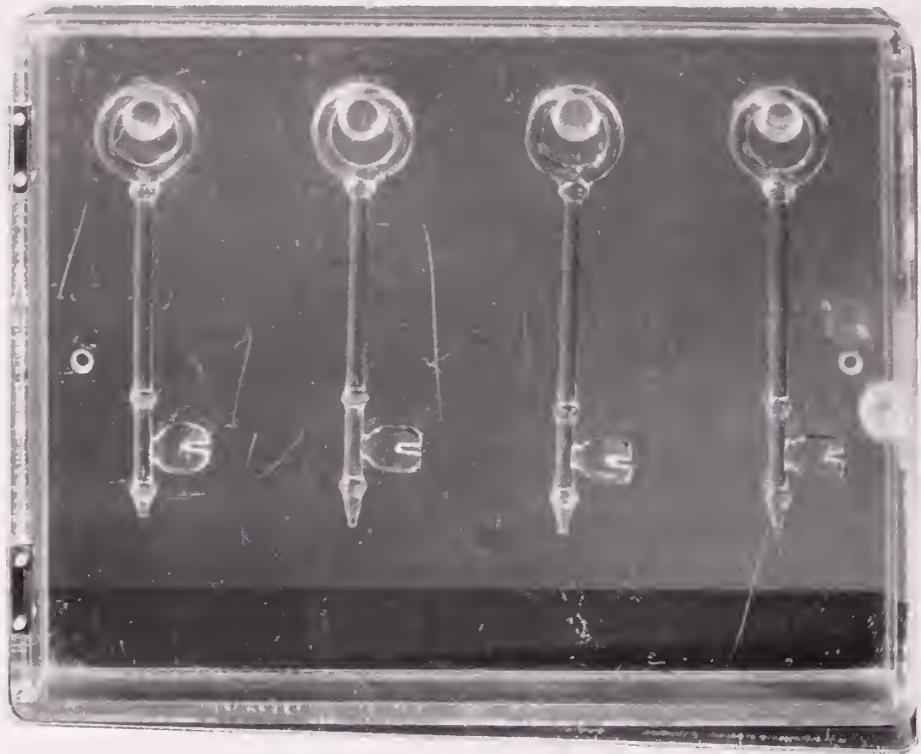


# YOKO ONO

objects, films



*Keys to Open the Skies, 1967*



*Keys to Open the Skies, 1988*  
(cast of 1967 work)

# YOKO ONO

## objects

Barbara Haskell  
Curator

Yoko Ono's association with rock star John Lennon after 1968 instantly transformed her into an icon of popular culture. But it simultaneously challenged the legitimacy of her prior achievements as an artist. In the years between 1960 and 1971, when she stopped creating objects, Ono's work occupied a distinct place within the aesthetic vanguard. The intent of this exhibition is to reconsider Ono's contributions during this period, unhindered by the distractions of two decades of superstardom.

In the early 1960s, Ono had been part of a loosely affiliated group of avant-garde musicians, visual artists, dancers, and poets who later came to be known under the rubric Fluxus. Together they assaulted traditional definitions of art. Encouraged by John Cage's appropriation of chance and everyday sound for his musical material, these artists initiated a new mode of performance art which favored single actions and "insignificant," quotidian phenomena, thus subverting the distinction between art and life. In Alison Knowles' *Proposition* (1962), for example, performers came out on stage, made a salad, and exited; La Monte Young's *Composition 1960 #10 to Bob Morris* directed a performer to draw a straight line and follow it.

Yoko Ono entered this aesthetic vanguard through music. She had studied poetry and music at Sarah Lawrence College. After her marriage in 1956 to Toshi Ichiyanagi, a promising modernist composer studying at Juilliard, her circle expanded to include John Cage and Merce Cunningham, at whose home she became a regular guest. Ono's assimilation of Cage's ideas primed her for participation in the pre-Fluxus activities that exploded in New York in September 1960. Indeed, one

of the seminal events was a concert series, organized by La Monte Young and held at Ono's loft at 112 Chambers Street. Presented from January to June 1961, the "Chambers Street Series," as it was informally dubbed, offered the first collective forum for the avant-garde sensibilities that later emerged as Fluxus.

As with other Fluxus artists, Ono's aesthetic expression was divided between visual and performance arts. Yet even within the performance arena, her work was not limited to a single medium but became an interdisciplinary mix of visual phenomena, movement, and sound. *A Grapefruit in the World of Park*, premiered in her first public concert at the Village Gate, New York, in 1961, consisted of a taped background of mumbled words and wild laughter, musicians playing atonal music, and a performer intoning unemotionally about peeling a grapefruit, squeezing lemons, and counting the hairs on a dead child. Other pieces drew more directly on Cage's theories of chance, audience involvement, and designated duration. In one such work, Ono amplified the sounds being made in the lavatory of the concert hall; in another, she placed a clock on the center of the stage and asked the audience to wait until the alarm went off.

