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Fact Sheet

“Christo and Jeanne-Claude: Remembering the ‘Running Fence, Sonoma and Marin Counties, California, 1972-76,’ A Documentation Exhibition”

Exhibition

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April 2, 2010 – Sept. 26, 2010

Location

Smithsonian American Art Museum

Eighth and F streets N.W.

Description

The most lyrical and spectacular of Christo and Jeanne-Claude’s epic projects was the “Running Fence, Sonoma and Marin Counties, California, 1972-76,” a white fabric and steel-pole fence, 24 1/2 miles long and 18 feet high, across the properties of 59 ranchers in Sonoma and Marin Counties north of San Francisco. The project attracted far wider public involvement than any previous work of art, including 18 public hearings, three sessions in the Superior Court of California and the first environmental impact report ever done for a work of art. Paid for entirely by the artists, the “Running Fence” existed for only two weeks. It survives today as a memory and through the artwork and documentation by the artists—drawings, collages, photographs, film and components. This collection of artwork, including nearly 50 major preparatory drawings and collages by Christo, and documentation was recently acquired from the artists by the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

“Christo and Jeanne-Claude: Remembering the ‘Running Fence’” celebrates this significant acquisition and presents an opportunity to re-assess after 30 years the impact of one of the artists’ best-known projects. In addition, the exhibition will introduce the “Running Fence” to a new generation that has grown up since its creation. The exhibition will trace Christo and Jeanne-Claude’s imaginative process through Christo’s early preparatory drawings and collages that preceded the final installation in California, and reveal how imagination and reality coincided by comparing these works with photographs of the completed project. George Gurney, deputy chief curator, and Joanna Marsh, The James Dicke Curator of Contemporary Art, are the exhibition curators. The exhibition will tour nationally following its presentation in Washington, D.C. The exhibition will tour nationally in 2011.

Publication

An accompanying publication will re-assess the “Running Fence” project, and will include interviews with the artists and other participants.

The Smithsonian American Art Museum is located above the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metrorail station. It is open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., except Dec. 25. Admission is free. Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Museum information (recorded): (202) 633-7970. Web site: americanart.si.edu.

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