Catalog 17: Yoko Ono & Fluxus

Boo-Hooray is proud to present our seventeenth catalog, dedicated to Yoko Ono and Fluxus.

Yoko Ono’s contributions to post-war avant-garde art movements such as Fluxus are invaluable, prescient, and often overlooked due to her later celebrity garnered from her marriage with John Lennon.

Born in Tokyo, Ono’s family moved to New York after World War II, but she stayed in Tokyo to attend Gakushuin University. The first woman to attend their philosophy program, Ono dropped out after two semesters and moved to the US, enrolling at Sarah Lawrence College. In 1956, she left college without graduating once again to move to New York after eloping with composer Toshi Ichiyanagi. During this period of her life, Ono was interested in twelve tone composers and modernist poetry. She became an important figure in the international avant-garde, working in the traditions of neo-Dadaism and aleatory music and collaborating with John Cage, La Monte Young, Ornette Coleman, and other giants of avant-garde music. George Maciunas, a founding member of Fluxus, enthusiastically supported Ono’s work and assisted with her first solo exhibition at his AG Gallery in 1961.

While Ono declined Maciunas’ invitation to formally join Fluxus, she frequently collaborated with him and other Fluxus artists including Jackson Mac Low, Charlotte Moorman, George Brecht, Allan Kaprow, amongst many others. During this time Ono also became friends with Jonas Mekas, a central figure of independent and underground film in New York. Ono hosted concerts and curated art events alongside La Monte Young at her loft at 112 Chambers Street from late 1960 through mid-1961. It was at her Chambers Street series that Ono presented her early performative artworks, including Painting to Be Stepped On, a scrap of canvas placed on the floor that became a completed work of art with the action of the viewer walking on it. Ono’s work throughout the 1960’s centered on similar pieces oriented around instruction, presenting a concept within which the viewer can either physically or mentally complete the work. Ono met John Lennon in 1966 at her exhibition “Unfinished Paintings,” held at the Indica Gallery in London.

The two began rigorous correspondence; Ono frequently sent Lennon conceptual artworks through the mail. The couple did not collaborate artistically until 1968, with the release of their album “Unfinished Music no. 1: Two Virgins.” Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s the couple embarked on a period of prolific collaboration, encompassing many musical recordings and live performances, as well as their widely publicized performance art activism including the peace campaign and bed-ins.

This catalog collects early works and documentation of works displayed and performed by Ono in New York and Tokyo in the 1960s, as well as collaborations between her and Lennon throughout the 1970s, including her Fluxus multiple “Box of Smile,” flyers and publications produced for exhibitions and performances, and LP releases of musical works. Many of the examples compiled here were gifted to Jonas Mekas and inscribed to him by the couple.

For over a decade, Boo-Hooray has been committed to the organization, stabilization, and preservation of cultural narratives through archival placement. Today, we continue and expand our mission through the sale of individual items and smaller collections. We encourage visitors to browse our extensive inventory of rare books, ephemera, archives and collections and invite you to our gallery and bookshop in Manhattan’s Chinatown, open on Saturdays 12-6pm and by appointment.

Catalog prepared by Beth Rudig, Director of Archives, with Evan Neuhausen, Archivist & Rare Book Cataloger. Photography and layout by Evan with additional photography by Hanna Sheehan. Please direct all inquiries to Daylon (info@boo-hooray.com). Terms: Usual. Not onerous. All items subject to prior sale. Payment may be made via check, credit card, wire transfer or PayPal. Institutions may be billed accordingly. Shipping is additional and will be billed at cost. Returns will be accepted for any reason within a week of receipt. Please provide advance notice of the return.
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1. Photograph of Yoko Ono with Poster for Works of Yoko Ono at Carnegie Recital Hall


Conceived as a poster for Ono’s first major public performance at Carnegie Recital Hall on November 24, 1961, this silver gelatin print features Yoko Ono peering through a large sheet of newspapers pasted together with event details overpainted on the negative.

The event presented three works featuring voice, instruments, and movements by Fluxus members and avant-garde luminaries including Yvonne Rainer, La Monte Young, Jonas Mekas, Jackson Mac Low, Ay-O, George Brecht, and others.

