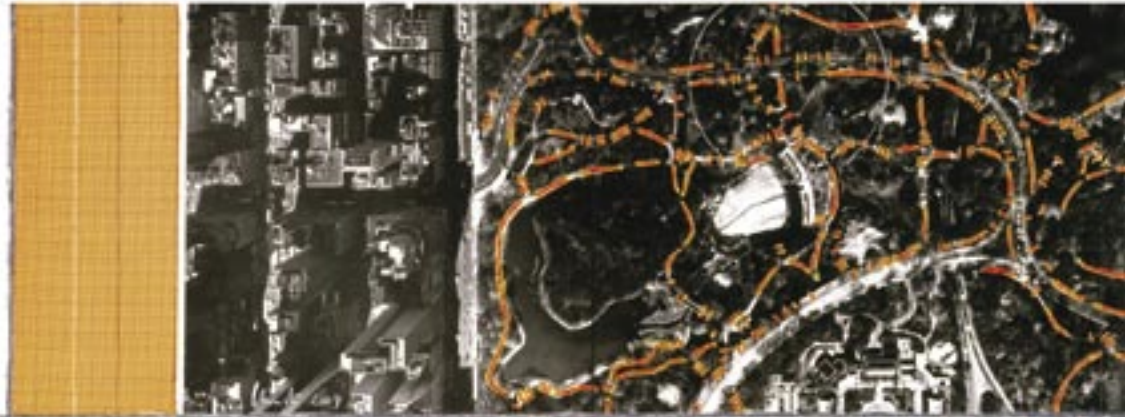


Christo and Jeanne-Claude

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



*The Gates, (Project for Central Park, New York City) (Central Park South, 5th Avenue, Central Park West, West 110th St.)*



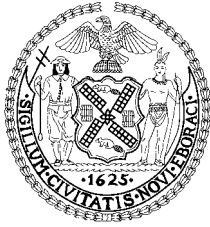
Free-Firming Fabric panels (100m dwt) length 86"  
width that yields from 6' to 18' between each gate 12'  
height 16'0"

*Some of the 5,257 fabric gates that formed the Gates in Central Park, New York City, February 12 through February 27, 2005*

A temporary work of art: February 12 through February 27, 2005

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November 22, 2004

Dear Friend:

Impressive and imaginative works of art have enhanced New York City's public spaces throughout history and have greatly contributed to the City's status as the cultural capital of the world. Since I took office, I have been committed to improving and enhancing the unique New York City experience, and I believe that the display of thought-provoking and inspiring public art adds to this experience. As a result, during my administration, an array of works by talented artists has been showcased in all five boroughs, including in the park right outside my office at City Hall.

It is in this grand tradition of public art in New York City that the internationally acclaimed artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude will present *The Gates, Central Park, New York City, 1979-2005*. From February 12 through February 27, 2005, when Central Park's trees are bare of leaves and snow often covers the expansive lawns, 23 miles of pedestrian paths throughout the park will be adorned with 7,500 gates bearing saffron-colored cloth. *The Gates* will transform Central Park and challenge viewers to revisit their preconceptions of public art and urban parks.

For the artists, this temporary exhibition will represent the realization of a vision first imagined for Central Park over a quarter of a century ago. The patient efforts of Christo and Jeanne-Claude, who would never let go of their dream, have finally been realized, and *The Gates* is perhaps the most exciting work of their legendary career.

The park has been carefully restored by the Central Park Conservancy and the City. It is more than parkland—it is a defining feature of New York City. The presence of such a peaceful oasis in this vibrant metropolis helps to make New York the greatest city in the world. Now, for 16 days in February, Central Park will be visually transformed. I invite New Yorkers and visitors from around the world to come to Central Park to experience *The Gates* and appreciate its splendor and beauty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael R. Bloomberg".

