at a tremendous ideal: if making something beautiful could become a major way of increasing shareholder value, then the immense forces of investment could start to line up in the right direction.

Christo is showing us that ideally artists should absorb the best qualities of business. Rather than seeing such qualities as opposed to what they stand for artists, following Christo's lead, should see these as great enabling capacities, which help them fulfil their beautifying mission to the world. In the future, an artist might spend as much time being trained by the Wharton School of Business or INSEAD as by the Royal College of Art.

Christo has never got to build an airport or a supermarket or lay out a new city – but the ideal next version of them will.

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### 3. Timeline

*The following chapter was archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the Christo website at [www.chrisojeaneclaude.net](http://www.chrisojeaneclaude.net).*

Christo was born on June 13, 1935 in Gabrovo, Bulgaria. He left Bulgaria in 1956, first to Prague, Czechoslovakia, and then escaped to Vienna, Austria, in 1957, then moved to Geneva, Switzerland. In 1958, Christo went to Paris, where he met Jeanne-Claude Denat de Guillebon, not only his wife but life partner in the creation of monumental environmental works of art. Jeanne-Claude passed away on November 18, 2009. Christo died on May 31, 2020 at his home in New York City, where he lived for 56 years.

From early wrapped objects to monumental outdoor projects, Christo and Jeanne-Claude's artwork transcended the traditional bounds of painting, sculpture, and architecture. Some of their work included *Wrapped Coast* near Sydney (1968–69), *Valley Curtain* in Colorado (1970–72), *Running Fence* in California (1972–76), *Surrounded Islands* in Miami (1980–83), *The Pont Neuf Wrapped* in Paris (1975–85), *The Umbrellas* in Japan and California (1984–91), *Wrapped Reichstag* in Berlin (1972–95), *The Gates* in New York's Central Park (1979–2005), *The Floating Piers* at Italy's Lake Iseo (2014–16), and *The London Mastaba* on London's Serpentine Lake (2016–18).



*Christo (left) and his two brothers Stefan (center) and Anani (right) Gabrovo, 1942.*



*Jeanne-Claude holding her baby sister Joyce-May Alazrachi, Casablanca, 1939.*

1935

Christo is born as Christo Vladimirov Javacheff on June 13, 1935, in Gabrovo, of a Bulgarian industrialist family.

Jeanne-Claude is born as Jeanne-Claude Marie Denat on the very same day in Casablanca, of a French military family.

1940s

Encouraged by his mother, who is a former secretary to the director of Sofia National Academy of Art, Christo begins to take drawing and painting lessons at the age of six.





*Christo at age 14, on the far left, during a drawing lesson. Gabrovo, 1949.*

1953

After being educated in Morocco, France, Switzerland, and Tunisia, Jeanne-Claude receives her baccalaureate degree and, subsequently, starts to train as a stewardess for Air France.

1953–56

Christo studies at the National Academy of Art in Sofia under the doctrine of Socialist Realism, which distances him from any modern western art. He takes courses in drawing, painting, sculpture, and architecture.

1956

In fall, Christo obtains permission to visit relatives in Czechoslovakia. In Prague, he discovers works by Picasso and Miró for the first time. Equipped with a sketchbook, Christo starts to explore the city, resulting in dozens of drawings in pencil and oil on paper.

1957

When the Hungarian Revolution breaks out, Christo decides not to return to Bulgaria. Instead, he bribes a railway employee and flees to Vienna in a sealed freight car on January 10, 1957. To avoid being sent to a refugee camp, Christo enrolls at Vienna's Academy of Fine Arts. In October, a temporary Swiss visa brings him to Geneva. In both Vienna and Geneva, Christo supports himself by washing cars and dishes, as well as painting classical portraits of wealthy society ladies, which he signs with his family name, "Javacheff."

1958

By March, Christo has succeeded in obtaining a French visa and saved enough money to go to Paris, where he takes a room at 8, rue Quentin Bauchart. A maid's room at 14, rue de Saint-Sénoch serves as his studio.



