
ALEXANDRA MUNROE
WITH JON HENDRICKS

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This volume accompanies the exhibition YES YOKO ONO, shown at the Japan Society Gallery, New York, from October 18, 2000, through January 14, 2001.

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EXHIBITION SCHEDULE:

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis
March 10–June 17, 2001
www.walkart.org

Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston
July 13–September 16, 2001
www.camh.org

MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Mass.
October 18, 2001–January 6, 2002
web.mit.edu/visualarts/

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto
February 22–May 20, 2002
www.ago.on.ca

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
June 22–September 8, 2002
www.sfmoma.org

Other venues in North America and Asia to be announced
The guiding inspiration of this exhibition and publication, YES YOKO ONO, has been to construct a useful and illuminating survey of Ono’s art in all media over a crucial period in the history of the modernism. Such an undertaking would have been impossible to achieve without the generous cooperation of the artist herself. I am grateful for the unwavering faith that Yoko has shown toward me and this project since we first began working together in 1995. Over the years, she has shared her insights and reminiscences and provided extraordinary background on the forces that have shaped her work. Her keen perception and wonderful humor have enriched our discussions, as has her boundless intellectual spirit and sense of the supernaturally divine. Yoko also gave tremendous attention to the authors during the research of their texts—an accessibility that has assured this book landing authority.

Ono once said that “dreaming alone is only a dream, but a dream we dream together is reality.” Sam Hawkinson has made this project possible at every stage and at all levels of production, and I thank him for his constant support, leadership, and creative input. His dedication to Yoko Ono’s art is the mainspring of YES.

Jon Hendricks, who has worked with Ono as curator and archivist since 1989, first revealed Yoko’s seminal conceptualism to me while I was researching an earlier exhibition of postwar Japanese art. His profound and detailed knowledge of her work has informed this exhibition and book and has inspired numerous discoveries. It has been a rare privilege to work with Jon as consulting curator on this project. His essay here on Yoko Ono and Fluxus sheds light on Yoko’s Fluxus history, and his compilation of the Anthology of artist’s writings offers rich and provocative testimony to Yoko’s unique artistic vision. Jon guided the authors through the artist’s archives, suggested directions for research, and his manuscript reviews helped fine-tune each author’s thinking, including my own. In thanking Jon we are appreciative as well of Joanne Hendricks and Aurora Hendricks. We also thank Sara Seager for her assistance in many ways.

This exhibition draws primarily from three collections: the artist’s collection, New York: The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit; and the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection, also in Detroit. We are grateful to these collections for their generous loans. We also acknowledge the Collection Archiv Sohn, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart, and Jon and Joanne Hendricks for lending important works to this show.

At the artist’s Lennon Photo Archive, Karla Mentfield supplied with marvelous calm and order a seemingly endless request for press clippings, broadcast recordings, and photographs representing Ono’s entire career. Her assistance with many aspects of this book’s research contributed to the success of our production. Curt Pettee also facilitated our work at the artist’s office, Studio One. We thank them for their support and cooperation.

Shows have a way of being conceived simultaneously as books, and YES was from the start an Abrams publication. I am grateful to publisher Paul Gottlieb for his enthusiastic support of this project and for his vision of the book’s significance. A monograph of this scope could not have been accomplished without the talents of Margaret Chase, Vice President and Managing Editor, and Nicole Columbus, editor, who supervised its publication. At Japan Society Gallery, Annie Van Asche compiled the photographs—a daunting task—and oversaw all new photography, scanning, and photo research. She worked tirelessly in coordinating many aspects of this project. General Editors Reiko Tomii and Kathleen M. Friehle did a masterful job of compiling the manuscripts, editing this book, and working closely with its eighteen authors. Dr. Tomii was instrumental in conceptualizing and organizing the Yoko Works section. We were fortunate to engage John Bigelow Taylor and Diane Dubler to produce new photography of Yoko Ono’s objects and ephemera that are featured throughout. In Jerusalem, Oded Lohb photographed several works on view at the Israel Museum, for whom we are most grateful. All other photographers who contributed to this book are listed under photography credits. Our thanks also go to Lisa Overton of Big Ant for her assistance on the scanned material. I am grateful also to research assistants Margaret McCaffrey and Midori Yoshimoto, and to translators Dr. Tomii and Mrs. Yoshimoto for making so many previously unknown Japanese texts available to us. The book’s superb design is the work of Miko McGinty, Rachel Tutschki assisted Miko in organizing the photographic material and in typography.

The range of Yoko Ono’s work demanded an equally wide range of expertise. YES YOKO ONO features essays and contributions by leading scholars and critics in the visual arts, film, music, performance studies, and cultural history, and we are indebted to the following individuals for their important texts on Ono. For Part I, On Yoko: David A. Ross, Director, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Murray Sayle, writer on Japan for The New Yorker; and John S.
Wexner, Publisher of Rolling Stone magazine. For Part III, Yoko Ono: Bruce Altshuler, Director of Studies for Graduate Programs, Christie's Education; Kevin Connaghan, Adjunct Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University, Edward M. Gonen, critic and novelist; Christie Yens, Curator of Film and Video, Whitney Museum of American Art; Joan Rothfus, Associate Curator of Visual Arts, Walker Art Center; Kristine Stiles, Associate Professor, Duke University; and Miwon Yoon, Ph.D., Candidate, Department of Art History, Rutgers University. This section, arranged in catalogue-roman format, provides an in-depth history and appreciation of Ono's work that should inspire a serious reappraisal not only of her art but of conceptualism itself. Special thanks are due to these authors for their scholarly expertise. Global perspectives on Ono's recent work have been supplied by curators who have first-hand experience presenting her projects: Kei Bauer, former commissioner of visual arts programming, Langenhalten, and currently independent curator, Stuttgart; Achille Bonito Oliva, independent curator, Rome, and 1993 commissioner of the Venice Biennale; Nani Funke, independent curator, Tokyo; Pablo J. Rico, independent curator, Spain; and Luis Schwarcz, Curator, Fotografisk Centreh, Copenhagen. Part IV presents an extensive documentary and research effort on the part of Jon Hendricks and the team of Kevin Connaghan and Rano Yomii.

This exhibition travels to several venues in North America. I am grateful to David Ross, Director of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, for his early and abiding interest in this show and to each of my colleagues who signed up early for the tour: Kathy Halbreich, Director, and Joan Rothfus, Associate Curator, Walker Art Center; Marti Mayo, Director, and Dana Friki-Hansen, former curator, Contemporary Art Museum, Houston; and Jane Farver, Director, MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge. We look forward to watching Yoko Ono's art and thought expand with new meaning in today's world.