Later in 1961, Ono had an evening of performance events at Carnegie Recital Hall, the first in an impressive list of concerts she gave through 1968. Included in her 1961 program was *A Piece for Strawberries and Violins*, in which Yvonne Rainer stood up and sat down before a table stacked with dishes. At the end of ten



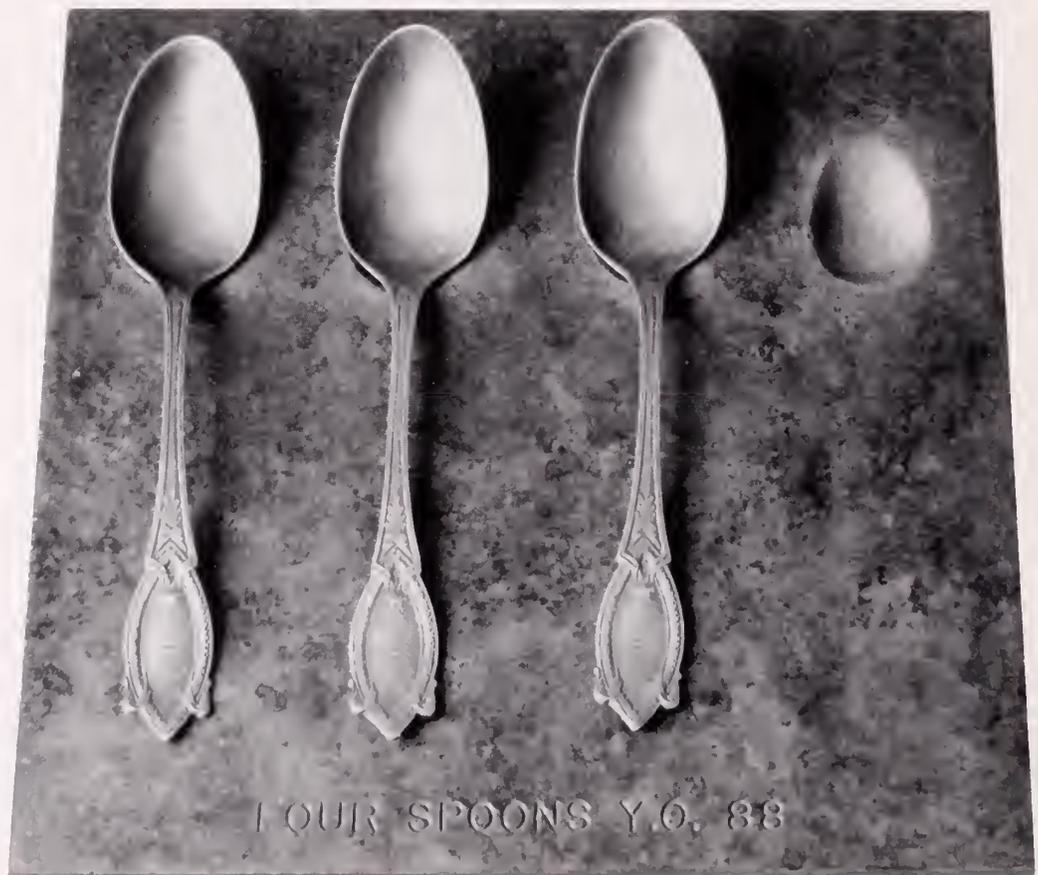
*Play It by Trust*, 1986-87  
(cast of 1966 work)

minutes, she smashed the dishes. Her action was accompanied by a rhythmic background of repeated syllables, a tape recording of moans and words spoken backwards, and an aria of high-pitched wails sung by Ono.

In common with other Fluxus events, Ono's performances jettisoned conventional aesthetics in order to jolt viewers out of self-satisfied assumptions about art. Her incorporation of matter-of-fact, task-oriented activities paralleled the reliance on commonplace gestures that had overtaken the vanguard dance community. In her performance work *Cut Piece* (1964), Ono sat impassively onstage while members of the audience came forward and cut off pieces of her clothing until she was nearly naked, and in *Bicycle Piece for Orchestra* (1962), a hundred bicyclists pedaled noiselessly around the stage. Other pieces contained only imperceptible visual data: in one work, the audience sat in darkness while two men, clanking empty cans and bottles tied to their legs, walked on a dark stage carrying heavy boxes; in another, the au-

dience waited for hours in darkness, which was relieved only by the glow of a match or flashlight that illuminated parts of the stage or parts of the performers' bodies. Such exploitations of silence suggest comparison with Cage's *4'33"* (1952), whose only sound was the random noises made by the audience within a designated time span. Yet Ono's intention differed from Cage's: her goal was to direct the audience's attention inward so as to highlight the stillness of the self. This focus resembled a kind of Zen meditative practice more than it did Cage's idea of transferring the burden of "music-making" onto the audience.

Another characteristic of Ono's performance work was the aura of discomfort that often derived from her subversive attacks on conventional notions of morality and violence. Implicit in works such as *Cut Piece* and *Wall Piece for Orchestra* (1962), in which she knelt on the stage and repeatedly hit her head against the floor, were questions about the nature of personal violation and violence.