*Christo in his seventh floor studio at 14, rue de Saint-Sénoch. Paris, 1962.*

Shortly after his arrival, Christo becomes friends with Lourdes Castro and René Bertholo, a Portuguese artist couple and founders of the KWY group and magazine (named after the three letters that don't exist in the Portuguese alphabet), which Christo joins the following year. Having no manifesto, all members have in common the fact that they escaped from their countries for political reasons.

In summer, Christo travels to Brussels for the World's Fair, where he sees works by the American avant-garde for the very first time in the exhibition 50 ans d'art moderne at the Palais International des Beaux-Arts. At the same time, Christo's studio begins to fill with inexpensive or free items—crates, boxes, cans, barrels, and discarded everyday objects that he wraps with fabric and rope.

In early October, Christo meets Jeanne-Claude when he is doing portraits of her family. At the end of the year, Christo moves into a small one-room bachelor's apartment at 24, rue Saint-Louis en l'Île. The cellar of Jeanne-Claude's apartment at 4, avenue Raymond Poincaré serves as a storeroom.

1960

Needing even more space, Christo moves into a second studio in Gentilly, a suburb of Paris. The spacious garage owned by his friend, the artist Jan Voss, is in an industrial area and borders on a recycling yard for used oil drums. The new studio makes it possible for Christo to create large-scale works as well, for the first time.

On May 11, Jeanne-Claude gives birth to her son Cyril.

1961

At the end of July, Christo's first solo exhibition opens at Galerie Haro Lauhus in Cologne. On this occasion, Christo and Jeanne-Claude also realize Dockside Packages and Stacked Oil Barrels at Cologne harbor, constructed from rolls of paper and oil barrels wrapped with tarpaulin and rope. The project is Christo and Jeanne-Claude's first collaboration and the artists' first temporary outdoor environmental work of art.



*Christo at Dockside Packages. Cologne, 1961.*



*Wall of Oil Barrels—The Iron Curtain, Rue Visconti, Paris, 1961-62.*

During Christo's time in Germany, construction of the Berlin Wall begins. Back in Paris, Christo and Jeanne-Claude propose to erect a Wall of Oil Barrels blocking Rue Visconti, one of Paris's narrowest streets. Although, the artists never receive a response to their official application from the city's authorities, they realize the project illegally the following year on the occasion of Christo's solo exhibition at Galerie J.

1962

In January, Christo wraps a naked woman in the apartment of his artist friend Yves Klein. The work is repeated on several occasions during the following years.

During his exhibition at Galerie J in Paris, Christo shows, for the first time, his 1961 study Project for a Wrapped Public Building. Art critic Pierre Restany calls Christo the "architectural visionary of Nouveau Réalisme."

Between 1961 and 1963, Christo and Jeanne-Claude suggest to wrap two public buildings in Paris, the École Militaire (the headquarters of Jeanne-Claude's stepfather, General Jacques de Guillebon) and the Arc de Triomphe. Since Christo's studio is located in close proximity to the triumphal arch, the iconic monument is an obvious choice as Christo walks past it almost every day. However, the artists do not apply for an official permit.

On November 28, Christo and Jeanne-Claude get married at the Paris City Hall. Pierre Restany and Janine de Goldschmidt are the witnesses.

1963

To prepare his exhibition at Galerie Schmela in Düsseldorf, Germany, Christo temporarily uses the studio of his artist friend Günther Uecker. While being in Germany, Christo and Jeanne-Claude realize several temporary sculptures: Wrapped Volkswagen, Wrapped Woman, and Wrapped Mannequins.



*Christo and Jeanne-Claude in the courtyard of Christo's temporary studio at Hüttenstraße 104 with "Wrapped Car (1963)," realized on the occasion of his solo exhibition at Galerie Schmela. Düsseldorf, February 19, 1963.*

In November, Christo wraps his very first monument, one of the sculptures in the garden of the Villa Borghese in Rome, Italy. Only three months later, he also wraps one of the gilded statues on the Esplanade du Trocadéro in Paris, which is around the corner of Jeanne-Claude's apartment. Both works are done without permission.

