

# Land Art

Public Art. Site Specific.  
Environmental Art.

# History

Historically Sculpture has been figurative.

It has also been representational.

Michelangelo, *David*, 1501-4



# History

Not only has it been mostly representational, it's been carefully crafted by skilled artists.

Marble  
Bronze  
Wood

Rodin, *The Thinker*, 1879-89



# Marcel Duchamp

Duchamp changed everything.

When he submitted this artwork to an exhibition.

The idea took precedence over the image.

Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917



# Robert Rauschenberg

After WWII young artists influenced by Duchamp expanded his 'readymade' idea.

Rauschenberg made what he called 'combines,' which were a combination of sculpture and painting and combined from found objects and crafted elements.

Robert Rauschenberg, *Odalisk*, 1955-58  
Combine: oil, watercolor, pencil, crayon, paper, fabric, photographs, printed reproductions, miniature blueprint, newspaper, metal, glass, dried grass, and steel wool with pillow, wood post, electric lights, and rooster on wood structure mounted on four casters  
83 x 25 1/4 x 25 1/8 inches



# Eva Hesse

Hesse was a female artist working in the 1960s with ideas related to Minimalism and Conceptual Art.

Her use of multiples and industrial materials created forms that appeared somewhat 'bodily' and reliant on gravity.

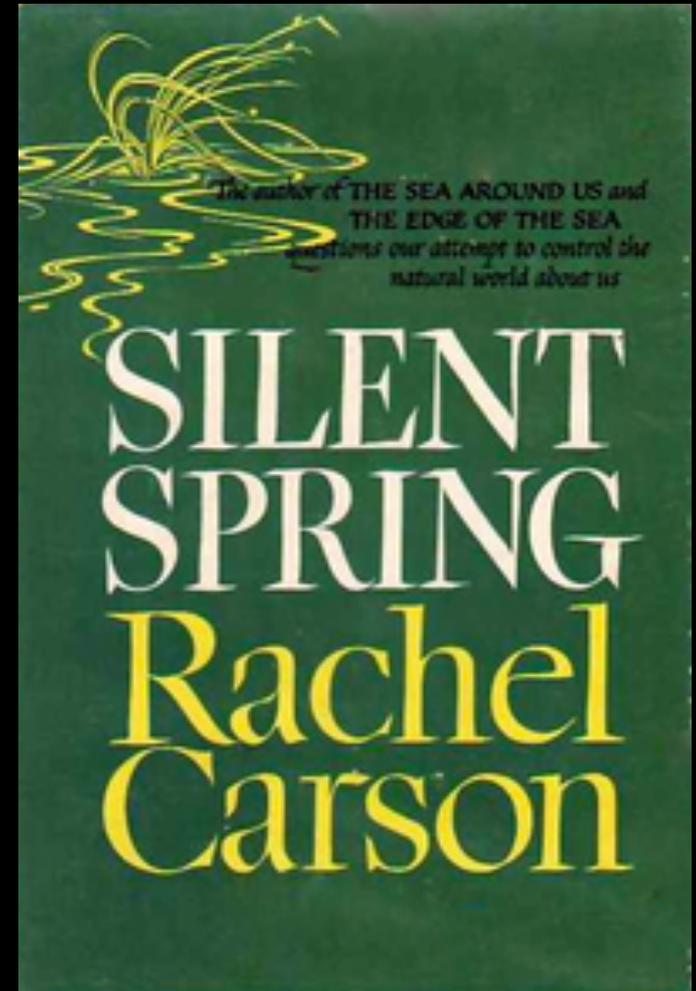
Eva Hesse, *Repetition Nineteen III*,  
fiberglass and polyester resin.  
1968





# 1960s Land Art

Land Art emerged in the 1960s, coinciding with a growing ecology movement in the United States, which asked people to become more aware of the negative impact they can have on the natural environment.



1962 . Aquatic biologist Rachel Carson exposes harm caused by insecticides such as DDT.

Creating interventions in the land date back to prehistoric art. In the US, Native people created mounds and sculptures made into the earth.

Our Contemporary land artists were departing from Minimalism but also knew about these prehistoric precedents.



This is a photo of -- ***Serpent Mound***, built in Ohio, ca. 1070 CE. 1200' long, 20' wide, 5' high by an early Native American people..

# 1960s Land Art

- In US artists trained in Minimalist principles shared their concerns with organic transformations and the interrelations of landscape and history.
- Land art took art out of the gallery or museum and into the natural landscape.
- Artists produced huge works engaging elements of the environment, sometimes in remote locations.