Michael R. Bloomberg  
Mayor

## About *The Gates*, Central Park, New York City, 1979-2005

- *The Gates* will be unfurled in Central Park, New York City on February 12, 2005, weather permitting, and will remain through February 27, 2005.
- Christo and Jeanne-Claude developed the concept for *The Gates* in 1979. On January 22, 2003, the City granted permission to the artists to realize their vision.
- 7,500 gates, 16 feet high (4.87 m) with a width varying from 5 feet 6 inches to 18 feet (1.68 m to 5.48 m) will line 23 miles (36.8 km) of footpaths in the park.
- Free-hanging, saffron-colored fabric panels will be suspended from the top of each gate and hang down to 7 feet (2.13 m) above the ground.
- The gates will be stationed approximately 12 feet (3.65 m) apart, except when low branches extend above the walkways.
- *The Gates* will create a visual golden river appearing and disappearing through the bare branches of the trees, highlighting the shapes of the footpaths.
- The luminous moving fabric will underline the organic and serpentine design of the walkways, while the rectangular poles will be a reminder of the grid pattern of the City blocks around the park.
- The project will provide employment for hundreds of New York City residents, hired to assemble, install, maintain and remove the installation.
- After *The Gates* is removed, most of the materials will be recycled.
- As always, Central Park will be open to the public, free of charge, during *The Gates*.
- *The Gates* is financed entirely by the artists, who do not accept sponsorships. The public will bear no expense of any kind.



Christo: *The Gates, Project for Central Park, New York City*. Drawing: 2004. In two parts: 244 x 38 cm and 244 x 106.6 cm (96" x 15" and 96" x 42"). Pencil, charcoal, pastel, wax crayon, enamel paint, fabric sample, hand-drawn map, technical data tape. Photo: Wolfgang Volz. Copyright Christo 2004. Ref. # 049

## About Christo and Jeanne-Claude



The artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude were born in the same hour on the same day, June 13, 1935. Christo Vladimirov Javacheff was born in Gabrovo, Bulgaria, of a Bulgarian industrialist family. Jeanne-Claude Denat de Guillebon was born in Casablanca, Morocco, of a French military family. The couple first met in Paris in 1958, while Christo was working on *Packages and Wrapped Objects*. Their only child, the poet Cyril Christo, was born May 11, 1960. In 1964, the artists moved to New York City, which has been their home ever since.

For decades, Christo and Jeanne-Claude have inspired the world with their art, which has been displayed on four continents and seen by millions. Other works by the artists include *Wrapped Reichstag, Berlin, 1971-95*; *The Pont Neuf Wrapped, Paris, 1975-85*; *Surrounded Islands, Biscayne Bay, Greater Miami, Florida, 1980-83*; *Running Fence, Sonoma and Marin Counties, California, 1972-76*; and *Valley Curtain, Grand Hogback, Rifle, Colorado, 1970-72*.



Top image: Christo and Jeanne-Claude: *Surrounded Islands, Biscayne Bay, Greater Miami, Florida, 1980-83*. Photo: Wolfgang Volz. © Christo 1983.

Bottom image: Christo and Jeanne-Claude: *The Pont Neuf Wrapped, Paris, 1975-85*. Photo: Wolfgang Volz. © Christo 1985.

## Christo and Jeanne-Claude in Their Own Words

**Question: How did you conceive of *The Gates*?**

Answer: Our aspiration to create a major public work of art for New York began when we emigrated from Europe in 1964. During the 1970s, while creating projects elsewhere but continuing to live and work in New York, we remained committed to succeeding in completing a major outdoor work of art in the City. Our attention turned toward the vast flow of people walking through the streets. The resulting proposal was *The Gates*, a project directly related to the human scale, to be sited in Central Park, whose 843 acres are the ultimate locale for walking at leisure. First proposed in 1979, the gates were then 12 feet tall, of a totally different design, and the first drawing was titled *The Thousand Gates*. The project was rejected in 1981 but ultimately approved on January 22, 2003 by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, for completion in February 2005.

**Question: *The Gates*, like all of your work, is temporary and public. Why do you choose to create temporary public art?**

Answer: The temporary quality of the projects is an aesthetic decision. Our works are temporary in order to endow the works of art with a feeling of urgency to be seen, and the love and tenderness brought by the fact that they will not last. Those feelings are usually reserved for other temporary things such as childhood and our own life. These are valued because we know that they will not last. We want to offer this feeling of love and tenderness to our works, as an added value (dimension) and as an additional aesthetic quality.

**Question: What is the best vantage point for appreciating *The Gates*?**

Answer: There is no particular special vantage point to experience and enjoy walking under the gates, on 23 miles of walkways. The succession of 7,500 gates moving capriciously in the wind, projecting on one another at different levels, sometimes hiding the buildings around the park, will reveal the serpentine design of the walkways.

**Question: How do the two of you divide your efforts when approaching a project?**

Answer: We do not divide our efforts, we do every thing together, except three things:

We never fly in the same aircraft.

