

Media information: 4 September 2008

BALTIC

YOKO ONO

BETWEEN THE SKY AND MY HEAD

Sunday 14 December 2008 – Sunday 15 March 2009

Yoko Ono is one of the pioneers of conceptual art and has an international exhibition career spanning nearly 50 years. From **Sunday 14 December**, **BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art** will present **YOKO ONO: BETWEEN THE SKY AND MY HEAD**, comprising work by **Yoko Ono** from 1961 to the present.

The exhibition, one of the largest exhibitions of **Yoko Ono's** work to date, is a major collaborative project with **Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Germany**, and will occupy two floors of **BALTIC** with additional works located outside the gallery.

Yoko Ono has a strong and irrepensible desire for freedom. This desire can be immediately recognised in her **Imagine Peace** billboards which will be located in prominent locations. Ono's **Wish Trees** invite visitors to express their hopes and dreams by writing wishes on paper and hanging them on **Wish Trees** installed close to **BALTIC**. These wishes will be gathered at the end of the exhibition, and sent to the **IMAGINE PEACE TOWER** in Videy Island, Iceland, to join the rest of the wishes from around the world. Another work, **SkyLadder** - which might be read as an allegory for the exhibition's title, **BETWEEN THE SKY AND MY HEAD** - invites us to consider an imaginary, spiritual space centred between the sky and earth.

Inside **BALTIC**, the exhibition will cover more than 1400m² of gallery space containing sculpture, paintings, drawing, photography, films and sound installations, as well as participation works. Among the 50 works featured in the exhibition is **Play it by Trust**, a conceptual chess set, made from white Italian Carrara marble. A version of the work was first exhibited in London at Ono's legendary exhibition at the Indica Gallery in 1966.

Another work, **My Mommy is Beautiful**, is a participatory piece in which visitors to **BALTIC** are invited to bring photographs of their mothers, along with thoughts and memories about their mothers, to be permanently attached to the blank canvases. At the conclusion of the exhibition, the filled canvases will be sent to the artist in New York.

YOKO ONO: BETWEEN THE SKY AND MY HEAD will be accompanied by a 208-page exhibition catalogue edited by **Thomas Kellein**, director of the Kunsthalle Bielefeld, published by **Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König**, Cologne and will be available from **BALTIC Shop**.

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For further information please contact:

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NOTES TO EDITORS

BALTIC would like to thank Thomas Kellein from Kunsthalle Bielefeld Germany and Jon Hendricks, Yoko Ono curator for their contribution and support in creating the exhibition at BALTIC.

YOKO ONO BIOGRAPHY

Yoko Ono, born in 1933 in Tokyo, is one of the pioneers of Conceptual Art. In 1952, she became one of the first women in Japan to study philosophy. In 1953 she took composition courses at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, NY, and studied creative writing at Harvard. In the mid-1950s, Yoko Ono lived in New York City, where she knew John Cage, and many other artists and composers. In 1960, she rented a loft on Chambers Street, and together with La Monte Young, organized a series of concerts, attended not only by young musicians and artists, including Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns and Fluxus founder George Maciunas, but also by Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Peggy Guggenheim, and Isamu Noguchi.

As a young artist, Ono left New York in 1962 in order to return to Japan. During this period she performed several concerts with John Cage and the pianist David Tudor. In the same year at the Sōgetsu Art Center in Tokyo, she began hanging texts as artworks, instead of the pictures she had shown in 1961 at the AG Gallery in New York. Her work in conceptual art manifested in the famous collection of works, *Grapefruit*, which she first published herself on July 4, 1964 in Tokyo. It went on to be published in numerous editions. Some of the works in it date back to the early 1950s. The book divided her oeuvre into chapters dealing with music, painting, happenings, poetry, and objects, documenting her affinity for all categories of art. To this day, she continues to move forward in unexplored territories in her art.

BALTIC is a major international centre for contemporary art situated on the south bank of the River Tyne in Gateshead, England. BALTIC presents a constantly changing, distinctive and ambitious programme of exhibitions and events, and is a world leader in the presentation, commissioning and communication of contemporary visual art. BALTIC has welcomed over 3 million visitors since opening to the public in July 2002.

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