

Christo and Jeanne-Claude

For Immediate Release
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**CHRISTO, THE SERPENTINE GALLERIES AND THE ROYAL PARKS
CELEBRATE LAUNCH OF EXHIBITION AND TEMPORARY SCULPTURE
IN HYDE PARK, LONDON**

Today marked the opening of *The London Mastaba*, a temporary sculpture in Hyde Park, by world-renowned artist Christo. The sculpture, which consists of 7,506 horizontally stacked barrels on a floating platform in the Serpentine Lake, will be on view until 23 September 2018. *The London Mastaba* is the first major outdoor public work by Christo in the UK, and it coincides with an exhibition at the Serpentine Galleries of Christo and his late wife Jeanne-Claude's work, which opens 19 June and continues until 9 September 2018. Today's launch was attended by Christo, Serpentine Galleries Chairman Michael R. Bloomberg, London Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries Justine Simons, The Royal Parks Chairman Loyd Grossman, Serpentine Galleries CEO Yana Peel and Artistic Director Hans Ulrich Obrist. Both *The London Mastaba* and exhibition are free to the public – no tickets or reservations are required.

Justine Simons, OBE, Deputy Mayor for Culture and Creative Industries, said: "I'm delighted that this major new work by Christo has a home in the capital this summer. The striking sculpture in the Serpentine Lake is the first work by this internationally acclaimed artist in the UK. I encourage Londoners and visitors to come down and enjoy world-class art for free in the gorgeous surroundings of Hyde Park. It shows once again that London is open to people, ideas and creativity."

"For three months, *The London Mastaba* will be a part of Hyde Park's environment in the centre of London," said Christo. "The colours will transform with the changes in the light and its reflection on the Serpentine Lake will be like an abstract painting. It has been a pleasure to work with The Royal Parks to realize *The London Mastaba* and with our friends at the Serpentine Galleries to create an exhibition showing Jeanne-Claude's and my 60-year history of using barrels in our work."

"The Serpentine is known for pushing artistic boundaries and celebrating bold experimentation — and that is the spirit that Christo and Jeanne-Claude exemplify," said Michael R. Bloomberg, Serpentine Galleries Chair. "As a free museum, the Serpentine is also a fitting place to celebrate two of the greatest public artists of our time. Public art draws people together, starts conversations and attracts visitors who support local businesses and generate revenue for cities. *The London Mastaba* is sure to bring these benefits to London, just as *The Gates* did in New York City."

The London Mastaba:

The construction of Christo's temporary sculpture began on 3 April 2018 by JK Basel, Deep Dive Systems, and Coventry Scaffolding as well as a team of engineers from Schlaich Bergermann Partner. *The London Mastaba* consists of 7,506 horizontally stacked barrels on a floating platform, 20 metres (65.5 ft) high x 30 metres (90 ft) wide (at the 60° slanted walls) x 40 metres (130 ft) long. Standard 55 gallon barrels, 59 x 88 cm (2 ft x 3 ft), were fabricated and painted for the sculpture. The sides of the barrels, visible on the top and on the two slanted walls of the sculpture, are red and white. The ends of the barrels, visible on the two vertical walls, are blue, mauve and a different hue of red.

The sculpture's floating platform is made of interlocking high-density polyethylene (HDPE) cubes and is held in place with 32 6-tonne anchors. The barrel-supporting substructure consists of scaffolding and a steel frame that connects to the floating platform. The sculpture's total weight is 600 metric tonnes (660 US tons) and its footprint takes up approximately 1% of the total surface area of the lake.

All construction materials are certified as having low environmental impact to preserve the ecosystem of the lake. The removal of the sculpture will begin on 23 September 2018. While some equipment and materials, such as scaffolding, have been rented and will be returned, the other materials will be removed and industrially recycled in the UK following the project. *The London Mastaba* is being entirely funded by Christo, through the sale of his original works of art. No public money is used for Christo's projects and he does not accept sponsorship.

Hyde Park:

The Royal Parks oversees 5,000 acres of historic parkland, including Hyde Park, in the heart of London. The Royal Parks has worked very closely with Christo and his team on this project, and the artwork also presents an opportunity to enhance the conservation area and associated wildlife of Hyde Park. In addition to ensuring there will be no negative ecological impact, the Serpentine Lake will benefit from substantial investment after the sculpture is removed. This includes ecological improvements on Serpentine Island and the creation of new habitats. These efforts, funded by the artist, will improve conditions in the lake, including litter clearance and the re-treatment of Phoslock on the lakebed to reduce the growth of harmful algae.

Loyd Grossman CBE, Chairman of The Royal Parks charity, said: "Christo is a world renowned artist who has enjoyed highly successful exhibitions in parks and open spaces in other leading cities across the world, but has never before exhibited in London. We're delighted to be able to facilitate his first major public outdoor work in this country in one of central London's finest and most visited parks. This will be an opportunity for park visitors to see an outstanding installation for free within an iconic landscape."

Serpentine Galleries:

The Serpentine Galleries presents *Christo and Jeanne-Claude: Barrels and The Mastaba 1958-2018*, the first major public exhibition by the artists in the UK since 1979. Through

sculptures, drawings, collages, photographs and models, it traces the artists' sixty-year-history of using barrels and provides a historic context to *The London Mastaba* situated close by. The exhibition offers new perspectives on the artists' career by exploring the origins of their earliest wrapped works and temporary sculptures, alongside proposals for barrel projects at sites such as the Suez Canal (1967) and the Museum of Modern Art, New York (1968). It also includes drawings for Christo and Jeanne-Claude's most ambitious mastaba yet, *The Mastaba (Project for United Arab Emirates)*, which was first conceived in 1977 and, if realised, would be the world's largest sculpture. A catalogue by Taschen will be published to accompany the exhibition and *The London Mastaba* in early July.

The Serpentine's digital mobile tours are supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies. The mobile tours offer visitors the opportunity to discover more about the exhibition and Christo and Jeanne-Claude's practice through new audio, video and text content. It also features an interactive map to guide visitors between the various Serpentine sites: Serpentine Gallery, the Pavilion, Serpentine Sackler Gallery and *The London Mastaba* and provides visitor information including hours of operation, accessibility details and café information. The mobile tour is accessible and free for all: sgtours.org

Yana Peel, CEO and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director, Serpentine Galleries, said: 'In keeping with our mission to realise the possibilities of art and architecture, the Serpentine exhibition has been thoughtfully curated to coincide with *The Mastaba (Project for London, Hyde Park, Serpentine Lake)*. Christo's project will challenge where art can be encountered and by whom and – together with the Serpentine show – provides the UK public with an unprecedented insight into Christo and Jeanne-Claude's work. We hope this combined experience will be a highlight of London's summer of 2018 in the open landscape of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens.'

Visitor information:

No tickets or reservations are needed for the exhibition or *The London Mastaba*. Hyde Park is open daily from 5AM – midnight and the Serpentine Galleries are open 10AM-6PM, daily, throughout the summer. Entry is free.

The nearest tube stations are: Knightsbridge; Hyde Park Corner; Marble Arch; Lancaster Gate; and South Kensington. The best vantage points for *The London Mastaba* include the south and northwest banks of the lake; the Princess Diana Memorial Fountain; the Serpentine Bar and Kitchen; and Lido Bar and Café, but the work can be enjoyed from a wide range of locations and each offers a different perspective. Hyde Park has a fleet of rowing and pedal boats on the lake for rental through Bluebird Boats from 10AM until 7PM or by arrangement.

For disabled access, Liberty Drives provides free mobility for The Royal Parks. There is also full disabled access at the Serpentine Galleries.

A detailed map is available at: www.serpentinegalleries.org. Visitor information about the sculpture and exhibition will be updated regularly on The Royal Parks and Serpentine Galleries websites as well as on the Serpentine mobile tour.

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About the Artist

Christo (born 1935 in Gabrovo, Bulgaria) and his late wife Jeanne-Claude (born 1935 in Casablanca, Morocco, died 2009, New York City, USA) are among the world's most celebrated artists. The artists began their collaboration in 1961. Their large-scale projects include *Wrapped Coast, Australia, 1968–69*; *Valley Curtain, Rifle, Colorado, 1970–72*; *Running Fence, Sonoma and Marin Counties, California, 1972–76*; *Surrounded Islands, Biscayne Bay, Florida, 1980–83*; *The Pont Neuf Wrapped, Paris, 1975–85*; *The Umbrellas, Japan–USA, 1984–91*; *Wrapped Reichstag, Berlin, 1971–95*; *Wrapped Trees, Riehen, Switzerland, 1997–98*; *The Gates, Central Park, New York City, 1979–2005*; and *The Floating Piers, Lake Iseo, Italy, 2014–16*. Their work is represented in museums and galleries throughout the globe including the Guggenheim and Metropolitan museums in New York, the Tate in London and the Pompidou Centre in Paris.

Website: www.christojeanneclaude.net (images available with accompanying credit)

Twitter: @ChristoandJC

Instagram: @ChristoJeanneClaude

Facebook: facebook.com/xtojc

About Serpentine Galleries

The Serpentine Galleries have been a pioneering force in contemporary art and architecture since 1970. Inspiring the widest possible audiences with the urgency of art and architecture, the Serpentine attracts up to 1.2m visitors a year to its interdisciplinary programme of exhibitions, architecture, education, public events and digital innovation in the Royal Park of Kensington Gardens, London. Admission is free.

Website: www.serpentinegalleries.org

Twitter and Instagram: @SerpentineUK

Facebook: Serpentine Galleries

About The Royal Parks

The Royal Parks is a charity created in March 2017 to manage 5,000 acres of historic Royal parkland across London. Every year there are an estimated 77 million visits to The Royal Parks, providing unparalleled opportunities for enjoyment, exploration and healthy living in the heart of London. The Royal Parks looks after eight of London's largest open spaces: Hyde Park, The Green Park, Richmond Park, Greenwich Park, St James's Park, Bushy Park, The Regent's Park and Primrose Hill, and Kensington Gardens. It also manages other important open spaces in the capital including Grosvenor Square Garden, Brompton Cemetery, Victoria Tower Gardens, Canning Green and Poet's Corner, and maintains the gardens of 10, 11 and 12 Downing Street. The parks are owned by the Crown with statutory responsibility for their management resting with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. The Royal Parks charity manages the parks on behalf of the government.

Website: www.royalparks.org.uk

Twitter and Instagram: @theroyalparks
Facebook: The Royal Parks London

About Bloomberg Philanthropies

Bloomberg Philanthropies works in nearly 480 cities in more than 120 countries to ensure better, longer lives for the greatest number of people. The organization focuses on five key areas for creating lasting change: Arts, Education, Environment, Government Innovation, and Public Health. Bloomberg Philanthropies encompasses all of Michael R. Bloomberg's charitable activities, including his foundation and his personal giving. In 2017, Bloomberg Philanthropies distributed \$702 million. For more information, please visit www.bloomberg.org or follow on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter.

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High-resolution press images available for download at:

www.christojeanneclaude.net/press