

Yoko Ono Exhibit Opens at University

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Curator John Noga leads several visitors in stamping the words “Imagine Peace” on a map of the world, one of the exhibit’s interactive pieces. A traveling display of artwork by Yoko Ono opened at Stony Brook’s University Art Gallery on Tuesday, preceded by a presentation that gave the history of Ono’s work for peace, including her worldwide “War is Over If You Want It” campaign with husband and former Beatle John Lennon. Curator Kevin Concannon, a professor of art history and the director of the school of visual arts

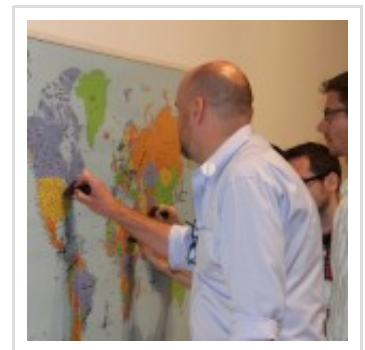
at Virginia Tech, gave an hour-long lecture to introduce the exhibit. Images and footage of Ono and Lennon and their efforts to spread the message of peace were shown as Concannon narrated a timeline of the couple’s campaign before Lennon’s death in 1980.



“I’m interested in Yoko as an artist,” said Concannon. “This was a convergence of pop culture, art and pop music that exploited the media in what was really an unprecedented way.”

Both the lecture and the exhibit included pictures and recordings of Ono and Lennon during their “War is Over” campaign, which Ono continued years after Lennon’s death under the catchphrase “Imagine Peace.” The message, conveyed by simple words

placed on billboards or in other prominent places, was meant to encourage others to take up the cause and create their own “installations” of it.



Concannon's lecture provided background for Ono's modern "Imagine Peace" campaign, giving the history and noting the determination with which Ono and Lennon went about their political activities despite being targeted for deportation by the Nixon administration, according to Concannon. In one segment of the lecture, a video of graphic scenes of human suffering in war zones from the past four decades was shown as Lennon and Ono's popular Christmas ballad "Happy Christmas (War is Over)." Many of the images were of injured children or small bodies being buried.

The exhibit will remain open at the university until October 15, when Lennon's son, Sean, and Charlotte Kemp Muhl will perform there as the group The Ghost of a Saber Tooth Tiger. Tickets are available for \$34 at the Staller Center for the Arts.

Admission to the gallery is free, with viewing hours between 12 p.m. and 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday evenings.

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