# 1960s and 1970s

## **Land Art**

**(Environmental Art)**

## **Site Specific Art**

Maya Lin

Walter de Maria

Richard Long

Robert Smithson

Michael Heizer

Jean Claude and Christo



Richard Long, *Line made by walking*, 1967

# Richard Long

took long walks as his principle medium. Then began arranging elements in the landscape, sometimes bringing them back into the gallery or museum.

One of a number of British 'land' artists where the relationship with the land contains a more spiritual bent.

Taking long walks in nature, as a reverent encounter.



# Richard Long

In 1967, when he was 18, **Richard Long** made a sculpture by the simple act of walking.

*Key to Land Art*, his work is 'simple creative acts of walking and marking about place, locality, time, distance and measurement'.

All this is brought to the gallery in the form of photographs, text, sculptures and mud works on the walls.

This piece uses mud from the area he was walking.



# Robert Smithson

The monumental earthwork *Spiral Jetty* (1970) is located on the Great Salt Lake in Utah. Using black basalt rocks and earth from the site, the artist created a coil 1,500 feet long and 15 feet wide that stretches out counter-clockwise into the translucent red water.

*Spiral Jetty* was acquired by Dia Art Foundation as a gift from the Estate of the artist in 1999.



# Robert Smithson

*Spiral Jetty* is made with earth moving equipment out of the Black rock, salt crystals, earth, red water (algae) existing in the Great Salt Lake, Utah.

A bulldozer can drive on it.  
It is 1,500' x 15' x 3 1/2'.

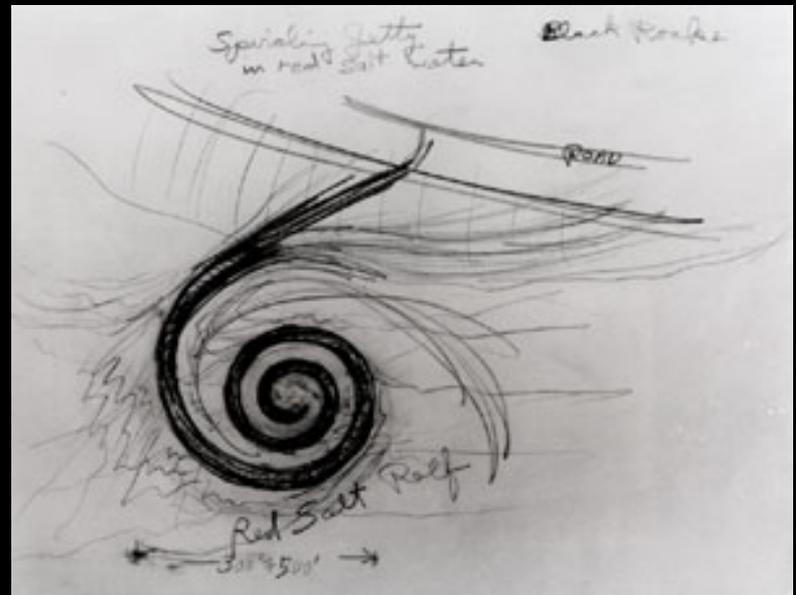
Smithson was very interested in entropy...the principle whereby ordered systems undergo exponential deterioration or unraveling.



# Robert Smithson

He was interested in the relationship between the formation and life of the works, all made and then left to nature to dissolve or transform.

He knew eventually the water of the Great Salt Lake would raise and cover the Jetty, For several years it was covered with salt





# Walter de Maria

was interested in systems of ordering and measurement rather than geological time.

His piece, *Lightening Field* is constructed in a flat semi-arid basin in southern NM a 1 mile by 1 kilometer grid of 400 stainless steel poles, arranged in 16 rows of 25, 220 feet apart, The poles, 2" in diameter are about 20 ft 7.5 in tall set so the tops are level despite variations in the landscape.

