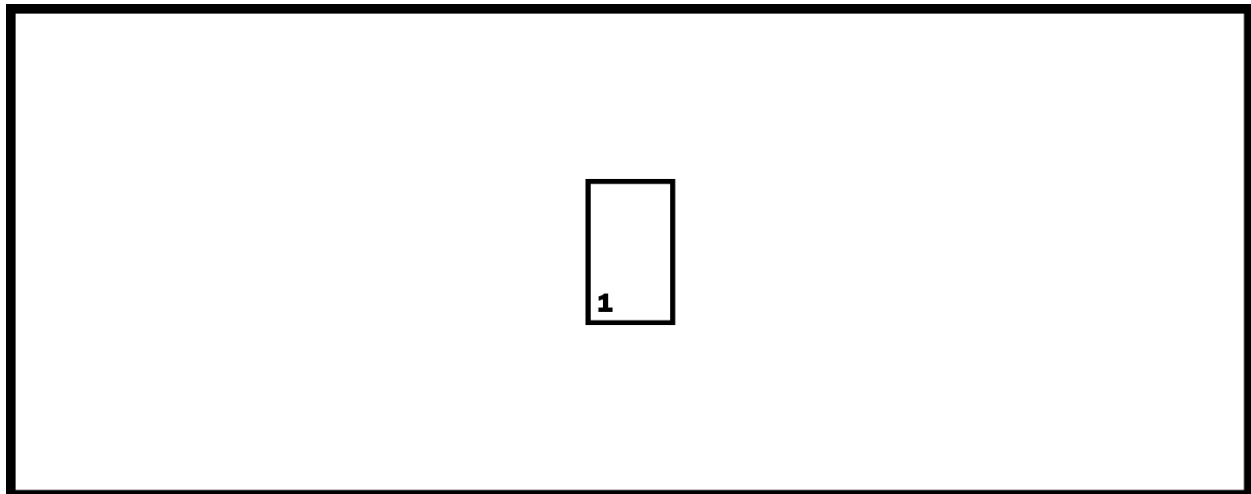


Yoko Ono: Drawings from *Franklin Summer* and *Blood Objects* from *Family Album*, Ubu Gallery, New York, October 28 - December 12, 1995

ON VIEW: NOVEMBER 20 – DECEMBER 10 2019



1. Ubu Gallery, New York, *Yoko Ono: Drawings from Franklin Summer and Blood Objects from Family Album*, Ubu Gallery, New York, October 28 - December 12, 1995, 1995
Pigment, key, paper and string tag, in printed zipper bag [with printed invitation card]*
6 ⁷/₈ x 4 inches (17.5 x 10.2 cm)
Announcement Edition Ubu #6, Edition size unknown
Not for sale

* Element missing, illustrated below





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USA**
10/28/95.BURBANK,CALIFORNIA.YOKO ONO IN HER FIRST ACTING ROLL APPEARS
IN THE AMERICAN SIT COM,"MAD ABOUT YOU, WITH THE TWO STARS OF THE SHOW,
HELEN HUNT AND PAUL RIESNER PHOTO © NBC STUDIOS,GARY NULL
ONLINE USA INC. P.O. Box 75, Beverly Hills, Ca. 90213. Phone 310 587 0027. Fax 310 587 0027

10/28/95.Burbank,California, Yoko Ono Plays Her First Television Acting Roll In The American Sit Com, "Mad About You" Starring Helen Hunt And Paul Riesner (Photo By Getty Images)



Yoko Ono, *Family Album Exhibit M: High Heel Shoes*, 1993 Installation view courtesy of Ubu Gallery, New York

"A derivative display of small surrealistic drawings and small bronze objects, including a box, hairbrush, a pair of high heels. Dripped or splattered with blood red paint, these gain a maudlin, almost shameless impact from the artist's proximity to the assassination of John Lennon."

Roberta Smith
New York Times
December 8, 1995

ubu

YOKO ONO

DRAWINGS FROM FRANKLIN SUMMER AND (BLOOD OBJECTS FROM FAMILY ALBUM)

October 28 - December 12, 1995

Ubu Gallery is pleased to present **Yoko Ono: Drawings from *Franklin Summer* and *Blood Objects from Family Album***, which will open on October 28, 1995 and run through December 12, 1995.

On exhibition will be current drawings, which will be shown for the first time in the United States, and a group of recently executed bronzes making their New York debut. Unlike the conceptual nature of her other bronze works, the "Family Album" objects - splattered with red pigment - uniquely express Yoko Ono's metaphoric and poetic response to the terror and violence which we experience, not only on a global basis, but at a personal level.

The sense of betrayal inherent in the objects is, however, redeemed by the spontaneous pleasure and biomorphic references evident in the "Franklin Summer" drawings. Recently exhibited in Majorca, Italy and Germany, the works are an agglomeration of fine ink dots which appear to have combined in an automatic manner. Begun in the summer of 1994, this visual exploration is an ongoing process. Ono has written, "The dots accumulated into a mass, and figures emerged from them... It was very much like what one goes through in meditation..." With this group of drawings, she embraces the quiet and poetic sensibility of her earlier works.

Film-maker, musician, performer, object-maker and, foremost, conceptual artist, Yoko Ono is, above all, a poet. She emerged as an artist in the late 1950s in New York City and her presence was noted and felt in the avant-garde scene at that time. During the summer of 1961, Ono's first solo exhibition took place in New York at AG Gallery, the short-lived enterprise of George Maciunas, spiritual leader of Fluxus. It was at AG that she introduced to the public her "instruction paintings," works which consisted of instructions for creating the work and directions for viewer participation. In the fall of that year, Ono gave a concert at Carnegie Recital Hall during which she stimulated audience participation. These were the first of a series of interactive events that she performed throughout the decade. In 1971, Ono was honored with her first museum exhibition at the Everson Museum in Syracuse, New York.