A scarce photograph and working document for the published poster.

ON HOLD
2. Works of Yoko Ono at Carnegie Recital Hall

New York: Carnegie Hall, 1961. Offset printed double-sided handbill and program. 5 ½ x 8 ½ in. Very good, toning to edges, creased across center.

Presented Friday November 24, 1961 by Norman J. Seaman, this handbill documents a significant early New York performance by Yoko Ono featuring voice, instruments, and movements by Fluxus members and avant-garde luminaries Yvonne Rainer, La Monte Young, Jonas Mekas, Jackson Mac Low, Ay-O, George Brecht, and others.

Ono's first major public performance, the evening consisted of three pieces titled respectively, “A Grapefruit in the world of Park,” “A Piece for Strawberries and Violin,” and “AOS – to David Tudor.”

$800
3. Draw Circle Event


“Draw Circle Event” was a postcard-based performance by Ono, dated 1964 and most likely executed in early 1965. The work prompted responses to the instruction to “draw circle” in a rectangle on a card, alongside some circle-related questions. Ono distributed the cards to Fluxus members and other affiliates of the avant-garde, including Earle Brown, Tony Cox, Carolee Schneeman, George Maciunas, Dick Higgins, and Ay-O.

An example of Fluxus performance embodied as mail art, “Draw Circle Event” utilized the format of a form letter and the strategy of audience participation to spark interpersonal communication and a frolicking, cascading collaboration.

$1050
4. Judson Gallery Presents The Stone by Anthony Cox, Sound Forms by Michael Mason, Eye Bags by Yoko Ono, Film Message by Jeff Perkins [with] Ono’s Sales List

New York: Judson Gallery, [1966]. Mimeograph sheets printed on rectos only. Side stapled. Very good, final two sheet have come disbound from staples, light toning to edges and bumps to front wrap. “File on Ono” written in the hand of Jonas Mekas at top right edge.


Catalog published on the occasion of the Anthony Cox exhibition “The Stone”, annotated by Jonas Mekas and with a 1965 sales list of Ono’s work, elaborating over 40 kinds of work available for purchase or commission.

The exhibition included performances by Fluxus members held at Judson Gallery, New York City, March 10–27, 1966. The catalog includes an introduction, exhibition proposal, and illustrations by Cox with “Sound Forms” by Michael Mason, “Eye Bags” by Yoko Ono, and “Film Message” by Jeff Perkins. Additional credits list technical assistance by Ludwig Lanko and air by John Hendricks.

$2750
5. Judson Gallery Presents The Stone by Anthony Cox, Sound Forms by Michael Mason, Eye Bags by Yoko Ono, Film Message by Jeff Perkins [Flyer]

New York: Judson Gallery, [1966]. Mimeograph mailer flyer. 8 ½ x 11 in. Very good, creased from folds, toning to edges, small bumps and closed tears to edges.

Flyer promoting the exhibition “The Stone” by Anthony Cox with performances by Fluxus members held at Judson Gallery, New York City, March 10-27, 1966.

$950

6. The Stone by Anthony Cox Eye Bags by Yoko Ono at the Paradox

New York: The Paradox, [1966]. Offset. 8 ½ x 11 in. Very good, toning and bumps to edges.

Flyer promoting the performance “The Stone” by Anthony Cox and “Eye Bags” by Yoko Ono at The Paradox, 64 E. 7 St, with sound by Cox, John Gemperle, and Angus Maclise. Film by Jeff Perkins.

Boasting air conditioning, this scarce flyer for the performance by Fluxus duo Cox and Ono instructs the audience to Tune In / Drop Out / Cool Off / Theatre of the Mind.

$950


Yoko Ono’s exhibition catalog for an exhibition that never existed, or only existed as a conceptual work in and of itself, signed and inscribed by Ono and John Lennon to Jonas Mekas.

