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BY

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INTRODUCTION

Aesthetic experience is an end in itself with nothing on which to count. The only way for us to preserve its truth is by maintaining its distance from the social world - by staying pure. (1)

Early Modernists rejected modern society by creating an ideal, resulted from only having events and concentrating on art. This belief was not the same but was a source for a pure and actively intellectual aesthetic.

Charlesworth has argued the Modernists '... did not value' principle. His art is equally important. It would not only afford imagination with everyday processes. It is made accessible to the general public and Charlesworth acknowledged their importance as necessary influences of his work.

His main audience is located outside the gallery: the community experienced the British Council (1971 - 1976) and many other galleries experienced the British Council (1971 - 1976). Thus a wide range of social groups are exposed to his artwork. Do the public react with interest to his art when they enter their space?

INTRODUCTION

Aesthetic experience is an end in itself worth having on its own account. The only way for art to preserve its truth is by maintaining its distance from the social world - by staying pure. (1)

Early Modernists rejected modern society by creating art which resulted from their turning inward and concentrating on self. The belief was that the inner self was a source for a pure and socially unaffected aesthetic.

Christo Javacheff has upturned the Modernists 'art for arts sake' principle. His art is socially connected: It would not exist without integration into everyday processes. It is made accessible to the general public and Christo acknowledged their interpretations as necessary enrichers of his work.

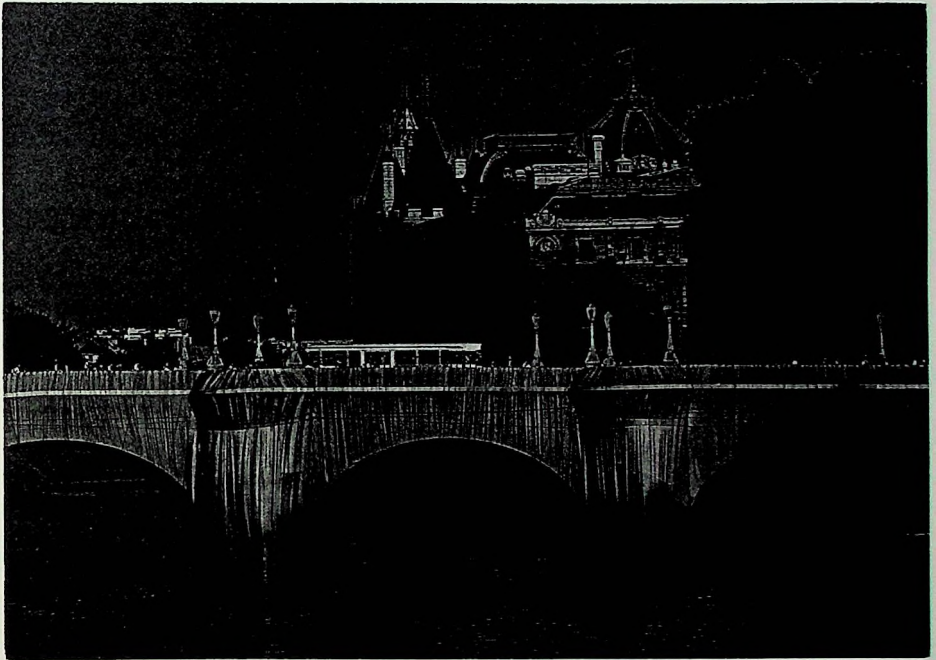
His main audience is located outside the gallery: rural communities experienced the Running Fence (1972 - 1976) and many urban dwellers experienced, Surrounded Islands (1981 - 1983). Thus a wide strata of social groups are exposed to the artworks. Do the public react with protest to this art which enters their space?

Chapter I

The crowds came, the traffic continued
there was popular and intellectual
acclaim a rare double achievement (1)

This statement refers to the positive reaction towards Christo's Pont-Neuf wrapping in Paris 1985. While the bridge was shrouded for the duration of three weeks, it caught the attention and response of a wide audience. Christo makes his art in the public sphere; it confronts two sets of viewers the art audience and the non-art audience.

The former are more informed about the aesthetic. The latter are those uninformed about art and would be the majority of public viewers. Their eyes may be opened by the artists strange transformations of an ordinary bridge which they may use daily. The informed audience - the public minority - might specialize in either art-making, art-assessing or art-reviewing. Thus, they can interpret Christo's Pont - Neuf through their knowledge of the visual arts.



A The Pont - Neuf Wrapped

Paris, 1975 - 1985

- People used the bridge daily -

The manipulation of illusion versus reality is prevalent in a Christo piece. Real objects, bridges, buildings, walkways, coastal-lines, valley's and plains are shrouded, wrapped and are given a mysterious apparitional appearance. The use of the ordinary object or familiar scene by the artist is intended to establish a relationship with the uninformed audience. When they see in Paris, the Pont - Neuf packaged in woven polyamide sheet, their common sense tells them that it is a bridge covered with some fabric.

In contrast the 'illusion' or the illusionary image of the Pont - Neuf may be read as a symbol or an index of consumer society by those more informed about art. There is evidence that the former non-specialized audience generally relate to the banality and the reality of Christo's object as an illusion, and the meaning behind the illusion.

Thus, both audiences have an essentially different interpretation of the artwork. It could be said that the informed viewers have the advantage of grasping the meaning of the packaging, expressed by the artist, more expansively than those who are uninformed.

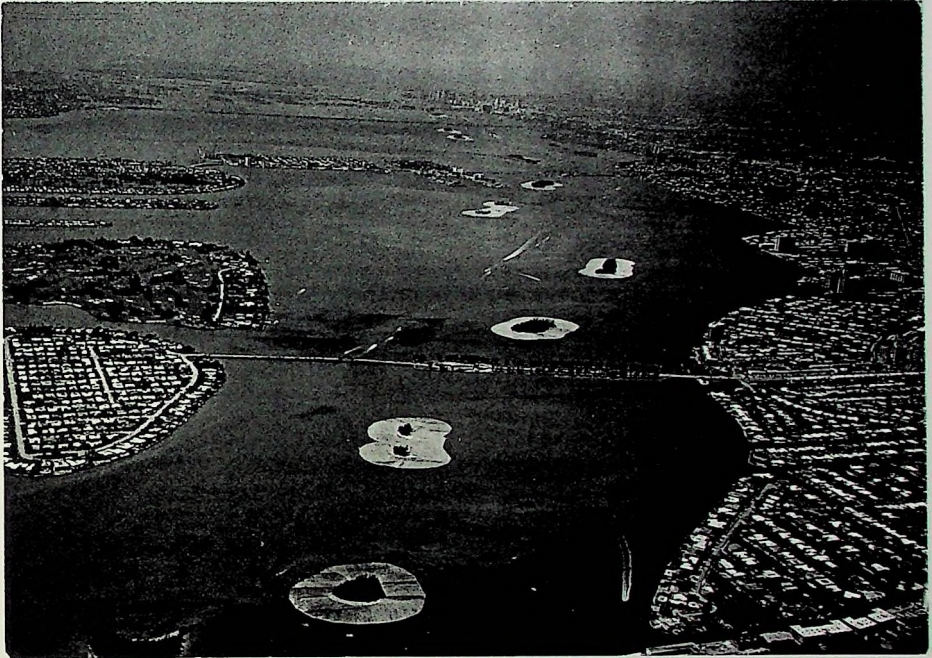
There are a lot of people who didn't know lily-pads from locker rooms who walked down to the project and went "oh wow!" It just knocked them right out. (2)

This response came from John Becker - one of the many construction workers on Christo's Surrounded Islands project. The installation of the artwork was completed on 7 May 1983.

Bright pink, woven polypropylene fabric (6.5 million square feet) encircled eleven small, uninhabited islands which were situated in Biscayne Bay between the city of Miami, Northern Miami, the Village of Miami Shores and Miami Beach. On a north to south axis the islands spanned seven miles of the Bay. The floating fabric covered the surface of the water extending 200 feet out from each island. It was sewn into 79 patterns to follow the contours of all eleven islands.

Preparations for the installation took three years. When the completed artwork was on show the display time amounted to only two weeks. It was swiftly removed by Christo after this period.

A Japanese photographer reporting for a Tokyo magazine gave his reaction to Surrounded Islands:



B Surrounded Islands

Biscayne Bay, Miami, Florida. 1980 - 1983

A small bowl on the turf and water
 (inside the bowl) - that's a landscape.
 Then you put something in, it changes.
 He [Christo] did one thing and its very
 simple, very strong. (3)

One can see from his words that he seems to have grasped some notion of the visual language. He seems to understand the effect of the relationship between the landscape and the art; and also that this interaction with the land which looks apparently simple in Christo's case, can be visually stunning.

John Becker does not say much about the islands in visually descriptive terms. Instead he talks about changing from a position of ignorance about art to an emotional feeling for it: a change that he himself experienced.

Different levels of response may be due to many reasons. Apart from the issue of prior knowledge it is also true that participation will vary in degree. John Becker, for instance, spent more time constructing the artwork so his interpretation may seem to be more personal.

Even-though both interpretations are contrasting there is, at the same time, an underlying similarity. This is the educative process that occurs when one views and thinks about a Christo work of art. The Japanese photographer and the American construction worker are both learning about art. The former is broadening his understanding of land art. The latter's interaction with Surrounded Islands provided the first opportunity perhaps to experience the aesthetic. Thus, those informed and uninformed arrive at interpretations, at different speeds.

The success for Christo in attracting the specialized audience is not such a surprising feat since it is in their interest to acquaint themselves with the work. Their attention is to be expected unlike that of the non-specialized public. One might consider Michael Spen's statement (4) that both popular and intellectual acclaim from the public audience is a 'rare double achievement' why is this so rare? To look at those working in the same realm as the Bulgarian/American artist would be the first step in answering this.