When I assumed the directorship of Japan Society Gallery in spring 1998, my plans for this exhibition were well underway. I am grateful to Ambassador William Clark, Jr., President of Japan Society, for his enthusiastic embrace of this project and for his belief in its importance within the overall programming of the Society. John Wheeler, Vice President, and Carl Schellhorn, Vice President and Treasurer, have also provided support throughout. Each of the following individuals contributed to Japan Society's presentation: Elizabeth Costa, Director, and Diana Foster, Assistant Director, Development; Paula Lawrence, Director, Performing Arts; Kyoko Hamano, Director, Japan Society Film Center; Kat Cohen, Director, Communications, and Ruth Kaplan, press consultant; Ruri Kawashima, Director, and Katherine Belling, Senior Program Officer, U.S.-Japan Program.

In the Gallery, Assistant Director Jane Rubin superbly managed every aspect of this exhibition and its ambitious tour. As I struggled with my new balancing act of directing a museum and curating an exhibition, Jane compiled much of the object research that forms the basis of this show. Together with Curator of Education, Anna Van Amze, they have made YES everything we ever dreamed of. Others whose hard work helped realize this project are Assistant to the Directors, Takehito Tatsuya, and Gallery interns Cynthia Eldon, So Young Lee, Mori Oda, and research associate Hyunsoo Woo.

The Gallery benefits from its Art Advisory Committee, chaired by Samuel Sachs, II, and the Friends of Japan Society Gallery. I am thankful for their support and encouragement of new directions and scholarship in the field of Japanese art.

Alexandra Munroe
Director, Japan Society Gallery
and Exhibition Curator
Among Yoko Ono’s artistic accomplishments, possibly the least recognized are her various series and works for advertising media (created as early as 1964), which clearly manifest the strategy of institutional critique that would in later years be considered a hallmark of Conceptual Art. From Isreal Gallery (1965) through War Is Over! (1969) and beyond, these works in many ways prefigure the trajectory of Conceptual Art’s development through the 1970s and into the 1980s.

Although a number of authors have noted the importance of Ono’s advertising works in passing, it is only very recently that they have been considered in any depth.1 Even such a widely publicized project as War Is Over! (billboards, posters, and ads created with John Lennon) has received little art-historical or critical attention.2 This scholarly oversight can be explained in part by the fact that “ad art” is yet to be recognized as a separate category of artmaking. Artists’ billboards are often understood as “installation art,”3 postcards as “mail art,” and print ads as a type of “artist’s page.” And some of Ono’s advertising works have also been categorized simply as “stems.”

The sphere of advertising allowed Ono to reach far wider audiences with her characteristic participatory works than would otherwise have been possible. Her works that are explicitly intended to be completed in the viewer’s mind, advertising is an especially obvious medium. Whereas the conventional objective of advertising is to encourage consumption, Ono’s ads encourage creation. Draw a circle; drill a hole; win in your sleep. Hovering between the real and the imaginary, Ono’s art offers a virtual reality that the viewer must help construct, tangibly or conceptually. The aim of this chapter is to introduce Ono’s advertising works and to prepare a foundation for understanding their significance in the history of Conceptualism.

The first advertisements as such that Ono placed in a magazine or newspaper were two at Isreal Gallery ads in The New York Arts Calendar (no. 36). One was a full-page display in the March 1965 issue, which advertised “Circle Events” at Isreal Gallery.4 According to the ad, “circle events” could be ordered on different materials (leather, silk, glass, canvas, or others), in varying sizes (from 3½ x 2½ to 40 x 24½), for the price of “about $25.50.” The exhibition dates were given in the listings page as March 3–31, and the gallery described as open twenty-four hours a day. No address was offered, but a telephone number was listed. The magazine’s next issue featured another ad for Isreal Gallery, this one offering “Hole Events,” also on “leather, silk, glass, canvas, or other material to order.”5 Isreal Gallery, however, existed only in the pages of The New York Arts Calendar and in the minds of the artist and her readers.

The Isreal advertisements are among the earliest examples of Conceptual Art in an advertising medium, coming three years before Dan Graham’s Figurative (fig. 9.2) in the March 1968 issue of Harper’s Bazaar, a work that is generally cited in this regard.6

Graham’s ad, a cash-register tape with the title Figurative by Dan Graham, appeared sandwiched between advertisements for Warner bras and Tampons tampons.7 The coincidence of Figurative’s place-
FIGURE 9.1

ADVERTISEMENT FOR MUSEUM OF MODERN ART IN MODERN TICKET WINDOW FROM ARTIST'S BOOK / EXHIBITION CATALOGUE, 1971
ment adjacent to an ad for bras extends the pun inherent in the work, which—to an art-savvy reader—already suggests a play between “figurative art” and the column of “figures” on the page. In an essay titled “My Works for Magazine Fagges: A History of Conceptual Art” (1985), Graham offers this explanation of the words:

I became involved with the art system accidentally when friends of mine suggested that we open a gallery.... At our gallery, John Daniels, we gave Stelarc a one-man show, and presented several group shows that included all the proto-Minimalist artists.... However, the gallery was forced to close at the end of the first season due to bankruptcy.... Through the actual experience of running a gallery, I learned that a work of art was not written about and reproduced in a magazine, it would have difficulty attaining the status of “art.” It seemed that to be defined as having value (that is, value as “art”), a work had only to be exhibited in a gallery and then be written about and reproduced as a photograph in an art magazine. It was this record of the no-longer-existent institution, along with more assertions of information after the fact, that became the basis for the art works’ fame and, to a large extent, its economic value.

Ono’s Isreal Gallery was constructed of little more than these “accretions of information”: In it, the effectively conflated the exhibition and its documentation. The Draw Circle and Drive Circle works—actually blank rectangles—were “reproduced” in *The New York Arts Calendar* as Illustrations, “documenting” works available at an immaterial gallery. (Curiously, in the same March 1965 magazine in which the first Isreal Gallery ad appeared, Graham had an advertisement as well—for his very real, soon-to-be-bankrupt gallery, John Daniels.)

As with much Conceptual Art, language and geometry are both implicated in the Isreal Gallery works. (Indeed, the ads prominently feature the phrase “concept art.”) The name itself suggests the notion of Israel (enough to confuse the typesetter who gave it as such on a listings page of *The New York Arts Calendar*) and was in fact inspired by the name of prospective patron Sylvia Israel, for whom the artist created Eternal Time in 1965 (no. 13). And as Ono had pointed out in his 1962 article “The Word of a Fabricator,” circles and lines are abstract concepts—

"a perfect circle and a perfect line which we have not encountered except in our conceptual world."

The ads, moving from “Circle Events” to “Hole Events,” even showed a progression in dematerialization: a circle might be rendered in one material or another, whereas a hole is defined by the lack of a given material; it is immaterial by definition.

