

## ***The Heart of No Place***

*The Heart of No Place* was born of an internal dialog, between my own experiences and what I learned, as an artist and as a Japanese woman, about the life and work of Yoko Ono.

I have tried to avoid direct quotations, although some references are more recognizable than others. These faux-Ono pieces are all results of post-impact fermentation taking years or decades.

### **List of works by Yoko Ono referenced:**

#### **1. Installation and objects**

*Play It by Trust*, 1997 (installation)

An earlier version is *White Chess Set* (1966). The version I saw in person was a giant, all-white chess set.

In the movie, dancers walk on a chess board made with sheets of glass with champagne flutes filled with milk in hand.

Chess motif recurs, taking on the Cold War hues in one instance: two men buried to the waist in sand, which in turn refers to a Goya painting.

(A Goya lithograph of flying figures also appears in the movie.)

*Painting to Hammer a Nail in No. 4*, 1990

Ono created many variation of this *Painting*. The 1990 version is the heaviest: she made a life-size wooden cross with a hammer attached to it. In the movie Y. contemplates a wooden easel resembling a cross. The easel is carried by Atlas (Chris Maher) in a later scene.

## 2. Film and performance

*Rape*, 1969 (film, directed in collaboration with John Lennon)

*Cut Piece*, 1964 (performance)

These pieces became, the rather-frivolously named “Cat Piece” cited by Interviewer (Judith Lewis). Yes I meant “pussy.”

*Film No. 4 (Bottoms)*, 1966 (film)

*Film No. 12 (Up Your Legs Forever)*, 1970 (film, directed in collaboration with John Lennon)

Two German filmmakers talk about their film “Arse Longa/Up Your Bottoms Forever” in which they put together these two well-known films in tribute.

*Bed-In for Peace*, 1968 (performance)

This was turned from an event protesting the Vietnam War to one protesting the nuclear arms race of the ‘80s, with emphasis on breakfast.

The “documentation footage” of a performance piece is a re-staging of my own work *Neither Garlic Nor Beans* (1984 - 88).

## 3. Instruction Paintings

Instruction Paintings are my favorites among Ono’s work. They metamorphose into “Task Haikus” in the movie. Andrea (Sarah Holbert) describes them: “They are like theater, just waiting to be reconstituted with a little bit of water and microwave of your imagination.”

From *Grapefruit*, two variations:

PAINTING TO HAMMER A NAIL

Hammer a nail in the center of a piece of glass. Send each fragment to an

arbitrary address.

1962 spring

#### PAINTING TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN YOUR HEAD

Hammer a nail in the center of a piece of glass. Imagine sending the cracked portions to addresses chosen arbitrarily. Memo the addresses and the shapes of the cracked portions sent.

1962 spring

Throughout the film, Y. is repeatedly seen working with glass, nails and a hammer. The two sheets of cracked glass in the 1999 gallery opening scene was meant to remind the viewer of Ono's *Painting to Hammer a Nail*. I put two side by side because the cracked glass also made me think of Marcel Duchamp's *A Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even...* (AKA "The Large Glass"). I have considered naming them either "Two Brides" or "Two Bachelors."

#### PAINTING FOR A BROKEN SEWING MACHINE

Place a broken sewing machine in a glass tank ten or twenty times larger than the machine. Once a year on a snowy evening, place the tank in a town square and have everyone throw stones at it.

1961 winter

This becomes, in the phone interview with Andrea (Holbert), a sewing machine meets an umbrella (in reference to a line in Lautréamont's *Les Chants de Maldoror* often quoted by the Surrealists), in a snow globe / fishbowl.

#### TUNAFISH SANDWICH PIECE

Imagine one Thousand suns in the sky at the same time.  
Let them shine for one hour.  
Then, let them gradually melt into the sky.  
Make one tuna fish sandwich and eat.

1964 spring

What I saw when I read this in the '80s was a nuclear explosion, then, realizing that you have survived the catastrophe -- real or imagined -- celebrating life by the fundamental act of eating. Y. literally makes a tuna sandwich for her son,

because the idea of continuation of the world as one knows it is brought into sharp focus by the presence of children.

Ono also wrote "The only sound that exists to me is the sound of the mind. My works are only to induce music of the mind in people" in her letter "To the Wesleyan People" (1966). In the movie, Y. says to John "The radio...prevents you from listening to your own music."

Half-full glass of milk mirrors a half-full glass of water that has recurred in Yoko's work since 1981, and of course to her and Lennon's album *Milk and Honey* (1984).

In addition, I have taken inspiration from Dali's *Geopoliticus Child Watching the Birth of the New Man* (1943).

In closing: while I was doing a final check on dates, I came across this one in *Grapefruit* – I might have read it before but I did not remember? The scene I chose for Yoko's "Ask the Dragon" (expression of manic oneness with the universe) seems to harmonize with it.

A beautiful thing happened to  
a girl in sunset.  
It was so beautiful she couldn't  
get over it for a long time.  
In fact, she's still going around  
soaked in the same evening light –  
carrying her orange past.  
In daytime she looks like a cutout  
from a Grand Canyon postcard.  
At night she glows.  
Then she's heard of a guy carrying  
rain around him.

1968 summer