*Four Spoons*, 1988  
(version of 1967 work)



*Painting to Be Stepped On II*, 1988  
(cast of 1966 work)

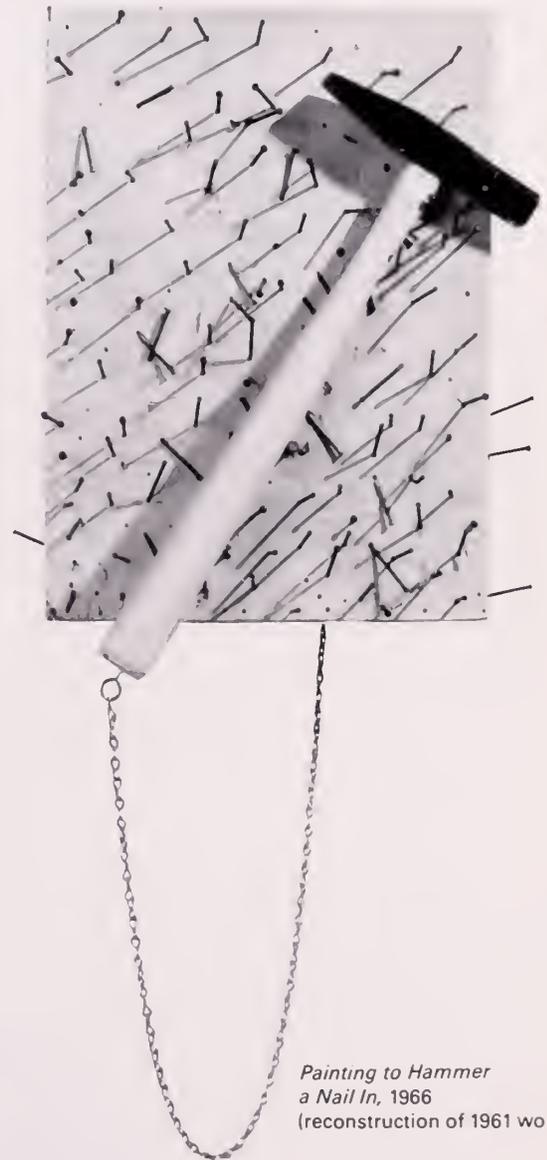
The dependence on chance and audience participation likewise informed the paintings and objects that Ono began in the winter of 1960-61. Initially, these works were expressed as written performance scripts: the instructions for *Painting to Be Stepped On* were to "leave a piece of canvas on the floor or in the snow"; for *Kitchen Piece*, to "hang a canvas on a wall. Throw all the leftovers you have in the kitchen that day on the canvas." By thus providing the structure of the work—the canvas—but not its specific visual material, Ono extended Cage's expansive attitude toward music to mutable visual phenomena involving chance, transformation, and ritual. As conjunctions of object and event, they possessed a quality of organic evolution—as in *Smoke Painting* (1961), whose instructions were to light a canvas with a cigarette and observe the smoke movement.

Some of Ono's objects and paintings paralleled aspects of her performance scripts in their attempts to remove the clutter of life in order to create an internal stillness and focus the viewer's concentration. Initially she did this by delineating small sections out of a normally unscrutinized field of vision. *Painting to See the Room Through* (1961) was a canvas with a tiny, almost invisible hole in its center that one peered through to see the room; *Painting to See the Skies* (1961) contained two holes in the center of a canvas through which viewers could see the sky. In several of Ono's performances, she had attempted to stimulate the viewer's imagination of intangible phenomena: in *Wind Piece* (1962), whose prop was a fan, the audience was asked to move their chairs to make a narrow aisle for the wind to pass through; in *Sun Piece* (1962) to "watch the sun until it becomes square." She became increasingly interested in situations or constructs that existed only in the minds of viewers. Accordingly, she began to create instruction pieces intended to be realized solely in the mind. *Painting to Be Constructed in Your Head* (1962) called for viewers to observe three paintings carefully and then to mix them well in their heads. *Part Painting* (1961) instructed viewers to rearrange mentally, in any way they desired, the various pieces of a painting that Ono had scattered around the walls of a room. And *Mend* (1962) commanded them to imagine mending a broken ceramic object whose parts were presented on a pedestal.

Ono exhibited a selection of these early works in June 1961 at the AG Gallery in New York, run by George Maciunas, who

later spearheaded the Fluxus movement. Maciunas remained a staunch supporter of Ono's work, and he included her in his first Fluxus concert program in Weisbaden, West Germany, and in all his subsequent Fluxus productions.

Apart from the exhibition at the AG Gallery, Ono presented only performance pieces between 1961 and 1966. In September 1966, she was invited to participate in the "Destruction in Art Symposium" in London, a conference of some fifty artists from around the world. She remained in London following the symposium, staging a series of concerts, events, and film showings. Her presence on the London art scene earned her the epithet "the High Priestess of the Happening" and caused a reviewer to remark that she seemed as ubiquitous in London as Stilton cheese and Princess Margaret. She also had gallery shows at



*Painting to Hammer a Nail In*, 1966  
(reconstruction of 1961 work)

two highly respected, vanguard venues in London: the newly opened Indica Gallery and the Lisson Gallery.

It was at the Indica Gallery that Ono again began exhibiting audience-participation pieces. In *Apple* (1966) a green apple sat on a pedestal, and members of the audience were invited to bite into the fruit, while in *Painting to Hammer a Nail In* (1961), the instructions were to pound nails into a white wood panel with an attached hammer. Such implied ritual also characterized *Cleaning Piece* (1966), which consisted of a white cloth, a dark plexiglass box, and instructions to "clean it."