Christo began making small-scale packages during the early sixties. Around that time an important

development was occurring. Many artists began to challenge the role of the museum and the Modernist's view of the self-autonomous and the self-involved artist. Basically, movements such as pop art, land art and community art all began to consider the place where they showed their work and to whom they were showing it.

Pop artists recognised mass-culture and advertising as the 20th century environment of the mass-audience, hence their use of this new culture in socially-awakened paintings and prints. Although, ironically they were still connected to the museum and gallery space which did not cater for the mass-audience.

Community art, on the other hand, reached a wider audience. Murals painted by communities, mainly in urban disadvantaged areas were effective in the rehabilitation of the human and social environment. Co-operation between the community and the artist during this period of the 1970's, influenced Christo to collaborate with the public in his working process. Although, the quality of the art was questionable - because the community artist was less in control.

The community artists shared similar feelings about disconnection from the indoor gallery, with land artists. But in contrast to the former, land artists refused to exhibit in the traditional public arena. Ironically, Christo is most likened to these artists because - the larger environment became vital to the sculpture put into it, hence their second name - environmental artists.

Earth-works are placed outside the confines of the indoor gallery. However, this practice must be questioned when documented works eventually end up on the gallery wall or in the art magazine. Thus, do environmental artists, generally work with the view to getting a response only from the 'intelligentsia'? (5)

In a discussion between Harold Rosenberg, Les Levine, Dennis Oppenheim, Alan Sonfist and Christo (6) it was pointed out that the gallery has certain limits - size, time and most notably viewers. Gallery attendances consist mainly of the specialized audience.

An average of 61,947 that is approximately 6% of

Dublin's approximate population of one million, attended the Douglas Hyde Gallery each year between 1983 and 1989. (7) Thus 94% of the city's population have not visited any of the gallery's highly acclaimed exhibitions during those years.

Alan Sonfist said during the discussion that some environmental artists feel that they are leaders in society or have a 'responsibility to society' (8) and to the public. Christo stated that if they are to be responsible it must mean not only working outside the gallery but in the public arena also.

Unlike Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer or Walter de Maria, Christo could never have escaped into the Mojave Desert, the Great Salt Lake or the Yucatan Peninsula. (9)

Such secluded places have never attracted Christo. He seems to thrive on criticism from a wide public audience. Some of his artworks are placed in rural areas but the community however spread out, still exists.

Christo always seeks 'a dialectical approach, a continual involvement with forces alien or indifferent to art'. (10) If in 1976, the Running Fence had been built on a rich friends property with hundreds of miles of available land in the depths of somewhere such as South Africa - 'the work would be non-existent' (11)

The artist could have drawn the same conclusion with the Surrounded Islands, but he chose to plant his giant pink water-lillies in the centre of a busy metropolis. He says - 'the work arrived to that impact only because it is nourished on the power it carried with itself. The real sources.' (12)

Ordinary people both informed and initially uninformed became 'the real sources' or the medium in the art process. The engineers, lawyers, public authorities, reporters, traffic police, housewives, ranchers and students are just a section of those who put a large amount of energy into the process. Christo claims that people give a project 'such poetry and life' (13). They become involved either as indirect witnesses giving response to the artwork, or as direct collaborators in the physical construction of the sculpture.

Perhaps Christo is rare as an artist when he declares that everybody, every opposition and every response to the art is part of the art.

Confrontation and opposition to the artwork prove to be as beneficial as acceptance (this tends to be ignored by his contemporaries). This confrontation creates a dynamic that would otherwise not normally be experienced especially by the non-art audience as they make judgements about art they've never made before.

Christo believes of his general public that:

They're the art-makers
because....without their decisions,
without their involvement, without
their approval, without their reaction
the work cannot be, they will or will
not let me do the work. (14)

His dependance upon the public to ensure the success of a project means that Christo must tread carefully especially when dealing with his future collaborators for the first time. He fully understands that -

to the public at large modern art has
always implied a loss of craft, a fall
from grace, a fraud or a hoax. (15)

For psychological reasons, the artist believes after 25 years of working with the public on a large scale, that it is more important to supply his public initially with pragmatic information. This is so that everyone can understand and cope with an art proposal. This primarily counteracts any sense of alienation which may occur between him and the chosen communities. Otherwise there may be total scepticism of the essential art idea.

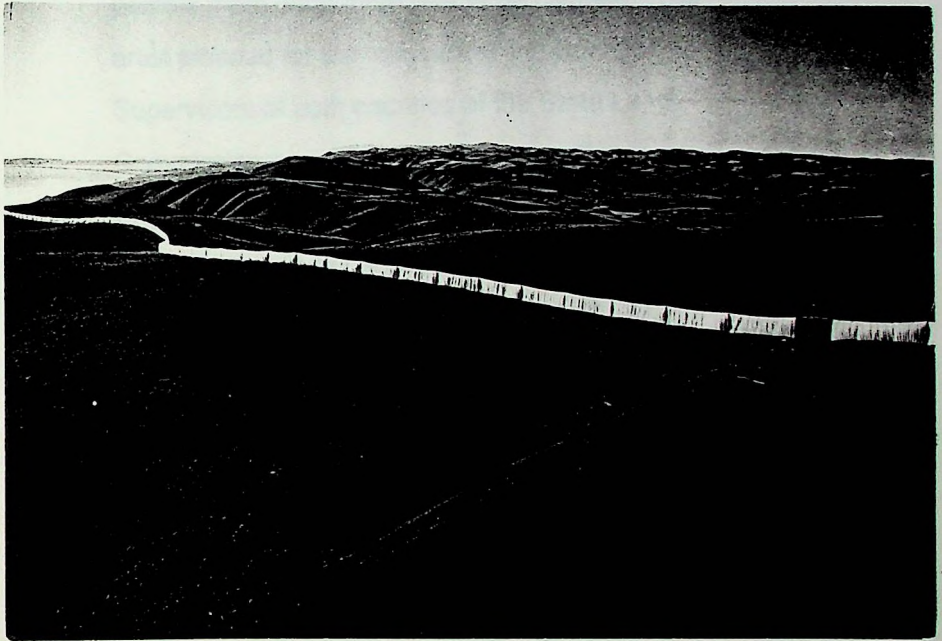
Like a doctor easing a patient into the gradual acceptance of a serious diagnosis - Christo must gently persuade the public to listen to him. The changing of many lives and the subtle disturbance of activities within their space will inevitably occur - if a project is given the go-ahead. Often people do not like to see changes; the ranchers in Northern California are a prime example of this because their lives on the ranch have been the same ever since their grand-parents farmed there.

An 18 foot high 24 mile long white nylon fence spread across 59 ranches during 1976. It entered two counties - Sonoma and Marin - north of San Francisco, before dropping down into the Pacific

Ocean at Bodega Bay. Running Fence was made of 165,000 yards of material, hung with 350,000 hooks on 90 miles of steel cable which was then strung between 2,050 poles. Completed on 10 September 1976, the displayed artwork only lasted two weeks after three years of preparations.

Having driven around many rural sites in the U.S.A. for months (beginning in 1972) Christo and his wife Jeanne-Claude - a driving force behind the organizing of work - chose the Northern Californian counties as the perfect location for Running Fence. Christo prepared drawings, photomontages, scale models, maps and technical details describing the proposal. Permission then had to be sought from 59 ranchers and their families so that the fabric structure could roam across their land.

It took a whole year to convince them to accept a work of art which initially had no conceivable sense or functional value. Each individual ranch was visited by both Christo and Jeanne-Claude. In this way the artist was familiarized with the



C. Running Fence

Northern California. 1972 - 1976

ranchers and any questions which needed to be heard were answered directly by the projects creator.

However, even having attained most of the 59 permits there were more hills to be climbed. The artist pleaded for the consent of the Board of Supervisors of both counties of the State Land Commission as well as the U.S. Army Corps. of Engineers. He then had to explain his intentions and the seriousness of his plans as often as twenty times at open public hearings.

It seemed that the persuasion had to begin all over again at these meetings. The councillors and public officials were shown the drawings and details of the Running Fence proposal and plans were explained in the most pragmatic way possible.

At first the councillors were against the proposal because they feared for the local environment. This was dealt with by Christo as he presented a 450 page Environmental Impact Report. It explained the precautions that would be taken to ensure the safety of the fence's surroundings during its construction and showing period.

Ironically, though if the ranchers had not given their support in 'promoting press conferences themselves to defend the project publicly' (16) - the public authorities may have terminated Running Fence altogether.

Ranchers were determined to express what could or could not be done on their property. Les Bruhn - an old rancher stated:

'I don't know anything about art but if a man wants to dump \$1 million into Sonoma county I'm all for it.' (17)

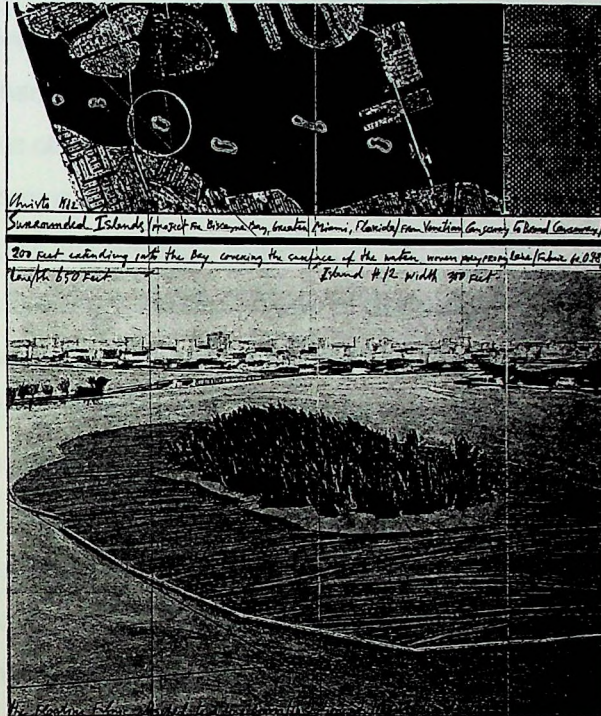
Another rancher exclaimed at one public hearing that he only knew about sheep and cattle and absolutely nothing about art. But he also knew that not one rancher was against the fence idea. The artwork was allowed to begin its physical journey in September 1976 - after 42 months of preparations.

