

# My Mommy Is Beautiful

Mommy, I'm sorry.

Without you

I would not be here.

We would not be here.

Yet,

Your life, your tears, your laughter  
have now become a memory.

This is a tribute to you

all mothers

from each of your children.

We love you.

Y.O. 2013

# YOKO ONO

## *My Mommy Is Beautiful*

Armory Gallery at Virginia Tech

September 10 - October 1, 2013

Opening Reception: Thursday, September 19, 2013, 5-7PM



Yoko Ono's *My Mommy Is Beautiful* has been realized as gallery installations and as social media on Facebook, Instagram, Flickr, and Twitter. Here at Virginia Tech's Armory Gallery, the artist's tribute to her own mother is accompanied by a series of blank white panels to which visitors may attach their own "mommy messages." Ono invites you to "write about your mother. Paste her image on the canvas. And write about your feelings when you think of her."

Ono's own maternal relationships have been complicated by elopements, marriages, deaths and disappearances. While the emotional significance of *My Mommy Is Beautiful* surely resonates deeply with the artist herself, like most of Ono's work, it achieves full impact only as it engages her audience. Ono's art finds its greatest power as her audience completes it, sometimes mentally and sometimes physically.

A pioneer in both conceptual art and performance art, Ono's early text pieces require viewers to construct the work in their minds. *Painting to be Constructed in Your Head* (1962), for example, instructs us to: "Go on transforming a square canvas in your head until it becomes a circle. Pick out any shape in the process and pin up or place on the canvas an object, a smell, a sound, or a color that came to your mind in association with the shape."



Ranging from the purely intellectual to the viscerally emotional, Ono's participation pieces take the form of instructions, installations, performances and more. For *Cut Piece* (1964), first performed in Kyoto in July 1964, the performer sits on the stage wearing his or her best suit of clothing. A pair of scissors is placed beside them with which audience members may cut pieces of the performer's clothing that they may keep. Most typically seen as a feminist work, it has also been understood as a pacifist plea for peace, a Buddhist ritual, a lesson about gifts, and even a reverse strip-tease. Watching Ono perform the piece in the video presentation, one becomes acutely aware that the audience is performing as well. The performer, from this perspective, becomes a screen onto which audience members project their politics, romance, insecurities, aggressions, and tenderness.

Not unlike the canvases in *My Mommy is Beautiful*.

- Yoko Ono - *Cut Piece* 1964  
Performed by the artist on March 21, 1965  
Carnegie Recital Hall, New York, NY  
Photo by Minoru Niizuma, Courtesy of Yoko Ono

- Yoko Ono - *Cut Piece* 1964  
Performed by the artist on September 15, 2003  
Theatre Le Ranelagh, Paris, France  
Photo by Ken McKay © Yoko Ono

*My Mommy is Beautiful* is presented at the Armory Gallery at Virginia Tech in conjunction with *Yoko Ono Imagine Peace Featuring John and Yoko's Year of Peace* at the Taubman Museum of Art in Roanoke, Virginia (September 14, 2013-January 11, 2014). *Cut Piece* will be performed by Eva Thornton at the Taubman Museum on Thursday, December 19, 2013 at 7 pm.



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