Ono extended the textual component of these pieces to include a kind of aphoristic poetry, so that the ensemble of text and object resembled a three-dimensional version of a Zen Buddhist *koan*—in *Pointedness* (1964), the text reads, "This sphere will be a sharp point when it gets to the far side of the room in your mind." A paradoxical spirit pervaded other pieces, with the result that humor became a major component of Ono's work. *Three Spoons* (1967) confounded verbal commonsense by presenting four spoons, while *This Is Not Here* (1966) did the same by patently denying verifiable reality. Likewise, the transparency and fragility of the glass keys in *Keys to Open the Skies* (1967) undermined the functionality of normally opaque, durable objects.

By 1967, when Ono's "Half-a-Wind Show" opened at the Lisson Gallery, her work increasingly sought to address philosophic questions about the nature of reality. Her part paintings—each one a minute section of an object—demonstrated

the similarity that obtains between seemingly disparate phenomena when seen microscopically. Moreover, inclusion in this exhibition of a room of furniture and functional objects, cut in half, suggested that memory and the realities in the mind are as potent and eternal as those of concrete, physical presences. Ono's desire to alter the viewer's sense of reality about ostensible intangibilities is apparent from her admonishment to remain in the white room, "until it turns blue." In the steel box entitled *Disappearing Piece* (1965), the caption warned, "The object in this box will evaporate when the lid is opened."

Ono's exhibition at the Everson Museum in Syracuse, New York, in 1971 signaled the end of her object-making. Now, eighteen years later, she has cast a number of her earlier objects in bronze. Seen together, the two versions speak to the paradox of objects that are at once the same and different. The idea came to her during a visit to a restored palace outside Leningrad. Each restored room had two photographs on the wall—one taken in the czarist period and the other taken after the room had been bombed by the Nazis. The three states of the room—two in the past and one in the present—were totally different; only the *idea* of the room remained the same.

Casting transparent or physically insubstantial objects in bronze dramatically changes their nature and meaning. While the quotidian nature of the objects in Ono's early pieces spoke to a quality of the 1960s, bronze epitomizes the 1980s, which Ono feels is an age of commodity and solidity. The work, in her words, is "a story of change and survival. It was a story of all of us."



*Apple*, 1988  
(cast; original apple 1966)



*Cleaning Piece*, 1966

**Selected Exhibition History**

- 1961 \*AG Gallery, New York. "Paintings and Drawings by Yoko Ono." July 17–30.
- 1966 \*Indica Gallery, London. "Unfinished Paintings and Objects by Yoko Ono." November 9–22 (catalogue).
- 1967 San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. "Aktual Art International." May 2–21.  
\*Lisson Gallery, London. "Half-a-Wind Show." October 11–November 14 (brochure).  
Stanford University Museum and Art Gallery, Stanford, California. "Aktual Art International." December 2–28 (catalogue).
- 1970 Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne. "Happening and Fluxus." November 6, 1970–January 6, 1971 (catalogue).
- 1971 Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery, Blackburn, England. "Fluxshoe" (catalogue). Traveled.  
\*Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York. "This Is Not Here." October 9–27 (catalogue).
- 1972 Kassel, West Germany. "Documenta 5." June 30–October 8 (catalogue).
- 1979 Galerie 'A,' Amsterdam. "Fluxus: The Most Radical and Experimental Art Movement of the Sixties." May (catalogue).
- 1981 Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. "Fluxus etc./The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection." September 20–November 1 (catalogue).
- 1982 Museum Wiesbaden, West Germany. "1962 WiesbadenFLUXUS 1982: Eine kleine Geschichte von Fluxus in drei Teilen." September 17–November 14 (catalogue). Traveled.
- 1983 Neuberger Museum, State University of New York at Purchase. "Fluxus etc./The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection." January 30–March 27 (catalogue).  
Baxter Art Gallery, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena. "Fluxus etc./The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection." September 28–October 30 (catalogue).
- 1984 Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston. "Fluxus, etc./The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection." July 7–September 16 (brochure).  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. "BLAM! The Explosion of Pop, Minimalism, and Performance 1958–64." September 20–December 2 (catalogue).
- 1985 The Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre, Banff, Alberta, Canada. "Fluxus etc./The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection." October 5–27.
- 1987 Carl Solway Gallery section of Chicago International Art Fair. "A Tribute to John Cage." May 8–13 (catalogue).  
Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, Massachusetts. "Fluxus: 25 Years." November 7, 1987–January 3, 1988 (catalogue).
- 1988 \*University of Missouri, Kansas City Gallery of Art. "Yoko Ono: Three Events." November 4–December 16.  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. "Fluxus: Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection." November 17, 1988–March 10, 1989 (catalogue).
- Items marked with an asterisk (\*) are one-person shows.