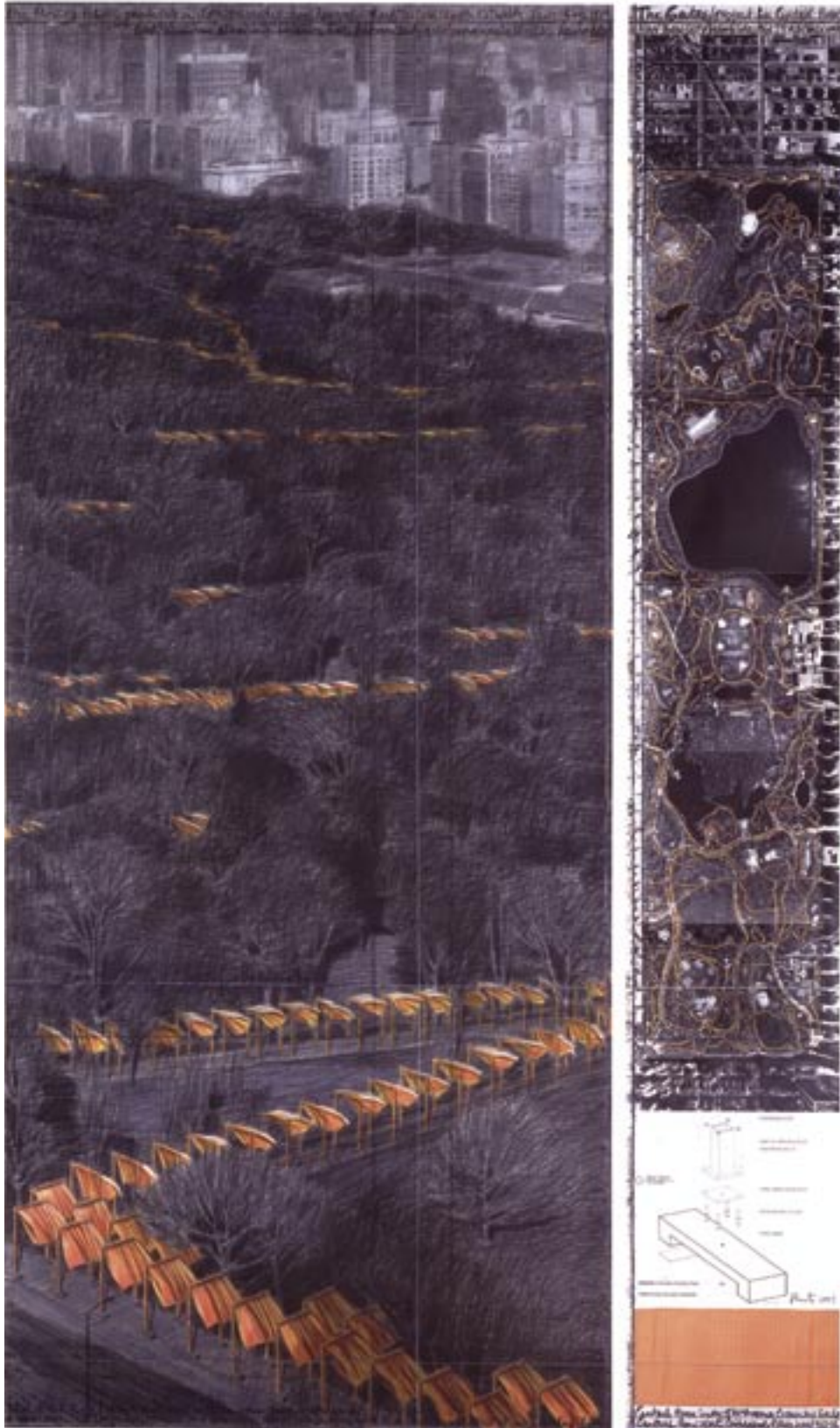
(Jeanne-Claude) does not make drawings; she was not trained for that.

(Christo) puts our ideas on paper. He never had an assistant in his studio; he even frames his drawings himself.

(Christo) never had the pleasure of talking to our tax accountant.

**Question: Why was it so important to realize this work in Central Park?**

Answer: When our son was a little boy, we used to take him to Central Park every day—he loved to climb the beautiful rocks. Central Park was a part of our life.



Christo: *The Gates, Project for Central Park, New York City*. Drawing 2003; in two parts. 96" x 42" and 96" x 15". Photo: Wolfgang Volz. © Christo 2003.