In the course of the following years, Christo and Jeanne-Claude try to expand the concept of a Wrapped Monument to a much bigger scale, resulting in numerous proposals for various cities across Europe.

1964

In February, Christo and Jeanne-Claude arrive in New York on board of the SS France. They live at the Chelsea Hotel and move into an abandoned 19th-century building in SoHo in December.



*Christo and Jeanne-Claude in their one-room apartment at the Chelsea Hotel. New York City, 1964.*



*Christo and Jeanne-Claude in his studio with "Green Store Front (1964)," which was built for a group show at the Leo Castelli Gallery in May 1964. New York City, 1966*

Shortly after seeing the skyline of downtown Manhattan from the bow of the ship, Christo does the first collages of Two Lower Manhattan Wrapped Buildings, #2 Broadway and #20 Exchange Place. Later, when Christo and Jeanne-Claude meet with the owners to request permission to realize the project, the answers are negative. Fascinated by the city's architecture, Christo starts his Store Front series, made out of architectural elements found in scrap heaps and the remnants of demolished buildings. The display windows of the suggested stores are draped with fabric or wrapping paper. Christo's Store Fronts series shows the artists' growing interest in altering whole rooms and environments.

1966

Christo's first personal museum exhibition opens at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, the Netherlands. Christo initially plans to wrap the building's clock tower. However, after the museum's architect declines, he realizes *Air Package*, a giant rubberized canvas balloon wrapped in polyethylene and rope, suspended above the museum's entrance.

For his exhibition at the Van Abbemuseum, Christo also creates his first *Wrapped Tree*. With its roots wrapped in fabric and branches wrapped in polyethylene, the tree is placed inside the museum, where it is shown on a pedestal. Returning from Eindhoven, Christo and Jeanne-Claude expand the idea of a *Wrapped Tree*, proposing to wrap the crowns of about forty live trees near the Saint Louis Art Museum in Forest Park, Missouri. The artists plan to wrap the trees in winter, when they are leafless and dormant, but the project falls through because the university that owns the park opposes it.



*Christo and Jeanne-Claude installing 42,390 Cubic Feet Package. Minneapolis, 1966.*



In the autumn, the artists realize 42,390 Cubic Feet Package, an air package filled with 2,800 colored balloons, lifted by helicopter above the lawn of the Minneapolis School of Art, Minnesota.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude propose to wrap the monument to Louis XIII on Place des Vosges during the annual Festival du Marais. The statue is only a few minutes' walk away from Christo's former apartment at 24, rue Saint-Louis en l'Île. However, the project is never realized.

The oldest bridge in Rome, the Ponte Sant'Angelo, which crosses the Tiber River, near the Vatican, is the first one Christo and Jeanne-Claude propose to wrap. At the same time, they also have their first proposal for a wrapped museum, the Galleria Nazionale. For both projects, the artists fail to get permission.

In the course of the following years, Christo and Jeanne-Claude propose several projects for the construction of Mastaba structures—monumental sculptures made from horizontally stacked oil barrels—in New York's Central Park (1967), Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome (1967–68), Fondation Maeght in Saint-Paul de Vence (1967–68), documenta IV in Kassel (1967–68), New York's Museum of Modern Art (1968), and the city of Houston, Texas (1969–74).

1968

Friend and art collector John Powers introduces Christo and Jeanne-Claude to the chairman of the board of Allied Chemical Corporation, hoping to get permission to wrap the Allied Chemical Tower, No. 1 Times Square, in Manhattan, the former headquarters of The New York Times. After a few weeks of negotiations, the board refuses to allow the artists to wrap the building.

