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Gagosian to Exhibit Rarely Seen Works by Christo and the First-Ever Presentation of *Air Package on a Ceiling*, Conceived in 1968 but Never Realized

Opening May 21, *Christo: Air* Distills Christo's Drive to Contain the Intangible



Christo with his *Wrapped Ceiling* (1965) in a Midtown Manhattan office building, New York, 1965. Artwork © Christo and Jeanne-Claude Foundation. Photo: Thomas Cugini

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LONDON, May 4, 2026—Gagosian is pleased to announce an exhibition of works by Christo, and a large-scale indoor installation conceived by Christo and Jeanne-Claude in 1968. Organized around the theme of air—invisible, intangible, and essential—the exhibition unites the historic, unrealized project with rare early works that distill the conceptual foundations of the artist's practice.

In the 1960s, Christo and Jeanne-Claude developed a series of works exploring wrapped air, sealing it within transparent polyethylene packages bound with rope. These intimate sculptural gestures render their invisible subject tangible, thereby proposing a radical shift in perception which suggests that value and meaning might emerge not from an object itself, but from the act of its containment. Such works foreshadow the artist's later interventions at environmental scale, in which buildings, landscapes, and public spaces are temporarily redefined through acts of wrapping that reveal latent sculptural qualities while obscuring function and identity.

As throughout Christo and Jeanne-Claude's practice, the works on view foreground the ephemeral, echoing philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty's understanding of perception as a lived, shifting experience grounded in the immediacy of encounter. The exhibition is centered on *Air Package on a Ceiling*, a vast, internally illuminated and suspended form. Originally conceived in 1968 for the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, the installation remained unrealized due to technical constraints. Installed here for the first time, in collaboration with the Christo and Jeanne-Claude Foundation, it fully occupies the space—measuring 16 meters long and 10 meters wide, and descending to just above head height. Both architectural and atmospheric, it compels visitors to move beneath and around it.

Archival materials—including the original 1968 model of *Air Package on a Ceiling (Project for the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia)*, preparatory drawings, and collages—are presented alongside the installation, offering insights into the evolution of the project from a freestanding, balloon-like form to its final, hanging configuration.

The second gallery is devoted to *Wrapped Automobile—Volvo, Model PV-544 (1981)*, which has not been exhibited for thirty years. Before it was wrapped, the car belonged to Serge De Bloe, an art dealer and friend of Christo and Jeanne-Claude, who was acquiring a new vehicle but didn't want to see the old one—about which he felt sentimental—destroyed. He asked Christo to wrap the car as an artwork, which the artist did in a Brussels body shop prior to exhibiting the work in Berlin. A related work, *Wrapped 1961 Volkswagen Beetle Saloon (1963–2014)*, is currently on view at the Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude were known for creating monumental, temporary public artworks that transformed landscapes using everyday materials. Their ambitious projects required years of planning yet existed only briefly before being dismantled and recycled. Christo, born in Bulgaria in 1935, met Jeanne-Claude in Paris in 1958, and together they moved from producing wrapped objects and assemblages to orchestrating large-scale environmental works spanning parks, cities, and coastlines. Their decades-long collaboration combined artistic vision, engineering, and public participation.

Coinciding with the Grosvenor Hill exhibition, Gagosian's gallery in Burlington Arcade will present an exhibition of drawings and prints related to Christo and Jeanne-Claude's realized and unrealized site-specific projects, while the Shop will host a takeover featuring four wrapped sculptures and a selection of books tracing the artists' oeuvre from May 21 to July 18.

Gagosian will host a conversation between Vladimir Yavachev, director of projects for the Christo and Jeanne-Claude Foundation, and Es Devlin, artist and stage designer, within the exhibition on Monday, June 22, 2026, from 6:30 to 7:15pm.

For Christo's biographical information and exhibition history, [please visit gagosian.com](https://www.gagosian.com).

#Christo

CHRISTO

Air

Opening reception: Thursday, May 21, 6–8pm

May 21–August 21, 2026

20 Grosvenor Hill, London

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