Ono took out ads in the Village Voice and New York Times announcing a one-woman show at the MoMA, running December 1-15, 1971. She produced this exhibition catalog to further publicize the exhibition, which features collaged images of Ono in MoMA’s sculpture garden with a massive glass jar filled with flies, which she released into the city before documenting their movements. The exhibition catalog features photographs of various locations in New York where the flies traveled (including on a sleeping John Lennon), fly tracking charts and lists, instructions to readers to perform tasks and thought exercises related to the respective circulations of flies and the book’s postcards, and vignettes and thought exercises defamiliarizing the concept of ownership.

Ono staged the show without MoMA’s knowledge. She pasted a sign describing the release of flies into the city and a handwritten note to the museum’s ticket booth that read, “This is Not Here,” a phrase that reoccurs in Ono’s work. Ono gravitated towards using flies in her work frequently throughout the early 1970s, releasing a film titled “Fly” the year prior to this performance and an album titled “Fly” in the same year.

$7500
8. Sogetsu Contemporary Series 15: Works of Yoko Ono

Tokyo: Sogetsu Art Center, 1962. 4 1/2 x 18 1/2 in. Very good, slight toning to edges, creased from folding.

Flyer for Yoko Ono’s show presented May 24, 1962 at the Sogetsu Art Center. The flyer includes lines of text with uninked numbers embossed at the end of every line, creating a concrete poem.

Sogetsu Art Center was a principal hub of the Japanese avant-garde and a key link between the New York and Tokyo artistic communities. Ono and her then-husband Toshi Ichiyanagi were a major reason for this: they facilitated connections and relationships between important artists in each city, introducing George Maciunas to Group Ongaku and other Japanese artists. The resulting circulation of musical scores, texts, art objects, and recordings between the Tokyo and New York avant-gardes created a cross-pollination between distant artistic communities, linked by overlapping conceptual, thematic, and formal preoccupations. Evidencing this cross-pollination, Sogetsu hosted several key figures from the New York avant-garde in the early 1960s, including John Cage, David Tudor, Robert Rauschenberg, and Merce Cunningham.

$3500
Flyer advertising a performance by Yoko Ono held on September 12 and 19, 1965, on the roof of her apartment building in the West Village. First performed in Tokyo in 1964, this flyer documents the second performance of Morning Piece.

As participants gathered on the roof for the sunrise, Ono sold scraps of typewritten papers attached to shards of glass. Each piece named a future date and period of the morning. By selling these pieces at arbitrary and wildly varying prices, Morning Piece explored the urge to put a price tag on the ethereal, ephemeral, and unsaleable, and created a mindful space where participants were encouraged to listen to the world, celebrate the dawn, and touch each other when the sun comes up.

A scarce document of a performance Ono has revived and staged many times throughout her career.

SOLD
10. Assholes Wallpaper [Still from Yoko Ono's Film no. 4 aka Bottoms]

Ben Vautier


Published by George Maciunas in 1973, this poster was conceived by Fluxus member Ben Vautier. Vautier took a still from Yoko Ono's Film no. 4, described by Ono as “an aimless petition signed by people with their anuses.” The poster was also reprinted by Flash Art Edizioni Milan in 1975 and included as a component in Fluxpack 3.

$650

11. No Smoking

George Brecht, George Maciunas


Wallpaper made by George Brecht and George Maciunas. The sheets were papered in consecutive patterns on the walls of several Fluxus exhibitions. Brecht joined Fluxus after studying with John Cage at the New School for Social Research in the late-1950s, where he composed “Event Scores,” a key work in the Fluxus oeuvre.

$750
12. Keine Kunst, Pas d’Art, No Art

Ben Vautier


An early example of Vautier’s work with the phrases “No Art” and “Art Total”-- phrases and concepts that would organize much of his later work. Vautier was a founding member of Fluxus, best known for his text-based paintings.

$650
13. This Is Not Here Exhibition Poster


Exhibition poster for Ono's first solo retrospective held at Everson Museum of Art in 1971, including work from the previous 15 years of her career and collaborations with John Lennon.

The exhibition was famously mobbed by Beatles fans on its opening day, October 9th, which coincided with John Lennon's 31st birthday. A false tabloid rumor that the Beatles were reuniting at the opening led an extremely crowded and frenzied opening—Beatles fanatics broke down the museum's doors and the works were impossible to view. Many firsthand accounts of the opening depict a colorful and chaotic evening, including a moment in which Allen Ginsberg had to calm crowds so that the artworks would not be destroyed, and the dramatic exit of George Maciunas—complete with a leap out of a moving vehicle—due to a heated disagreement over the staging of works.

Nevertheless, this was Ono's first solo exhibition to fill an entire museum, and presented a wide range of her work executed in the 1960s, including painting, film, performance, Fluxus objects, and her instructional and conceptual works.

$950


The ninth issue, mislabeled as the eighth, of the Fluxus newspaper V TRE, dedicated to Yoko Ono and John Lennon.

This issue formatted as a poster folded into quarters with reproductions of 123 black and white photographs by Peter Moore documenting the “Fluxfest presentation of John Lennon & Yoko Ono,” along with various related Fluxus performances and excursions described by a double-sided blue insert. Abundant candid performance and party photographs capture Jonas Mekas, George Maciunas, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Robert Watts, Wolf Vostell, George Brecht, Henry Flynt, Joe Jones, and many more.

$800

The tenth issue of the Fluxus newspaper, dedicated to George Maciunas, upon the suggestion of George Brecht. He and other Fluxus artists were in the process of organizing a Festschrift for Maciunas which included original contributions for a Fluxus box to be presented to Maciunas. These contributions were imaged and collected here in this issue, “Laudatio Scripta Pro George”, presented alongside the box to Maciunas at the honorary event on May 2, 1976.

Contributions by Ay-O, Henry Flynt, Dick Higgins, Alice Hutchins, Alison Knowles, Larry Miller, Yasunao Tone, Wolf Vostell, Robert Watts, George Brecht, Joseph Beuys, Geoffrey Hendricks, Larry Miller, Peter Moore, Nam June Paik, Takako Saito, Mieko Shiomi, Daniel Spoerri, and anonymous others.

$800
16. John and Yoko Lennon Club Orgy Membership Card [Ono Holograph Notation]


John Lennon and Yoko Ono’s membership card to the members-only sex club at 110 West 24th St, Club Orgy. Described by owner Mel Cooper as “an emancipated sex entertainment center”, Club Orgy was highly surveilled and often raided, much like other midtown sex clubs in the 1970s, by Mayor John Lindsay’s criminalization of sex work across the city.

This card is dated November 25, 1970 and lists the couple’s address as the Apple Records New York headquarters.

$5000
17. War is Over! If You Want It – Happy Christmas from John & Yoko


Created as a part of the couple’s massive publicity campaign for peace, highlighted by their infamous “Bed-In.” The message “War is Over / If you want it / Happy Christmas from John and Yoko” was made ubiquitous, with flyers and handbills distributed widely to passers-by by who, hung in windows of homes, and pasted throughout public spaces.

The campaign was followed by the release of the song “Happy Xmas (War is Over)” in 1971, which solidified the phrase in the public lexicon.

$1500


Artists’ book reproducing a pocket diary completed in the hand of John Lennon for the year of 1969; the original work was written in November 1968 as a “diary of the future”. Most entries record the same banal routine, with some variation on “got up / went to work / came home / watched telly / went to bed”, with “fucked wife” peppered in occasionally.

Originally published as a part of Aspen Magazine in a Box #7 (“The British Issue”) in 1970. Though undated, research suggests that it was produced shortly after the Aspen publication. OCLC locates only three copies as of November 2022.

SOLD
19. [Promise Piece] “Piece of Broken Vase from Yoko Ono's Performance at Nam June Paik Memorial at Guggenheim April 26 2005 signed”


From Yoko Ono’s performance that concluded “Nam June Paik: A Memorial Tribute” at the Guggenheim, this fragment of broken vase is signed and dated by Ono and was retrieved by Jonas Mekas. The memorial event also included speeches by John G. Harnhardt, Thomas Krens, Ken Paik Hakuta, Shigeko Kubota, Shuya Abe, Jonas Mekas, Russell Connor, David A. Ross, and Wulf Herzogenrath.

Michael Wilson’s account of the evening for Artforum Diary describes the performance: “Finally, after two helpers in head-to-toe black and ninja masks had carried a large canvas of a vase to the front of the stage and unrolled a canvas bag heavy with ceramic fragments, Ono walked on and took a seat. A soundtrack of birdsong faded out and, after a burst of dissonant song, she announced: ‘The vase has been broken into 450 pieces. Take one home and promise to think of Nam June.’ She took out her knitting (I’m not making this up), and the crowd began to mass around her to claim their (signed) fragments before filtering out into the night.”

$6500
20. Yoko Ono Feeling the Space Lyrics & Press Booklet [with Xerox annotations]


Typed lyrics with photocopied annotations in the hand of Yoko Ono for songs appearing on her fourth solo album *Feeling the Space*. Likely issued as promotional material prior to the release of the album, the first sheet advertises a week of performances in October 1973 at Kenny's Castaways on 84th St, which were widely maligned in the music press.

An exceedingly scarce document of a strange moment in Ono's career: a foray into explicitly feminist pop music that did not translate to a mainstream audience at a time when her relationship with Lennon was strained. However, some hallmarks of Ono's artistic vision are still present here, reveling in contradictions and creating opportunities for one to “feel the space.”

$1500
21. Yoko Ono Holiday Card 2002


Holiday card featuring drawing by John Lennon from the Christmas edition of “In His Own Write,” with text inside by Yoko Ono, “listen, the snow is falling.”

$350

22. Yoko Ono Instructions for Paintings May 24, 1962 Exhibition Catalog [1993 Restaging]

Yoko Ono


Exhibition catalog published in 1993 of works originally exhibited by Yoko Ono in 1962. While the original show did not have a catalog, many of the works were reconfigured in her self-published and self-distributed 1964 artists' book Grapefruit.

Ono’s “Instructions for Paintings” was a groundbreaking exhibition of conceptual art and performance, developing concepts that would become the organizing thrust behind much of her more widely seen and well-known work. This catalog reproduces the works in English and Japanese texts as originally exhibited, with an introduction from curator John Hendricks.

$300
23. Imagine: John Lennon – Motion Picture Soundtrack LP [signed by Yoko Ono] [with] Yoko Ono Christmas Card to Jonas Mekas


Original double-LP release of the soundtrack to the documentary on Lennon’s Life, “Imagine: John Lennon“, released in 1988; signed by Yoko Ono, and with a holiday card to Jonas Mekas.

$2500
24. Yoko Ono / Plastic Ono Band [with] John Lennon / Plastic Ono Band [signed to Jonas Mekas from Yoko Ono and John Lennon, respectively]


The debut studio albums released simultaneously by Ono and Lennon, both bearing the title Plastic Ono Band. Ono’s album features the Ornette Coleman Quartet on one track, an unexpected collaboration sparked by Coleman’s interest in Ono’s artwork and music produced in the 1960s. Ono’s singing on the album mixed hetai, a Japanese vocal technique from kabuki theatre, with modern rock music and outbursts of aggression inspired by the primal therapy Ono and Lennon then practiced with Arthur Janov. Lennon’s album explored themes of child-parent abandonment and trauma and is largely considered his best and most influential solo work.
The respective cover images are photographs taken at Lennon's Tittenhurst Park estate with an Instamatic camera by actor Dan Richter, who lived with and worked as an assistant for the couple at the time. The images are identical except for Ono and Lennon's inverted positions in each respective album. These copies were given as gifts by Lennon and Ono to their friend and collaborator Jonas Mekas, with each inscribing their respective albums to Mekas.

$15000
25. Yoko Ono – Fly [signed by Yoko Ono and John Lennon to Jonas Mekas]


Yoko Ono’s second album, released in 1971, a double album of experimental modern music written by Ono and performed by Ono with John Lennon, Eric Clapton, Ringo Starr, Klaus Voormann, Jim Keltner, Jim Gordon, Bobby Keyes, Chris Osborne, and Joe Jones. The record is particularly notable for utilizing instruments built by Fluxus member Joe Jones specifically for Ono. Joe Jones, an avant-garde musician who built and sold drone instruments out of his “Tone Deaf Music Store”, collaborated with Ono, who sought to create specific instruments to match emotional counterpoints. The gatefold collage pictures the instruments created by Jones played on the album.

The design of the album is also a Fluxus collaboration, issued with a gatefold sleeve featuring a collage designed by George Maciunas and photographed by Iain MacMillan, poster designed by Allan Steckler, insert sleeves designed by Ono, front and back cover designed by John Lennon, and postcard to purchase Ono’s 1964 book Grapefruit, then recently reissued by Simon & Shuster. The postcard is a mail order form but due to a die cut hole in the center, also doubles as Ono’s piece “A Hole to See the Sky Through.”

$7500
26. John Lennon / Yoko Ono – Unfinished Music No. 2: Life with the Lions

UK: Zapple Records, 1969. ZAPPLE01. LP with original outer and inner sleeves. Very good, record clean and sleeves intact, inner sleeve creased at edges with minor toning.

The second of three experimental albums of live and avant-garde music released by John Lennon and Yoko Ono in the late 1960s. Side A consists of a improvised noise performance at Lady Mitchell Hall in Cambridge on March 2, 1969, the couple's second public performance as a duo. The second side of the album was recorded on tape in Ono's suite at Queen Charlotte's Hospital in London, while she was recovering from a miscarriage, including a track of silence referencing John Cage's 4'33". The album's cover photo was also taken during this hospital stay by Susan Wood.

$50


Recorded at the Toronto Rock and Roll Festival with a hastily formed and barely rehearsed band including Ono, Lennon, Eric Clapton, Klaus Voormann, and Alex White. Includes calendar originally issued with record. Calendar features photographs of John Lennon and Yoko Ono, with each month also featuring an instructional performance piece by Ono and an excerpt of writing by Lennon

SOLD
28. Rubbers are Fun! Imagine Peace [Visual AIDS]

Michael Mitchell


Issued as one of the “Visual AIDS Broadsides”, a project in which artists design multiples promoting safer sex, harm reduction, and HIV prevention. Artist Michael Mitchell designed this yellow balloon, featuring the slogan “RUBBERS ARE FUN” with an illustration of a condom-clad penis. Bearing signs of inspiration from Yoko Ono and John Lennon’s “Listen to this balloon,” issued as a part of their Peace campaign.

Issued in a stamped envelope with condoms and lube, this envelope is stamped with the slogan and Visual AIDS’ website, and on the opposite side, “Imagine Peace”. An excellent example documenting the enduring impact Ono and Lennon’s works had on artists everywhere.

$200
29. A Box of Smile Y.O '71 [Black with Facsimile Mirror]

Yoko Ono, George Maciunas


Produced by George Maciunas in conjunction with Yoko Ono’s 1971 exhibition “This is Not Here” at the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, this multiple by Yoko Ono was conceived of in 1967. A small plastic box that opens to reveal a mirror with the viewer’s reflection, invoking a smile. The piece engages the viewer through the act of smiling, which reappears in her work frequently, most prominently with her concept to make a film starring every single person on Earth smiling.

While the edition was originally issued in 1971, it was reissued by ReFLUX in 1984 when a number of deadstock inscribed boxes fabricated in 1971 for the original edition were found. The 1984 edition added new mirrors and inscribed on the underside to distinguish the new edition. It is unclear if this box was issued as a part of the original run and lost its mirror, or if it was one of the deadstock boxes that somehow never made its way into the reissue edition. Mirror added by Boo-Hooray.

$450
30. A Box of Smile Y.O ‘71 [White with Facsimile Mirror]

Yoko Ono, George Maciunas


Produced by George Maciunas in conjunction with Yoko Ono’s 1971 exhibition “This is Not Here” at the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, this multiple by Yoko Ono was conceived of in 1967. A small plastic box that opens to reveal a mirror with the viewer’s reflection, invoking a smile. The piece engages the viewer through the act of smiling, which reappears in her work frequently, most prominently with her concept to make a film starring every single person on earth smiling.

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