In a short 1966 essay titled “On Circle Event,” in the publication for the collaborative environment *The Storrs*, Ono explains the origins of Isreal Gallery, as well as his related “Draw Circle” postcard (fig. 14.11):

The circle painting idea was taken to a gallery for a possible presentation. They did not like the idea. They did not know exactly what was going to be shown.

"Are we going to show circles?"

"No, we are going to ask people to come and draw circles."

"But what will be on the canvas before that?"

"A blank canvas will be alright."

"Are we going to show blank canvases?"

"We are not going to show, we are going to prepare."

"But what then is the point of the show? Can’t you draw a few circles before they draw?"

"Is that necessary?"

"Don’t you think your circles will be better than theirs, that is, your being an artist and all that?"

"Do you think so?"

"But if somebody wants to buy the painting, for instance, what are they going to buy?"

"They can buy blank canvases, or they can buy the unfinished painting and take it home and ask circles to be added on each time they have a guest, they can go on adding circles that way and it will be an endless painting."

But the gallery did not like the idea. So Tony Cox and I opened a gallery called “Isreal” and put the circle painting on sale. The gallery was even listed in one of the art magazines under the “gallery index” but the only physical thing that existed was the phone number.

The gallery referred to is Leo Castelli. An exchange of letters in January 1965 between Ono and Castelli director Ivan Karp documents her proposal and its rejection. In her letter to Karp, dated January 4, 1965, Ono refers to a meeting between Karp and Anthony Cox (presumably described above) and counters with a proposal that Castelli invite a group of well-known artists to contribute a circle to the proposed painting, thus making it more saleable.

Among the artists the cites are Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Max Ernst, Marcel Duchamp, and Isamu Noguchi. Karp’s reply reads, in part:

Thank you so much for your urgent missive. It is indeed taken with genuine metaphysics and adventurous aesthetics. It seems now, however, after your clarified and detailed exposition that the kind of show you have in mind fails to suit our temperament which is essentially restless, driven, aggressive, barely Western and concrete—not metaphysical mind you—push the thought—but certainly concrete.

It would be a few years still before Conceptual Art became part of the program at Castelli.

The Isreal Gallery acts clearly fit Graham’s conception of his own advertisement as institutional critique. Although Graham’s figurative has been highlighted in previous studies of Conceptualism, several interventionist uses of advertising and other print media have recently been brought to light. For example, in 1965, a year after Ono’s Isreal, Latin American artists Eduardo Costa, Raúl Escamán, and Roberto Jacoby proposed, as Alexander Alberro explains, “to ‘deterritorial’ objects by presenting accounts to newspapers and magazines of artistic exhibitions and events that did not in fact take place.” Again, the resemblance to Ono’s work is remarkable.

A few notable earlier examples of this strategy exist. One is Roy Johnson’s ad for his imaginary gallery, Robin Gallery, in the pages of the Village Voice for the winter of 1964. Critic David Bouillon explains that Johnson was a pun on the former Reuben Gallery, “the birthplace of happenings.”
Brecht, George Herrn, and Ray Johnson. The eight (two threes make an eight) was usually on its side signifying violence[17] Bourdain's story documents the "closing" of this imaginary gallery a month after the opening of s[Real]. He also notes that Johnson "detests commercial art galleries," which might allow an inference of the Robin Gallery ads as institutional critique as well. But although Johnson's ad for the July 30 issue of the Village Voice announces one such eight-man show with no address, phone number, or date,[18] it is not immediately clear to the reader that the Robin Gallery is not "real." Another ad on the same page, for example, simply states "Paintings by Baudrillard at Stanley's," also lacking location or contact details. And another Robin Gallery ad from the September 17 issue of the Village Voice further confuses the question of real vs. imaginary, it states (in its entirety): "Ray Johnson & other Living Americans in 38-man show at Robin Gallery, Section A2, 1st Ave & 27th St-Albany: 7-8 Mon., Wed., Fri., 2-8 Sat., Tues., Thurs., weekends. Holidays."[19] The Robin Gallery, then, seems to exist as something between an art world joke and a conceptual artwork, and it certainly warrants further study. Ono was apparently unaware of Johnson's gallery at the time, recalling, "After I did the s[Real] Gallery, somebody told me that George Brecht did it before me, or something to that effect... However, I think it's nice that so many of us were thinking in the same direction, if that was the case."[20]

Another example is a work by Ono's fellow Tokyo Fluxus artist Yasuno Tone, "Tone-Prize Composition" advertisement, unearthed by art historian Reiko Tani and included in the 1995 book Robin Gallery Conceptualism. Tani and Tone's ad fun at the independent exhibition system and award exhibition programs then common in Japan. The ad, which appeared in the September 1964 issue of Onagaku geijutsu (Music art), begins:

Call for Entries: 1st Tone-Prize Composition
Tone-Prizes are given to all entries.
Deadline: October 1st
Certificates will be mailed in lieu of official announcement in early October.
There is no restriction on form or content. However, phenomena will not be accepted for they are impossible to present; instead, please submit texts, etc.[21]

Contact information and other details are followed by the announcement that all winners automatically qualify for a series of other awards, each named after an artist or composer—one of whom is Yoko Ono. A request for further information would have yielded a Tone-Prize application (fig. 9.3), which included the following special note regarding qualification for the Ono Award: "Ono Award, given by Yoko Ono, will be open to works by male composers only. [Entrants] are required to present "face and form," i.e., a photograph and data for weight, height, bust size, etc."[22]

Whereas Tone's composition event did in fact take place, Ono's s[Real] Gallery had no physical incarnation at the time the ads appeared. Although there was an effort to incorporate s[Real] Gallery as a legal entity,[23] the shift and slide between the real and the virtual—and perhaps the propensity for the latter—characterizes Ono's humorous appropriations of advertising media in the mid-1960s. In a sense, unlike conventional advertising, Ono's ads implicitly acknowledge that the goods or services on offer are often better imagined than actually had.

This play between real and imaginary is demonstrated by at least two works before s[Real] in which the artist used direct mail advertising. In a postcard from early 1964, she invites recipients to her "Touch Poem No. 3" in Nigeria, Africa, on March 33, 1964 (no. 33). The date of March 33 makes it clear that this event takes place only in the reader's mind. Ono
used this strategy in her postcard Miss Ono’s Tea Party, probably from early 1956 (Fig. 9.4; see no. 35). Professionally printed postcards were at that time (as today) commonly used in Japan for personal holiday greetings and were thus relatively easy to produce.24

After &Real, Ono’s deployment of advertising media became more intentional. A case in point is the three ads—Fountain Piece, Mouthpiece, and Do It Yourself (Fig. 2.16)—Ono placed in the fall of 1956 in the London-based magazine, Art and Artists (no. 38).25 These works are variously related to Ono’s dance instructions published in her Do It Yourself (Nakano designed by Fluxus founder George Maciunas) as part of &Real or newspaper events for the benefit of $1 (Fluxus Newspaper No. 7), in February 1956 (Fig 2.16). This festival actually began as an ad for “Do It Yourself” Dance Festival in the Village Voice that announced it as a subscription event (Fig. 9.5).26

Although the dance instructions in &Real could be more properly thought of as an “artist’s page” (one of three in the newspaper) than as an advertising work, the Art and Artists realizations are clearly advertising interventions, contextualized as such by their placement within the magazine’s pages among other ads and listings. The works thus began as a dance festival of the mind, the participants for which were solicited through an ad in the Village Voice, and ended up as instructions realized within advertising spaces. With the Art and Artists realizations, Ono conflates the solicitation of participation and the product offered. Whereas Village Voice readers were required to send money for instructions to be delivered by mail, Art and Artists readers were offered instructions outright.

