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Three Edison State students delivering Yoko Ono 'Wish Tree' wishes to Iceland



Tom Hall, 2014



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Wish Tree has been a cornerstone in Yoko Ono's exhibitions since her introduction of the concept sometime in the early '90s. So not surprisingly, co-curators Kevin Concannon and John Noga placed two ficus trees inside the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery as receptacles for wishes scribbled by *Yoko Ono Imagine Peace* visitors on shipping tags they've provided for that purpose. Since the opening of the exhibition on January 24, thousands of guests have attached their written wishes to the branches of the two trees, and now those wishes are being transported to the Imagine Peace Tower in Reykjavik, Iceland by three Edison State College art students.

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The Imagine Peace Tower is a light tower located on Videy Island in Kollafjörður Bay near Reykjavík that soars two and one-half miles into the sky on a clear Icelandic night. Erected by Yoko Ono in 2006-7, it is conjured by 15 searchlights with prisms that act as mirrors, reflecting a column of light vertically into the sky from a 30-foot wide wishing well base that contains time capsules that hold more than a million wishes harvested from Ono's *Wish Trees* since she first introduced the installation in the early 1990s.

In the early days, Yoko plucked the wishes from her *Wish Trees* herself and took them personally to Reykjavik.

"I never read any of them," she told Hans Ulrich Obrist in a 2002 interview. "I feel it's not right to read people's private wishes."

But at 81, she now encourages curators and exhibitors to send their wishes directly to the Tower and has provided both an email address and post office box in Reykjavik for that very purpose. But new Bob Rauschenberg Gallery Director Jade Dellinger thought it would be more meaningful for everyone concerned to have three Edison State students fly a representative sample of wishes to the Imagine Peace Tower on Videy Island.

Josue' Charles, Christopher Lacoste and Leila Mesdaghi were selected by Edison State College Art Instructor Dana Roes for this honor on the basis of merit. "All three are exceptional art students," notes Dellinger, "who adds that Dr. Roes will accompany the students on their trip. She spent a year in Iceland on a Fulbright scholarship that culminated in an exhibition of her series, *The Red Body*, at the Gallery Listamidstodim.

Following their return, Charles, Lacoste and Mesdaghi will collaborate on a group show in the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery that opens April 10. *Ferdalag* (a journey or voyage) will include individual and collaborative artworks inspired by *Yoko Ono Imagine Peace* and the experiences they gain while visiting Iceland. "The important part for the Rauschenberg Gallery is to help these deserving students excel and give them a meaningful opportunity to learn about professional practices," adds Dellinger.

If you want your personal wish for peace to be included with those taken by the Edison State College delegation to Reykjavik, you have until March 29 to visit *Yoko Ono Imagine Peace* at the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery on the Lee campus of Edison State College. During the exhibit, gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday (closed Sundays and holidays). For more information, please telephone 239-489-9313.

"All my works are a form of wishing," notes the artist. "Keep wishing while you participate."

Suggested by the author

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