After their attempt to wrap the Whitney Museum fails, Christo and Jeanne-Claude propose various projects for The Museum of Modern Art in New York City, to be realized all at the same time. In addition to wrapping the museum's building and sculpture garden, the artists plan to build a Wall of Oil Barrels outside the museum closing 53rd Street for both traffic and pedestrians. Though the museum's chief curator, William S. Rubin, initiates efforts to obtain permission to wrap the building, the insurance company declines.

In conjunction with the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy, Christo and Jeanne-Claude almost succeed to wrap the city's opera house, Teatro Nuovo, but fire laws finally prevent the artists from wrapping the building.

Instead, Jeanne-Claude chooses to wrap a medieval tower and a baroque fountain at the market place.



*Christo and Jeanne-Claude at Wrapped Fountain, Spoleto, Italy, 1968.*

Christo, at the very same time, is working in Bern, Switzerland, wrapping the city's Kunsthalle with 2,400 square meters of reinforced polyethylene, and three kilometers of nylon rope. The museum is the first public building wrapped by Christo and Jeanne-Claude. Because of the simultaneous timing of the two projects in Italy and Switzerland, Christo never sees the Wrapped Medieval Tower and the Wrapped Fountain in Spoleto, while Jeanne-Claude never sees the Wrapped Kunsthalle in Bern.



*Installation of 5,600 Cubicmeter Package (second skin). Kassel, 1968.*



*Christo during the installation of Wrapped Kunsthalle. Bern, 1968.*

That same summer, together, they complete the 5,600 Cubicmeter Package in Kassel, Germany, as part of documenta IV. The 85-meter-high air package is then the largest ever inflated structure without a skeleton.

1969

Realization of Wrapped Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 1968–69. The building is covered with 930 square meters of tarpaulin and one kilometer of Manila rope. In conjunction with the wrapping of the museum, the artists also make a complementary work for the interior, Wrapped Floor and Stairway.



*Wrapped Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 1968-69.*

For intermedia 69, a Fluxus festival in Heidelberg, Germany, Christo and Jeanne-Claude propose to wrap the city's castle and dormitory. After permission is denied, the artists decide to wrap the American Institute's building instead. However, a gale and several protests prevent the installation from being completed, and the project remains unfinished.

In May, Christo and Jeanne-Claude realize *Wrapped Floor and Stairway*, an indoor installation at Wide White Space Gallery in Antwerp, Belgium. The entire floor of the gallery, which is emptied of everything and then painted white, as well as the Flemish staircase with its banister and handrail are covered with cotton drop cloths.

Realization of *Wrapped Coast*, Little Bay, Sydney, Australia, 1968–69. With 93,000 square meters of fabric and 56 kilometers of rope, the artists shroud a 2.4-kilometer-long section of the Australian coastline.



Christo directing work at the *Wrapped Coast* project. Little Bay, 1969.

On their way to Australia, Christo and Jeanne-Claude visit Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Japan, where they become aware of the ceremonial use of gardens, inspiring them to create *Wrapped Walk Ways*, a two-part project linking Europe and Japan. The artists unsuccessfully try to obtain permission from the Japanese authorities for Ueno Park in Tokyo, and from the Dutch authorities for Sonsbeek Park in Arnhem.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude also start to negotiate permission for wrapping the 380 trees bordering the Avenue des Champs-Élysées and the Rond Point in Paris. The project is denied by Maurice Papon, Prefect of Paris, and the city decides instead to decorate the trees with electric Christmas lights.

1970

Realization of Wrapped Monuments, Milano, Italy: Wrapped Monument to Vittorio Emanuele II on Piazza del Duomo and Wrapped Monument to Leonardo da Vinci on Piazza della Scala. The two wrapped monuments can be seen from the center of the Galleria, simultaneously, at each extremity of the XIX-century grand vaulted pedestrian shopping passageway.