Perhaps the best known of Ono’s published print advertising pieces is the Museum of Modern Art’s program for 1971 (no. 40; fig. 9.1). No longer the “starving artist,” Ono placed a paid display advertisement in the Village Voice announcing her (again, purely conceptual) “one-woman show” at the Museum of Modern Art. The works associated with Museum of Modern Art as a whole extend the implicit institutional critique evident in earlier &Real Gallery works. The &Real Gallery mainly existed for the comparatively small readership of &Real, but Ono’s open-ended MoMA show was presented to the much wider audience of the Village Voice. Further complicating the boundary of the real and the virtual, Ono published a “catalogue” as an artist’s book and also documented it in a film, The Museum of Modern Art: E.T. Ono’s Body. Ono’s advertising work gained a worldwide audience with the War & Over! campaign, created in collaboration with John Lennon (no. 39). For this event, launched on December 15, 1969, the couple commissioned billboards and posters in twelve cities: Athens, Berlin, Hong Kong, London, Los Angeles, Montreal, New York, Paris, Portof-Spain (Trinidad), Rome, Tokyo, and Toronto.27 In the language of the city where they were held, the billboards and posters declared: "WAR IS OVER! IF YOU WANT IT! Happy Christmas from John & Yoko." As Ono had appropriated the medium of the professionally printed postcard popular for Japanese holiday greetings for her Touch Peace Pamphlet and several other works, War is Over! similarly echoes the British practice of placing advertisements with holiday greetings in lieu of sending cards.28 War is Over! extended its impact through other media as well, including newspaper ads, postcards, and The Peace Station Network.29

In 1989, Ono began creating advertising works again on a significant scale, at first re-creating her signature War is Over! works as postcards, banners, and wall paintings in conjunction with her museum exhibitions. Instead, one could argue that the War is Over! campaign was renewed in earnest in January 1983 with Ono’s placement of a full-page ad, "Surrender to Peace," in the New York Times (Fig. 14.31), proposing a Nationwide Peace Poll.

The ad should be authorized and organized by the Congress as a national undertaking for the sake of experience and for the benefit to the arts, the media to minimize administrative expenses.30

The &Real/Gallery arts literally provided a space in which readers could contribute circles or holes; "Surrender to Peace" offers an opportunity for collab.

Miss Ono’s Tea Party

There will be a tea party given by Miss Ono as follows:

January 31, 1956 Come prepared to touch each other.

January 32, 1956 Come prepared to cut each other.

January 33, 1956 Come prepared to fly.

Those who wish to attend will please check the date you wish to attend and send $100 or donation per party, to Miss Yoko Ono, Empire State Bldg., N.Y.C. 1, N.Y.

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FIGURE 9.4
MISS ONO’s TEA PARTY.
POSTCARD, 1956

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FIGURE 9.5
ADVERTISING FOR "DO IT YOURSELF" DANCE FESTIVAL IN VILLAGE VOICE.
DECEMBER 1965
Over the course of a career that has evolved from the confines of the international avant-garde to the headlines of popular magazines and other mass media, Ono developed a Conceptualist practice that parallels her personal circumstances. As the Issei Galleries works critique the market realities and other politics of the art world, later works such as War is Over! offer an implicit critique of the art of politics. Specifically, as the Issei Galleries work exploits the centrality of marketing to the art world, War is Over! operates from the precedent that politics is largely conducted through the media as well. As Ono told Penthouse, "We're using our money to advertise our ideas so that peace has equal power with the means of spending their money to promote war." And as the developing culture of celebrity in which Ono found herself cast with increasing regularity became more and more engaged with the world of politics proper, Ono and Lennon seized the moment for positive change. Although Ono's advertising works can rightly be seen as institutional critique, the critique is offered in positive and empowering terms. With their blank rectangles as the central illustrations, the Issei Galleries work literally valorize "nothing," while at the same time empowering the reader with the potential for the creative act. Likewise, the War is Over! campaign does not denounce war or those who wage it, but rather suggests that the power to create peace is ours: War is Over! If You Want It.

Ono has stated that all her work is a form of wishing, and this might be what lends her advertising works their special power. For advertising, too, works from the premise of desire. The difference, of course, is that conventional advertising operates by provoking desires that can be fulfilled by its clients' products, whereas Ono's faith in the power of wishing to create positive vibrations is freely shared.
Postcards in English and Japanese
each 3 x 5.5" (8.1 x 14.7 cm)
Collection of the artist

Ono created and distributed Touch Poem No. 2 during early 1964 in the form of a postcard, in English and Japanese versions. The English version is in three parts: a nonverbal phonetic phrase credited to Nam June Paik; a date and location information for the event performance; and an instruction to "Wash your hair well before attending." The Japanese version lacks Paik's epigraph. The location given for the performance is "Nigeria, Africa," and the obviously fictional date is "March 32nd, 1964.

Touch Poem No. 2 is a realization of an instruction piece first published in Grapefruit (1964):

TOUCH POEM II

Held a touch poems meeting at somewhere in the distance or a fictitious address on a fictitious day:

1964 spring

An earlier, related work in the same publication is:

TOUCH POEM FOR GROUP OF PEOPLE

Touch each other:

1963 winter

Ono performed the latter version with audiences on numerous occasions. In a program brochure presumably distributed at her performance of Touch Poem (for Group of People) at the 3rd Annual New York Avant Garde Festival in September 1965, Ono offered a history of the work:

Touch poem was first exhibited in the lobby of the living
Theater in New York City on January 8, 1962 in the evening of
AN ANTHOLOGY.
It was then exhibited at the Soges Art Center in Tokyo for
the evening of WORKS BY YOKO ONO.

Touch poem, the audience participation piece, was first
performed in NAIDOU GALLERY, February, 1964, since then it
was performed in Kyoto, Nigeria, Berlin, Florence, Aachen
and New York.

