

# The Museum of Modern Art

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## Christo Wraps the Museum: Scale Models, Photomontages, and Drawings for a Non-Event

will be on view in the Main Hall of The Museum of Modern Art from June 5-25. The Bulgarian-born artist Christo (Javacheff) had ambitious and inventive plans to wrap the Museum, the projects for which are presented here in an exhibition selected by William S. Rubin, Curator of Painting and Sculpture.

"As an artist functioning more in the realm of 'events' than in that of painting and sculpture, it is not surprising that Christo should have dreamed that it was time to wrap up the Museum -- and for that matter the trees, the sculptures, and even some of the spectators in its garden," states Mr. Rubin. "The Museum staff found this a potentially lively and poetically strange project. But the more practical heads of the fire department, police department, and insurance agencies prevailed. Nevertheless, we felt that our public would enjoy seeing the models, photomontages, and drawings that Christo had prepared as sketches for this event, an event that was to have signalled the closing of the exhibition Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage."

This June, for Documenta IV in Kassel, Germany, Christo is creating a giant air package, filled with helium and air, about the size of the Pan Am Building, almost 300 feet high with a volume of 200,000 cubic feet, as well as an enormous constructed and wrapped store front covering 1,300 square feet. For the opening of the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto this summer, he will wrap the Opera House, the first packaged building project to be realized. Later, he will wrap the Kunsthalle in Berne, Switzerland, for its 50th anniversary.

"Man Ray, a pioneer Dada artist, was the first to wrap an object. But his gesture remained unique in the history of Dada," states Mr. Rubin in the brochure accompanying the exhibition. "Since then, packaging has itself become a crucial -- and potentially insidious -- aspect of the way in which the world is presented to us.

(more)

The exploration of its implications has been taken in hand by Christo. By the range and scale of what he wraps (girls, buildings -- nothing is beyond his reach), Christo draws attention to the various ironies that exist in the relationship between the packager, the package, and the thing packaged."

Born in Bulgaria in 1935, Christo emigrated to Paris in 1958 and has lived in New York since 1964. With his first one-man show in 1961, Christo began to wrap objects such as tables, chairs, and bicycles, and in the following year, his first major "event" took place -- the erection of an "iron curtain" of painted oil drums, completely blocking the Rue Visconti in Paris for one day. Christo has proceeded to wrap automobiles and storefronts, always maintaining the idea of packaging public monuments and vast public buildings.

In 1966, Christo created his first very large work, a 42,390 cubic-foot "Empaquetage," with the participation of 147 students at the Minneapolis School of Art at the Walker Art Center. Constructed of 8,000 square feet of translucent polyethylene, four enormous U.S. Army research balloons, 2,800 28-inch balloons, and 4,000 feet of rope, the "Empaquetage" was airlifted by helicopter.

The Museum's exhibition will include six scale models, nine drawings, and a large blow-up of the photomontage showing the Museum's facade wrapped. A poster for the exhibition will be on sale for \$1.00, and the brochure, with excerpts from articles by David Bourdon and Lawrence Alloway, and a short text by Mr. Rubin will also be available.

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Photographs (including "before" and "after" comparisons) and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, and Patricia Bauman, Associate, Press Services, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. 245-3200.