*Wrapped Monument to Vittorio Emanuele II, Piazza del Duomo, Milan, Italy, 1970.*

Two other projects remain unrealized: Arco della Pace Wrapped and Curtains for La Rotonda, which would have involved fabric curtains closing the nearly 100 arches of the late baroque Rotonda della Besana.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude propose a three-part project for the city of Monschau, Germany: Wrapped Castle, Wrapped Tower and Curtains for Monschau. With the help of their friend, the art critic Willi Bongard, the artists obtain permission to realize the project the following year.

However, because the Valley Curtain project, which also started in 1970, is advancing very fast, the artists abandon the Monschau project, which is carried out by Willi Bongard instead.



*Christo and Jeanne-Claude in their living room. New York City, 1970.*

1971

Realization of *Wrapped Floors, Wrapped Stairway, Covered Windows and Wrapped Walk Ways*, Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, Germany, 1971. The building's floors and stairway are covered with cotton drop cloths, the windows with brown wrapping paper. At the same time, the artists realize a small version of their 1969 idea for Japan and the Netherlands by wrapping the walkways in the garden of the museum.

Ten years after their initial idea to wrap a public building, Christo and Jeanne-Claude propose to realize *Wrapped Reichstag, Project for Berlin*. Coming from a communist country, Christo has a special relationship to Berlin ever since, then a divided city, where East and West meet. The Reichstag building, at that time, is situated on the border of the British and Soviet sector.

1972

Christo and Jeanne-Claude propose to realize another project in Berlin, *Curtains for West Berlin*, blocking the view of the Berlin Wall. When the artists realize that the project could only be seen in the western part of the city, they abandon the idea and fully concentrate on the Reichstag project.



The idea of a fence composed of hundreds of fabric panels stretched along steel poles is finally relocated to the rural areas of Sonoma and Marin Counties, near San Francisco, California.

Realization of Valley Curtain, Rifle, Colorado, 1970–72. A giant orange curtain is installed between two Colorado mountain slopes, spanning 380 meters and made from 18,600 square meters of woven nylon fabric.



*Valley Curtain, Rifle, Colorado, 1970-72.*

Christo and Jeanne-Claude propose to wrap the Pont Alexandre III in Paris but soon abandon the idea, because the towerless one-arch bridge offers a profile, which the artists consider too skinny, and it also is not really used by pedestrians.

1973

After their unsuccessful attempt to realize the Texas Mastaba, Christo and Jeanne-Claude propose a smaller version in the middle of a parking lot that is planned to be built near the Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo, the Netherlands, which owns a large collection of Christo's works. Again, the idea falls through.

1974

Christo and Jeanne-Claude fail to get permission for a three-part project in Geneva: Wrapped Monument to Général Dufour; Le Jet d'Eau Wrapped; and Wrapped Monument to Calvin, Beze, Knox and Farel—Le Mur des

Réformateurs. Christo lived in Geneva for five months, between October 1957 and March 1958, before he moved to Paris.

Realization of *The Wall—Wrapped Roman Wall*, Via Veneto and Villa Borghese, Rome, Italy, 1973–74. A 250-meter long section of the Aurelian Walls in Rome is wrapped with woven polypropylene fabric and Dacron rope.