Here, Ono describes two types of Touch Poem—objects (fig. 14, 5) and performances—and treats "real" and "imaginary" performances without distinction. The Kyoto and New York

references most likely are to actual performances she gave in
these cities. The references to Berlin, Florence, and Aachen cor-
respond to performances by Charlotte Moorman and Paik on their
European tour in June 1965. And the Nigerian performance refers,
no doubt, to the work under discussion. The confusion of real and
imaginary performances underlines the work's conceptual nature.

Another postcard work, Mrs. Ono's Tea Party (fig. 9, 3), extends
the idea of the imaginary performance as defined in Touch Poem II
and first realized in Touch Poem No. 2. Probably dating from
January 1966, it invites recipients to one of three tea parties to
take place on January 31, 1966, January 33, 1966, and January
34, 1976. For each date, a different instruction is offered: the first
advices, "Come prepared to touch each other."

WC

NOTES

1. Paik's nonverbal phrase is a string of Japanese katakana syllables (nam, mu, re, mo), with accent marks that in conventional use suggest "hard" pronunciation. In P., "e" would fit the hard pronunciation of "i" in the case, however, since "i" lacks a hard sound, the phrase is unpronounceable.

2. The object version of Touch Poem is a blackmail of "poems to touch" which consists of slips of paper as text and strips of hair as illustration.

LITERATURE: Concannon, Atlantis (1993)
touch poem  no. 3
yoko ono
place : Nigeria, Africa
time : March 33rd, 1964

wash your hair well before
attending

タッチ・ポエム 第三回
小野洋子
場所 ： ナイジェリア・アフリカ
時 ： 3月33日・1964

髪をよく洗って来る事。
In spring of 1965, Ono placed advertisements for her conceptual gallery Isreal in two issues of The New York Arts Calendar, a magazine of gallery listings. The Isreal Gallery ads offered two "events" by the artist: Circle Event and Hose Event. The ads were designed by the magazine's publisher, Marshall Mattison.1

Ono conceived the idea of Isreal Gallery when Ivan Karp, director of Leo Castelli Gallery, declined to exhibit Ono's Circle painting on the grounds that his gallery was interested in work that was "seriously concrete—not materialistic, mind you—pass the thought—but sensibly concrete."2 The gallery's name was inspired by a patron, Sylvia Israel, whom Anthony Cox had negotiated the sale of Ono's Eternal Time (no. 13).4

Ono's Isreal Gallery advertisements are among the earliest manifestations of Conceptual Art as advertising, as well as institutional critique. With Isreal, Ono mocks the gallery system by attempting to sell work that challenges the notion of artistic authority: a blank canvas to be completed by the purchaser, offered by a gallery that exists only as documentation in an art magazine.

While the physical gallery did not exist, Ono did use the name to sell her art. A flyer from 1965, for example, offered a "beautifully framed portrait of Moea Uba by Yoko Ono" for five dollars. Interested parties are advised to make out and mail checks for that amount to Isreal Gallery at 27 Christopher Street (actually Ono's apartment). This request suggests that the conceptual gallery actually had a bank account as well.5

Ono also designed stationery for the gallery, which spread the Isreal logo from the very top to the very bottom of the page. To use the stationery in any conventional manner would result in the obliteration of any part of the writer's text that ran across the black lettering of the logo. The stationery in this respect may be compared to Ono's A Pop B Painting of 1961, in which text or a picture on one layer of canvas can only be partially seen through a hole on a second layer that covers it (pl. 2d).

**NOTES**

1. An Isreal ad had been placed in the magazine, Isreal Gallery was mentioned in that month's listings section and was given a reproduction of Circle Event in the March issue.
4. Ono, e-mail to author, 10 August 1999.
5. In a document titled "Prospects for Presenting The Stones," issued by Anthony Cox probably in April 1966, a bank account number for Isreal Gallery is listed, along with a diagram of the account structure that was used to hold assets of $2,500. According to Cox, Isreal Gallery was legally incorporated (conversation with author, July 1999).

CONCEPT ART  INSTRUCTURE  INSOUND

YOKO  ONO
IsReal Gallery

MATERIAL TO ORDER 3 1/4"x 2" TO 40" x 24" ABOUT $250
CIRCLE EVENT ON LEATHER SILK GLASS CANVAS OR OTHER
IsReal Gallery  TELEPHONE OR 7 8871

CONCEPT ART  INSTRUCTURE  INSOUND

DRILL HOLE  

/ ONO
IsReal Gallery

HOLE EVENT ON LEATHER SILK GLASS CANVAS OR OTHER
MATERIAL TO ORDER 3 1/4"x 2" TO 40" x 24" ABOUT $250.00
IsReal Gallery  Tel: WA 5 4793
Ono’s Sales List catalogues a broad variety of works by the artist in the form of a price list printed on a legal-size sheet of paper. Many items on the list, such as Sky Machine and Soft Portrait, were apparently sold to paying customers. Some of the offered items clearly did not exist. Grapefruit II, for example, is offered at a pre-publication price of five dollars, but was never produced. Of the "events" offered, Circle Event and High Event were realized as advertisements for Artel Gallery (No. 39). The first event, however, "to let pink snow fall and cover your town—guaranteed not to be artificial," offered as both a score and a performance, was unlikely to be performed, even at the $2,000 asking price.

Ono has described her Sales List as a "Walking out of the ivory tower and getting down to business kind of feeling. It’s a list of what’s sold in a conceptual market. If you will!" 4

Apparently distributed in the autumn of 1965, the list was featured by writer John Wilcock in his column for the Village Voice. Inquiries were directed to Ono at a New York address that was, in fact, the office of Norman Saltman, her friend who presented her 1961 and 1965 Carnegie Recital Hall concerts. Wilcock’s column (which presumably generated requests for the list, if not sales) concluded, "you won’t be able to afford many of the items but the sales list is free.

A related work from the previous year, Notice, offered "mornings" for sale. This handwritten sheet complete with order form itemized mornings that had been previously sold at events in Tokyo on May 24 and 31, 1964, along with a list of previous purchasers and mornings still available.

Notes
1. One, e-mail to author, 21 January 2000.