Nine years after this, Christo was commissioned to do a major urban work by Miami City, for its New World Festival of the Arts. The preparatory steps

taken for Surrounded Islands were as numerous as those for Running Fence. The first of these steps was to look at suitable locations around the chosen tropical city.

An overall view of the urban landscape was best obtained from the air. After several flying trips in early 1982 - the artist and his advisor Jeanne-Claude saw how the city's inhabitants constantly used the aquatic areas all around them. Biscayne Bay was the most noted of these waterways as one could clearly see the criss-cross pattern of white surf from the hundreds of small boats ploughing both directions in the deep blue waterway. The dark green islands were chosen as the centrepiece for Christo's idea because their importance to the people of Miami was evident being used as resting places, for picnicing and exploring.

Not unlike Running Fence's preliminary phase - the artist spent many months working on the presentation of his proposal. Collages and drawings on photographs were produced which showed short details about engineering, dimensions of the fabric encircling the islands and even included sections of the potential material.



D. Surrounded Islands: 1980 - 1983

Collage including a map of
Biscayne Bay and a
sample of the pink material.

Obviously, due to the difference in the size of the urban population Christo could not meet everyone individually. The best approach as he had discovered was to talk with people in small groups. He, Jeanne-Claude and some helpers, visited senior citizens clubs, university students and school classrooms all around the city. The introduction was slow and simplified making sure that possible confusion was prevented. News of Christo's extravagant proposition spread like wild fire into the homes of school children and to retired friends of the elderly.

Many discussions with other residents as well as jurors, city officials, developers, advisory committees, architects and co-ordinators snow-balled from Christo's initial propagation. Subsequently permits had to be sought from the following governmental agencies: the Governor of Florida and the Cabinet; the Dade County Commission; the Department of Environmental Regulation; the City of Miami Commission; the City of North Miami; the Village of Miami Shores; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Dade County Department of Environmental Resources Management. The more public the art-work goes the more people it must try to please.

During these long phases of preparations the artist must present his intentions continuously. He was once asked did he ever feel tired of explaining his work . He answered:

No, I do not feel tired, though probably to some people it looks very exhausting. This is because I never explain my projects to the same people. In addition discourse about my project is not something which is definite in my mind. My idea about a project grows with the explanation process. I continuously discover, learn and sense new things.(18)

As the art process builds step-by-step its participants are also on a voyage of discovery. In the beginning of the process all are focused on the social, political, technical, legal and ecological concerns. For a while, this gets so intense that the aesthetic criteria appear to be forgotten. But as the participants become gripped by a 'gigantic surprising irrationality' (19), those who have always thought of art as distant, as a fraud or an insult to them now discover the aesthetic experience.

Ann Burley, a house-keeper living in Miami commented:

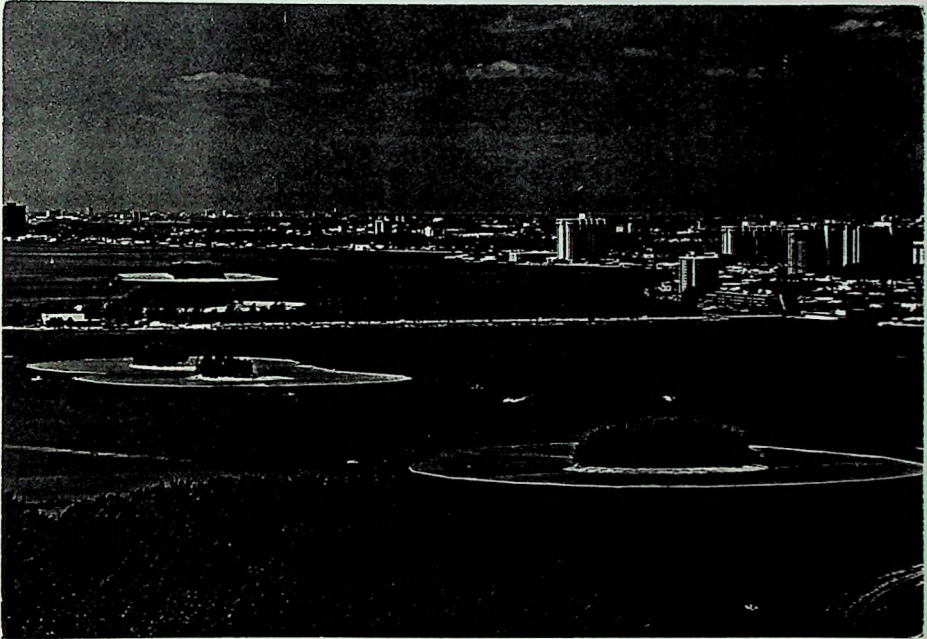
I think it's [Surrounded Islands]
 beautiful.....we take these islands for
 granted Until this project I never
 even knew how many were out there
 and I've been in Miami all my life. (20)

Christo's addition to the otherwise familiar
 cityscape has brought it to the viewers attention.
 She cannot help but notice the fluorescent pink
 discs in the Bay: the neon colour is such a contrast
 to the aqua-marine surroundings. Yet the colour,
 though more subdued, is a natural choice for its
 location.

Tropical art-deco hotels, tropical birds -
 flamingoes - and Miami's flora are all brushed with
 a pink hue. Christo has taken an element of Miami
 and created a startlingly new landscape. Lying in the
 Bay are giant pink liquorice allsorts - the dark
 green vegetative islands being the liquorice, are
 encased with a delicious pink outer coating.

The new landscape has often been compared to
 Monet's late paintings of waterlilies. From the air
 the small islands could be a 'floating chain of
 lilly-pads.' (21) However there is something more
 mysterious about the Miami image than white
 flowers on an Impressionist's canvas.

The Christo view is one so surreal that the public



E. Surrounded Islands: 1980-1983

a 'floating chain of lily - pads' (21)

finds almost unimaginable the depth of human ability it took to put together. Human achievement: the feats of engineering and the amount of organization is part of the wonder of this project. Yet all work and pressure seemed distant in early May 1983. The pink and green blossoms appeared to be undisturbed in the placid water as if they were continuing a perennial cycle.

Christo's son - Cyril offers his interpretation:

great sky flower/As its caress is caught and mirrored in the tendrils of a giant raspberry coat, a coat that billowed a reflection/of supreme humility, by stretching the impossible, in the/Flicker of a thread, beyond the limits of earth-shackled trials. (22)

During 1976, a Californian woman experienced the aesthetic from an older Christo. Next to the Running Fence, she ran a catering business and in the Fence video (23) she expresses to her customers how pretty, in the sense of 'nature pretty' the tall steel poles were winding over the land - and this even before the panels of fabric were attached.

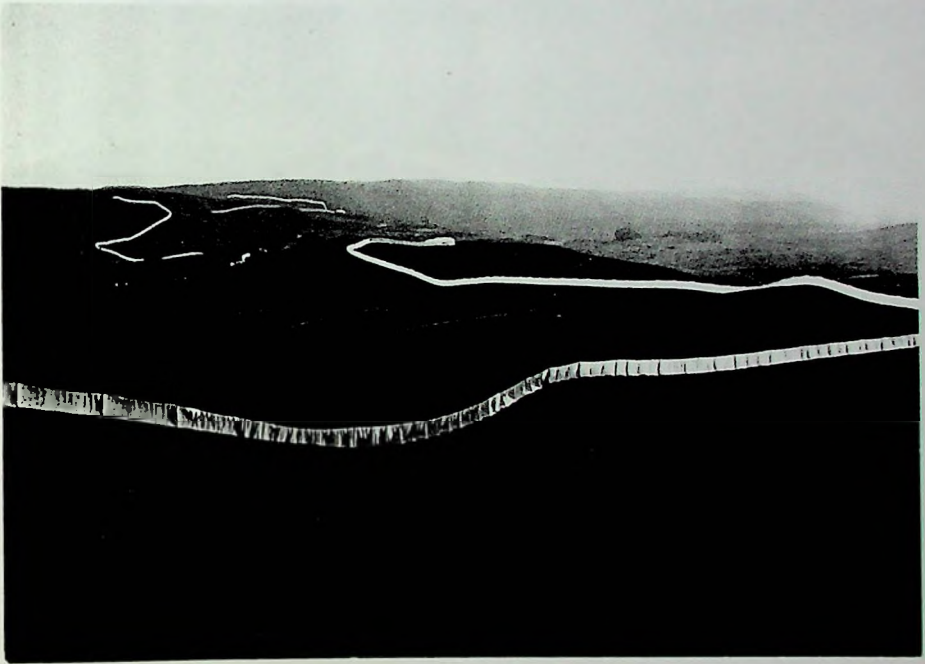
Following the contours of the rolling lands the poles were like pencil-lines, from a distance,

waiting to be filled in with a white paint. When the miles of cable were erected they resembled telephone poles. Seperate nylon panels (like smaller versions of Valley Curtain 1970-1972) were rung together, filling the spaces between these 2,050 poles.

