

Italians Can Soon Walk on Water

Emily Hayes (April 24, 2015)



For about two weeks in June 2016, wrap artist Christo will create floating walkways to wind around Italy's Lake Iseo in the Lombardy region, connecting the mainland to and surrounding Italy's largest land island, Monte Isola. Viewers can also walk around San Paolo Island and the mainland town of Sulzano. The bright yellow fabric used for the walkways will continue on the streets in two mainland towns.

After 40 years of living abroad, [Christo](#) [2] returned to Italy to present his work, "The Floating Piers," with Italian art critic and curator [Germano Celant](#) [3] in Rome on Wednesday. Christo raised about \$11 million to fund the project.

Viewers will actually be able to walk on top of the artwork, which consists of 200,000 floatable cubes wrapped in fabric for about three miles. Christo's design becomes an artwork when viewers climb the



lush green mountains surrounding the lake and look down on the water.

This is not Christo's first project in Italy. Before his wife [Jeanne-Claude](#) [2] passed away in 2009, they created "Wrapped Fountain and Wrapped Medieval Tower" in Spoleto in 1968. In Milan they created many "Wrapped Monuments" in 1970, and a wrapped Roman wall in 1974.

Jeanne-Claude and Christo collaborated to create other environmental art projects, such as the wrapping of the [Pont Neuf](#) [4] in Paris and the [Reichstag](#) [5] in Berlin. In America, Jeanne-Claude and Christo installed 7,503 vinyl gates with saffron-colored nylon panels in Central Park. Called "The Gates," the work attracted over five million viewers in two weeks. In 1969 they wrapped a million square feet of coastline in Australia, near Sydney.

Christo's The Floating Piers is similar to his 1983 work Surrounded Islands, in which 11 small islets in Biscayne Bay, Miami were wrapped in hot pink fabric that rested on the top of the water.

The artist recently faced objections to his proposed project in Arkansas, because it may be detrimental to the environment. Despite local activists, a judge recently allowed the six-mile installation, because it complied with environmental regulations.

According to the news agency ANSA, Christo said: "we do these projects because we think they will be beautiful, they will be exciting, they are physical and experimental."

Christo attempted to do the same floating walkway project in Argentina and Japan, but local authorities in Italy were more willing to give him a permit. The process of placing the floatable cubes in the water will begin in May 2016. Christo stated that surrounding the island was Jeanne-Claude's idea. He told ANSA it "will be a very sexy experience, for the fabric follows the movement of the waves."

At the end of the allotted time, the fabric will be taken apart and recycled.

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Links

[1] <http://ftp.iitaly.org/files/floatablepiers1429915565jpg>

[2] <http://christojeanneclaude.net/>

[3] http://www.guggenheim.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=27&Itemid=246

[4] <http://www.aviewoncities.com/paris/pontneuf.htm>

[5] <http://www.aviewoncities.com/berlin/reichstag.htm>