C O I C E  S A L E S  187

These books (copyright 1935 by Yaku Den

a. SCULPTURE.........$5-
   Types: a. wood
   b. bronze

b. PROCESSES of the book printing orBRO...$25 per inch
   Types: a. ink on India
   b. ink of type
   c. color of ABS

c. LINING PAPER...purchased according to material...$100 to $500-
   types: a. paper set
   b. half set
   c. full set
   d. cloud set
   e. water set
   f. wind set

P. Machines:
   Types: a. O O H I C H A K I—each acquires houses and trees for you
   b. O O H I C H A K I produces a world when wind is
   c. O O H I C H A K I—each acquires houses and trees for you
   d. O O H I C H A K I produces a world when wind is
   e. O O H I C H A K I—each acquires houses and trees for you
   f. OOHHIHAKI—each acquires houses and trees for you

L. Architectural Works, (purchased according to contractors' arrangements and cost of property)
   Types: a. LIGHT HOUSE...a house constructed of light from places where stars fall on it
   b. LAND HOUSE...a house of land on the water
   c. LAND HOUSE...a house of land on the water
   d. LAND HOUSE...a house of land on the water
   e. LAND HOUSE...a house of land on the water

F. Paintings:
   Types: a. FALL PAINTING...ITALIAN PAINTING...ENGLISH PAINTING...SHAPED PAINTING...PAINTINGS...WHOEVER PAINTING
   b. FALL PAINTING...ITALIAN PAINTING...ENGLISH PAINTING...SHAPED PAINTING...PAINTINGS...WHOEVER PAINTING

U. SHOES (purchased according to contractors' counts, stones, paillettes, etc.)
   Types: a. a shell for the moonlight to sleep in
   b. a shell for the moonlight to sleep in
   c. a shell for the moonlight to sleep in
   d. a shell for the moonlight to sleep in
   e. a shell for the moonlight to sleep in

H. Letters:
   Types: a. letter to Ivan karp...original...$200
   b. reply from Ivan karp...original...$200

I. GIFTED
   Types: a. to let people know all and cover your lower-guaranteed not to be artificial...price...$5-
   b. to let people know all and cover your lower-guaranteed not to be artificial...price...$5-
   c. to let people know all and cover your lower-guaranteed not to be artificial...price...$5-
   d. to let people know all and cover your lower-guaranteed not to be artificial...price...$5-

J. Record of Events—a complete record of all Events by Yaku Den since 1951 with photographs and illustrations...

K. Dance Scores—Twenty Five scores...

L. Music Scores:
   Types: a. actual sound prepares...original...$10
   b. additional music prepares...original...$10
   c. physical music prepares...original...$10
   d. physical music prepares...original...$10

M. Underwear (fabric made to order)
   Types: a. special defects underwear for eyes-designed so that your special defects in getting
   b. special defects underwear for eyes-designed so that your special defects in getting
   c. special defects underwear for eyes-designed so that your special defects in getting
   d. special defects underwear for eyes-designed so that your special defects in getting

N. Books:
   Types: a. OMEN PUBLISHED—published in Tokyo, July 18, 1964, a limited edition of 500 copies, in English, 250 pages, over 250 compositions in music, painting, play, poetry, and
   b. OMEN PUBLISHED—published in Tokyo, July 18, 1964, a limited edition of 500 copies, in English, 250 pages, over 250 compositions in music, painting, play, poetry, and

C. ALL ITEM 50% OFF—includes sale of the books...original...$85

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Fountain Piece
published in Art and Artists 1, no. 7 (October 1966): 44
image: approx. 2½ x 2½" (6.3 x 6.3 cm)

Mouthpiece
published in Art and Artists 1, no. 8 (November 1966): 39
image: approx. 4¼ x 3¼" (12 x 8.2 cm)

Do It Yourself Dance Piece (Swim in Your Sleep)
published in Art and Artists 1, no. 9 (December 1966): 73
image: approx. 4¼ x 3¼" (12 x 8.2 cm)

Omobono continued her advertising works after she moved to London in September 1966. Mario Amaya, the editor of the British art magazine Art and Artists, who had invited her to participate in the Destruction in Art Symposium (DAS) in London (no. 33), provided her with free advertising space in the October, November, and December issues.

The three works—Fountain Piece, Mouthpiece, and Do It Yourself Dance Piece (Swim in Your Sleep)—have their distinct histories in Ono's oeuvre. Fountain Piece can be traced to the instruction Central Park Pond Piece, dated 1956 autumn, first published in Grapefruit (1966). Mouthpiece, which instructs “Hide Mouth,” was concurrently realized on the catalogue cover of Yoko at Indica, for Ono's exhibition that November in London (fig. 14-14).

Most significantly, all three relate in differing degrees to “Do It Yourself Dance Festival,” a work originally advertised in the Village Voice in December 1966. Presented by Fluxus, the “Yoko Ono and Dance Company” event was to take place, according to the ads, during January 1-31, 1966 (fig. 9.5).1 Although it is unclear whether the festival actually occurred on these dates, her dance instructions, with illustrations designed by George Maciunas, were published in several formats shortly thereafter.

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Rolf Neilson to Oct 15
Horst Gregory from Oct 20
KUNSTVEREI N FUR DIE RHEINLANDE UND WESTFALEN
Kunsthalle Heine-Allee 11a
Mark Tobey to Oct 3

FOUNTAIN PIECE

Go to Eros
fountain and
throw in all your jewelleries

YOKO ONO LONDON, SEPT, 1966

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PLATE 1 (PAGES 1-3)
ADVERTISEMENTS IN ART AND ARTISTS:
FOUNTAIN PIECE, OCTOBER 1966

PLATE 1 (PAGE 5)
ADVERTISEMENTS IN ART AND ARTISTS:
MOUTHPIECE, NOVEMBER 1966
Among them is a full page of thirteen daily "dance" instructions in a newspaper entitled for the price of £1 (Fluxus Newsletter No. 7, February 1966, under the title "Do It Yourself Fluxfest" (Fig. 2.16). In this version, three instructions vaguely anticipate the Art and Artists ads:

5th Day. Watch. Go to the nearest fountain and watch the water dance.

10th Day. Swim. Swim in your dream as far as you can.

(no day given) Hide Mouth. Hide your mouth at all times. In the government should outlaw such indecent exposure.

Although Ono adopted Madura's graphics for the Mouthpiece ad, she substituted a photograph (by Anthony C. J. of herself asleep on a pillow in the Swim in Your Sleep ad.2

Ono offered a subscription version of the dance festival in London as well, in 1967. The instruction cards prepared for the London festival were illustrated with her own drawings and subsequently reprinted in Grapefruit (1970 and later). The work was transformed back into a newspaper ad in May 1958, when Ono's solo exhibition Impressionist was held in Bergen, Norway.3

NOTES
2. In January 1965, the V7 no. version of "Swim in Your Dreams as Far as You Can" was published, without Ono's knowledge, in Transradio (a magazine published in London by the group "Island Religious Youth"), edited by Alan Hodgson, who was the organizer of Fluxus West at the time.

38 War is Over! 1969
Yoko Ono and John Lennon

Multimedia advertising campaign, including billboards, posters, handbills, newspaper advertisements, radio spots, and postcards.

Chronology
December 15 Billboards and posters
Put up in twelve cities: Athens, Berlin, Hong Kong, London, Los Angeles, Montreal, New York, Paris, Port-of-Spain (Trinidad), Rome, Tokyo, and Toronto. Text reads, in each city's language: "WAR IS OVER. IF YOU WANT IT, BE HAPPY CHRISTMAS FROM JOHN & YOKO"

December 17 Peace for Christmas
Lyceum Ballroom, London. Benefit concert for UNICEF. War is Over! posters and handbills displayed on stage.