**Works in the Exhibition**

- All works are in the collection of the artist. Bronze casts are courtesy Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati. Dimensions, excluding the base, are in inches, followed by centimeters; height precedes width precedes depth.
- Apple*, 1966  
Pedestal only, 48½ × 10 × 10 (123.2 × 25.4 × 25.4)
- Apple*, 1988 (cast; original apple 1966)  
Bronze, 3½ diameter (8.9)
- Cleaning Piece*, 1966  
Plexiglass and cloth, with accompanying text, "Clean It," 7¾ × 14 × 8¼ (19.7 × 35.6 × 21)
- Cleaning Piece*, 1988 (cast of 1966 work)  
Bronze, 6¼ × 15 × 10 (15.9 × 38.1 × 25.4)
- Disappearing Piece*, 1988 (cast of 1965 work)  
Bronze with accompanying text, "The object in this box will evaporate when the lid is opened," 1¼ × 7 × 4 (3.2 × 17.8 × 10.2)
- Forget It*, 1966  
Stainless steel needle, 2⅞ (6)
- Forget It*, 1988 (cast of 1966 work)  
Bronze needle, 2⅞ (6)
- Four Spoons*, 1988 (modification of 1967 work)  
Bronze, ¼ × 7¼ × 7¼ (.6 × 19.7 × 19.7)
- Keys to Open the Skies*, 1967  
Four glass keys in plexiglass box, 7½ × 10 × 1½ (19.1 × 25.4 × 3.8)
- Keys to Open the Skies*, 1988 (cast of 1967 work)  
Bronze plate with hanging keys; plate, 7 × 10 × ¼ (17.8 × 25.4 × .6)
- Painting to Be Stepped On I*, 1988 (cast of 1960 work)  
Bronze, 23 × 29 × ¼ (58.4 × 73.7 × .6)
- Painting to Be Stepped On II*, 1988 (cast of 1966 work)  
Bronze, 18 × 14 × 1½ (45.7 × 35.6 × 3.8)
- Painting to Hammer a Nail In*, 1966 (reconstruction of 1961 work)  
White wood panel, hammer, chain, nails; panel, 11⅞ × 8⅞ × 1¼ (30.2 × 22.5 × 4.4)
- Painting to Hammer a Nail In*, 1988 (cast of 1961 work)  
Bronze, 11⅞ × 8⅞ × 1¼ (30.2 × 22.5 × 4.4)
- Painting to Let Evening Light Go Through*, 1966 (reconstruction of 1961 work)  
Plexiglass, 33 × 27 × ¼ (83.8 × 68.6 × 0.6)
- Painting to Let Evening Light Go Through*, 1988 (cast of 1961 work)  
Bronze, 33 × 27 × ¾ (83.8 × 68.6 × 1.9)
- Painting to See the Room Through*, 1988 (modification of 1961 work)  
Bronze and wire, two parts, 108 × 39 × 3 (274.3 × 99.1 × 7.6) each
- Play It by Trust*, 1986–87 (cast of 1966 work)  
Bronze chess board and 32 pieces, 6½ × 30 × 30 (15.2 × 76.2 × 76.2)
- Pointedness*, 1966 (reconstruction of 1964 work)  
Crystal sphere with accompanying text, "This sphere will be a sharp point when it gets to the far side of the room in your mind," 2⅞ diameter (6)
- Pointedness*, 1988 (cast of 1964 work)  
Bronze sphere with accompanying text, "This sphere will be a sharp point when it gets to the far side of the room in your mind," 2⅞ diameter (6)
- Three Spoons*, 1967  
Four metal spoons, ⅞ × 1¼ × 6 (2.22 × 3.2 × 15.2) each
- To Be Appreciated Only When It's Broken*, 1988 (reconstruction of 1967 work)  
Silk, 1¼ × 24 × 3 (3.2 × 61 × 7.6)
- To Be Appreciated Only When It's Broken*, 1988 (cast of 1967 work)  
Bronze, 1¼ × 24 × 3 (3.2 × 61 × 7.6)



Yoko Ono in *Cut Piece* at  
Carnegie Hall, New York, 1964

# YOKO ONO

films

John G. Hanhardt  
Curator, Film and Video

The films of Yoko Ono, by virtue of their emphasis on stylistic and formal issues, occupy a unique place in the history of the American independent film. The mid-1960s, when Ono released her first films, were years of extraordinary creativity and ferment for independent filmmakers, as they challenged the conventions of filmmaking and developed alternative modes of distribution and exhibition. For several years, Ono, like others in the New York art world, had been crossing the boundaries that had traditionally separated art forms in order to explore issues of performance and object-making. The trajectory of Ono's filmmaking emerges in the mid-1960s out of this complex totality of interdisciplinary endeavors. Her songs, performances, objects, and films are distinguished by their direct focus on materials in a way that calls attention to the phenomenon of perception. Thus in her concert at Carnegie Hall in 1965 her songs, which were abstractly expressive voice sounds, were heard in a darkened space; in *Cut Piece*, her 1964 performance work, the audience was invited to cut off pieces of her clothing; her objects dealt with material and utilitarian properties—in *Painting to Hammer a Nail* the audience was invited to pound nails into a board with a hammer.

Like her work in performance and sculpture, Ono's films acknowledge their materials, in this case, the image-recording properties of the film medium. This acknowledgment is apparent in Ono's emphasis on formal concerns: (1) the composition of the individual shot (*No. 4 [Bottoms]*) and the construction of the *mise-en-scene* (*Rape*) through a recognition of the perceptual limits of the camera's frame; (2) the articulation of movement as defined by specific actions (*Fly*); (3) temporality, in the use of repetition (*Up Your Legs Forever*) and the animation of sequences of still photographs (*Erection*), which heighten our awareness of the image's content and reflect on the passage of time; (4) the creation of narrative that employs the camera as a protagonist (*Rape*) and manipulates the documentary genre as narrative (*Imagine*); (5) the relationship of sound as voice (*Fly*) and music (*Walking on Thin Ice*) to the perception of the image.