*Lightening Field, 71-77*



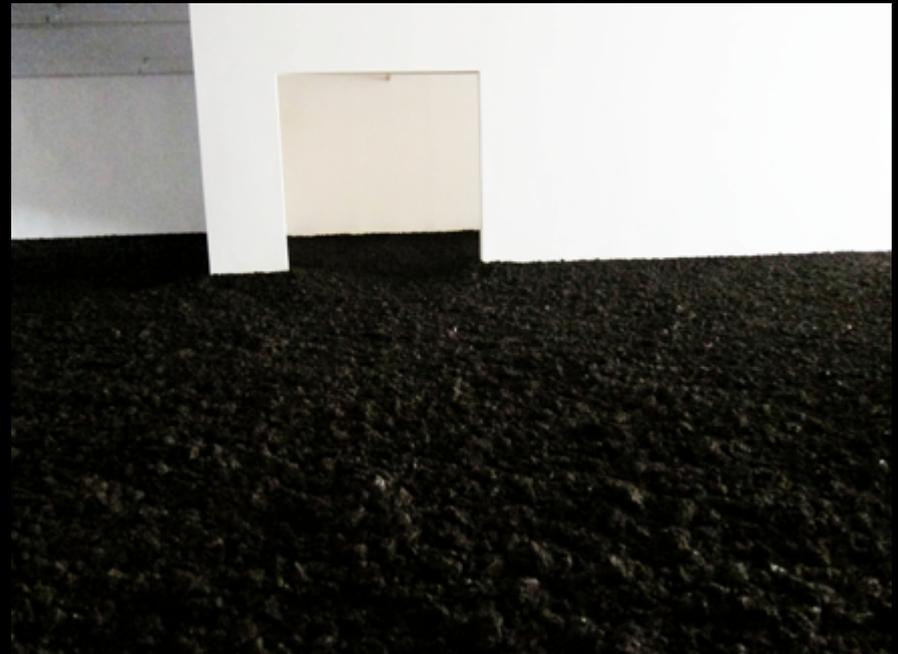


# Walter de Maria

Also interested in urban works like this one, *New York Earth Room*, which is located in a building in Greenwich Village.

It is a 3,600-square-foot room filled to a depth of 22 inches with 250 cubic yards of earth

*It was originally created for an art gallery in 1977 but then reinstalled at 141 Wooster Street.*



# Michael Heizer

Michael Heizer's *Double Negative* (1969) comprises two giant rectangular cuts (and the space in between them) in the irregular cliff edges of a tall desert mesa near Overton, Nevada.

The work is nothing- it is where something, the earth, was removed.

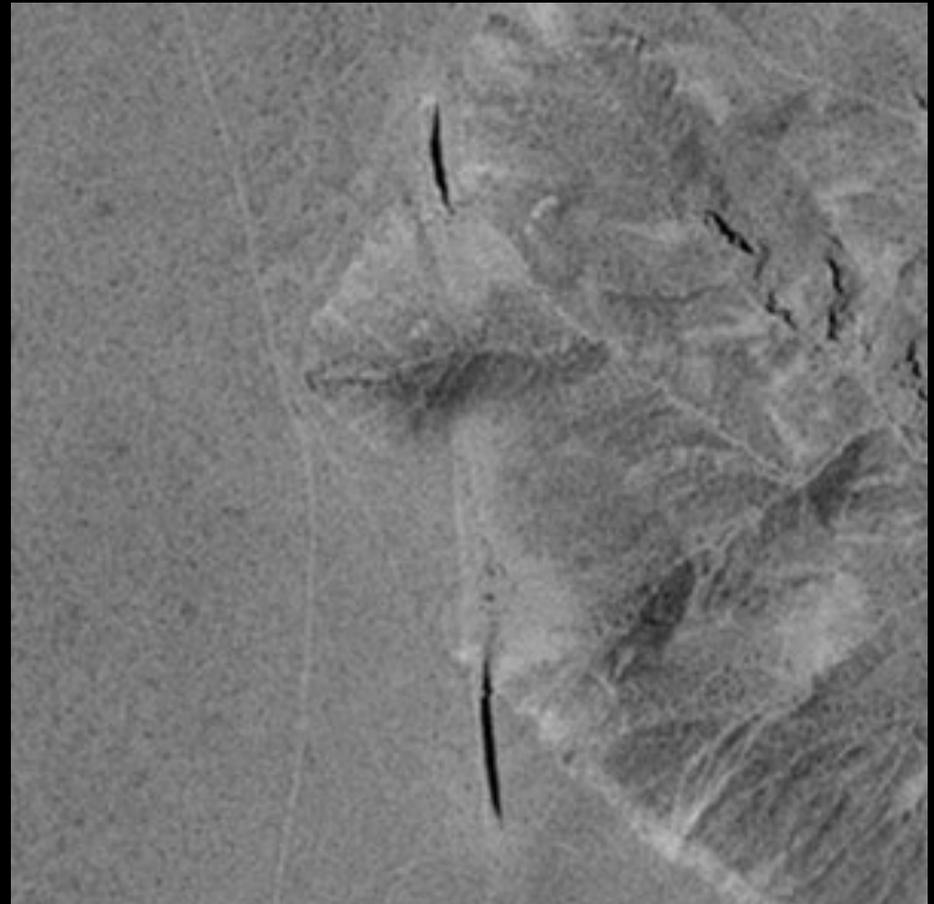


# Michael Heizer

Facing each other in the cliffs on either side of a wide cleft in the mesa, the cuts define rectilinear spaces from which bulldozers have removed the sandstone strata and rock.

Large enough to absorb the Empire State Building lying on its side, this piece has been compared to the monumental earthen architecture of ancient times, as much as to sculpture.

Heizer's work constitutes another challenge to sculpture's long history



Heizer's *Double Negative* Viewed from the air.

# Michael Heizer

Heizer continued to create sculptures based on this idea that what we are seeing is really nothing. These large-scale shapes do not stand above the floor but rather are set into the floor- they are deep holes that are very scary to walk near.



Michael Heizer, *North, East, South, West*—  
1967-2002, Concrete and Steel. Dia  
Foundation, Beacon, NY

# Maya Lin

Maya Lin designed The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as a graduate student at Yale.

She went on to design buildings and to make art about nature and our relationship to the nature.



MAYA YING LIN, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, D.C., 1981–1983. Black granite, each wing 246' long.

The memorial is made of highly reflective black granite.

The thin slabs are sunken into the earth and inscribed with more than 58 thousand names of men and women who died or were lost in action in the course of the Vietnam War. Lin envisioned the construction of the monument quite literally as a cut into the earth, a metaphorical wound in the nation's landscape, with the potentiality to heal through the monument's resurrection.



MAYA YING LIN, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, D.C., 1981–1983. Black granite, each wing 246' long.

Marked with the years 1959 and 1973 at its farthest points left and right respectively, the monument escalates to the center, with the walls reaching over ten feet at the apex.

Maya Lin imagined the names themselves would be the only concrete reality. The reflective surface opens a world the living can never enter but could conceptually experience.

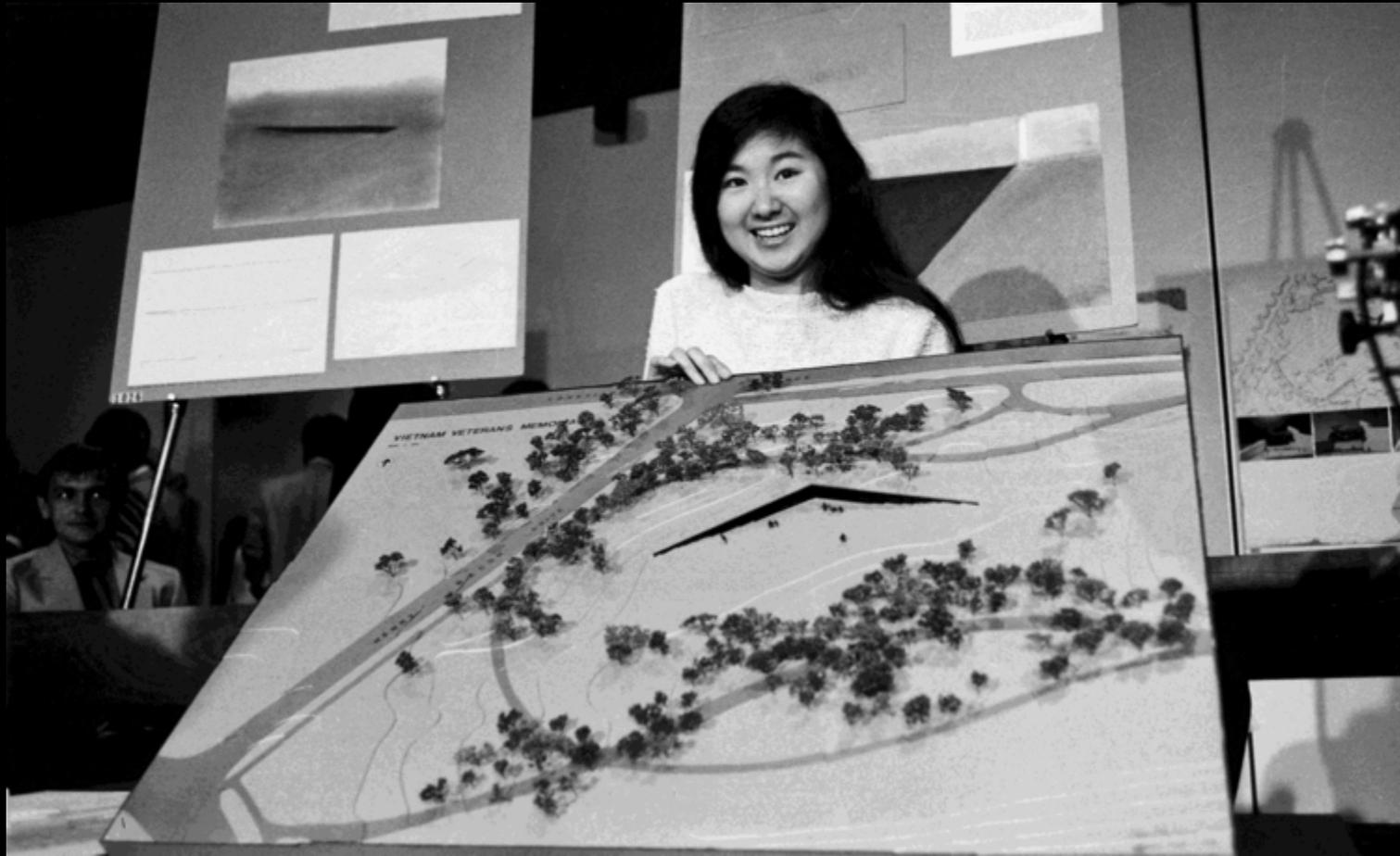


MAYA YING LIN, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, D.C., 1981–1983. Black granite, each wing 246' long.



# Maya Lin

Vietnam Veterans  
Memorial.  
Model.



# Maya Lin

Lin has created several other memorials like: *The Civil Rights Memorial*, Montgomery, Alabama, and *Women's Table* at Yale University. But she also makes sculptural pieces that reference the land or water.



# Maya Lin

Marine references make sense in a part of the world carved and smoothed by glaciers, and terrestrial themes have been central to Ms. Lin's art. "My affinity has always been toward sculpting the earth," she wrote in her autobiographical book "Boundaries" (2000). "This impulse has shaped my entire body of work."

She also created this piece, *Wavefield*, at Storm King Art Center, right here in NY



MAYA YING LIN, "Storm King Wavefield" Maya Lin's new work at the Storm King Art Center, occupies a former gravel pit.

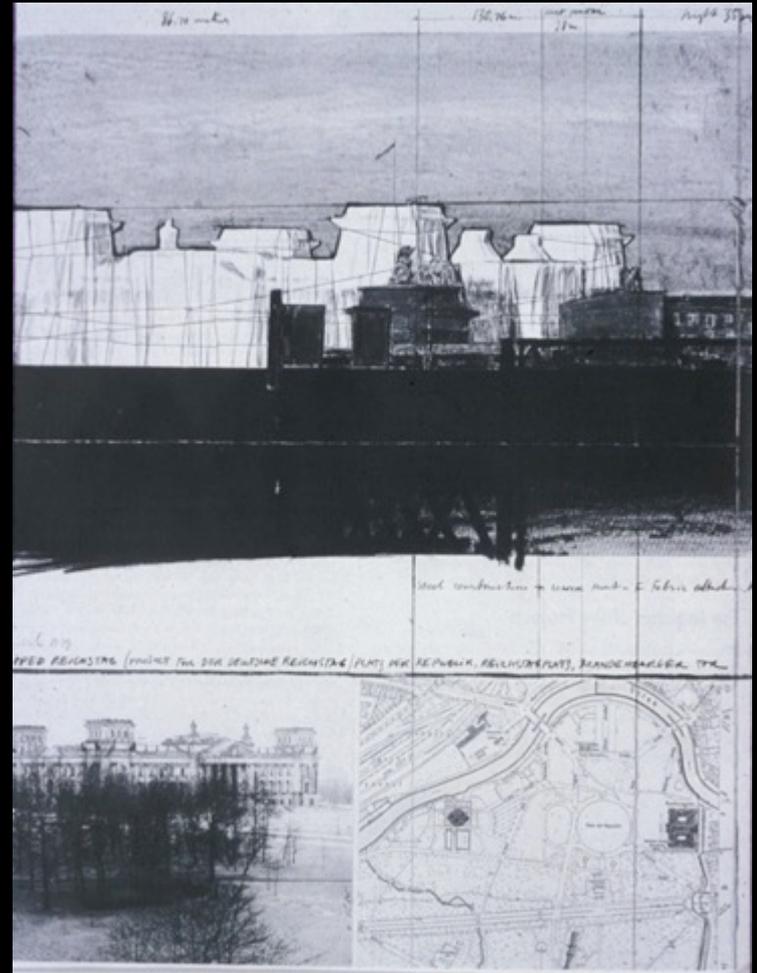
# Jean Claude and Christo

Create public work that is visually impressive and often controversial as a result of its scale.

They have never accepted commission or payment for any work, but rather raise the money themselves through the sale of drawings.

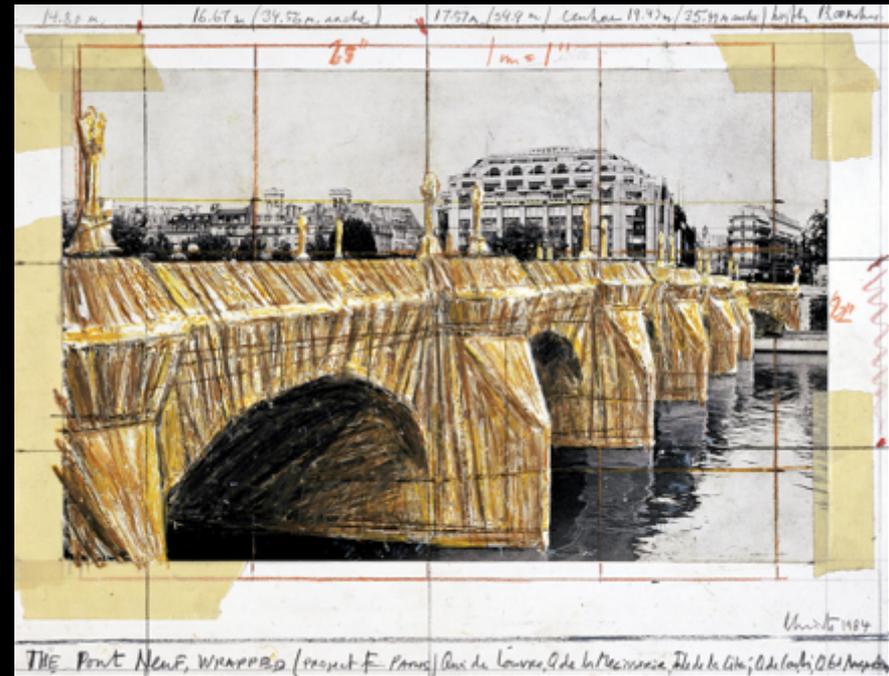
The art relies on the subtle political insight, empowered by visual beauty of the projects, to engage the public in masse in a critical debate on values.

Drawing for  
*Wrapped Reichstag*



# Jean Claude and Christo

Christo realized that those with wealth and power could control a democracy by shaping what people saw on television and read in the newspaper. He wanted to do something about this. He asked---  
How can art compete?  
What can art do?



*Drawing for Wrapped Pont Neuf, Paris.*

# Jean Claude and Christo

Before Christo and Jeanne-Claude brought the act of wrapping to much larger proportions when they applied it to the environment, Christo created many sculptures by wrapping everyday objects with fabric or polyethylene.

He understood that when an ordinary object is obscured, it becomes something else. Maybe just an unrecognizable object, now an art object, or maybe it's a ghost of it's self. *Maybe the wrapping makes us look at it more carefully.*



*Wrapped Motorcycle, 1962,*  
38 1/4 x 67 x 19 5/8" (97 x 170 x 50 cm),  
Polyethylene, rope and motorcycle

# Jean Claude and Christo

While having many people see the work outside a museum or art gallery was important to Christo, equally important was how many people worked on the piece to complete it.

Not only did they have to get permission from people in government, it took people (not artists) to sew, construct, tie off, and install, the piece.

Drawings:

<http://christojeanneclaude.net/mobile/projects?p=wrapped-reichstag>



*Wrapped Reichstag, 1970s -1995*

# Jean Claude and Christo

Running Fence was a 24.5 mile fabric fence constructed and installed in Sonoma and Marin Counties, CA. It was supported by steel posts and steel cables, running through the landscape and leading into the sea.

Approximately 200,000 m<sup>2</sup> of nylon fabric, 2050 steel posts and 90 miles of steel cable were needed.



*Running Fence, 1972-76*



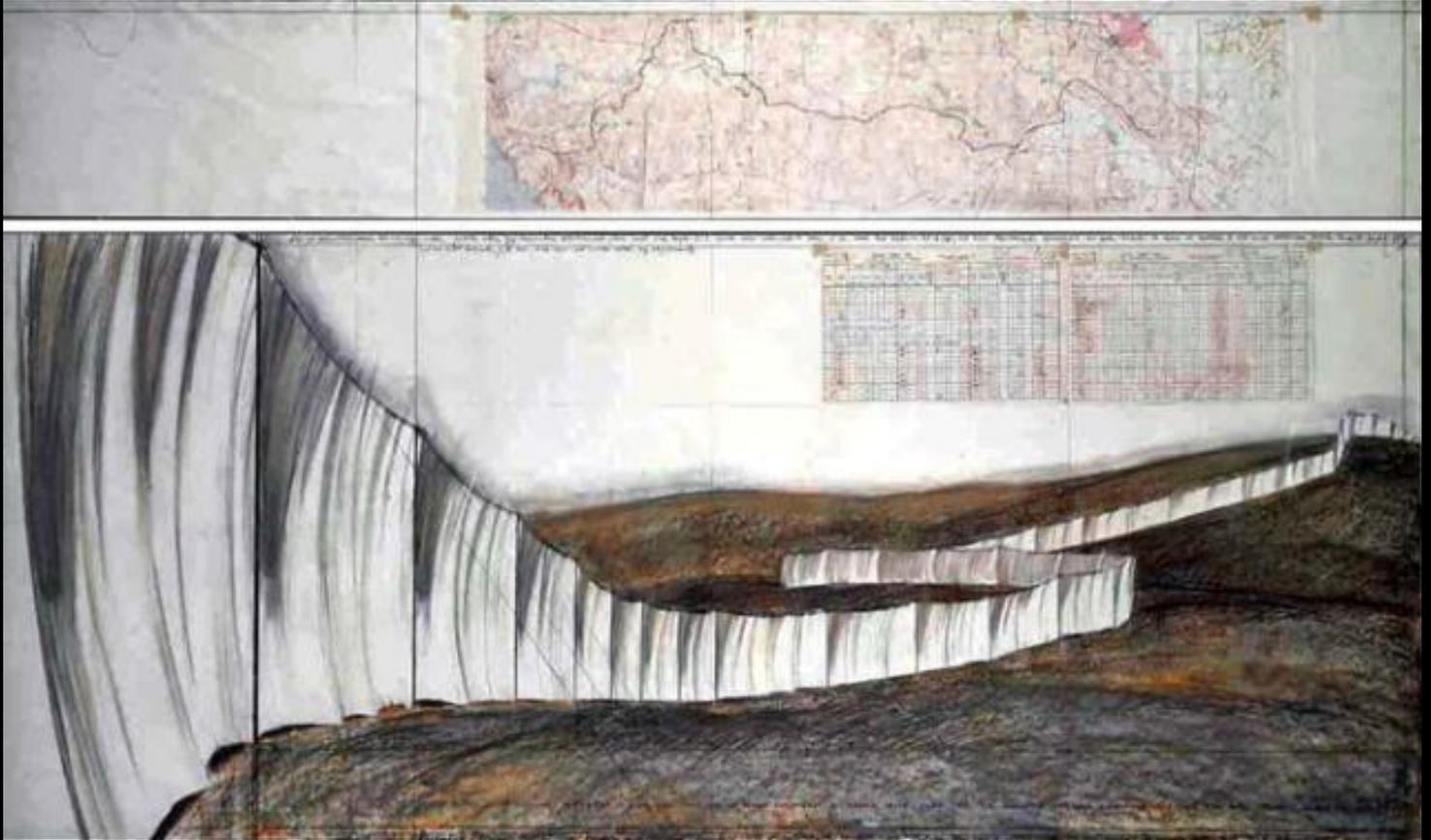
# Jean Claude and Christo

*Christo: “In 1972, we started with the idea of doing a project that involved the life of the people related to the ocean from the urban, rural, to the countryside in California. And this is why the Running Fence is 24.5 miles: Because the Fence crosses from the rural area near the coast to the suburban area at Petaluma and finally crosses the highway, Route 101. In California the highway is very important, and the closest highway ran 24.5 miles from the coast. If the highway had been ten miles from the coast, the Fence would have been only ten miles. The project translates crossing fourteen county roads and small roads until crossing the important Route 101 running north and south from San Diego to the Oregon border. And of course, using the land of the 59 ranchers and public space—all of this exactly reflects how the people in California use the land from rural, suburban, to the urban space.”*



*Running Fence, 1972-76*

# Jean Claude and Christo



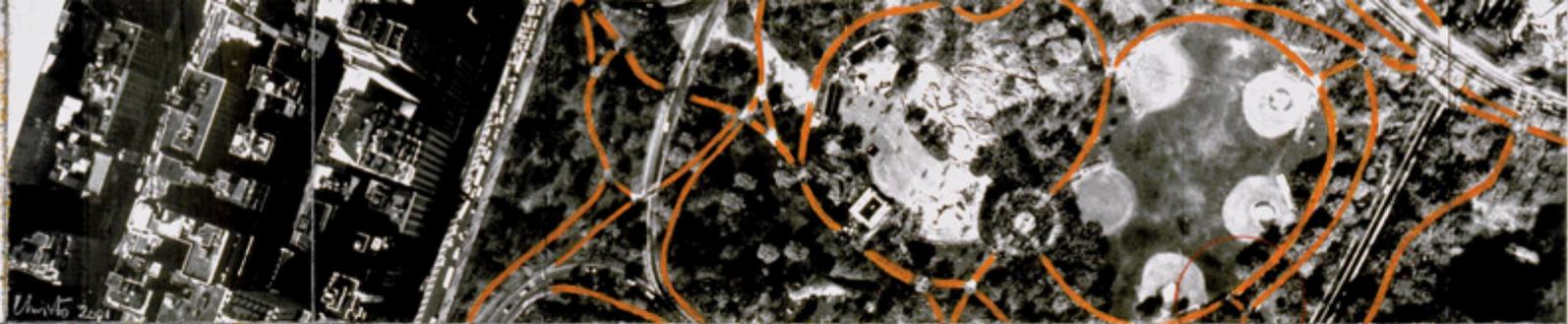
Drawing for *Running Fence*, 1972-76

# Jean Claude and Christo

A total of 7,503 gates made of saffron color fabric were placed on paths in Central Park. They were 16 ft. high and had a combined length of 22 miles.



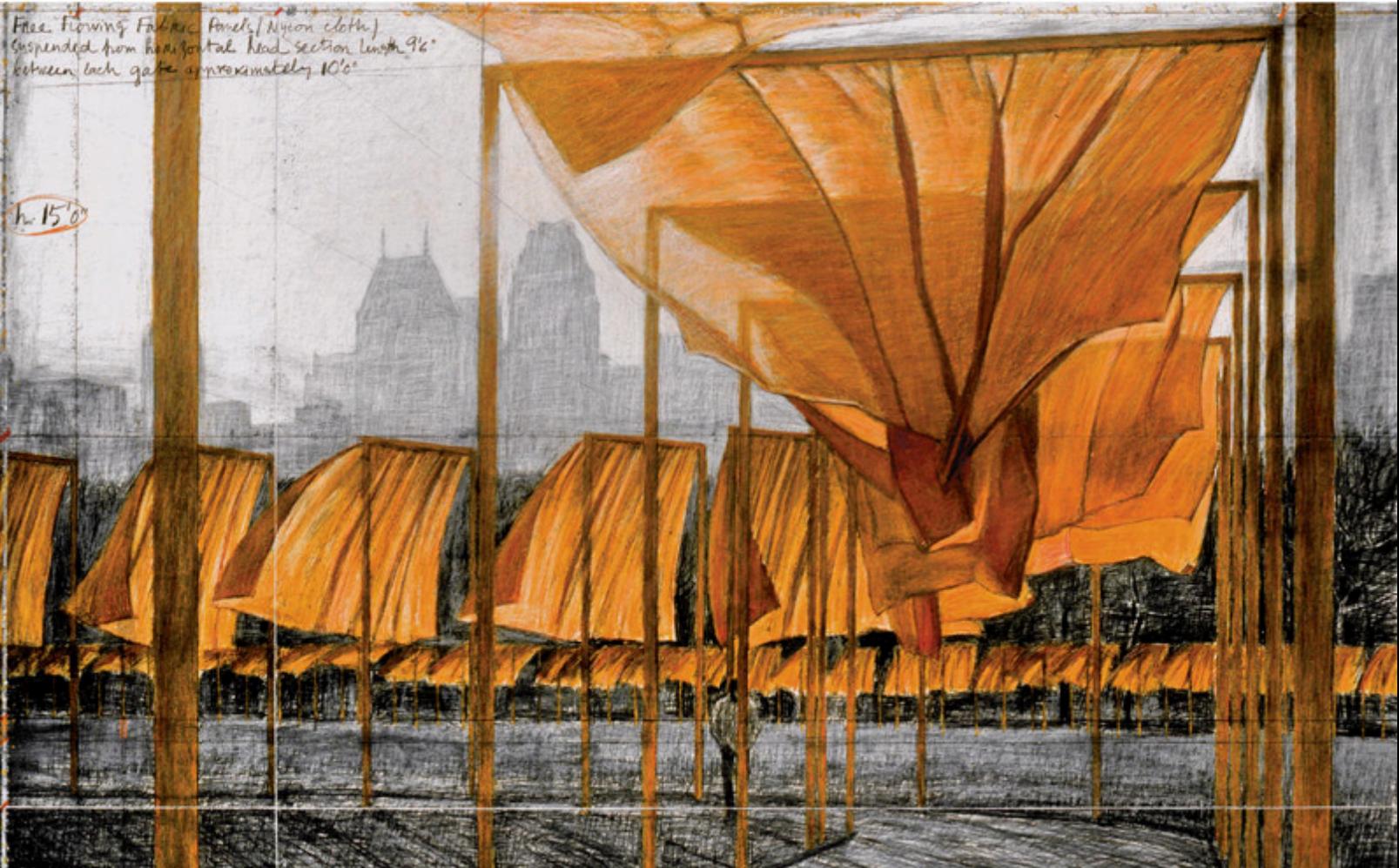
*The Gates*, NYC Central Park, February 12-25, 2005



UNITS 2001  
The Gates (Project for Central Park, New York City) Central Park South, 5th Avenue, Columbus Circle, Central Park West, Cathedral Pkwy, West 110 St.

Free flowing fabric panels (Nylon cloth)  
Suspended from horizontal head section length 9'6"  
between each gate approximately 10'0"

h. 15'0"



Steel to axis of rectangular steel pipe 4 1/2" dia. length 2 1/2" dia. width of gate from 1 1/2" to 2 1/2"