December 17 Skywriting event
Toronto, upon Lennon and Ono's arrival. Message in smoke; handbills also distributed on the ground.

December 17 Press conference
Ono and Lennon announce their campaign in Toronto.

December 21 Newspaper ad
Full-page advertisement placed in New York Times, sec. 4, p. 16.

1969-70 Worldwide Peace Campaign
Ronnie Hawkins and Ritchie Yorke travel worldwide with War is Over! posters.

1970 The Peace Station Network ad
Placed in Billboard (January 24).

1970 Postcard
Text identical to billboard.

1971 "Happy Xmas (War Is Over!"
Single record by John & Yoko/The Plastic Ono Band with the Harlem Community Choir (released December 1).

The best known of Ono's advertising works, War is Over! was created in collaboration with John Lennon as part of the couple's Peace Campaign of 1969-70, launched immediately after their March 20, 1969, wedding during a very public honeymoon in Amsterdam, the first of two Bed-ins for Peace (no. 34). It was at the Beatles that the seeds of the War is Over! campaign were sown. Interviewed during the second Bed-in in Montreal (May 26-June 1) by Penthouse magazine, Ono explained:

"Many other people who are rich are using their money for something they want. They promote soap, they advertise propaganda, what have you. We intend to do the same. . . . We're using our money to advertise our idea, that peace has equal power with the means who spend their money to promote war."

Ono, of course, had at this point been using advertising as her art for several years. And Lennon, leader of the world's most popular recording group, certainly knew about publicity; but as he later stated, "The poster idea was Yoko's."!

On December 15, 1969, Ono and Lennon performed with other musicians at the Plastic Ono Band (also called the Plastic Ono Supergroup) at the Peace for Christmas concert at the Lyceum Ballroom in London. War is Over! banners and posters were prominently displayed on and around the stage. This UNICEF charity concert effectively launched the War is Over! campaign in public. That same day, billboards and posters appeared around the world, from London to Hong Kong, Tokyo to New York, in each city's language. When questioned about the cost of this campaign, Lennon told the press that he would send the $72,000 printing bill to President Richard Nixon.

To further propagate their peace message, Ono and Lennon placed full-page ads in print media. The New York Times ad on December 21, 1969 replicated the billboards, but an ad in the music-industry magazine Billboard on January 24, 1970, went
WAR IS OVER!
IF YOU WANT IT
Happy Christmas from John & Yoko

PLATE 206A
ONO AND LENNON,
WAR IS OVER! 1969,
BILLBOARD INSTALLED
IN TIMES SQUARE,
NEW YORK
a step further, promoting their "Peace Station Network." In it, the two extended an invitation to radio and television stations to join their network, offering as special incentives "tree John and Yoko station breaks and ID's, plus the regular John and Yoko Peace Report."

The campaign continued in earnest throughout 1970 with the help of friends Ronnie Hawkins and Ritchie Yorke, who traveled the globe, carrying War Is Over placards and otherwise spreading the peace message. Lennon and Ono also continued their press promotion, telling a Liverpool paper in February, for example, about their "new, improved" product: "We are selling it now blue peace like they do with washing powders." In December 1971, the couple released a single with the song "Happy Xmas (War is Over)," which incorporated the "War Is Over/If You Want It" slogan as its chorus.

Ono resurrected the campaign in 1989, periodically installing War Is Over billboards and banners in conjunction with her exhibitions. During the 1998 Christmas season, she re-created the original 1969 billboard in Times Square, New York. At this time, Rydocks publishers of the OnoRock CD set and her resumed album series offered Internet users a live Webview of the billboard and an opportunity to submit their photos in front of the billboard for posting on Rydocks Web site.

**NOTES**
3. Jay Golden described the use of "huge placard War Is Over, on to which coloured added were repeatedly and quickly added," in "Combat's Brass," Evening Standard (London), 15 December 1968. Golden's photograph shows the hard men using stones to smash chalk handiwork.
4. At the press conference in Toronto on December 17, 1969, Lennon noted that a billboard in Faro, Spain, broadcast, and was being arranged by a friend, instructing that it may not have been placed.
6. During this period, Capital Records Canada paid for the ads in Canadian newspapers.

**RECENT VERSIONS**
Banners installed on museum exteriors, unless otherwise noted
1989 postcard
Facsimile postcard included in The Bronze Age, exh. cat. (Greenock 1989).
1991 banners/postcard
For Pitkin Monologue, Foro Tailandese. Banners in English and Finish; also Finish banner installed at Helsinki's railroad station. Postcard lasorated as part of invitation to Ono's performance (February 22).
1991 banner
For Peace Monologue, Kijkvijver Municipal Art Museum, English banner from Birth Monologue installed.
1993 wall painting
For Color, Fig, Sky, Stiffing Statue, Berlin, in German. Painted at the exhibition's entrance.
1996 newspaper ad
For Vital Use it, org. Museum in Progress, Vienna. Full-page ad placed in Der Standard (September 13).
1998 billboard/Webcast/postcard
1999 banner
Installed at Cinematheque, in conjunction with garden installation of Ono's Ex It, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (May), on view as of January 2000.
1999 poster event
Kunstbibliothek og Byens Billedtegningeshus poster on easel at Nikolaj seals, Copenhagen (June 4-18).
1999 billboard/postcard
For War Zones, Presentation House Gallery, North Vancouver (July-August).
2000 billboard
Post Live in Your Hotel: Concept and Experiment in Britain, 1965-75, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London. Installed inside (February 4-April 2).

**LITERATURE:**
Midin News (15 December 1966); Philadelphia Daily News (15 December 1963); West Lancashire Evening Gazette (15 December 1963); New York Times (16 December 1963), Highlands, Chicago Daily News (17 December 1963); Cincinnati Enquirer (18 December 1963); Releeg, Los Angeles Times (21 December 1963); American, New York Times (23 December 1969); Framingham News (7 January 1703); Champion-Urbana Courier (18 January 1703); King, Los Angeles Times (18 January 1703); Rolling Stone (21 January 1703); Breuer, Washington Daily Post (5 February 1703); Wenner, Rolling Stone (7 February 1703); Cole, Evening News (18 February 1703); Sandwein, Dutton (30 February 1703); Sun (22 May 1703); Huyer, Erin Advocate (17 December 1963); Hansen, John Lennon: Drawings, Performances, Film, exh. cat. (1995), 172-75; Concannon, Fig, Sky, cat. (1998), 11-12; Vetrovy, Art in America (July 1999); Concannon, Athene (1993).
Plate 393
ONO AND LENNON,
WAR IS OVER 1969.
POSTERS INSTALLED IN
BERLIN.
In its weekly issue of December 2, 1971, the Village Voice in New York contained a strange ad in the form of a photograph accompanied by a mail-in бук order form. The sign on the edge in the photo prominently reads: "Museum Of Modern Art." The informed reader would notice the irregularity—shouldn't that be "Museum Of Modern Art?" and isn't that indeed the named institution on 53rd Street? Also in the photo is a woman walking under the sign in front of the museum entrance. She is carrying a white paper bag conspicuously marked with the letter "F." If the "F" is placed in the gap above (in the viewer's mind), the sign now reads Museum Of Modern Art.