The formal strategies of Ono's filmmaking are organized around a central concern with the representation of the human body. The body becomes a paradigm both as subject matter (*Fly*, *Bottoms*, *Up Your Legs Forever*, *Freedom*) and as the subject of the viewer's voyeurism (*Rape*). In Ono's filmmaking the perceptual transac-

tion between the viewer and the cinematic image becomes an aesthetic and structural strategy in which the camera serves as an eye, an instrument for observation, in films stripped of the conventions of storytelling. The film scripts detail in their elegant economy how the spectator can look at the projected film image. By instructing us to look at a particular actor (*Film Script 5* [1964]: "Ask the following: 1) not to look at Rock Hudson, but only Doris Day"), Ono makes us create our own movie and forces us to realize how a film is composed and manipulated. In the script for *Film No. 1 (A Walk to Taj Mahal)* (1964), the camera and audience participate in various actions in which the distinctions between audience and film are blurred: "The film consists of snowfall only. The camera will make a walk movement of a person in the snow. The camera will move sometimes in circle, sometimes zigzag, sometimes slow, but mostly, will be in normal speed. Then at the last point, it will go up to the sky. It should make the audience feel as if they are the ones who are walking in the snow and who go up into the sky."



Filmstrip from *Fly*, 1970

The distinct style of Ono's films is due not only to their conceptual organization but to the fact that each film originated as a visual idea first articulated in a brief written statement. Thus, although the films often involved a number of people in their production, they followed a set of conceptual instructions which then were translated into and determined the means of production. *Up Your Legs Forever*, in which a camera moves up people's legs, required designing a method to control the position and movement of the camera so that the shots would be consistent, thereby highlighting the differences among the legs filmed. Seeing these films together makes it clear that Yoko Ono's formalism carries over even into the works produced with John Lennon, such as *Apotheosis*, in which the camera assumes the viewpoint of Ono and Lennon in a hot air balloon ascending slowly over snow-covered countryside.

Yoko Ono's films fall into three groups. Those in the first are the most conceptual in design, each one following a particular cinematic strategy. *No. 4 (Bottoms)* is made up of a series of shots of people's backsides framed and edited so that the entire screen is filled with one bare bottom after another. As in *Up Your Legs Forever*, the film focuses our attention on one aspect of the human body, and its repetitive seriality makes us aware of the particularities of individual anatomies. The movement of the camera (*Up Your Legs Forever*) and the movement of the person (*Bottoms*) are strategies which reveal different aspects of viewing the human body and, in cinematic terms, create great variety without once varying the methods of shooting within the film. In *Fly*, the subject is a fly, closely followed by the camera as it moves about the landscape of a nude female body. The close-up shots of the fly make us acutely aware of scale, as the large, projected film image magnifies both fly and body. Unlike the other two films, in which sound recordings of the production process make the anonymous subjects more real and yet invisible, the soundtrack of *Fly* is a voice piece by Ono. Her distinctive song becomes the "sound" of the fly, and the expressive range of her voice invests the insect's movements with mean-

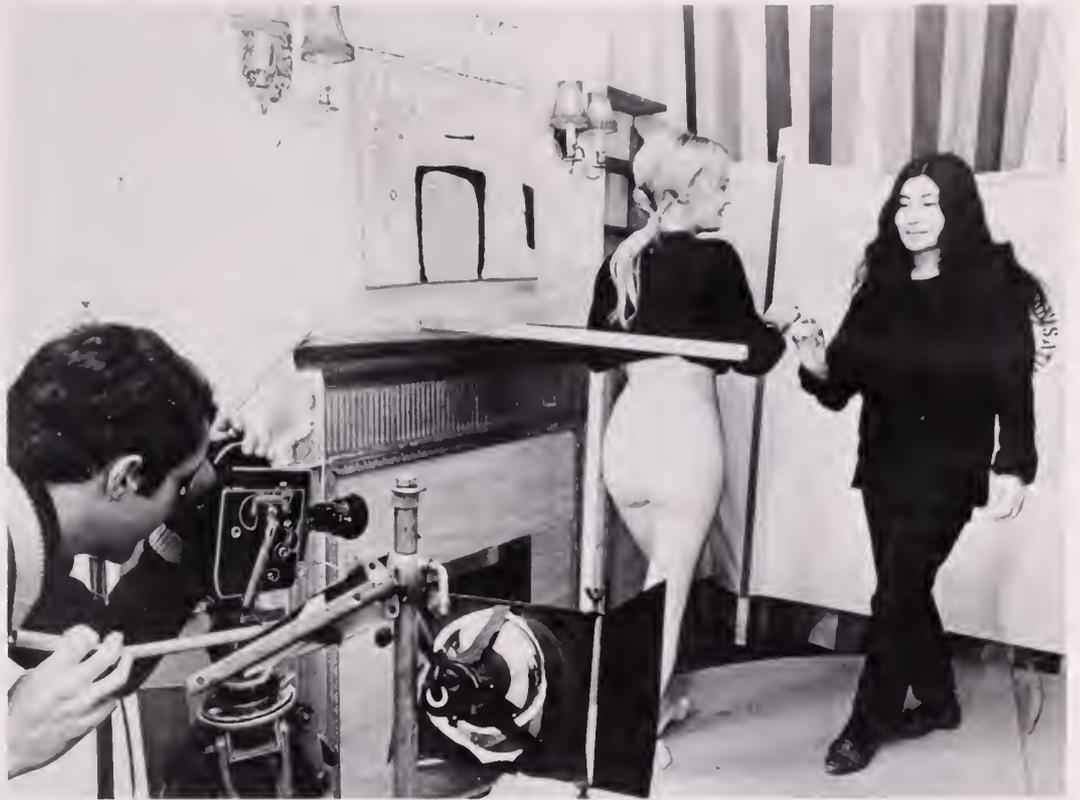
ing. In *Freedom* the camera focuses on a woman pulling at the clasp of her bra; the film ends just before it is removed. Here Ono plays with our sense of anticipation and constructs a metaphor for the liberation of the female body and self, an issue important in many of her other films and artworks.

Two other films from this group, *Erection* and *Apotheosis*, focus on the process of movement and change through time yet employ two very different strategies. *Erection* is a pixilated film—each sequence shot from the same point of view at different times—showing a building gradually being erected on an empty lot in London. As time is collapsed and the action speeded up, we watch the building suddenly take on an organic form, "growing" before our eyes. In *Apotheosis*, we follow Ono and John Lennon as they ascend in a balloon into the sky above a small town. In the gradual unfolding of the action in real time, the film becomes poetically evocative as the camera-balloon breaks through a cloud bank to the spectacularly clear vistas of the sky above. The sounds from the village are left behind as we enter the silent space above the earth. Both *Apotheosis* and *Erection* are linked to the other films in this group by their formal attention to a process that reveals and is expressive of experience and movement in time. In the film *The Museum of Modern Art Show*, the camera focuses on visitors to the museum who are being questioned about the idea of a Yoko Ono show at that institution. Here the camera is turned upon us, the spectators, in the process of commenting on the real Yoko Ono and the imagined event she creates. As in her other scripts and films, she is asking us to become active participants in the "making" of her films by our very presence as audience.

*Rape* takes as its premise a conceptual idea that Ono gave to a camera crew: to select a person at random and follow that person with the camera. The subject here is a German-speaking woman in London whom the crew encounters and doggedly pursues to her apartment. The woman's initial curiosity and openness turn to frustration and anger as the camera relentlessly pursues her. The uniqueness of this film derives from its narrative ambivalence: is this woman in fact being pursued or is she an actress? She does not speak English, yet we can understand her actions and emotions. This is a film that explores the issue of the camera as a transgressor of privacy, an invader of the human body and thus an extension of the



Filmstrip from  
*No. 4 (Bottoms)*, 1966



From left: Anthony Cox,  
unidentified woman, and Yoko  
Ono in a production photograph  
from *No. 4 (Bottoms)*, 1966



Yoko Ono in *Freedom*, 1970

male film crew and of ourselves as viewer-voyeurs. Ono's feminism and celebrity status, especially after she met John Lennon, become subtle issues in this compelling work.

The second group is concerned with narrative and documentary issues. It begins with *Imagine*, another feature-length film that has a special place in Ono's oeuvre. Like *Bed-In*, *Film No. 5 (Smile)*, and *Two Virgins*, it celebrates Lennon and Ono's relationship. Whereas *Smile* and *Two Virgins* are short lyrical impressions, and *Bed-In* is a record of one of their public peace actions, *Imagine* is an evocation of their music and life-style. Here their travels, their friends, other celebrities, and, most important, their music, are the subjects. In *Imagine* the camera is turned upon John and Yoko as they become part of the public imagination. The powers of cinematic observation transform the world of the self

into spectacle, recording the public life of public people.

The third group of films represents the concert and music videos. *Ten for Two: Sisters, O Sisters* is an excerpt from a concert film, which shows Yoko Ono singing, backed up by John Lennon, on stage in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in a concert protesting the arrest of political activist John Sinclair. We hear Ono's voice as it commands the audience to listen to her expression of freedom. The later music videos directed by Yoko Ono (*Walking on Thin Ice*, *Goodbye Sadness*, and *Woman*) were produced after John Lennon's death in 1980. A profound sense of loss fills these songs and the images, which circulate between their past together and Ono's present life of separation. The recasting of that life through film and song in old and new images creates a dialectic between history and memory, art and life.



From left: Eva Majlath, cameraman Nic Knowland, and soundman Christian Wangler in a production photograph from *Rape*, 1969

### Selected Filmography and Videography

All works are conceived, produced, and directed by Yoko Ono and are 16mm, color, and sound, unless otherwise noted. All are in the collection of the artist except *FLUXFILMS*, which is in The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Foundation, Detroit, Michigan.

*Eyeblink* (*FLUXFILM #15*, identical to *FLUXFILM #9*, also known variously as *One* and *One Blink*), 1966. Black and white, silent; 5 minutes.

*No. 1* (*FLUXFILM #14*, also known as *Match*), 1966. Black and white, silent; 10 minutes.

*No. 4* (*FLUXFILM #16*), 1966. Black and white, silent; 5½ minutes.

*No. 4* (also known as *Bottoms*), 1966. Black and white; 80 minutes.

*Film No. 5* (also known as *Smile*), 1968. 51 minutes.

*Two Virgins*, 1968. 19 minutes. In collaboration with John Lennon.

*Bed-In*, 1969. 61 minutes. In collaboration with John Lennon, with production assistance by Nic Knowland, Franco Rosso, Mal Hawley, Angus Drawbridge, Wendy Blindloss, Mike Lax, Richard Key, Jack Reilly, and Mike Billing.

*Rape*, 1969. 77 minutes. Directed in collaboration with John Lennon.

*Apotheosis*, 1970. 18½ minutes. Produced and directed in collaboration with John Lennon.

*Fly*, 1970. 25 minutes.

*Freedom*, 1970. 1 minute.

*Up Your Legs Forever*, 1970. 70 minutes.

*Erection*, 1971. 20 minutes. Produced and directed in collaboration with John Lennon.

*Imagine*, 1971. 70 minutes. In collaboration with John Lennon.

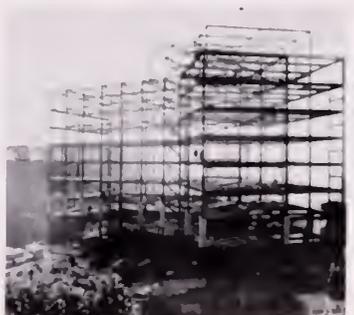
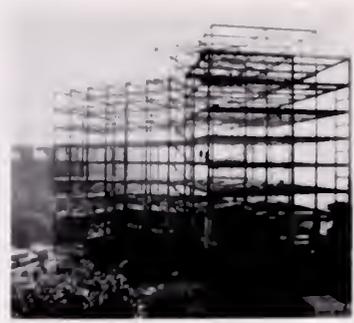
*The Museum of Modern Art Show*, 1971. 7 minutes.

*Ten for Two: Sisters, O Sisters*, 1972. 4 minutes. Produced in collaboration with John Lennon. Directed by Steve Gebhardt.

*Walking on Thin Ice*, 1981. 1" videotape; 6 minutes.

*Woman*, 1981. 1" videotape; 3½ minutes.

*Goodbye Sadness*, 1982. 1" videotape; 2½ minutes.



Filmstrip from *Erection*, 1971

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John Lennon and Yoko Ono in a production photograph from *Apotheosis*, 1970

## Film Schedule

### February 8–12

Tuesday at 1:30, 3:30, and 6:15;  
Wednesday–Saturday at 11:30, 1:30, and 3:30;  
Sunday at 12:30, 2:30, and 4:30  
*No. 4 (Bottoms)*, 1966, 80 minutes.

### February 14–19

Tuesday at 1:30 and 5:30; Wednesday–Saturday at  
12:00 and 3:00; Sunday at 1:00 and 4:00  
*The Museum of Modern Art Show*, 1971,  
7 minutes.  
*FLUXFILMS*, 1966, 100 minutes.

### February 21–26

Tuesday at 1:30, 3:30, and 6:15;  
Wednesday–Saturday at 11:30, 1:30, and 3:30;  
Sunday at 12:30, 2:30, and 4:30  
*Two Virgins*, 1968, 19 minutes.  
*Film No. 5 (Smile)*, 1968, 51 minutes.

### February 28–March 5

Tuesday at 1:30, 3:30, and 6:15;  
Wednesday–Saturday at 11:30, 1:30, and 3:30;  
Sunday at 12:30, 2:30, and 4:30  
*Erection*, 1971, 20 minutes.  
*Apotheosis*, 1970, 18½ minutes.  
*Fly*, 1970, 25 minutes.

### March 7–12

Tuesday at 1:30, 3:30, and 6:15;  
Wednesday–Saturday at 11:30, 1:30, and 3:30;  
Sunday at 12:30, 2:30, and 4:30  
*Rape*, 1969, 77 minutes.

### March 14–19

Tuesday at 1:30, 3:30, and 6:15;  
Wednesday–Saturday at 11:30, 1:30, and 3:30;  
Sunday at 12:30, 2:30, and 4:30  
*Freedom*, 1970, 1 minute.  
*Up Your Legs Forever*, 1970, 70 minutes.

### March 21–26

Tuesday at 1:30, 3:30, and 6:15;  
Wednesday–Saturday at 11:30, 1:30, and 3:30;  
Sunday at 12:30, 2:30, and 4:30  
*Bed-In*, 1969, 61 minutes.

### March 28–April 2 and April 4–9

Tuesday at 1:30, 3:30, and 6:15;  
Wednesday–Saturday at 12:00 and 3:00; Sunday at  
1:00 and 4:00  
*Ten for Two: Sisters, O Sisters*, 1972, 4 minutes.  
*Walking on Thin Ice*, 1981, 6 minutes.  
*Goodbye Sadness*, 1982, 2½ minutes.  
*Woman*, 1981, 3½ minutes.  
*Imagine*, 1971, 70 minutes.

### April 11–16

Tuesday at 1:30, 3:30, and 6:15;  
Wednesday–Saturday at 11:30, 1:30, and 3:30;  
Sunday at 12:30, 2:30, and 4:30  
*Rape*, 1969, 77 minutes.

## Exhibition Dates

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York  
February 8–April 16, 1989

The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston  
January 19–March 18, 1990

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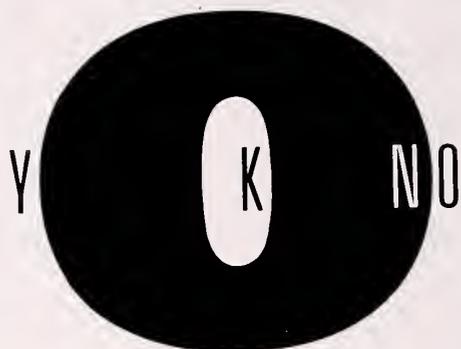
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