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IMAGINE PEACE: Featuring John & Yoko's Year of Peace

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Since the start of her career in 1950 and throughout her partnership with John Lennon in

the 60s, Yoko Ono used her artwork to spread a message of peace, which she continues to do till this day. Her message is now being spread to universities across the country, and the Staller Center's art gallery at Stony Brook is the first venue in New York to hold the exhibition.

Rhonda Cooper, the gallery director, says she has been trying to get this exhibit here for a while, and finally some connections made it possible.

"The message of this exhibition is about peace, which I think is very timely right now and important for young people," Cooper said.

The show is open to students and the public alike, and will be at the Staller Center until October 15. Along with 198 people, reporters from both Newsday and the New York Times came to see the gallery on September 6, the gallery's opening night.

The exhibition focuses on the themes of peace and love that can bring viewers back to the 1960s, when the marriage of John Lennon and Yoko Ono grabbed a lot of media attention. Always trying to spread the peace, Lennon and Ono used their fame to protest the Vietnam War, even inviting the press in their bedroom to see them at peace. This iconic time is showcased at Staller Center by photos, videos, posters and music from both artists, as a couple and individually.

Ono's career as an artist, musician, poet, filmmaker, and peace activist has spanned for six decades. Ono's works show her process of involving individuals in her art and towards her goal of world peace. In a video on display in the gallery, Ono shows viewers the ONOCHORD, in which a series of flashes from a flashlight can represent the phrase "I love you."

People who go to the gallery can even take home souvenirs – a mini flashlight that says "ONOCHORD Stony Brook Y.O. 2011," or a button imprinted with the words "IMAGINE PEACE."

The exhibition also includes Ono's Imagine Peace Maps where visitors can pinpoint where they think peace is needed in the world.

Finally, there is the Wish Tree, which lets gallery visitors write their ideas for peace on small tags and hang them on the tree. The tags will be collected and sent to the IMAGINE PEACE TOWER in Iceland where Ono often spends her time.

One hundred people came to the lecture held on the gallery's opening night. The lecture, entitled "Yoko Ono: Imagining Peace 1966-2011," was given by Dr. Kevin Concannon, Professor of Art History and Director of the School of Visual Arts at Virginia Tech, and co-curator of the exhibition.

On the closing night of the gallery, the Staller Center will also be hosting a concert by Ono's son, Sean Lennon, along with Charlotte Kemp Muhl. The concert, "The Ghost of a Saber Tooth Tiger," will be shown in the Staller Center Recital Hall on October 15 at 8:00 pm.