The advertisement was placed by one, who was, according to the ad, having a "one woman show" from December 1 through 15...where? The altered photograph, with added sign, recognizably showed the museum entrance. But given the perodic nature of this ad, the question naturally arises.

One answer would be that the exhibition was a purely conceptual incident, although the exhibition catalogue did exist. Or, according to the New Yorker, "the show" consisted of a sandwich man who walked and sat on the sidewalk in front of the Museum. The sign explained that files had been put in a glass container having the same volume as Yoko's body, and then placed in the middle of MoMA's sculpture garden (fig. 9.9). The files were released, and a photographer was dispatched to follow them around the city, documenting their travels. The files could be identified, the sign explained, by a sticker that the artist's favorite perfume also put in the container with the files. Handbills with the identical text were distributed to bystanders, who were invited to join in the search.

The catalogue, which interested parties could purchase using the ad's order form, "documented" the flight of the files throughout the city with photographs of the locations where they had been seen, complete with arrows indicating the exact spots. Toward the end of the catalogue is a photograph of the MoMA box office showing on its window the Village Voice ad, with the words "THIS IS NOT HERE" written across it (fig. 9.9). This sign placed on the window may have confused one's fans, since only a few months earlier her major retrospective called This Is Not Here had taken place in Syracuse. Not only did one offer a catalogue for the "one woman show," she also documented it in her seven-minute film The Museum of Modern Art Show (1971), through interviews with viewers as they left the museum.

In 1996, the Museum of Modern [Flat] files reemerged, after twenty-five years, at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, and their subsequent travels have been documented on the World Wide Web, expanding further one's use of advertising media to document this conceptual event. As "virtual" exhibition from the outset, its current digital incarnation seems entirely appropriate.

**Notes**

3. "One Flat One Woman Show," 16 September 1971-2 January 1972, while the clinical exhibition files would actually remain, as of April 2003 the work still existed on the internet through the website http://www.urbanmixworks.com

**Literature:**


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**Figure 5.6**

"THE MESSAGE THE SANDWICH MAN CARRIED..." FROM MUSEUM OF MODERN FLAT, ARTIST'S BOOK/EXHIBITION CATALOGUE, 1971

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**Table:**

| FLX | Files were put in a glass container having the same volume as Yoko's body. |
| LXX | All files were put in a glass container having the same volume as Yoko's body. |
| KTY | All files were put in a glass container having the same volume as Yoko's body. |
| AHH | All files were put in a glass container having the same volume as Yoko's body. |
| SM | A glass container was placed in the center of the museum. |
| SR | A glass container was placed in the center of the museum. |
| SGE | A glass container was placed in the center of the museum. |
| STR | A glass container was placed in the center of the museum. |

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**Advertisements**
Museum Of Modern art

Yoko Ono—One Woman Show

Dec. 1st—Dec. 15th

FOR INFORMATION CALL 676-8138

YOKO ONO
ONE WOMAN SHOW
Dec. 1st-Dec. 15th, 1971

Please send me____ copies of Yoko Ono's Museum Of Modern Art Show catalogue at $1.00 a copy. This catalogue is a 100 page booklet filled with photographs of the event itself. Enclosed is my payment in the correct amount.

NAME______________________________
SEX________________________________
AGE_______________________________
ADDRESS____________________________
CITY___________________________
STATE______________________ZIP CODE______

PLATE 49
ADVERTISEMENT FOR
MUSEUM OF MODERN
ART IN VILLAGE
VOICE, DECEMBER 2,
1971
Billboards at five locations in Richmond, Virginia
dimensions variable

Realized in various forms—score, performance, film, music—Fly is one of Ono’s favorite concepts and themes (nos. 28, 46, 55). In October 1996, Anderson Gallery at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond presented Fly, a solo exhibition that borrowed its title from her 1963 instruction piece (fig. 8.3). As part of the exhibition, Ono created a series of public works sited around Anderson Gallery and throughout the city. They included five billboards at various locations, a banner at the gallery’s entrance, and posters and T-shirts for sale in the gallery shop. The catalogue, which was produced in two versions, also featured the text on its cover. In each case, the word Fly appears alone in capital letters, without grammatical context.

The billboards quite naturally attracted journalistic and popular attention. On the opening day of the exhibition, Richmond’s daily newspaper, the Richmond Times-Dispatch, thoughtfully advised readers: “It’s not subliminal play from the airwaves. It’s art.” Indeed, people seemed puzzled. The Times-Dispatch critic began her brief interview with Ono by asking the artist to explain:

Q: What should people make of the Fly billboards?
A: This particular billboard, it’s a message. It’s an artwork. It’s taking the form of a billboard.
Q: And there are T-shirts and posters with the word on it, too, all for sale.
A: If you’re the gallery, you want to make the T-shirts and posters.
Q: What separates the billboards and T-shirts from advertising?
A: It’s the fact that it’s not selling anything.
Q: Some might argue it’s selling your art.
A: Well, but it’s not. The T-shirts you have to buy anyway. You might buy a blank T-shirt. It’s not saying “Buy Coca-Cola.” It’s just a communication of the idea of flying, the spiritual flight or whatever.

And certainly, the billboards sold nothing in any traditional sense. The only other information on the billboards was a line in small type, in the bottom right corner: “y.o. 1963–1996”; no indication of Ono’s name or the details of her exhibition at the Anderson Gallery were included.

The 1996 billboard version of Fly finds a particular resonance with its earliest public manifestation: Untitled (Birth Announcement) (1963, fig. 14.7). The leaflet, which includes Instructions for Room No. 36, reading simply “Fly” is an advertising work of sorts. It announces the birth of Ono’s daughter Kyoko, with a baby picture, and carries an ad for Ono’s yet-to-be-published book, Grapefruit.

KC

NOTES
1. The catalogue was a box that contained a booklet along with various objects, including stones, events, objects, and a brochure. It was also produced as an unnumbered signed edition of 100. An overrun of the booklets was also available separately.
3. Ibid.
4. The gallery placed a newspaper ad for the exhibition, mentioning the artist’s style by “visually” installing a Fly billboard on the VCU photography department building which had been destroyed recently. See “Yoko Ono: Fly,” Artforum 35, no. 2 (October 1996), 94.

PLATE 41
FLY, 1966 BILLBOARD
INSTALLED IN
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA