

# Yoko

GROWING FREEDOM  
The instructions of Yoko Ono  
The art of John and Yoko



**TEACHER STUDY GUIDE**  
WINTER 2022

**Vancouver**  
Artgallery<sub>1</sub>

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***"Art is my life  
and my life is art"***

- Yoko Ono

# VANCOUVER ART GALLERY

## TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR SCHOOL PROGRAMS

*GROWING FREEDOM: The instructions of Yoko Ono / The art of John and Yoko* celebrates the art practice of renowned conceptual and performance artist Yoko Ono. It follows the artist from her early performance work, through various collaborations with her late husband and creative partner John Lennon, to her more recent activist artworks. The exhibition focuses on the cornerstones of Ono's art practice: imagination, action and participation.



### DEAR TEACHER,

This study guide will assist you in preparing for your virtual or in-gallery class tour of the exhibition *GROWING FREEDOM: The instructions of Yoko Ono / The art of John and Yoko*. It also provides activities to facilitate discussion before and after your tour. Engaging in the suggested activities will reinforce ideas generated by this program and build continuity between the Gallery experience and your ongoing work in the classroom. Most activities require very few materials and are able to be easily adapted to the age, grade level and needs of your students. Underlined words in this guide are defined in the Glossary section.

### LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*GROWING FREEDOM: The instructions of Yoko Ono / The art of John and Yoko* takes place on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

# ***GROWING FREEDOM: THE INSTRUCTIONS OF YOKO ONO / THE ART OF JOHN AND YOKO HAS 3 MAIN GOALS***

1

## **TO INTRODUCE**

STUDENTS TO THE ARTWORKS OF YOKO ONO AND HER COLLABORATIONS WITH HUSBAND AND CREATIVE PARTNER JOHN LENNON

2

## **TO CONSIDER**

KEY THEMES WITHIN THE EXHIBITION, INCLUDING IMAGINATION, ACTION AND PARTICIPATION  
HOW ART IS DEFINED AND HOW INDIVIDUAL ARTWORKS CAN EFFECT SOCIAL CHANGE

3

## **TO EXPLORE**

INDIVIDUAL ARTWORKS IN THE CONTEXT OF IDEAS, TECHNIQUES AND INSPIRATION

# GLOSSARY

***"Art communicates, spreads  
and covers the planet. It is a  
blanket of love."***

- Yoko Ono

**ACTIVIST ART** Used to describe art that is grounded in the act of 'doing' and addresses political or social issues.

**CONCEPTUAL ART** The idea itself, even if it is not made visual, is as much of a work of art as any finished product. Conceptual artists used their work to question the notion of 'what art is'.

**EVENT SCORE** Text that can be seen as an invitation or instructions for actions. The use of the word 'score' implies musicality. Just like a musical score, event scores can be realised by artists other than the original creators and are open to variation and interpretation.

**FEMINIST ART** Art that deals with issues specifically relating to women's identity and experience.

**HAPPENING** Happenings were considered the forerunners of performance art. An event that combined painting, poetry, music, dance and theatre elements and was staged as live action.

**MAIL ART** A movement based on the principle of sending small scale artworks through the postal service.

**PERFORMANCE ART** Performance art can be many different things, but it usually means that an artist uses their body as their paint and canvas. Performances can be spontaneous or planned. Artists can perform to the camera, to an audience or in a public space. It can be a bit unexpected and unusual but it should make you think deeply about the context and environment in which the performance takes place.

**UNCEDDED** A term for a relationship between the government of Canada and Indigenous people when no treaties have been established. In general, "unceded" means the lands and waters of the Indigenous people were never surrendered and were taken without permission.