## About Central Park, New York City

- Central Park is 843 acres (11.2 km<sup>2</sup>); its 6-mile (9.6 km) perimeter extends from Central Park West to Fifth Avenue, and 59th to 110th Streets.
- Central Park is the first major landscaped public park in the USA. A competition for the design was held in 1858. The winners were Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux.
- The Manhattan rock outcrops in the Park are approximately 450 million years old.
- Central Park contains 58 miles (92.8 km) of pedestrian paths, 4.5 miles (7.2 km) of bridle trail, 6.5 miles (10.4 km) of Park Drive, and 7 miles (11.2 km) of benches (nearly 9,000).
- The Park's 843 acres (11.2 km<sup>2</sup>) include 136 acres (.5 km<sup>2</sup>) of woodlands, 250 acres (1 km<sup>2</sup>) of lawns, and 150 acres (.6 km<sup>2</sup>) of water in seven water bodies.
- More than a half million shrubs, trees, and vines were planted during the building of the Park. Today, there are more than 26,000 trees, including 1,700 American elms.
- More than 25 million visitors enjoy Central Park each year.
- Central Park's landscapes were created from barren swampland. It took 16 years and over \$14 million (roughly \$260 million today) to build the Park.
- To construct the Park, workers moved nearly five million cubic yards (3.8 million m<sup>3</sup>) of stone, earth, and topsoil. They built 30 bridges and arches, and 11 overpasses over sunken transverse roads.
- The northern end of the Park was the site of a series of fortifications for the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812.
- Belvedere Castle was completed in 1872 as a viewing pavilion overlooking the Croton Reservoir. In 1937, the Reservoir was filled in to become the Great Lawn.
- There are 51 sculptures in the Park and 36 bridges and arches.
- Bethesda Fountain was the only sculpture included in the original construction of the Park.
- Central Park was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1965 and a New York City Landmark in 1974.
- Since 1980, a public-private partnership between New York City and the Central Park Conservancy has restored and preserved Central Park. The Central Park Conservancy is responsible for the maintenance and continuing preservation of the Park and has raised over \$300 million for its care.

**Studio Museum in Harlem**  
 144 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street  
 (between Lenox Avenue and  
 Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Blvd)  
 (212) 864-4500  
[www.studiomuseum.org](http://www.studiomuseum.org)

## Visual Arts Organizations Near Central Park

**Children's Museum of Manhattan**  
 212 West 83<sup>rd</sup> Street  
 (between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenues)  
 (212) 721-1234  
[www.cmom.org](http://www.cmom.org)

**American Museum of Natural History**  
 175-208 Central Park West (at 79<sup>th</sup> Street)  
 (212) 769-5100  
[www.amnh.org](http://www.amnh.org)

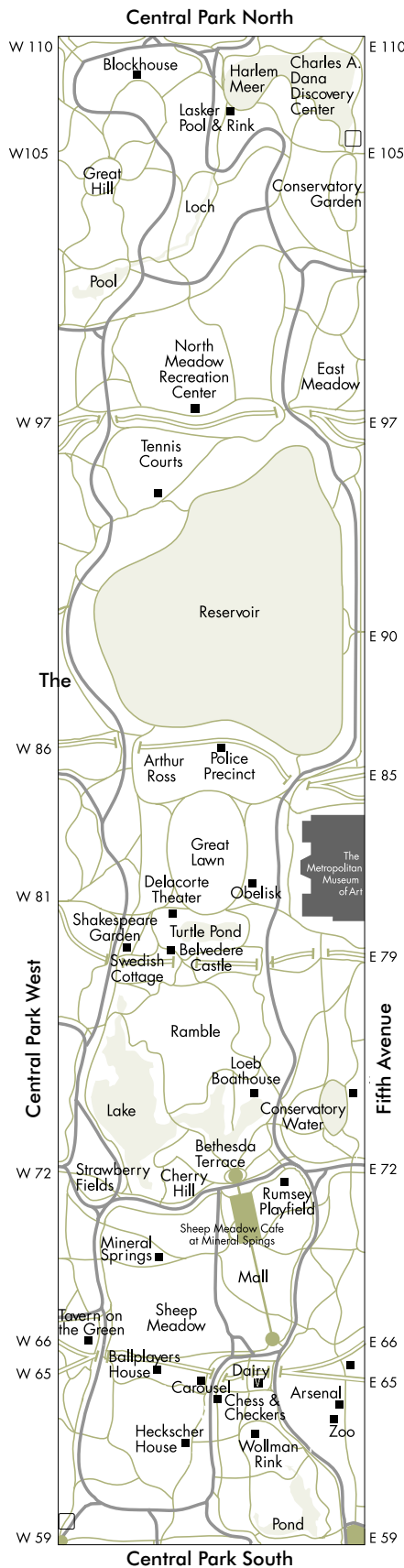
**The New-York Historical Society**  
 170 Central Park West (at 77<sup>th</sup> Street)  
 (212) 873-3400  
[www.nyhistory.org](http://www.nyhistory.org)