People were stunned by its glittering presence in the midday sun and its ghostly whiteness on a moon-lit night. The fence had a shimmering quality which converted the landscape into a dreamlike or mysterious place. It appeared to be

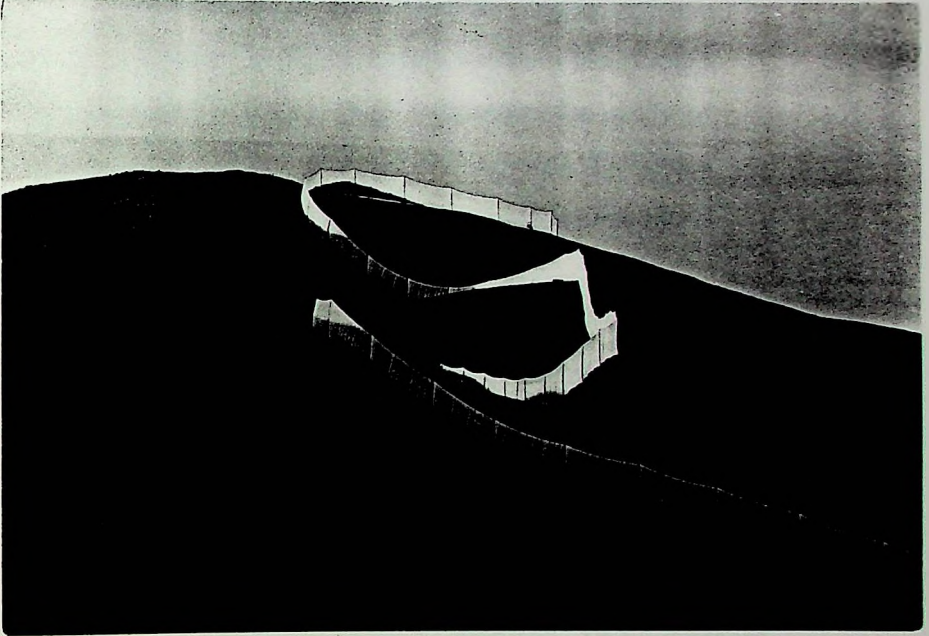
as volatile as quick silver in the midday heat, still visible in the early morning or at nightfall like light scratch-marks from a giant hand. (24)

Christo has frequently played with light in his creations. The nylon fabric he uses constantly attracts the light, thus making it quite shiny. More than the Surrounded Islands though, Running Fence because of its neutral colour seemed to reflect light-changes. Morning yellows were dusted onto its rippling material; Sunset oranges, yellows and pinks tinted its ghostly appearance. It acted like a mirror to the colours around it: the dull greens and browns of the withered grass lands, and vivid blues and greens of the sea and sky were reflected onto its shiny surface.



F. Running Fence: 1972-1976

-'light scratch-marks from a giant hand' (24)-



G. Running Fence: 1972-1976

- Sunset orange, yellows and pinks
tinted its ghostly appearance-

Many people who were very knowledgeable about ranching but not about art, now showed appreciation for a contemporary work of art. The ranchers who witnessed the slow process of technical, legal and construction stages, or tests of human endurance, were suddenly faced with a majestic feature which accentuated the vastness of their land. Every hill and vale was highlighted by this seemingly infinite line fluidly weaving its way towards the horizon.

Other fences on some ranches were broken and shabby and could not compare to the gigantic new one. The ranchers seemed to be proud of Running Fence - as if they possessed it temporarily. The town of Valley Ford was the only place where the fence could be touched by everyone. Some ranchers became like museum guides for a while, as they proudly invited their friends to visit the fence. Unlike in museums or galleries, here one could grip the poles to feel their sturdiness, or handle the strong woven sheets and explore the structuring together of fabric and metal.

As with Surrounded Islands people were made aware of their living place and their environment. One man, whose ranch was situated at the

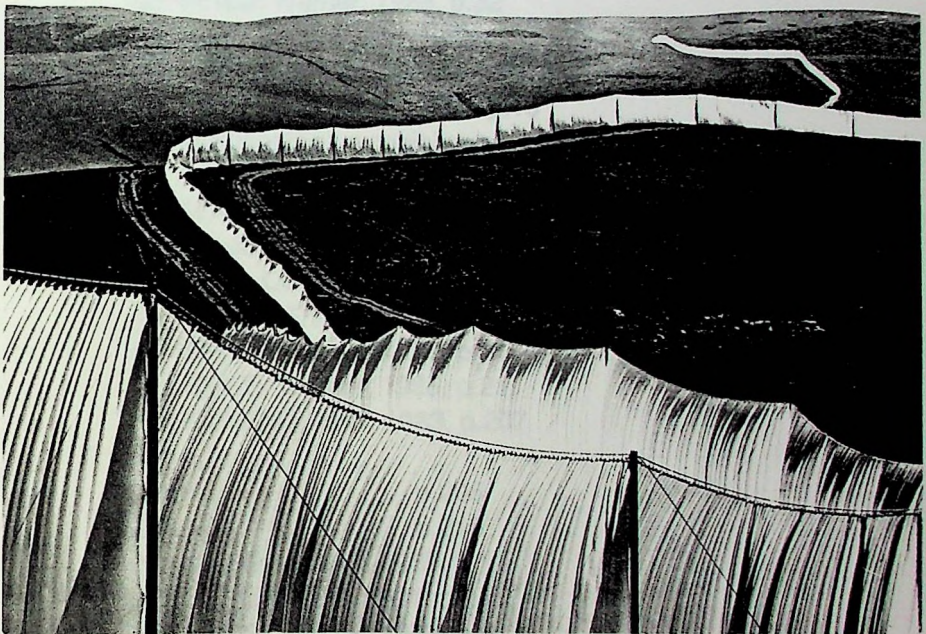
intersection between Running Fence and Bodega Bay, stated:

'Its so beautiful here, I think I'll sleep up here tonight with the fence.' (25)



H. Running Fence: 1972-1976

- Older fences broken and shabby could not
compare to the gigantic new one -



H. Running Fence: 1972-1976

- Other fences broken and shabby could not compare to the gigantic new one.-

FOOTNOTES: Introduction

- (1) GABLIK, Suzi, 1984, p.20

FOOTNOTES: Chapter I

- (1) SPENS, Michael, December 1985, p.2
 (2) SPIES, Werner, 1985, p.32
 (3) " " " p.30
 (4) SPENS, Michael, December 1985, p.2
 (5) WALKER, John A., 1983, p.15
 'intelligentsia': a social group privileged in
 terms of cultural if not monetary capital.
 (6) SONFIST, Alan, 1983, p.192-216
 (7) Details available at the Douglas Hyde Gallery,
 Trinity College.
 (8) SONFIST, Alan, 1983, p.196
 (9) SPIES, Werner, 1977, p.11
 (10) SPIES, Werner, 1985, p.21
 (11) SONFIST, Alan, 1983, p.207
 (12) " " " "
 (13) " " " p.206
 (14) " " " p.215
 (15) SPIES, Werner, 1985, p.13
 (16) GABLIK, Suzi, 1984, p.34
 (17) SPIES, Werner, 1977, p.8
 (18) YANAGI, Masahiko, 1987, p.14
 (19) SPIES, Werner, 1985, p.12
 (20) " " " p.30
 (21) " " " p.21
 (22) " " " p.696
 (23) SEE VIDEO
 (24) SPIES, Werner, 1977, p.1
 (25) SEE VIDEO

Chapter II

Both of Christo's rural and urban art-works had a 'negating power that broke into the false automatism of the mechanical mode of life' (1) Christo caught people off guard: those used to a conformist social reality were now being offered a new kind of reality. A critic for Tomaes Bay Times (a local newspaper for the counties siting Running Fence) wrote:

All of us have a capacity within us for expanding our visions beyond the mundane, but we are constrained and frustrated by the dilemmas of daily life. Something comes along that says the possibilities are unlimited, that the view dissappears over the horizon and goes to points unseen. (2)

The art-work in a gallery can stir up the imagination hence producing endless possibilities and alternatives. Christo's art, outside the white walls has the same function. It transforms every-day life into a world of fantasy; it has the ability to change common reality.

What a good luck for Sonoma county that Christo has chosen it for his gigantic work of art. The Running Fence is a new exciting, happy event to

take our minds off the recession. (3)

- wrote a reader of the Tomales Bay Times.

Apart from the psychological effect, Christo's manipulation of the landscape also affected people physically. Rural and urban dwellers had to re-adjust their movements in space. The ranchers, during the daily feeding of their sheep and cattle herds, had to drive them through specially designed gaps in the Fence. The people of Miami could not visit the Islands for two weeks. At that time they moored against the booms at the edge of the 200ft wide pink extensions. The public's reality changed visually as well.

The sight of an 18 foot high rippling, white fence traversing the otherwise barren Californian landscape could be considered as quite out of the ordinary. It is not something that one sees everyday. And neither is the sight of eleven small islands trapped in gigantic discs of shocking pink. So the aesthetic experience provides a new perception of reality and thus a relief from the common and banal.

His illusionary changing of reality supplies the aesthetic experience. The transformations are

'like intricate riddles waiting to entangle the public'. (4) If these puzzles did not involve the familiar, the non-specialized audience may not feel encouraged to look.

Ever since 1961, Christo has featured the familiar in his work. From that year onwards he wrapped common objects such as those used for transportation: a Renault Car in 1961, a motor-cycle and baby-carriage in 1962 and a Volkswagen in 1963. The following year he exhibited store-fronts which had its windows blocked out with brown paper - as if the window-dresser was preparing a display.

All of these early pieces were made on a human scale. That is they did not over-power the viewer in size, which was unlike Wrap in Wrap out - the shrouding of the Contemporary Museum of Modern Art in Chicago, 1969.

The artist (with eleven helpers) had three sides of the museum covered with tarpaulin and bound with rope so that it had the appearance of a giant parcel. This action brought the museum down to human-size, as did the 2,800 foot of painter's drop cloths which covered the floors inside.

The very act of window dressing, packaging and stacking (as in Stacked Oil Drums in 1962 and Stacked Hay 1968) is an everyday common occurrence. Even the materials used by the artist - the drop cloths, plastic, brown paper and binding string are functional to working people on a daily basis. Hence, it is the humanness of Christo's art which invites the audience to take a look.

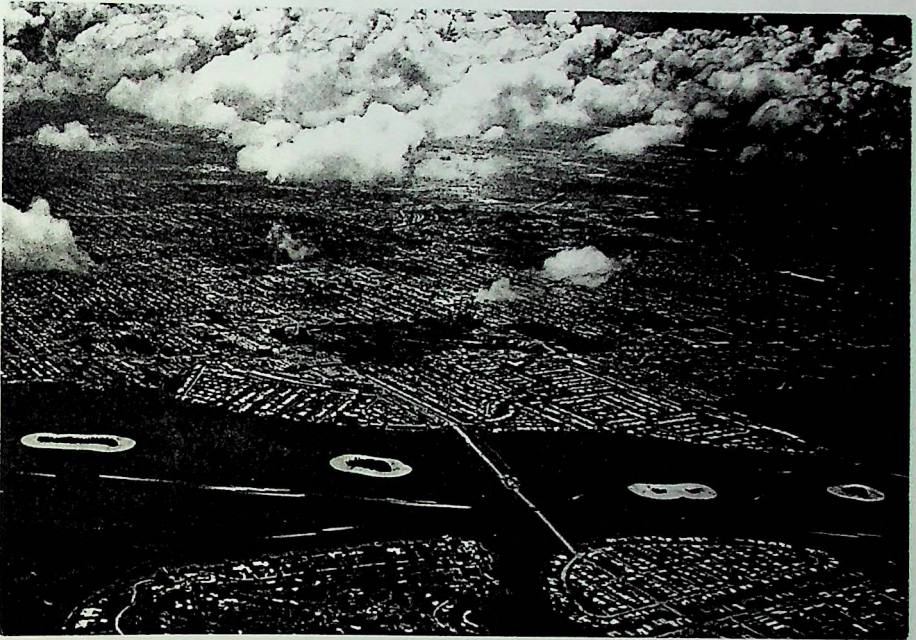
The human-side of his art works is intended to reach out, and not down from a pedestal, to a mass-audience and make it more accessible. But its accessibility is also due to the siting of the work in the space of the audience. In Wrap in Wrap out (1969) Christo made one of his first attempts to show outside the gallery. Apart from the museum's parcelled exterior, a tall maple tree on the street and the museum sign were also wrapped in clear plastic.

Accessibility was still as important to Christo twenty years later. The siting of Surrounded Islands in one of the busiest waterways in the City of Miami is proof of that. People could encounter the eye-catching art work by boat, or travelling to work near the Bay in their cars or even by air. Thousands witnessed the pink islands from national

and international airplanes at altitudes of 20,000 feet. Some of the pilots altered flight patterns so that passengers could view and photograph the blossoming islands.

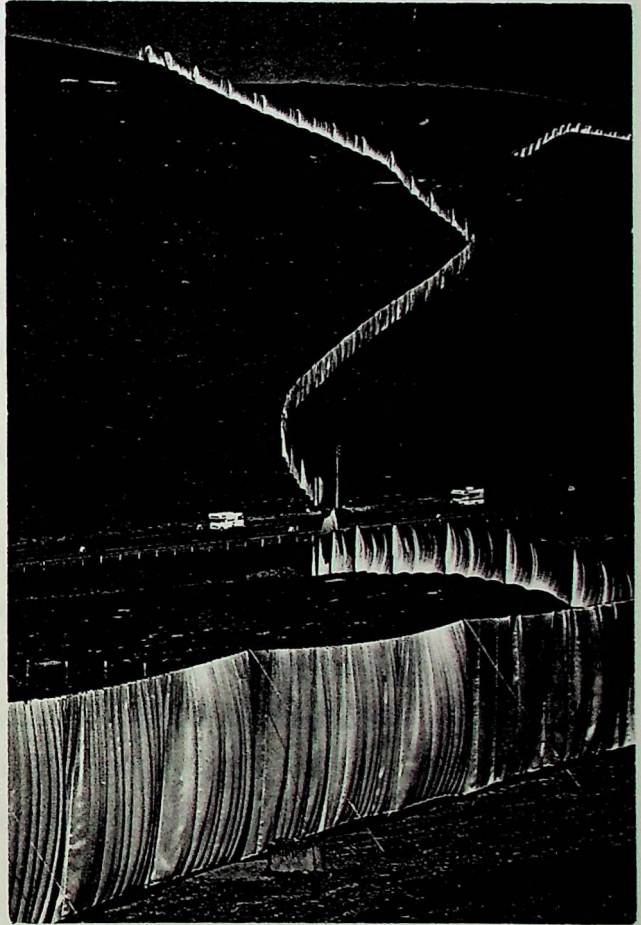
In 1976 Running Fence could also be seen from water, sky and along forty miles of public roads during its construction period and showing period of two weeks. Indeed the artwork was so popular that Christo had to employ 80 workers to control the influx on these rural roads. So many people visited the Fence that 'No Parking' rules, 'No Entry' signs and even a 'no Standing' rule had to be enforced by the artists and the ranchers so as to protect private land.

One important factor which makes up for this restriction was the media coverage of both the rural and urban projects. These artworks were made available to a mass-audience. They entered the living-rooms of the world by being broadcast on television and printed in the newspapers. Attracting the media's attention has not been a problem for Christo.



I. Surrounded Islands: 1980-1983

Thousands witnessed the islands..... at altitudes of
20,000 feet.



J. Running Fence: 1972-1976

One of the many gaps made in the Fence for public roads.

His works are grandiose, monumental, majestic and visually dazzling. They've often been compared to mass festivals - carnival-like in scale and colour; and also to ingenious studio sets created by Hollywood in such productions as The Gangs all Here (Fox 1943) or The Great Ziegfeld (MGM 1936). Such sets featured banana hats 30 feet high or hundreds of giant strawberries dancing on revolving stages.

Christo grew up in East-bloc Bulgaria which was far away from capitalist western idealism and where monumental displays were essential. He knew of gigantic works in the U.S.S.R. (between 1918 and 1921) which celebrated such historical events as May Day and the October Revolution. Materials such as 15,000 yards of canvas were used for a construction in Petreograd during the celebrations.

While the artist studied at the academy of Fine Arts in Sofia, from 1952 to 1955, he was greatly influenced by Sergei Vasiliev - who was an artistic director at the Bulgarian State film studios. His interest continued into theatre as he joined the 'agit prop' - a street theatre group. Contact with

work which was illusionary or monumental is even more apparent when one notes his participation in propagandist projects.

He became involved in Potemkinesque adornment - or falsification of reality. With some fellow students, he put on shows for capitalist westerners who were travelling on the Orient Express through communist Bulgaria. For instance; farmers machinery was placed in dynamic positions on a hill or water pipes would be arranged into artistic piles. These efforts displayed a false notion of wealth.

There is an element of universality about his more recent temporary monuments. One could compare them to ancient wonders of the world such as the Great Wall of China or the Pyramids. One of Christo's dreams which is still in progress (since 1978) is to build a pyramidal structure by stacking nearly 400,000 oil barrels. The Mastaba of Abu Dhabi for the United Arab Emirates, is to be 'taller and more massive than the great pyramid in Cairo'.
(5)

Such spectacles have the ingredients to interest a

huge audience as they enter different social and political contexts. Unselfconsciously though, the public will flock to see and be part of such an event as paralleled with a major sports event, a rock concert or circus-fair. Tomales Bay Times dated 10 September, 1976 - describes the atmosphere charged with the existence of Running Fence. A wonderful pandemonium of tourists, press, workers, monitors, passing motorists, cyclists and locals shared the blazing sun making this the theater event we all knew it really was. (6)

Seven years later the Miami Herald (9 May, 1983) talked about the island event:

This seemed a good week to go look at art. Art was in the news, it was the news: there was more in the local papers about Christo and the Surrounded Islands than any other single subject. (7)

As stated in Culture, Society and the Media (8): the popular media are powerful agencies in the interpretation and moulding of one's consciousness. These agencies - television, newspapers and radio act as 'definers of social reality' (8) This means that they have a bearing on how one perceives the world; they have the ability to shape our

perceptions. And as one of the authors of Culture, Society and the Media - Michael Gurevitch says about the shaping of our perceptions: 'if action is at all related to thought' (9) then the way one acts within the world is also shaped.

Through media interpretation the majority of the population will feel more at ease with art. One media-consumers response was:

If I can get from other artists what I've received from this project [Surrounded Islands], it's certainly worth paying attention to other modern artists. (10)

Now, this person may have been directly involved in the artworks preliminary phases or construction, rather than indirectly witnessing the art in their own living-room. Nonetheless 'even those who engage with art directly do not escape the influence of the mass media'. (11)

The most significant role the communications industry plays is as a mediator between the artist and his public. In addition, during Running Fence and Surrounded Islands many people wrote comments to newspaper editors, or revealed their

thoughts in person on television and radio.

Considering that countless public works such as Richard Serra's Titled Arc, or Ellis O'Connells The Wall of Kinsale (1987 - 1988) (12) have been tumulted with a wave of controversy and public out-cry, it would be surprising to think that the public art in question was not treated in the same way. The fact is Christo received more rejections and objections than the voice of approval.

The astronomical amounts of money spent were one of the main spring-boards of public protest.

Figures adding up to several millions are not unusual when dealing with land art by Christo. Running Fence cost over \$3 million and Surrounded Islands was \$5 million. Objections like Mary Fuller's (an artist living in the area of the Fence) were typical: 'It is money making a proposition not art... A public relations snow-job is not the same thing as fine-art'. (13)

Obviously the artist felt that the money made Christo's art successful. This is true to a certain extent as the construction of large environmental works require such major resources. It may be worth questioning the cost of the work in relation to the amount it received.

Most objections about the money Christo spent on single art events was based upon one assumption that it was public money. In truth, it came from sources independent of public sponsorship, art patronage or arts-councils. His finances came unusually from the sales of drawings, collages and scale models of his major works to museums, collectors and dealers; as well as from reproductions - for example, books, films and photographs - of completed projects. Ironically, one protestor during a Running Fence hearing, saw the artwork as a purely commercial activity advertising his books, film and happenings while Christo's perception was the reverse.

Christo's ventures are indeed commercial activities. His C.V.J. (Jeanne-Claude, Christo Javacheff) corporation was announced by the Wall Street Journal in 1983 as being in the top three list of American patrons/promoters. The result of the company's success is due essentially to the commercialization of reproductions of the art-work. One must question the implications that has on the commodification of the art itself.

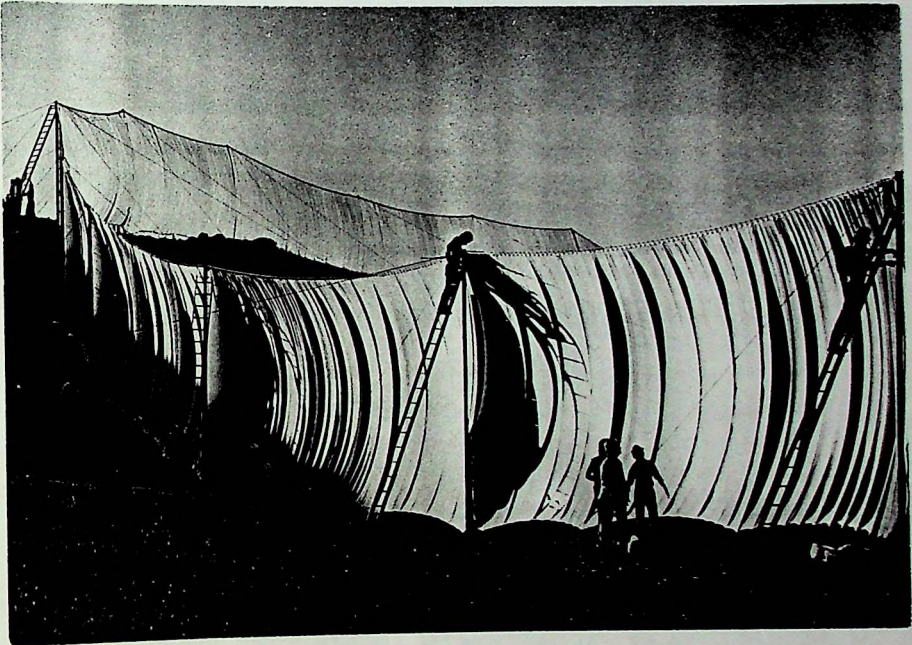
Despite the self-financing nature of Christo's work, public unease is still arguably justifiable.

During the hearings on Running Fence, Northern California had for instance a 12% unemployment rate, leading the public to question the appropriateness of Christo's expenditure on art.

Christo argued otherwise. The \$3 million spent to build Running Fence was calculated to have multiplied into \$9 million of economic benefit. Three hundred jobless people found a few weeks employment on the scheme. They sewed, gathered, hung and tied down the 165,000 yards of nylon fabric. When construction was completed Christo employed 80 monitors to control traffic and crowds, and to hand out factual information.

Five hundred people altogether reaped the benefits from Christo's Islands which cost him \$5 million. For example - 45 seamstresses cut, sewed, folded and ordered the fabric into special cocoons (which were towed on water to the islands). In order to inform the public about the finished work the artist hired 120 local people - who also monitored the pink islands in dinghy boats, by day and night.

When Miami gave to Christo eleven of the Bay's islands - he donated \$100,000 worth of his art-pieces to Biscayne Bay's Preservation Fund in



K. Workers finishing a section of
Running Fence: 1972-1976



L. Surrounded Islands: 1980-1983

Workers from the locality

return. The city's - State of Florida also received art-works valued at \$50,000 plus nearly \$13,000 - which paid the rental fee for an area in the North of the Bay. This is where the cocoons and installation equipment were launched.

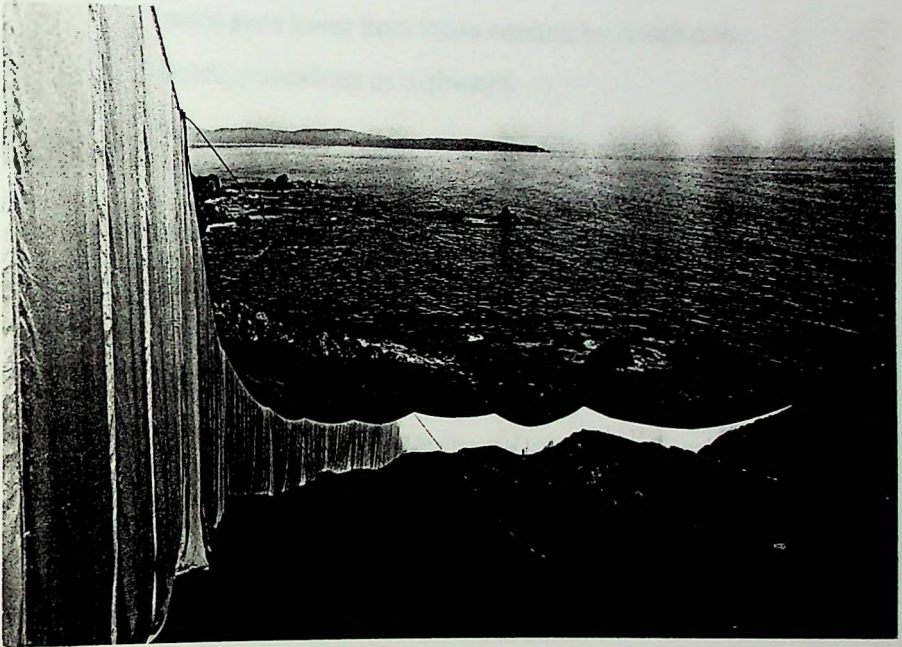
In addition to the hundreds employed namely - engineers, photographers, jurors, county officials, scientists and those in the media, businesses boomed in both rural and urban counties due to the tourist attraction. In Miami, for instance, profits increased for the Art Deco Hotels (who advertised typically in pink). During both projects smaller enterprises took advantage of the situation, such as one helicopter company which gave 5,000 rides at \$35 each to eager sightseers.

Apart from financial criticism there was also the potential danger to the environment to be considered. Unlike Richard Long's gentle interactions with the land, Christo's gigantic transformations intensely involve not only the land but the sea and sky as well. Tons and tons of material, steel cables and large equipment are used to convert the landscape. Those who were most concerned initially about the land siting the long fence were naturally the 59 owners who farmed it.

However, even with tons and miles of equipment the artist has always managed to tread lightly and with much sensitivity in his adopted environment whether it be on Australian coastline, a Florida Bay or miles of rural land in Northern California:

(a) No concrete was used to plant the Fence - it was braced laterally with guy wires (or steel cables); (b) Vehicles transporting equipment and the 300 strong work-force had special tyres to prevent soil erosion; (c) Aerial surveys made daily insured the safety of the private property; (d) And in order to prevent a fire disaster - smoking was not allowed and workers trained in fire prevention, were equipped with extinguishers. The removal of the Fence after two weeks completion also included a road side clean up.

A number of environmentalists then expressed concern about the fate of the local county wild-life as well as the effect of the Fence 'glittering like a pointed knife into the Bay'. (14) Immediately, Christo requested that an Environmental Impact Report be drawn up so that he could avoid any hazards.



'glittering like a painted knife' (14) into Bodega
Bay.

M. Running Fence: 1972 - 1986

Surprisingly rather than causing danger to some 68 species of animal (for example birds, rabbit, fox and deer) it was discovered that the art-work actually reduced animal casualties. The figures were even lower than those caused by telephone poles, powerlines or highways.

The artist worked with the compromises written in the 280 page report. Small changes had to be made to the part of Fence which entered the sea.

However, even after the Fence had been legally approved in the courts there came an 'express prohibition' (15) from Northern Californian Coastal Commission. Christo and his work-force were about half way through the construction period, when the commission suddenly demanded a halt to the fence's ocean dive.

It was defiantly ignored by the artist however. 'Suicidal energy' (16) was how he described the endless uncertainty created by the public opposers. With this energy he lead the fluid fence into the sea. He said 'it was the fear of failure and the constant sense of danger that released the energy to complete the work'. (16)

55 A.

For a time the harmonious and peaceful fence existed only in his preparatory drawings. The media gorged on such controversy but only for a short time. The prohibition was lifted after several nervous days for the artist, Jeanne-Claude and his team. Running Fence could continue in peace.

In early 1981, Christo made sure that any threat his Miami project would pose for Biscayne Bay's aquatic life was prevented. There was no prior knowledge of the damage that could have been caused by the 610 anchors driven into the limestone sea-bed or the earth-anchors drilled into the plant covered islands.

The cause for concern was obvious, so Christo and his team of experts spent months doing laboratory tests and experiments with the synthetic materials like the styrofoam booms (acting as floats for the pink fabric). It was discovered that the materials would not affect the sea-grass communities. An ornithologist found that the encircled islands would not affect the wading-bird population either.

A local group of ecologists were not so happy though. They produced a report, six inches thick, on the Bay's environment which included a list of rodents, insects, sea-grasses, pelicans, fish, manatees and ospreys which commonly nested on the islands.

A visual study of potential dangers to the environment was arranged and dealt with by Christo. He had from the start agreed not to use Bird Key - a little ornithological paradise - the only island of natural origin. In fact the other eleven islands had been man-made in the 1920's as a result of dredging for a shipping channel (the Intercoastal Waterway).

More than likely it would have seemed peculiar to Christo that these islands they were so protective of, actually had to be physically cleaned of 40 tons of rubbish! Thousands of picnics, boaters and explorers thoughtlessly used the islands as rubbish-tips. It took 400 people hired by the artist to clean up the mess.

It was obvious that the ecologists had not visited the so-called islands in a while. There seemed

to be little evidence of 'the abundant irreplaceable tropical vegetation' (17) that had sent them into such a frenzy. In defiance of the local ecologists views - another environmentalist wrote to the Miami Herald. He was amazed at the hoopla being raised over the pink islands: 'Where is the local alarm regarding the 50-500 acre parcels of asphalt, condominiums and malls that are devouring this country?' (18)

In order to further implement the safety measures adhered to by Christo, it was agreed that the Bay area should be monitored by scientists for two years after the projects completion and removal. Rather than threatening the Bay's ospreys and manatees and plant-life the artwork actually helped focus attention on the environment's needs. It was an ironic end to an exaggerated and unnecessary confrontation.

Surprisingly, Christo did not think of it as futile. 'There is no attraction for him in placid acceptance'. (19) He seems not to want the liberty to be able to do anything he desires in the public's space. The fact that the public will not let him, is a major challenge with every new project.

Talking into account the success he has had with earlier major projects such as Wrapped Coastline in Australia (1969), Valley Curtain, Colorado (1971), Pont-Neuf, Paris (1985) and Wrapped Walkways, Missouri (1977) - one would imagine the process getting easier with each new work. Also, with the level of publicity the artist maintains through mass-reproduction (such as making the front cover of the New York Times, (May 1983) one would have thought that he would be welcomed into any city or place.

This seems to be untrue. Surrounded Islands one of his later works was described by David Bourdon (20) as being the most discussed, the most difficult, the most controversial and the most complex of his artworks at the time.

The energy that Christo feels which keeps the process going is not positive acceptance from his at first reluctant audience, but the negative reactions. 'Confrontation develops its own dynamics' (21) - opposition is a sign that he is being taken seriously.

When the public sees and believes that this man is determined enough to build a high fence 24 miles

long or to encircle islands in a seven mile stretch of Bay - then it is time for their test. Will the public stand back to let this person drastically change their countryside or city-scape or will they fight him?

If they confront then they will come up against an energy and vivaciousness from Christo and Jeanne-Claude, some close friends and helpers that will win them over. Because, in the end the artist's idea becomes logical to the public and they accept it.

In 1976, as a symbol of the ranchers heartfelt gratitude and admiration both Christo and Jeanne-Claude were presented with an engraved metal plate. But more notably the communities deemed as a historical landmark the spot where the Running Fence crossed their Highway 1. The art became part of their lives, for a while and the memories they kept will constantly remind them of their new attitude towards contemporary art.

Seven years later, the people of Miami were grateful to Christo for being exposed to something on that level. The island workers repeatedly spoke of the 'family' aspect - as five hundred plus 'had

somehow miraculously joined forces in a bond far closer than a usual working relationship' (22)

There were different crews on each island all working together some around the clock, and they ate and slept communally when their daily towing and lacing of the pink fabric was done.

Many people lost their jobs and rescheduled their lives to work on Surrounded Islands. For some the experience changed their whole existence - making them happier by seeing life differently and by earning more respect having been able to use their own judgemental and creative abilities in the making of an artwork.

Admiration for Christo is best summed up by one of the workers. For example - Molly Joy from Ohio, U.S.A.:

I learned that art can be as phenomenal as a mind wants it to , and just as controversial. Art can also be a group effort without the aesthetic opinions of others detracting from the enormity and total originality of the artist's plan - even with 500 workers doing their part, Surrounded Islands never ceased to belong solely to Christo. Christo can



N. Surrounded Islands: 1980 - 1983
Some of the island crew from island number 13
-lacing adjacent sections of fabric together.
(SPIES, Werner, 1985, p.371)

lead a project like this, be totally committed to the goal and proceed full speed ahead, but never to the point where people - any individual were not 100% more important. (23)

FOOTNOTES: Chapter II

- (1) BOURDON, David, 1986, p.13
- (2) SPIES, Werner, 1977, p.4
- (3) " " " p.11
- (4) " " " p.6
- (5) LAPORTE, Dominique, 1986, p.82
- (6) SPIES, Werner, 1977, p.1
- (7) SPIES, Werner, 1985, p.10
- (8) GUREVITCH, Michael, 1982, p.295
- (9) " " " p.22
- (10) SPIES, Werner, 1985, p.32
- (11) WALKER, John A., 1983, p.17
- (12) Details available at the Sculptor's Society of Ireland (S.S.I)
- (13) SPIES, Werner, 1977, p.4
- (14) " " " p.1
- (15) " " " p.7
- (16) " " " p.8
- (17) SPIES, Werner, 1985, p.22
- (18) " " " p.22
- (19) " " " p.9
- (20) See Bibliography - BOURDON, David.
- (21) SPIES, Werner, 1985, p.11
- (22) " " " p.393
- (23) " " " p.393

Chapter III

Christo sees the public as being crucial to the project's progress. Their role as the medium for his extravagant dreams is carried through to the art-works removal and ends in documentation - print and photography in art books and magazines and in film. Public interaction and opinion is acknowledged by the artist in these documents. Interpretations especially from those 'who do not come from a normal way of viewing or thinking about art, like in a museum', says Christo have 'enriched' the work. (1)

An example of this would be the Environmental Impact Report for Running Fence which Christo described as one of the most marvellous books of contemporary art in the 20th century. It is recorded that he personally thanked the author - Mr. Cole, for writing 280 pages of 'the most profound study of relations', of a work of art 'with the nature, with the people, with the traffic, with the birds, with the ocean and with the sky'. (2)

Not only the physical art object is recorded in

Christo's documents but photographs and descriptions of people's contact with it as well.

Each Surrounded Island worker was sent a two page questionnaire about their experiences which was sent back to Janet Mulholland - a contributor to the book Christo : Surrounded Islands (3)

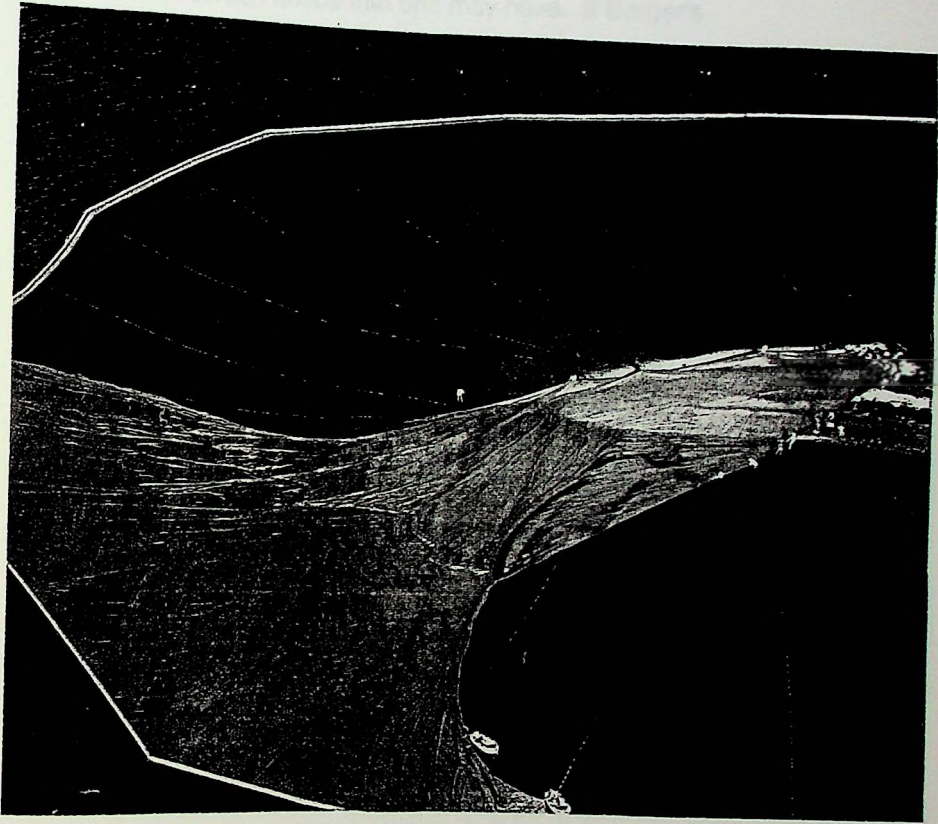
One is constantly reminded of the energy and painstaking lengths that the construction workers went to please the creator of their task. Hundreds of people (who get minimum wages) volunteered to work in precarious weather, at unusual hours. They hung thousands of fabric panels up poles twice their height or lay awkwardly in dinghy boats, lacing together enormous patterns of material. Their efforts do not go unnoted in books and films about Christo's art.

Seeing a photograph of people buzzing around the Fence or the Islands takes away from the apparitional landscape. The image could be mistaken for a well assembled collage or a shot of a scale model to an indirect witness; but the monumental artwork regains its proportions and becomes real and believable when one sees the shots of people swarming about it like armies of ants.

Photo-documentation is an essential form of communication. The common use of a camera in our culture automatically refers to advertisements, recording the news or other aspects of everyday life. Thus Christo's art becomes psychologically less distant to people due to descriptive relations of others to it, in the form of the written word and photo-documentation.

One is reminded of artists such as Bruegel and Hegarth who produced paintings for the wealthy during the 16th and 18th centuries, and had prints of these done in order to reach a larger, less affluent public. Christo's reproduction of the art work ensures that it will reach a universal audience. As Andre Malraux suggests in his Museum Without Walls (4) - the effect of mass reproduction means that the 'art of all times and all peoples' is made available to the private individual in their 'imaginary museum' or 'museum without walls'.

It is a necessity with Christo's art that it attracts such attention from the popular media. Millions of individuals acquire imaginary museums - as news and pictures about a current Christo is broadcast into their own living-rooms. This medium reaches a mass audience more immediately than documentation.



O. Surrounded Islands: 1980-1983

The crew for island number one buzzing around a giant section of fabric, pulling it onto the beach.

(SPIES, Werner, 1985, p.346)

According to Arthur Berger's uses and gratifications theory (5) the media can gratify certain needs that one may have. If Berger's reasons for relying on the media are substantial then Christo's projects are suitably linked to the media audience:-

- (a) To have a shared experience with others: an important media function is to offer people 'a common cultural frame or reference' (6) As millions watch large groups of people participating in Christo's art making there is a momentary kind of community created, almost like watching a football match on television.
- (b) To experience the beautiful: definitions of beauty are variable and changeable but the arts are taken for granted as being aesthetically pleasing.
- (c) To escape from reality: the need for fantasy in the viewers life can be supplied by the experience of watching an artwork in progress - whether it be controversial or not.
- (d) To find heroic figures to look up to: due to Christo's frequent appearances in newspapers and television and radio interviews - he reaches celebrity status in the eyes of some people, which may earn him certain respect. It

is questionable whether this distances relations between the public and the artist though, as he may seem to be on a higher level.

- (e) To be part of history: the media audience may feel the need to participate (indirectly) in something which is unique or does not happen often.
- (f) To have certain values reinforced: two of the more important values in American society are egalitarianism and achievement. Christo's project conveys an egalitarian attitude: everyone's opinion is valid which works within the constitutional right of 'free speech'. Also large groups work together towards something which is achieved in the Christo project.

Modern western society depends upon mass reproduction in order to gather information about how to live in that society. In such a media saturated world we are used to getting second-hand information so much, that reproduced images become more believable than reality. A classic illustration noted by Harold Rosenberg 'is that people run across the street to buy newspapers to find out how cold it is'. (7)

What position should an artist take in this age of mass reproduction? Les Levine (in reference to the artists' discussion (8)) believes that a photograph of an artwork has the same effect as a physical object. Christo admitted also to the power of the 'reproduced' with this example:

You could have a photograph of 80,000 people killed in the Vietnam War. When they kill 80,000 people its not an illusion. They kill 80,000 people. And of course you can have documents of 80,000 bodies but its not an illusion. (9)

Thus even though the reproduced image is not real its information is not an illusion either.

One must question the popular media's and documentation's reproduction of Christo's art. Reproduction is directed to the masses who cannot experience a Christo first-hand. His photogenic works are seen countless times in books or on television, either during or after the project, which may give one a glimpse of its nature when it was alive.

However photographs are inadequate for providing all information. They:

however striking do not fully reveal the breathtaking kinetic aspect of his art - the sensuous rippling and billowing of the fabric as it responds to air currents, expanding and contracting like a primitive organism. (10)

Perhaps, television or film documentary has a greater ability to capture some essence of the aesthetic experience such as the clanking sound of Running Fence moved by the wind - as recorded in the video (11) The camera provides moving pictures of the artwork particularly from the air (the best vantage point) which viewers may not get the opportunity to see otherwise.

It was suggested by Werner Spies (author of Surrounded Islands book (12)) that 'for some the project had more reality on t.v. than in real life' (13). If second-hand information replaces first hand experience how will it affect the direct witnessing of art? Does second-hand information devalue and cheapen the artwork?

Reproduction obviously occurs after the art idea has been established; without the concept of Running Fence or Surrounded Islands there would be no videos, books or media coverage. It is quite

ironic to think though that the camera starts to record or the word processor begins to function even before Christo gets permission to realize a concept. This says something about the dominance of the 'reproduced' which may result in the commodification of the real art experience.

Today it is nearly impossible for art to avoid being commercialized. It is either a collectable object in the market place or it must conform to demands to be functional, cost-effective, and unobjectionable when it enters the public domain. (14)

If Christo's art is to be integrated into 'the public domain' it must conform to the social system.

However, in order to re-affirm the artworks value it must become impermanent. The French philosopher Derrida was concerned about experience versus representation. He said:

in order to make literature and art genuinely present as an experience in itself, the artist has to transcend the representational quality of language and create the experience of text directly through its own self-definition. (15)

The self-definition of Christo's art is only through its destruction. The enormous artworks only last for two or three weeks then they are removed

quickly and quietly. What took three years to prepare and seven days to install could be gone within 72 hours. No photographs are taken of its departure. A member of the public once expressed their thoughts about temporary art:

Sometimes I go to a lot of trouble to prepare a meal that I think is art - its a masterpiece. But what happens it gets eaten up and disappears and everybody likes it! (16)

Like an outstanding meal the artwork has such a 'multiplicity of experience' (17) that it cannot be encapsulated on paper or the screen alone. Media and documentation become purely relics: as for instance fabric samples from the works, are stuck into many of Christo's books. Representation of the original only preserves the latters authenticity and irreplaceability.

Thus, reproduction can be described as immortalizing the memory of the artwork rather than substituting it.

Christo may have learned of the significance of documentation and the memory of art, in his youth during the 1940's. Russian constructivist artists - friends of his mothers' would visit their Bulgarian home often bringing books about their work.

Their art was illegal in war-time Bulgaria which was under German rule, - so it existed in memory and books rather than real objects. At one time the German army was searching houses and Christo's father was forced to burn his mothers whole library of constructivists works. All that remained was the memory of the art-works.

Perhaps Christo feels the same as one who reacted to the impermanence of his work:

I am retired after 40 years as an industrialist and rancher, and all the businesses and enterprises that I've developed are now gone. Little remains to show they were ever there. I have no regrets, it was great fun, but that is the way it is. (18)

FOOTNOTES : Chapter III

- (1) JOHNSON, Ellen H., 1982, p.198
(Christo interviewed by Cesar Pelli, 1979)
- (2) SPIES, Werner, 1977, p.9
- (3) See BIBLIOGRAPHY : SPIES, Werner.
- (4) MALRAUX, Andre, 1967, p.10
- (5) BERGER, Asa Arthur, 1982, p.99 - p.103
- (6) " " " 1982, p.100
- (7) SONFIST, Alan, 1983, p.196
- (8) " " " p.192 - p.216
- (9) " " " p.200
- (10) BOURDON, David, 1986, p.11
- (11) See VIDEO
- (12) See BIBLIOGRAPHY: SPIES, Werner.
- (13) SPIES, Werner, 1985, p.28
- (14) DENES, Agnes, Summer 1990, p.923
- (15) SPIES, Werner, 1985, p.29
- (16) See VIDEO.
- (17) SPIES, Werner, 1985, p.51
- (18) SPIES, Werner, 1977, p.11

CONCLUSION

The transitory nature of Christo's art-works re-affirms the power of the aesthetic experience. It also means that the audience will not tire of seeing the work over a prolonged period. These aspects of impermanence have influenced groups of artists in the 1980's.

Common ground and the Artangel Trust initiated in London during 1983 and 1985 respectively, support artists who create experimental and temporary projects in public locations. Their clients are primarily the general public.

John Carson (co-founder of Artangel) believes that contemporary media should be used for a contemporary society. He organizes temporary works which are seen by an urban audience for example: bill boards, spectacolour boards, newspaper stands and post cards.

Common ground (co-founded by Sue Clifford) works for a rural audience, comparable to Running Fence. Sculptures placed along country paths and walks and fields are sometimes permanent but they are made small and from materials of the idea, thus

being sensitive to the place and the environment.
Both these English groups share similar
philosophies with Christo:

- (i) Art is presented to the public in locations
with which they associate rather than waiting
for people to come to it in a gallery.
- (ii) The common-place and the ordinary is not
overlooked as is often the case with permanent
monuments.
- (iii) Instead of permanent work which is left
isolated after the artist has gone away, the
work is temporary and monitored, and it also
blends in with its surroundings.
- (iv) Mass reproduction is recognised as a widely
understood form of communication which is
manipulated to express to as many people as
possible the essential art-idea.
- (v) A most important aspect of their art-making
is participation in the decision making and
actual putting together of the finished piece.
This establishes acceptance among a wide
audience.
- (vi) Confrontation and 'free speech' are as relevant
and important as this acceptance.

This reversal in roles for the artist as server of the public dismissing all stereotypical modernist notions of the socially disengaged and self-autonomous painter or sculptor, is motivated by Christo. His success at informing the uninformed has been internationally effective. Public projects in places such as Alaska, Spain and Japan have been tried and tested successfully. By using the new philosophy of collaboration between the artists, the public and their places - the art-work has been well received. Results such as these were expressed by sculptors and project co-ordinators at the International Conference on Sculpture in Dublin 1988. [See ANTHOLOGIES]

It is hoped that artists will continue to take steps such as that of Christo into the arena of public art. The involvement of more people in the process of art making will lead to a greater appreciation and understanding of art among the general public. This could mean a brighter future - an art education, for both the uninformed and informed.

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