



PRESS RELEASE

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YOKO ONO PRESENTS "IMAGINE PEACE" BILLBOARD PROJECT IN WASHINGTON, DC AND NEW YORK

Artist Yoko Ono is presenting three billboard installations, one in downtown Washington DC and two in New York City's Times Square from January 6 through February 2, 2009.

IMAGINE PEACE, the Washington, DC billboard, is a large text with the words "IMAGINE PEACE" across a blue sky. Below the text, there is a reference to the website www.imaginepeace.com

Yoko Ono says,

"IMAGINE PEACE!

It's hard to kill people, when we're imagining peace.
There would be no more war.
If we all imagined peace,
It sounds simple,
but it's true.

So, go see the billboard: IMAGINE PEACE.
Just one glance and it will stay with you forever.
It'll speak to you in your dreams,
and even give you a good night's sleep

Let's make 2009 the Year of Peace!
Give our children a good chance to live.
I see them smiling and dancing with joy.
Let's all together
IMAGINE PEACE.

With love, yoko"

In New York City, there are two side-by-side billboards. One, IMAGINE PEACE, has IMAGINE PEACE written in 24 different languages and is simply signed, "love, Yoko." The New York City other says "WAR IS OVER! if you want it." This marks the 40th anniversary of John Lennon and Yoko Ono's peace campaign, "WAR IS OVER ! if you want it," presented on billboards and posters around the world in protest of the Vietnam War.

In conjunction with the DC billboard installation, IMAGINE PEACE, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC will activate Yoko Ono's Wish Tree from January 16 through January 21.

Wish Tree is part of the museum's permanent collection, and is located on the grounds of the museum's sculpture garden. Wish Tree, a gift from the artist, was donated to the museum as part of IMAGINE PEACE project organized by Street Scenes: Projects for DC in 2007. Wish Tree is usually dormant in the winter

months, but during the inauguration period Washington residents and visitors will be able to write their wishes on paper tags and hang them from the sculpture, which is a living Dogwood tree.

Wish Tree is part of an ongoing project that Yoko Ono began in the 1990s to encourage the public to become participants in the art process.

"As a child in Japan, I used to go to a temple and write out a wish on a piece of thin paper and tie it around the branch of a bush," Yoko Ono says. "Bushes in temple courtyards were always filled with people's wish knots, which looked like white flowers blossoming from afar."

At the end of the installation, the wishes will be collected and added to others generated by Wish Trees the artist has installed in more than twenty countries. The wishes will become part of Yoko Ono's IMAGINE PEACE TOWER in Reykjavik, Iceland, which was inaugurated in October 2007. So far, more than a million wishes have been collected.

Yoko Ono invites members of the public who cannot access Wish Tree to send their wishes directly to IMAGINE PEACE TOWER by going to the website www.imaginepeace.com.

"Yoko Ono's work celebrates the universal longing for peace: whether it is individual peace of mind, peace for a local community, a nation, or even a more global aspiration," say Nora Halpern and Welmoed Laanstra, co-founders of Street Scenes: Projects for DC. "At this time of historic change, and cataclysmic events, it is important to look to artists for inspiration and promise."

Street Scenes is distributing a postcard that can be sent directly to IMAGINE PEACE TOWER. The card will be available at different locations in downtown Washington, DC. For more information, go to www.streetscenesdc.com.

For more information about IMAGINE PEACE projects or IMAGINE PEACE TOWER go to www.imaginepeace.com.

For more information about the Washington Wish Tree, go to www.hmsg.org

For more information on Street Scenes: Projects for DC, please contact Nora Halpern or Welmoed Laanstra at 301.980.5533 or 301.651.8275 or info@streetscenesdc.com, or visit the website at www.streetscenesdc.com.