

The Arc de Triomphe is wrapped in fabric, a vision six decades in the making

After three months of construction work at Paris' famed Arc de Triomphe, the 160-foot-tall war monument has been completely concealed. The landmark, built during Napoleon's reign, has been outfitted in 270,000 square feet of silver-blue polypropylene fabric bound with red ropes.

Encasing the Arc de Triomphe in cloth was a longstanding vision of the late artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude -- one that finally came into focus this summer. It began with 400 tons of steel beams erected like a metal jacket around the structure, followed by the wrapping, which was conducted by a team of climbers over the course of a few days. Following the project's completion on Thursday, the arch will remain transformed for just 16 days.

The unveiling of the installation, officially titled "L'Arc de Triomphe, Wrapped," comes 60 years after Christo first became enthralled with the idea of wrapping the monument, more than a decade after Jeanne-Claude's death and over a year since Christo passed away last May. Originally scheduled for spring 2020, the project was first delayed out of concern for nesting kestrel falcons in the arch, and then because of the ongoing pandemic.

Vladimir Yavachev, Christo's nephew and the project's director of operations who worked with the artist for 30 years, explained that the shimmering color of the fabric and vivid ropes are Christo's "poetic interpretation" of the blue, white and red of the French flag.

"He liked colors that also change with the weather, or the time of day," Yavachev said in a video interview, adding: "The fabric is very reminiscent of Paris rooftops... which are very silvery gray."

The married artists became internationally renowned for ambitious projects like "The Pont Neuf Wrapped," revealed in 1985, and "Wrapped Reichstag" in Berlin 10 years later.

Christo said the only project he would consider in Paris was wrapping the Arc. In an interview with CNN just before his death, however, he confided that he "never believed" they would receive permission.

"I am an artist who is totally irrational, totally irresponsible, completely free," Christo said. "Nobody needs my projects," he added. "The world can live without these projects. But I need them and my friends (do)."

Anne Burghartz, an engineer on the project, said her team's first task was to interpret the final form that Christo wanted. "In his drawings, you can see the shape is not 100% the Arc de Triomphe," she said in a video interview. "It's very boxy, it has vertical lines, whereas the Arc de Triomphe at the cornices, for example, is very pointy-shaped."

They also had to determine how to keep the wind from dragging the fabric, while keeping it pliable to the elements. "(Christo) was also very fond of how he imagined the fabric would come alive with the wind," she said.

But, most importantly, Burghartz's team had to protect the monument and all of its ornamentation, from the sculpted figures flanking each side of the entrance to the intricate cornices. Though the engineers had permission to drill some holes in the landmark they had to minimize damage. So, they installed wood panels between the steel and the arch's concrete to protect it from scratches and built frameworks around its sculptures to keep them safe.

In total, the project cost around 14 million euros. But like all of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's projects, the "L'Arc de Triomphe, Wrapped" will, according to a spokesperson for the project, be entirely funded through the sale of preparatory drawings and other original artworks. Sotheby's Paris is hosting an exhibition and private sale featuring 25 of the artworks, with proceed going towards the project and the artists' foundation.

疯狂梦想终于成真：被包裹的巴黎凯旋门

施工了三个月后，巴黎名胜古迹凯旋门被完全包裹了起来，用掉了 27 万平方英尺的银蓝色聚丙烯布料并用红绳固定。凯旋门高 160 英尺（49 米），是建于拿破仑统治时期的地标性建筑。

给凯旋门“穿上衣服”是已故艺术家克里斯托和珍妮-克劳德的多年愿景，今夏终于付诸实践。400 吨重的钢梁像一件金属夹克一样矗立在建筑周围，并由一个攀爬队在几天内将其包裹起来。本周四（9 月 16 日）该项目完工后，这一新貌只能保持 16 天。

60 年前，克里斯托就萌生了“被包裹的凯旋门”项目的念头。直到珍妮-克劳德去世十多年，克里斯托去世一年多（去年五月去世）以后，这一执念才终于成真。这一项目原定在 2020 年春季动工，先是出于担心在凯旋门上筑巢的红隼鹰而被耽搁，而后又因为疫情而拖延。

这一项目的运营总监、克里斯托的侄子弗拉基米尔·亚瓦切夫解释道，闪闪发光的布料和鲜艳的绳子是克里斯托对法国蓝白红国旗的“诗意解读”。亚瓦切夫和叔叔克里斯托共事长达 30 年。

亚瓦切夫在一次视频采访中说道：“他喜欢能随着天气和时间而变化的颜色。这种布料让人想起巴黎的屋顶.....那种银灰色。”

这对艺术家夫妇凭借 1985 年面世的“被包裹的巴黎新桥”和 10 年后在柏林落成的“被包裹的德国国会大厦”等颇具胆识的项目而享誉国际。

克里斯托说过，他想在巴黎做的唯一一个项目就是包裹凯旋门。不过在他去世前接受美国有线电视新闻网采访时，他透露说自己“从来不相信”他们会同意。

克里斯托说：“我是一个完全没有理性、完全不负责任、完全自由的艺术家。没有人需要我的项目。这个世界没有这些项目也能运转下去。但是我需要它们，我的朋友们也需要。”

这一项目的工程师安妮·伯格哈茨说，她的团队的首要任务是解读克里斯托想要的最终形态。她在视频采访中说道：“在他的图纸中，你可以看见他设计的形状和凯旋门并不是百分百贴合。他想要的形状是方方正正，横平竖直，而凯旋门的飞檐翘角就很尖。”

他们还要想出怎样做才能让风不要拉扯布料，同时又能柔软灵动。她说：“克里斯托很喜欢想象布料随风飘动的样子。”

但最重要的是，伯格哈茨的团队必须保护凯旋门和所有的浮雕，从拱门两侧的雕像到精巧的飞檐。尽管工程师被准许在凯旋门上钻一些洞，但是他们必须将损害最小化。因此，他们在钢梁和拱门主体之间安装了木头防护板，保护拱门表面不被刮坏，还把浮雕用木框保护起来。

这一项目总计花费了 **1400** 万欧元（约合人民币 **1** 亿元）。但是该项目的发言人称，同克里斯托和珍妮-克劳德做过的所有项目一样，“被包裹的凯旋门”所用资金将全部来自出售他们的图纸和其他原创艺术品所得。巴黎苏富比拍卖行正在举办一场展览兼私人拍卖会，其中包括 **25** 件艺术品，拍卖所得将归这一项目和两位艺术家的基金会所有。