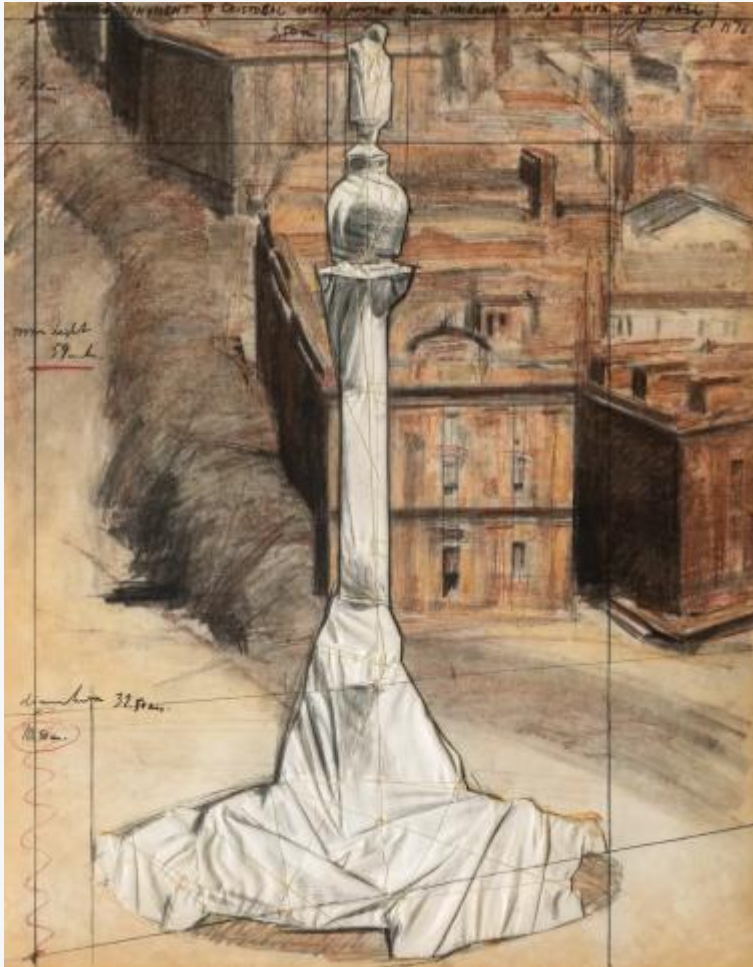
*Wrapped Roman Wall, Via Veneto and Villa Borghese, Rome, Italy, 1973-74.*



*Christo working on a preparatory collage for Running Fence. New York City, 1974.*

1975

Christo and Jeanne-Claude propose to wrap Barcelona's Fontana de Jujol, but soon abandon the idea and draw their attention to a more prominent landmark, the 60-meter-high monument to Christopher Columbus. In 1984, after having received two refusals, the Mayor of Barcelona, Pasqual Maragall, gives Christo and Jeanne-Claude permission to realize the project. However, because the idea of a Wrapped Monument is no longer in their hearts, Christo and Jeanne-Claude decide not to complete the project.



*Wrapped Monument to Cristobal Colón (Project for Barcelona) Collage 1976. Pencil, charcoal, pastel, fabric, and twine.*

In 1975, Christo and Jeanne-Claude finally decide to wrap the Pont-Neuf, the oldest bridge in Paris. The project is realized ten years later.

1976

After Christo and Jeanne-Claude's projects for the Arc de Triomphe in Paris in the early 1960s and the Arco della Pace in Milan in 1970 both did not succeed, the Puerta de Alcalà in Madrid is the third and last arch they propose to wrap. Again, the project fails.

While being in Vienna for the opening of the documentation exhibition about The Wall—Wrapped Roman Wall at the Museum of the 20th Century, Christo and Jeanne-Claude become aware of the city's numerous indestructible reinforced concrete air raid defense towers, built during the Second World War. Back home, Christo creates several works proposing to wrap the tower in Esterhazy Park, but the authorities refuse the permit.

The 1969 idea of the two-park project for Japan and the Netherlands having been abandoned, Christo and Jeanne-Claude make another attempt to do a large-scale Wrapped Walk Ways, this time in Dublin, Ireland, in St. Stephen's Green, a landmark park in the city center. Again, the authorities refuse the permit.

Realization of Running Fence, Sonoma and Marin Counties, California, 1972–76. The 5.5-meter-high fence, which is made from 200,000 square meters of heavy white woven nylon fabric, stretches across 40 kilometers of rolling hills before dropping down to the Pacific Ocean at Bodega Bay.



*Christo and Jeanne-Claude at Running Fence. California, 1976.*

Five years after his idea for wrapping the Reichstag building, Christo visits Berlin for the very first time starting to negotiate permission. In May 1977, the President of the Bundestag, Karl Carstens, announces that he rejects the idea. Permission is again refused in 1981 and 1987 by Carsten's successors Richard Stücklen and Philipp Jenninger.