**American Folk Art Museum**  
 45 West 53<sup>rd</sup> Street (between Fifth and Sixth Avenues)  
 (212) 265-1040  
[www.folkartmuseum.org](http://www.folkartmuseum.org)

**The Museum of Television and Radio**  
 25 West 52<sup>nd</sup> Street (between Fifth and Sixth Avenues)  
 (212) 621-6800  
[www.mtr.org](http://www.mtr.org)

**The Museum of Modern Art**  
 11 West 53<sup>rd</sup> Street (between Fifth and Sixth Avenues)  
 (212) 708-9400  
[www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org)

**Museum of Art and Design**  
 40 West 53<sup>rd</sup> Street  
 (between Fifth and Sixth Avenues)  
 (212) 956-3535  
[www.americancraftmuseum.org](http://www.americancraftmuseum.org)



- **El Museo del Barrio**  
 1230 Fifth Avenue (at 104<sup>th</sup> Street)  
 (212) 831-7272  
[www.elmuseo.org](http://www.elmuseo.org)
- **Museum of the City of New York**  
 1220 Fifth Avenue (between 103<sup>rd</sup> and 104<sup>th</sup> Streets)  
 (212) 534-1672  
[www.mcny.org](http://www.mcny.org)
- **The Jewish Museum**  
 1109 Fifth Avenue (at 92<sup>nd</sup> Street)  
 (212) 423-3200  
[www.thejewishmuseum.org](http://www.thejewishmuseum.org)
- **Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum**  
 2 East 91<sup>st</sup> Street (at Fifth Avenue)  
 (212) 849-8400  
[www.si.edu/ndm](http://www.si.edu/ndm)
- **National Academy of Design**  
 1083 Fifth Avenue (at 89<sup>th</sup> Street)  
 (212) 369-4880  
[www.nationalacademy.org](http://www.nationalacademy.org)

● **Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum**  
 1071 Fifth Avenue (at 89<sup>th</sup> Street)  
 (212) 423-3500  
[www.guggenheim.org](http://www.guggenheim.org)

● **Neue Galerie**  
 1048 Fifth Avenue (at 86<sup>th</sup> Street)  
 (212) 628-6200  
[www.neuegalerie.org](http://www.neuegalerie.org)

● **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**  
 1000 Fifth Avenue (at 82<sup>nd</sup> Street)  
 (212) 535-7710  
[www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)

● **Whitney Museum of American Art**  
 945 Madison Avenue (at 75<sup>th</sup> Street)  
 (212) 570-3676  
[www.whitney.org](http://www.whitney.org)

● **Frick Collection**  
 1 East 70<sup>th</sup> Street (between Madison and Fifth Avenues)  
 (212) 288-0700  
[www.frick.org](http://www.frick.org)

● **Asia Society**  
 725 Park Avenue (between 70<sup>th</sup> and 71<sup>st</sup> Streets)  
 (212) 288-6400  
[www.asiasociety.org](http://www.asiasociety.org)

● **Dahesh Museum of Art**  
 580 Madison Avenue (at 57<sup>th</sup> Street)  
 (212) 759-0606  
[www.daheshmuseum.org](http://www.daheshmuseum.org)

## Resources

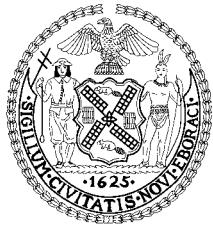
Information regarding *The Gates, Central Park, New York City, 1979-2005* can be found at:

- [www.christojeanneclaude.net](http://www.christojeanneclaude.net)
- [www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov)
- [www.centralparknyc.org](http://www.centralparknyc.org)
- [www.nycvisit.com](http://www.nycvisit.com)

or call 212-NEW YORK (212-639-9675); 311 in New York City

For press inquiries, please call 212-360-1311

Design: Toby Allan Schust



City of New York  
Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor

[www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov)