

Christo and Jeanne-Claude

**WALL OF OIL BARRELS - THE IRON CURTAIN COMMEMORATION**  
**THE FIRST MAJOR ARTWORK BY CHRISTO AND JEANNE-CLAUDE**  
**INSTALLED 60 YEARS AGO IN PARIS**



This week marks the 60th anniversary of [Wall of Oil Barrels - The Iron Curtain, Rue Visconti, Paris, 1961-62](#), the first artwork Christo and Jeanne-Claude created in the French capital. This seminal work of art closed Rue Visconti with a wall of 89 oil barrels in poetic protest against the Berlin Wall. As the wall disrupted the free flow of people between a divided Germany, *Wall of Oil Barrels - The Iron Curtain* obstructed some of the traffic on Paris' Left Bank.

"It was very beautiful and also a manifest," painter **Jan Voss** remarked following the 1962 installation that he attended. "When you close a street, you separate two things that were never separated. So people could not pass where they wanted to pass and that offered trouble for them. Of course, that was Christo's intention, his purpose. He wanted a social reaction from those people. He wanted to make people react, to be with or against him."

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**On Monday, June 27**, nearly one year after the installation of [L'Arc de Triomphe, Wrapped](#), a commemoration event, organized by Christo and Jeanne-Claude's estate, art space 22Visconti and Gagosian Gallery, was held on Rue Visconti. **Nearly 100 people gathered at the site, where a plaque was unveiled** to mark the public installation 60 years ago. **An Augmented Reality (AR) tool was also created by Anna Batheva** to allow Parisians and visitors to virtually view the project at the exact location using a smartphone or tablet.

Visitors on Rue Visconti can simply hold up their device to display an augmented image, displaying the wall as it appeared in 1962. Additionally, the **Bloomberg Connects app provides a free guide available on smartphones** for anyone interested in learning more about *Wall of Oil Barrels - The Iron Curtain* or other Christo and Jeanne-Claude works. The guide, accessible anywhere, provides immersive content, including sketches, photographs, videos, recordings, and texts. The Bloomberg Connects app can be downloaded from [Google Play](#) or the [App Store](#).

"A few months after the wonderful success of *L'Arc de Triomphe, Wrapped*, I am delighted that a work by Christo and Jeanne-Claude has 'returned' to Paris, on rue Visconti," said **Anne Hidalgo**, Mayor of Paris. "Through augmented reality of this 60-year-old *Wall of Oil Barrels - The Iron Curtain*, we have an opportunity to rediscover **the commitment of this couple of artists who chose Paris to express themselves, to commit themselves, and to keep alive the freedom of expression, so dear to our democracies.**"

**This anniversary of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's first major work of art came as the Gagosian Gallery recently unveiled its first exhibition dedicated to Christo – Christo: [Early Works, 1958 – 1963](#).** Featuring sculptures made in Paris between 1958 and 1963, many of which are being exhibited for the first time, the exhibition encompasses the earliest examples of Christo's wrapped objects and barrel structures, together with key works from his rarely shown *Surfaces d'Emballage* and *Cratères* series. **Open until October 8**, the exhibition unfolds across two floors of Gagosian's rue de Ponthieu gallery, not far from Christo's first Paris studio.

**Almost a year ago, 6 million people saw Christo and Jeanne-Claude's [L'Arc de Triomphe, Wrapped, Paris, 1961 - 2021](#)** during its 16-day installation from September 18 to October 3, 2021. Like all of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's past projects, *L'Arc de Triomphe, Wrapped* received **no public funds or sponsorships**, and was entirely funded through the sale of original works of art by Christo.

**Christo and Jeanne-Claude's team is now focusing on the realization of a permanent work of art, [The Mastaba, a project for Abu Dhabi](#),** which was first conceived by the artists in

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1977. It will be made of 410,000 multi-colored barrels to form a colorful mosaic, echoing Islamic architecture.

*The Mastaba* will be 150 meters (492 feet) high, 300 meters (984 feet) long at the vertical walls and 225 meters (738 feet) wide at the 60 degree slanted walls. The colors and the positioning of the 55-gallon steel barrels were selected by Christo and Jeanne-Claude in 1979, the year in which the artists visited the United Arab Emirates for the first time. The proposed location is inland, approximately 160 kilometers (100 miles) south of the city of Abu Dhabi in the desert of Liwa. **If realized, *The Mastaba* will be Christo and Jeanne-Claude's only permanent, large-scale public artwork.**

*"The Wall of Oil Barrels - The Iron Curtain* was the beginning of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's public self-financed projects," said **Vladimir Yavachev, Christo and Jeanne-Claude Operations Director**. "Fifteen years later in 1977 they conceived *The Mastaba*, a project for Abu Dhabi, and per Christo's wishes, we plan to complete it as their last project. **So while the artists became widely known for their use of fabric, it is fitting that their life's work will be framed by artworks using barrels.**"

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### Christo and Jeanne-Claude:

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