*Christo and Jeanne-Claude discuss the Wrapped Reichstag project with Willy Brandt, former Chancellor of West Germany, at their home in New York City, October 04, 1981.*

1977

After both the Texas and Otterlo Mastabas fell through, Christo and Jeanne-Claude relocate the project from urban to rural space, proposing to erect The Mastaba of Abu Dhabi in the desert of the United Arab Emirates. This project is still in progress today.

1978

Wrapped Walk Ways is finally realized in Kansas City, Missouri, in Jacob Loose Park, as a single work, involving 12,500 square meters of saffron-colored nylon fabric covering four kilometers of formal garden walkways and jogging paths.



*Wrapped Walk Ways, Jacob Loose Park, Kansas City, Missouri, 1977-78.*

The idea of creating a two-part project comes to fruition in 1991 when Christo and Jeanne-Claude realize *The Umbrellas, Japan—USA, 1984–91*.

1979



*Jeanne-Claude introduces *The Gates* project to the members of Community Board #7, one of five community boards adjacent to Central Park, New York City, December 02, 1980.*

After Christo and Jeanne-Claude failed to get permission to wrap two of New York's skyscrapers in the mid-1960s, they became more and more interested in how the people of New York use the streets, walkways and parks of the city. Being aware that they would never get permission to realize a project involving the busy streets and walkways, they propose The Gates, a project for Manhattan's Central Park.

1980s

In the early 1980s, Christo and Jeanne-Claude are working on a total of six projects at the same time: Wrapped Reichstag, Project for Berlin (since 1971), The Pont Neuf Wrapped, Project for Paris and Wrapped Monument to Cristobal Colón, Project for Barcelona (both since 1975), The Mastaba, Project for the United Arab Emirates (since 1977), The Gates, Project for New York City (since 1979), and Surrounded Islands, Project for Biscayne Bay, Greater Miami (since 1980).

1983

Realization of Surrounded Islands, Biscayne Bay, Greater Miami, Florida, 1980–83. Eleven islands are surrounded with 600,000 square meters of floating pink woven polypropylene fabric covering the surface of the water and extending out from each island into the bay.



*Surrounded Islands, Biscayne Bay, Greater Miami, Florida, 1980-83.*



*Christo and Jeanne-Claude in his studio with preparatory works for Surrounded Islands. New York City, 1981.*

1985



*The Pont Neuf Wrapped, Paris, 1975-85.*



Realization of *The Pont Neuf Wrapped*, Paris, 1975–85. The bridge is covered with 42,000 square meters of woven polyamide fabric and 13 kilometers of rope.

1991

Realization of *The Umbrellas*, Japan—USA, 1984–91. The project is realized in two countries at the same time, reflecting the similarities and differences in the ways of life and the use of the land in two inland valleys in Japan and the USA. 1,340 blue umbrellas are placed in a valley in Ibaraki, Japan, measuring 19 by 4 kilometers. 1,760 yellow umbrellas are simultaneously placed in a valley in California, USA, measuring 29 by 4 kilometers.



*The Umbrellas*, Japan—USA, 1984-91.

1992

Christo and Jeanne-Claude start to work on *Over The River*, Project for the Arkansas River, State of Colorado. The artists' vision includes 9.5 kilometers of silvery, luminous fabric panels to be suspended clear of and high above the water in eight distinct areas along a 67.6 kilometer stretch of the Arkansas River between Cañon City and Salida in south-central Colorado.



Christo in his studio with the very first sketches for Over The River. New York City, 1992.

1994



*In its 211th full plenary session, the German Parliament debates the Wrapped Reichstag project for 70 minutes. Bonn, February 25, 1994.*

After a struggle spanning the seventies, eighties, and nineties, the German parliament votes on the Reichstag project in a seventy-minute debate and finally approves its realization by 292 votes to 223. It is the first time a

parliament discusses a work of art. Prior to the debate, between April 1993 and February 1994, Christo and Jeanne-Claude visited a total of 352 members of parliament to discuss the project in person.

1995

Realization of *Wrapped Floors and Stairways and Covered Windows*, Museum Würth, Künzelsau, Germany, 1994–95. A total of 2,900 square meters of floor space is covered with 9,000 square meters of cotton drop cloths. The building's 879 windows are covered with 3,450 square meters of brown wrapping paper obstructing the view outside.

Realization of *Wrapped Reichstag*, Berlin, 1971–95. The building is covered with 100,000 square meters of aluminum-coated polypropylene fabric and 15.6 kilometers of blue rope, highlighting the features and proportions of the imposing structure.



*Wrapped Reichstag, Berlin, 1971-95.*

1998

32 years after their initial attempt to wrap live trees, Christo and Jeanne-Claude finally succeed with *Wrapped Trees*, Fondation Beyeler, Berower Park, Riehen, Switzerland, 1997–98.



*Wrapped Trees, Fondation Beyeler and Berower Park, Riehen, Switzerland, 1997-98.*

1999

Realization of *The Wall*—13,000 Oil Barrels, Gasometer Oberhausen, Germany, 1998–99. The multicolored mosaic of 13,000 oil barrels, standing 26 meters tall, spans the distance from wall to wall of the 68-meter wide Gasometer, one of the largest gas tanks in the world.

2005

Realization of *The Gates*, Central Park, New York City, 1979–2005. 7,503 vinyl gates, 4.87 meters tall, with free-flowing nylon fabric panels are anchored to 15,006 steel bases on 37 kilometers of walkways.



The Gates, Central Park, New York City, 1979-2005.



Christo and Jeanne-Claude at The Gates. New York City, February 2005.

2009

On November 18, Jeanne-Claude passes away in New York City. As promised to each other during their lifetimes, Christo continues to realize their current works in progress, *Over The River* and *The Mastaba*.

2013

Realization of Big Air Package, Gasometer Oberhausen, Germany, 2010–13. The 90-meter-high and 50-meter-wide air package has a volume of 177,000 cubic meters. Airlocks allow visitors to enter the package, which is self-supporting and the largest ever inflated envelope without a skeleton.

2016

49 years after his first proposal, Christo realizes The Mastaba at Fondation Maght in Saint-Paul de Vence, a sculpture made of 1,106 multicolored oil barrels.



Realization of The Floating Piers, Lake Iseo, Italy, 2014–16 (above). 100,000 square meters of shimmering yellow fabric are carried by a modular floating dock system of 220,000 high-density polyethylene cubes, creating a 3-kilometer-long walkway across the water.

2017

After pursuing Over The River, Project for the Arkansas River, State of Colorado for 20 years and going through five years of legal arguments, Christo decides to no longer wait on the outcome and devote all of his energy, time and resources into the realization of The Mastaba, Project for Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

2018

Originally conceived by Christo and Jeanne-Claude in 1967 for Lake Michigan, a floating Mastaba is realized at London's Hyde Park. 7,506 barrels are stacked horizontally on a floating platform in Serpentine Lake. The size of the temporary sculpture is 20 meters high by 30 meters wide (at the 60° slanted walls) by 40 meters long.



The London Mastaba, Serpentine Lake, Hyde Park, 2016-18

56 years after Christo and Jeanne-Claude had the idea to wrap the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, Christo finally applies for and is granted an official permit. As a prelude, the Centre Pompidou organizes a major exhibition about Christo and Jeanne-Claude's work and time in Paris, on view from July to October 2020.



*Christo in his studio working on a preparatory drawing for L'Arc de Triomphe, Wrapped. New York City, 2020.*



*Christo and Jeanne-Claude on the site of Wrapped Coast. Little Bay, 2007.*



2020

On May 31, Christo passes away in New York City. Per his wishes, Christo and Jeanne-Claude's work in progress L'Arc de Triomphe, Wrapped will be carried out posthumously from September 18 to October 3, 2021.

