

September 25, 2024

## NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale Receives Major Exhibit Donation

It will permanently display critical sections of the historic exhibition.

September 25, 2024 | Sean d'Oliveira



The NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale is now the new home to Christo and Jeanne-Claude's Surrounded Islands art exhibit. The museum will debut its inaugural exhibition in February 2025, featuring over 43 preparatory drawings and collages by Christo, along with photographs, engineering surveys, environmental studies, permits, correspondence, original components like sections of the pink fabric, scale models and other archival documents that chronicle the history of this project.

"The Christo and Jeanne-Claude Foundation is delighted to designate the NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, part of Nova Southeastern University, as the permanent home for the Surrounded Islands documentation exhibition," says Karin J. Barkhorn, President of Christo and Jeanne-Claude Foundation. "The museum's dedication to exploring topics that deeply connect with the South Florida community and its commitment to fostering meaningful discussions through scholarly research align with the ethos of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's art. We are particularly excited that the museum will permanently



display key sections of this historic exhibition, ensuring that the legacy of Surrounded Islands continues to inspire awe for generations to come.”

Following the passing of the artist duo Christo V. Javacheff (b. 1935, Gabrovo, Bulgaria; d. 2020, New York, NY) and Jeanne-Claude Denat de Guillebon (b. 1935, Casablanca, Morocco; d. 2009, New York, NY), the NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale was chosen to be the guardian of the archive for the definitive landmark installation, *Surrounded Islands: Biscayne Bay, Greater Miami, Florida, 1980-83*.



Christo and Jeanne-Claude

“A gift of this caliber brings Fort Lauderdale’s cultural landscape to the next level, further positioning the city as a premier arts destination,” says Dean J. Trantalis, Fort Lauderdale Mayor. “As ‘Home of Surrounded Islands,’ our very own NSU Art Museum in Downtown Fort Lauderdale will be a draw for art enthusiasts, visitors and our local community to experience our city’s vibrant cultural offerings.”

The gift will help NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale be known as “The Home of Christo and Jeanne-Claude’s Surrounded Islands.” This gift places NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale in a league with the Smithsonian American Art Museum, which acquired *Running Fence*, Sonoma and Marin Counties, California, 1972-76, *The Documentation Exhibition* in 2008. Additionally, it is comparable to the Centre Pompidou in Paris, which owns the documentation exhibition of *The Pont Neuf Wrapped*, Paris, 1975-85, and the Reichstag Building in Berlin, which houses the *Wrapped Reichstag*, Berlin, 1995 *Documentation Exhibition* on permanent display.



"A gift of the magnitude of the Surrounded Islands documentary exhibition to NSU Art Museum is incredibly significant," says Bonnie Clearwater, Director and Chief Curator of NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale. "It marks much more than a gift; it's an investment in the culture of our community and the future of the museum. Surrounded Islands has undoubtedly left an indelible impact on South Florida and the art world by redefining the interaction between art, environment and public space. This contribution further solidifies Fort Lauderdale's unique cultural offerings and provides an opportunity for visitors to experience the work of Christo and Jeanne-Claude for years to come."

Despite the temporary nature of their projects, Christo and Jeanne-Claude considered each of these events as permanent artworks in viewers' minds, asserting that "an experience can never be taken away." The artists sparked the curiosity of the broader community and the international art world due to the extensive effort required to realize their works. Documents, such as correspondence, permits, and environmental studies, are preserved as part of the documentation exhibitions curated by the artists.

"This gift, allowing us to bring the Surrounded Islands Documentation Exhibition to NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, will grant NSU students, faculty, and staff, as well as the public, a unique opportunity to be part of the creative process that led to this innovative and culturally significant work," says Dr. George L. Hanbury II, president and CEO of Nova Southeastern University. "Exhibits like this one attract more people of all ages to come in and experience the power of imagination, creativity, and dedication that comes through engaging with works like these. That's how the NSU Art Museum not only helps to foster a lifelong passion for the arts but also allows us all to come away with a bit of that artistic passion in ourselves, to enrich whatever else we may choose to do in our own lives."

For more information, please visit <https://nsuartmuseum.org>.