# THE EXHIBITION | GROWING FREEDOM: THE INSTRUCTIONS OF YOKO ONO / THE ART OF JOHN AND YOKO

*GROWING FREEDOM: The instructions of Yoko Ono / The art of John and Yoko* highlights the cornerstones of action, participation and imagination in the artwork of Yoko Ono. The exhibition explores the collaborative works she undertook with her late husband John Lennon to promote world peace. Yoko Ono is one of the most inventive and unique conceptual artists of our time, with a career that now spans more than 60 years. Through her art, she has created a new relationship with the audience, inviting us to play an active part in the completion of the artwork. With hands-on contributions from its viewers, the exhibition is a living installation that will evolve and grow while on display.

The instructions of Yoko Ono encompass Ono's consistently radical approach to visual art. For example, none of the artworks travelled to the Vancouver Art Gallery in art crates or boxes. The art consists of words that hang on the wall and instructions for visitors to follow. Ono hopes that by participating in her artwork viewers will become connected to each other and committed to the idea of making the world a more peaceful place.

The art of John and Yoko explores the work that Ono made with John Lennon. They were united in the common goal of world peace. The exhibition helps us to see the huge contribution their collaborations have made to igniting and exciting people's belief in their ability to attain peace. Lennon and Ono's works are a living art of love and revolution that reminds us of the vital connection between our individual and collective power. This section of the exhibition also features the stories and voices of everyday people who participated in Lennon and Ono's art projects.

The interactivity of the exhibition also reaches far outside the walls of the Vancouver Art Gallery. Ono put out a worldwide call to women for a feminist artwork entitled *ARISING*. In the artwork *WATER EVENT*, local Indigenous artists were invited to submit vessels to honour and acknowledge the importance of the waters where we live, both past and present. Many of the pieces speak to ancestral knowledge and Indigenous connections to water.

*GROWING FREEDOM: The art of Yoko Ono / The art of John and Yoko* creates multiple entry points for us to participate, use our voices and engage in the transformative power of our minds.





***"Every artwork deserves to be called art, when it has been made with the love of an artist"***

– Yoko Ono

Above: John Lennon and Yoko Ono, Brochure Cover for *Planting Acorns at Coventry*, 1968, first public art collaboration, Photo: Keith McMillan, © Yoko Ono

# ARTIST BACKGROUND

Yoko Ono is a ground-breaking, visionary artist whose career spans over 60 years. She has created significant works in film, music, performance and visual arts. Ono's interdisciplinary approach was unconventional when she began creating art in the 1950s and 60s. For this reason, she played a very important role in the development of Conceptual art. Ono was one of the first artists to introduce the extremely radical concept of including us, the viewer, in her work. Without the participation of the viewer, many of Ono's works would be incomplete.

Ono was born in Tokyo, Japan, in 1933, to a wealthy family. Until the beginning of the Second World War, Ono's family travelled back and forth between Japan and San Francisco due to her father's job as a banker. Thanks to this international experience, she was exposed to different cultures and religions, but simultaneously had to face the issue of being treated as an outsider; she was too Japanese in America and too Americanized in Japan. This feeling was only made worse when her family's fortunes declined during the war.

Ono attended an elite progressive school where the curriculum was forward thinking and ahead of its time. She learned that music could be created without conventional musical instruments; it could also be made in the everyday. Ono discovered that music could be made in the sound of the rain falling, the wind blowing or the rustling of leaves. These unconventional thinking practices continued as Ono's mother insisted that she should be able to have the same high school education as boys did. Until this time in Japan, boys and girls went to separate schools, but the Ministry of Education changed the rules so that Ono could engage in the same level of instruction as boys, and she became one of the first young women permitted to enter philosophy classes with young men. All these life experiences contributed to forming Ono's identity and attitudes towards art-making later in life.

In 1953, Ono moved to New York with her family and enrolled in Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville. While at school, she began writing event scores, a series of instructions for viewers to follow. In 1955, she dropped out of university and moved to New York City, and by 1960, Ono was involved in New York's experimental art scene. She rented an apartment loft and opened it as a performance and happening space. She began presenting her own artworks, becoming influential in the international development of Conceptual art. Ono had her first gallery show in 1961, where she presented her instruction pieces, radical works of art that could be completed anywhere, by anyone, and could exist outside of galleries and museums. This artwork questioned the division between art and the everyday.

In 1964, Ono compiled more than 150 of her instructions in her ground-breaking artist's book, *Grapefruit*. Although text-based, Ono's instructions were considered a new type of visual artwork. Many critics associated her instructions with musical scores. Before Ono's instructions, artwork was seen as an object, exhibited and displayed in museums and galleries. Ono's artworks, the instructions, escape the traditional need for conservation and care as the artwork is simply text which can be performed anywhere.





In 1966, Ono had an exhibition at London's Indica Gallery, where she met the pop star John Lennon, a member of the rock band The Beatles. Through her art practice, they created a bond that would blossom into one of the greatest love stories and art collaborations of the twentieth century. After their marriage in 1969, in lieu of a honeymoon, they conducted a bed-in for peace at the Amsterdam Hilton Hotel and the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal, inviting journalists into their room to promote a message of world peace. During the Montreal bed-in, they recorded the anti-war song Give Peace a Chance (1969). Throughout their relationship, they collaborated on a wide range of works that took on many forms, including performance, sculpture, films, books, live and recorded music, poster campaigns and mail art projects. All these projects were rooted in playfulness, hope and a desire for freedom for all human beings.

In the years after Lennon's death in 1980, Ono continued to create art and invite us, the viewer, to participate in the artwork. She continued to make instruction artworks, films and music. Today, she embraces social media to communicate her artistic and activist messages. She has won many awards including a Grammy, the Rainer Hildebrandt medal and a Golden Lion Award for Lifetime Achievement.

***"Smile in the mirror. Do that every morning and you'll start to see a big difference in your life"***

– Yoko Ono

# PRE AND POST TOUR ACTIVITIES

## GRADE 3 - GRADE 12



### 1. WHO IS YOKO ONO?

Pre-Tour Activity



### 2. CREATE WITH ONO

Participate and complete instruction work CLOUD  
PIECE by Yoko Ono



### 3. ACTIVIST ART

Explore John Lennon and Yoko Ono's collaborative  
artworks promoting World Peace



## 4. THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER

Explore the importance of water in our community through Yoko Ono's WATER EVENT



## 5. WISH TREE

Post-Tour Activity



## 6. FURTHER LEARNING TEACHERS & STUDENTS

Film  
Audio  
Literature  
Resources



# WHO IS YOKO ONO?

## PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY



### OBJECTIVE

Students are introduced to the life, artistic process and works of Yoko Ono.

### MATERIALS

- Writing materials
- Access to the internet
- Artist Information sheet (p.13) and the Student Worksheet (p.14)

### PROCESS

- Divide the class into small groups
- Give each group one of the categories from the Artist Information Sheet (p.15)
- Give each student a copy of the Student Worksheet (p.16) and ask them to consider what they need to find out to complete their section
- Have them conduct research using the Internet, either at home or at school

- Ask each group to find and describe a piece of work by the artist and add it into the space provided on the Worksheet
- Have each group present their information while the rest of the students fill in their worksheets

## CONCLUSION

Discuss the following:

- What were some of the most interesting things that students learned or discovered?
- Which piece are students curious about seeing in the exhibition?
- Does Yoko Ono's work connect to or resonate with students' lives? Why or why not?
- What else are students interested in finding out about the artist?

# WHO IS YOKO ONO?

## PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY

### ARTIST INFORMATION SHEET

#### Her Life

- Born and raised in Tokyo, Japan, during World War II, Yoko Ono's childhood experiences form many of her ideas around art making
- One of the first contemporary artists who thought that the concept was more important than the object
- She is considered an interdisciplinary artist combining music, film, performance and visual art
- She has campaigned for peace, human rights and equality throughout her life
- She married one of the most famous musicians in the world, John Lennon, and, together, they mobilized their fame and recognition to promote peace

### PROCESS

- Imagination, participation and action are important elements of Ono's artwork
- She creates Event Scores, which are instructions for viewers to follow and actively participate in
- Performance has often been a key element in her work
- A sense of humour infuses many of her artworks
- She combines her training in music composition, philosophy and literature to create a new kind of radical art

### EXAMPLES OF WORK

- *MEND PIECE*
- *PLAY IT BY TRUST*
- *PAINTING TO HAMMER A NAIL*
- *CEILING PAINTING*
- *BED-IN FOR PEACE*
- *WAR IS OVER! (if you want it)*
- *WISH TREE*

### ACHIEVEMENTS

- Grammy Award for Album of the Year, 1982
- Juno Award, 1982
- Grammy Award for Best Music Film, 2001
- Lifetime Achievement Golden Lion Award, 2009/ Venice Biennale
- Lifetime Achievement Award / Observer Ethical Awards 2015



# WHO IS YOKO ONO?

## PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY

STUDENT WORKSHEET (FILL IN THE CHART WITH THE FOLLOWING)

<b>PERSONAL INFORMATION</b>	
<b>ARTIST'S PROCESS/ PRACTICE</b>	
<b>EXAMPLES OF WORK</b>	
<b>ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	
<b>AN ARTWORK: TITLE AND DESCRIPTION</b>	

# CREATE WITH YOKO ONO

## INSPIRED BY HER INSTRUCTION WORKS

### OBJECTIVE

Learn about Yoko Ono's conceptual practice by participating in her instructions and completing her artwork.

### DISCUSSION

Yoko Ono creates conceptual artwork. The main principle of Conceptual art is that the idea behind the work is more important than the final product. Her artwork often relies on YOU to participate - you are just as important as the artist in creating the artwork. Yoko Ono provides us with directions that she calls "instructions." Anyone who reads the instructions can complete the work in collaboration with Ono. In this way, we are all connected through the process of creating art. She believes that the everyday person can, and should produce artwork. She invites all of us to experience the art as she does, while at the same time acknowledging that each person's experience is different.

### MATERIALS

- Imagination
- Paper
- Crayons, markers, or pencil crayons

### PROCESS

- Begin a classroom conversation on conceptual art work and Yoko Ono's instructions.
- As your teacher reads Yoko Ono's CLOUD PIECE, close your eyes and visualise a painting in your imagination.

#### CLOUD PIECE

**Imagine the clouds dripping  
Dig a hole in your garden  
to put them in.**

- Use the drawing tools to put the painting you created in your imagination on paper.
- Create your own instruction work to share with the class.

# CREATE WITH YOKO ONO

## INSPIRED BY HER INSTRUCTION WORKS

### CONCLUSION

- Share your drawings with the class. What was different and what was the same?
- Were you surprised at how many different ways there were to complete Yoko Ono's work?
- What ideas did you think about when you were completing the instructions?
- Share all the instruction works created in class over a week. Share what it was like to have the class finish your instruction work. Were you surprised by the results?

***"You may think I'm small, but I have a universe inside my mind."***

- Yoko Ono



Image: Yoko Ono, *PLAY IT BY TRUST*, 1966/2020

# ACTIVIST ART

## INSPIRED BY JOHN AND YOKO'S ACTIVIST ART

*"We announced the birth of a Nutopian nation: a conceptual country anybody could join and be the ambassador of. Our white flag, and ordinary bed-sheet, symbolized a surrendering to Peace. Give Peace A Chance was our chant. Imagine was our anthem and a song of prayer. 'Imagine all the people living life in peace.' This was a song asking people to imagine, to visualize, and realize our future. It was especially important that it was asking people to use the power of their own minds to make things happen."*

- Yoko Ono

### OBJECTIVE

John Lennon and Yoko Ono were dedicated to imagining and demanding world peace through their collaborative artworks.

They first met in November of 1966 when John Lennon, a famous musician with the Beatles, visited Yoko Ono's exhibition at the Indica Gallery in London. John Lennon was taken with the positive and interactive nature of Yoko Ono's work and they began to collaborate to create conceptual works in art, film and music imagining peace.

The sixties and seventies were an era not only of change, but of collision. Anti-Vietnam war protests, civil rights, the generation gap and the sexual revolution- these were but a few ideas exploding on the worlds' stage.

When Lennon and Ono decided to marry in 1969, they knew the marriage would make headlines around the world and so they decided to use the opportunity to create a collaborative anti-war performance to promote peace.

At the Hilton hotel in Amsterdam, surrounded by flowers, they sat in bed for a week and invited the press to ask them questions between 9am and 9pm each day. Major broadcast stations and publications were invited to cover the performance. But so were smaller media organisations, including kids from high school papers who not only got an interview but were also rewarded with the right to take photographs. Although lighthearted and fun, the couple had a serious message to stop the Vietnam war.

Lennon and Ono branded the protest BED-IN FOR PEACE, making it an artistic activist happening. The bed-in idea was inspired from sit-ins, where protestors remain seated in front or within an establishment until they are evicted, arrested, or their demands are met. The performance art name, BED-IN FOR PEACE, also played off of Yoko Ono's use of the word "piece" to name her earlier artworks.

# ACTIVIST ART

## INSPIRED BY JOHN AND YOKO'S ACTIVIST ART

The photos of the bed-in went around the globe, with the couple repeating the week-long bed-in performance in Montreal. The newly founded Plastic Ono Band landed a world hit with the song, Give Peace a Chance, written and recorded live during the Montreal bed-in. The song is one of the most famous anti-war songs of the era.

BED-IN FOR PEACE was the first of several political art performances they created together. After the Montreal bed-in, Lennon and Ono continued their campaign for peace by sending world leaders acorns "for peace" and they also bought full-page ads and billboards with the message WAR IS OVER! IF YOU WANT IT.

WAR IS OVER! IF YOU WANT IT was unveiled on prominent billboards in 12 major cities worldwide in December of 1969. The campaign highlighted the power of ordinary people and how they could call for an end to war. Deliberately intended to reach as many people as possible, Lennon and Ono made use of leaflets, posters, radio announcements, newspaper advertisements and billboards to send a message of self-responsibility for peace. By presenting peace as an advertising campaign, their sole mission was to get everybody's attention drawn to the fact that war and peace is an individual choice.

The WAR IS OVER! IF YOU WANT IT campaign is still going today through social media.

***"We announced the birth of a Nutopian nation: a conceptual country anybody could join and be the ambassador of. Our white flag, and ordinary bed-sheet, symbolized a surrendering to Peace. Give Peace A Chance was our chant. Imagine was our anthem and a song of prayer. 'Imagine all the people living life in peace.' This was a song asking people to imagine, to visualize, and realize our future. It was especially important that it was asking people to use the power of their own minds to make things happen."***

- Yoko Ono

## MATERIALS

- Photo documentations of Lennon/Ono activist performances (p)
- YouTube for music videos mentioned in discussion, links in RESOURCES
- A variety of materials, which might include some of the following
  - old magazines/newspapers/advertisements, coloured paper
  - scissor and glue
  - cardboard, 4 x 6 inches or index cards
  - markers
  - Postage stamps (optional)



# ACTIVIST ART

## INSPIRED BY JOHN AND YOKO'S ACTIVIST ART

We are not able to create an advertising campaign or a music video, but you have the chance to create your own artwork to share your message with mail art. Mail art began in the 1960s when artists sent postcards inscribed with poems, drawings, or collages through the postal service rather than exhibiting or selling them in museums and galleries. You have the opportunity to create your own activist mail art postcard to share an issue important to you. You can send it to someone you think can help bring about the change you'd like to see in your school, community, country, or world.

### PROCESS

- Look at the photo documentation of John Lennon and Yoko Ono's performances for peace.(p) Why do you think Lennon and Ono chose these different ways to communicate their message of peace? What was the impact of their choices? How would the impact of the work be different if it were presented in a traditional way such as a painting?
- Take a moment to think about an issue important to you. It might be something you want to change or fight for in your school, your community, your country or the world. What do you want people to stop doing? What do you want people to start doing? This is an opportunity to prod boundaries, consider big issues, and think outside the box. You do not have to find a solution here - rather, you are cracking the idea open and sharing that idea with others through a message in the mail.
- Once you have an issue, use magazines, newspapers, or old advertisements to find visuals and text you can collage together to create your activist artwork. You can also use coloured paper to create your own words and images.
- Cut a piece of recycled cardboard into a 4x6 inch rectangle.
- Do not glue anything down immediately. Give yourself time to play with the words and images on the cardboard, cut things apart and put them together differently until you are satisfied. Then glue things down securely. (Remember you may decide to send your message through the mail, so make sure you glue everything down really well.)
- When finished, share your activist art postcards with the class
- If you wish, send your postcard to someone you feel could be helpful creating change or promoting the issue important to you. On the backside of the card, write the address and add a stamp.

### CONCLUSION

Discuss the process and the finished works. Helpful questions could include:

- How can an artwork connect with an audience differently from other forms of protest?
- What are the challenges/advantages of using art as a tool for protest?
- Were the pieces successful as artworks? Why or why not?
- Did the finished works stand alone or did they need added explanation- verbal or written?

# IS THE BED-IN A GOOD IDEA?

## SECONDARY SCHOOL ACTIVITY EXTENSION

Work in small teams to share information gathered from virtual magazines and by researching the Internet to learn more about John Lennon and Yoko Ono's *BED-IN FOR PEACE*. Present the results of your research using the art medium of your choice. After everyone presents their findings, have a class discussion to think about the different ways used by Lennon and Ono to promote their message of peace.

### QUESTIONS TO FEED THE DISCUSSION

- What were John Lennon and Yoko Ono's objective in organising this bed-in?
- What do you think of their recording of the song under such circumstances?
- What else could they have done to circulate their message of peace?
- What celebrities today are using their fame to promote an issue and how are they doing it?
- Instead of organising a bed-in, what are other ways you could use art to convey a message of peace?



Image: John Lennon and Yoko Ono, *BED-IN FOR PEACE*, Amsterdam, 1969, Photo: Nico Koster, Courtesy of Yoko Ono

# THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER

## INSPIRED BY YOKO ONO'S WATER EVENT

*"What I'm trying to do is make something happen by throwing a pebble into the water and creating ripples...I don't want to control the ripples."*

- Yoko Ono

### OBJECTIVE

Think about the importance of water and create a design for a sculpture that reflects your findings.

### DISCUSSION

In 1971, Yoko Ono sent out an invitation to 120 artists and musicians with a request for each artist to produce a water sculpture with her. By submitting a water container or idea of one which would form half of the sculpture, Yoko Ono would supply the other half- water. The sculpture would be credited to both the artist and Yoko Ono, establishing unity between artists. This piece was titled *WATER EVENT*. It was inspired by a poem Yoko Ono wrote in 1967 titled *WATER TALK*.

#### WATER TALK

you are water  
i'm water  
we're all water in different containers  
that's why it's so easy to meet  
someday we'll evaporate together

but even after the water's gone  
we'll probably point out to the containers  
and say, "That's me there, that one"  
we're container minders

**For Half-A-Wind Show, Lisson Gallery, London 1967**

The sculptures were as different as the artists Ono invited. Among the many artists who contributed, Andy Warhol contributed a film of a water cooler with a soundtrack of people talking. A gallery owner provided a tree. One artist brought dry instant soup, another artist supplied hydrogen and oxygen in pressurised tanks, and someone even provided a plastic bag.

# THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER

## INSPIRED BY YOKO ONO'S *WATER EVENT*

When talking about the event, Yoko Ono stated, "It was a Zen joke, I thought jokes and laughter are very important elements in Zen. This particular joke is that I get all the containers from the artists to fill them with water, and the water I supply is conceptual. Meaning that I never fill them with actual water. I like that bit. It gave me a laugh right away as soon as I thought of the idea. Then I knew it was a good piece."

Throughout the decades, Yoko Ono has invited artists to participate in *WATER EVENT*. However it is set up differently each time because in each new city, Yoko Ono engages local culture, people and artists. For the re-creation of this work at the Vancouver Art Gallery, Yoko Ono invited local Indigenous artists to participate, reflecting on the significance of water both past and present to the local First Nations the Vancouver Art Gallery resides upon, Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh.

Just like the original exhibition, local Indigenous artists provided a wide variety of water sculptures in response to Ono's invitation. These included traditional baskets, as well as contemporary wood carvings, beading and film.

One of the participants, Musqueam weaver, Debra Sparrow, created a small wooden canoe in collaboration with a Musqueam carver.

"I hold my hands up to Yoko for recognizing the value and importance of water," Sparrow says. "They spoke about Indigenous rights long before most politicians did."

### MATERIALS

- Paper
- Drawing materials

### PROCESS

- As a class, discuss the importance of water to our community. How is water important in your daily life? How is water important to our city? To our country? To the world? What concerns do you have about our waters?
- Discuss some of the ways that artists have responded to Yoko Ono's invitation using both objects and conceptual ideas. Why was a plastic bag used? Why instant dried soup? Why a carved canoe? What are the artists asking us to think about?
- Think about some of the ways you could present a sculpture design that reflects the importance of water in your life.



# THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER

## INSPIRED BY YOKO ONO'S *WATER EVENT*

- Brainstorm ideas for a water sculpture. How would Yoko Ono pour water into your vessel?
- Draw your sculpture design on paper. Use colour and text if you desire.
- Share your design with the class.

### CONCLUSION

- Display artworks in the classroom.
- Are there similarities in your sculpture designs? Do you share some of the same ideas or concerns about our waters?
- What are some of the ways you learned water is important to your classmates through their sculpture designs?
- Did you learn anything new looking at all the water sculpture designs?
- What were some of the things you needed to take into consideration while planning and creating your design drawings?
- Discuss the process, how easy or hard was it to create the work.

### ACTIVITY EXTENSION

Now that you have drawn out your water sculpture design, gather found materials to build the sculpture. Write a statement about the idea behind your piece. Have an exhibition where students from other classes can see your artworks and learn more about the importance of water in our community.



Image: Yoko Ono, *WATER EVENT*, 1971/2021



# WISH TREE

## POST-TOUR ACTIVITY



*"As a child in Japan, I used to go to a temple and write out a wish on a piece of thin paper and tie it around the branch of a tree. Trees in temple courtyards were always filled with people's wish knots, which looked like white flowers blossoming from afar."*

- Yoko Ono

### OBJECTIVE

Students have the opportunity to participate in instruction work, *WISH TREE*, by Yoko Ono.

### DISCUSSION

Yoko Ono's wish piece is based on a childhood memory of visiting Japanese temples. As a child, Yoko Ono visited Japanese shrines where it is an old custom for people to purchase and tie pre-printed tags with messages onto trees. The wishes were simple, such as 'Good Luck' or 'Good Health'. The multitude of white papers tied to the trees resembled blooming white flowers. "Many of my works are related to something in my roots. *WISH TREE* comes from root experience as a child in Japan."

*WISH TREE* is a collaborative project between the artist and us, an invitation to write our wishes on small tags or pieces of paper and then hang them on a branch of a tree indigenous to the site specific area- creating a living monument to all dreams, big and small.

As the tree fills with wishes, the paper is collected and returned to Yoko Ono, to be buried, unread, around her *IMAGINE PEACE TOWER*, a 2007 art installation in Reykjavik, Iceland dedicated to the memory of her late husband John Lennon. The tower symbolises Lennon's and Ono's continuing campaign for world peace. Inscribed on the walls of the Wishing Well is the phrase *IMAGINE PEACE*, translated into 24 different languages. It communicates to the whole world that peace and love is what connects all lives on Earth. To date, more than a million wishes have been gathered from Yoko Ono's collaborative *WISH TREE* project and placed here.

# WISH TREE

## POST-TOUR ACTIVITY

### MATERIALS

- Yoko Ono instruction work WISH TREE (included in Process section)
- Paper or tag
- String
- Hole punch or tape
- Pencils
- Tree or bush on school grounds

### PROCESS

- Take the wish you created in the virtual school tour and punch a hole through the paper. Add some string through the hole long enough so that you can tie it on a tree or bush at your school.
- As a class, choose a tree or bush on the school grounds to create a wish tree.
- Take a picture to document the Wish Tree. Email your photo and story to the IMAGINE PEACE TOWER at [wish@imaginepeacetower.com](mailto:wish@imaginepeacetower.com)
- Invite another class to participate by sharing Yoko Ono's instruction work, *WISH TREE*.

### WISH TREE

**Make a wish.**

**Write it down on a piece of paper.**

**Fold it and tie it around a branch of a wish tree.**

**Ask your friend to do the same.**

**Keep wishing.**

**Until the branches are covered with wishes.**

**y.o.1996/2021**

### CONCLUSION

- Discuss your experience of participating in the completion of Yoko Ono's artwork.
- What idea do you think Yoko Ono wanted you to think about?
- Yoko Ono said, "The wishes that we make, even if it's just written on paper and nobody sees it, I think they do affect the world and the universe" Do you agree? Why or why not?
- Do you think this act of expressing a wish changes people? Why or why not?
- The cornerstones of Ono's practice is imagination, action and participation. Where did you notice these elements when you were doing *WISH TREE*?

# FURTHER LEARNING

## TEACHER AND STUDENT RESOURCES



Yoko Ono, *CEILING PAINTING*, 1966/2020

### BOOKS

- Grapefruit. Yoko Ono
- Yoko Ono. *GROWING FREEDOM*. The instructions of Yoko Ono/The art of John and Yoko. Phi Foundation
- HANS ULRICH & YOKO ONO: THE CONVERSATION SERIES VOL.17. Hans Ulrich OBRIST, Yoko Ono.

### VIDEOS

- BED PEACE documentary can be found on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRjiOV003Q>
- Give Peace a Chance <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftE8vrOWNus>

### YOKO ONO ON SPOTIFY

- <https://open.spotify.com/artist/4m2kfAHEnK7Z7qLGxeWtro>

### WEBSITES

- Imagine Peace website <http://imaginepeace.com/>
- Guggenheim Bilbao <https://www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus/en/learn/schools/teachers-guides/activism-and-implications-2>
- Walker Art Center <https://walkerart.org/collections/artworks/invitation-to-a-participate-in-a-water-event>



# FURTHER LEARNING

## TEACHER AND STUDENT RESOURCES



Image: Yoko Ono, *WAR IS OVER* campaign, 1969

### DEFINITIONS

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms>
- [Kids.britannica.com](http://Kids.britannica.com)

### YOKO ONO QUOTES

- <https://www.lofficielusa.com/pop-culture/yoko-ono-best-quotes-john-lennon-art>
- [https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/69998.Yoko\\_Ono](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/69998.Yoko_Ono)
- <https://www.inspiringquotes.us/author/3160-yoko-ono>
- <https://twitter.com/yokoono?ref>

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