

The Smithsonian Associates
Afternoon Lecture/Seminar

May 24, 2023
Dr. Nancy G. Heller

THE ART OF CHRISTO AND JEANNE-CLAUDE:
Outdoors, Outsized, and Out of the Ordinary

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS (recent, with good-quality illustrations and English texts):

- Adelina Fileva, et al, *Christo and Jeanne-Claude: Life = Works = Projects* (Sofia [Bulgaria] City Art Gallery, 2021)
Paul Goldberger, *Christo and Jeanne-Claude*, rev. ed., (2019, Taschen)
Jacob Baal-Teshuva, *Christo and Jeanne-Claude* (1995, Taschen)

ARTICLES:

- Michael Kimmelman, "Christo's Billowy Visions, Fleeting but Unforgettable," *The New York Times* (June 1, 2020, C1-C2)
William Grimes, "An Artist Who Saw Streets and Mountains as His Canvas," *The New York Times* (June 1, 2020, A1 and A9)
Jan Garden Castro, "A Matter of Passion: A Conversation with Christo and Jeanne-Claude," *Sculpture* magazine (vol. 23, no 3, April 2004, pp. 28-35)
David Galloway, "Packaging the Past," *Art in America* (vol. 83, no. 11, November 1995, pp. 86-89 & 133)
David Bourdon, "A Conversation with Christo," *Architectural Digest*, vol.38, no. 11 (November 1981, pp. 194-204)
Calvin Tomkins, "Onward and Upward with the Arts: Running Fence," *The New Yorker* magazine (March 28, 1977, pp. 43-82)
Jan van der Marck, "The Valley Curtain is Up! But...," *Art in America*, vol. 61, no.1 (January/February, 1973, pp. 75-77)
Christopher Zheng, "Beauty Wrapped in Bureaucracy: An Art Law Tribute to Christo and Jeanne-Claude, 2020, <https://itsartlaw.org/2020/07/28/beauty-wrapped-in-bureaucracy-an-art-law-tribute-to-christo-and-jeanne-claude/>

DOCUMENTARY FILMS (Selected):

- 2018, "Walking on Water (The Floating Piers)," by Audrey M. Paoumov, Kotva Films, 100 minutes
2007, "The Gates", by Albert & David Maysles, et al, Maysles Films, 87 minutes (won 2008 Peabody Award)
2004, "Five Films About Christo & Jeanne-Claude," 3 DVDs and a booklet, Maysles Films Production, Plexifilm, 282 minutes [includes "Valley Curtain," "Running Fence," "Islands," "Christo in Paris," & "Umbrellas."]
1995, "Christo and Jeanne-Claude," by Michael Blackwood, Michael Blackwood

Productions, 58 minutes

- 1994, "Umbrellas," by Albert Maysles, et al, Maysles Films, 81 minutes
- 1990, "Christo in Paris (The Pont Neuf Wrapped)," Maysles Films, 58 minutes
- 1986, "Islands," Maysles Films, 56 minutes
- 1978, "Running Fence," Maysles Films, 57 minutes
- 1974, "Christo's Valley Curtain," Maysles Films, 28 minutes (Academy Award nominee)
- 1969, "Wrapped Coast," Michael Blackwood Productions, 30 minutes

PRINCIPAL PROJECTS (realized):

- 2021, *L'Arc de Triomphe, Wrapped* (Paris, France) [posthumous]
- 2018, *The London Mastaba* (Hyde Park, England)
- 2016, *The Floating Piers* (Lake Iseo, Italy)
- 2005, *The Gates* (Central Park, NYC)
- 1998, *Wrapped Trees* (Riehen, Switzerland)
- 1995, *Wrapped Reichstag* (Berlin, Germany)
- 1991, *The Umbrellas* (one valley in Japan and another in California, USA)
- 1985, *The Pont Neuf, Wrapped* (Paris, France)
- 1985, *Surrounded Islands* (Biscayne Bay, Miami, Florida, USA)
- 1978, *Wrapped Walkways* (Jacob Loose Memorial Park, Kansas City Missouri, USA)
- 1976, *Running Fence* (north of San Francisco, USA)
- 1972, *Valley Curtain* (Rifle Valley, Colorado, USA)
- 1969, *Wrapped Coast, One Million Square Feet* (Little Bay, near Sydney, Australia)

PROJECT STILL IN PROGRESS (assisted by Christo's son and nephew):

The Mastaba: A Project for the United Arab Emirates; started in 1977. Intended to be the largest contemporary in the world, made from stacked, multicolored steel barrels, in Abu Dhabi.

VERY BASIC BIOGRAPHY/IES:

- June 13, 1935—Christo Javacheff and Jeanne-Claude Denat de Guillebon both born—in Gabrovo, Bulgaria and Casablanca, Morocco, respectively.
- 1958, after living, studying, and searching for work in Sofia, Prague, & Vienna, Christo arrives in Paris, where Jeanne-Claude's family had moved; they meet, and fall in love.
- 1959, Christo and Jeanne-Claude marry.
- 1960, Their son, Cyril, is born. Christo begins wrapping objects and planning/executing larger projects.
- 1962, Christo has his first one-man exhibition, in Paris.
- 1964, Christo and Jeanne-Claude settle permanently in New York City.
- 1969, Christo's first massive project, *Wrapped Coast*, is realized. From then on, until his death, Christo (with the collaboration of Jeanne-Claude) continues planning and making many different projects, of various sizes, in various nations (see above). A number of projects are never realized, due to unsurmountable obstacles.
- 1973, Christo becomes a U.S. citizen; Jeanne-Claude does the same, in 1984.

1994, Christo goes back and retroactively adds Jeanne-Claude's name to all of the work made since 1961; thereafter, they receive dual credit.

2009, Jeanne-Claude dies, due to complications from a fall, November 18th, aged 74.

2020, Christo dies, May 31st, at 84.

A FEW USEFUL NAMES, TERMS, CONCEPTS:

Man Ray

Isidore Ducasse

wrapping

Environmental Art, Land Art

temporary, site-specific art

the Maysles brothers (documentary filmmakers)

Wolfgang Volz (Christo and Jeanne-Claude's longtime official photographer)

OTHER RESOURCES:

christoandjeanneclaude.net (official website)

**