In 1988, Ono wrote, "In my mind, bronze started to have a warm shimmer instead of the dead weight I had associated it with. Bronze is OK I thought..." In this same year, she was invited to participate in a birthday homage to John Cage for which she created a bronze cast of *Play It By Trust*, a variant of the all white chess set she first executed in 1966. This led her to cast several other bronzes related to earlier works, which she included in her 1989 exhibition at The Whitney Museum of American Art,

Yoko Ono: Objects, Films.

The exhibition at Ubu Gallery reflects the paradoxical aesthetic that Yoko Ono has always projected. The tensions inherent in the extremities of human emotion and natural forces -- destruction versus creation and violence versus peace, for example -- energize the creativity and stimulate the political activism of this extraordinary artist.



Experience



Owner

Ubu Gallery Limited

Apr 1994 – Present · 25 yrs 8 mos

New York, NY

Founded in 1994, Ubu Gallery has presented almost 100 exhibitions of 20th Century avant-garde art, with an emphasis on the inter-war period of the 1920s-1930s, particularly the Dada, Surrealist, and Constructivist movements. Ubu exhibits paintings, drawings, photography, sculpture, and ephemera (books, posters, graphic design, etc.) and, wherever possible, highlights the interrelationships among these art forms.

Ubu Gallery is a well-known presence on the international cultural scene and enjoys a worldwide reputation for its serious explorations of areas covered by few other galleries, including acclaimed survey exhibitions of Polish, Romanian and Czech avant-garde art. Ubu's focus on the avant-garde, particularly on historically important artists and movements that have not received appropriate attention, has earned the gallery frequent reviews in press throughout the world focused on the visual arts. Ubu participates in the most important Parisian art fair, FIAC, held annually in the Grand Palais (2010-2018), and has participated significantly in Art Basel (2003-2011) and the encyclopedic Frieze Masters fair (2012-2015) showcasing the best of antiquities to modern art, in Regent's Park in London.

[see less](#)

Body of Evidence

Yoko Ono
Ubu Gallery
16 East 78th Street
Through December 12

BY ELIZABETH HESS

For Yoko Ono, making art has always been part of life, like breathing. Ono has been a heavy breather since the early '60s. She was a solid member of the avant-garde even before she met—what's his name? Ono is star material, yet she has been strangely overlooked by the art world. Just try and find Yoko Ono in the index of any major art historical tome. It's as if she didn't exist, and still doesn't. Dealers don't exactly shun the stars; take Karl Lagerfeld's or Richard Gere's photos—please. Ono, however, was

my turn. As I'm standing in the gallery trying to figure out the mind of Yoko Ono, in walks the artist with a little entourage. Ono is a small woman with the presence of a mountain. Some people drive by mountains without noticing them. This might be part of the story of Ono's life. She's the kind of person who could either disappear in a crowd or be the center of attention.

Ono tells me about a bronze sculpture from the same series that is not at Ubu. She shows me a picture in a catalogue. It's of a man's denim shirt with bullet holes and bloodstains around the heart. I see John. "When I first showed the shirt [in an Los Angeles gallery], there were so many objections that I was inundated with calls," she tells me. Everyone else, apparently, saw John, too. "This work is about what many women have experienced around death, not just me," Ono insists. But Lennon's fans didn't care

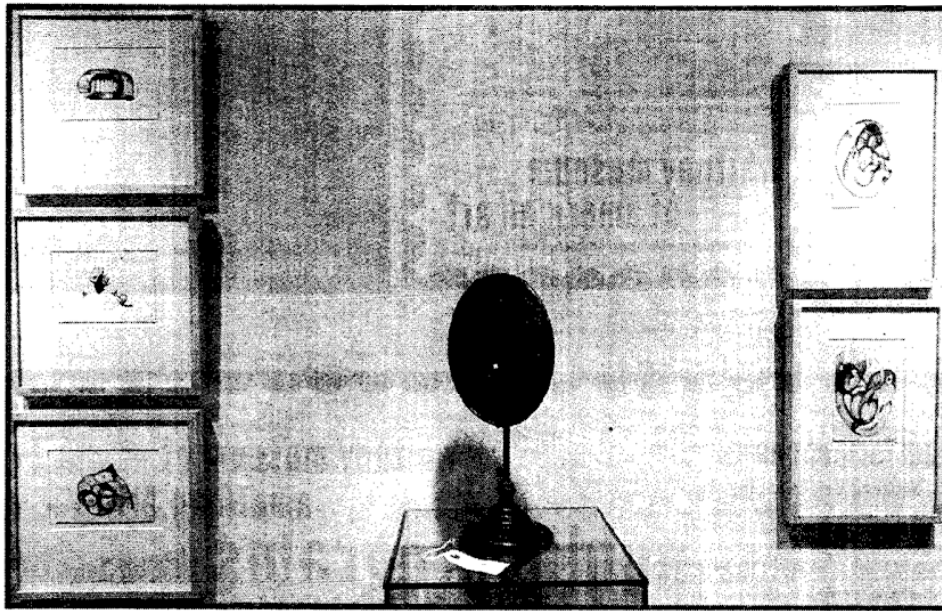
by a male society. We all succumb to it," she says.

Suddenly the mirror cracked with bullet holes becomes a work about the death of vanity—not John Lennon. A broken bronze baseball bat becomes a war trophy from the streets, not a piece of memorabilia from a dead boy's life. It might be difficult to read Ono's art apart from Lennon, but certainly the work is open to it.

Ono is best known for *Bed-In*, a 1969 performance in Amsterdam. She and Lennon were on their honeymoon; they invited the press into their hotel suite to witness a peaceful protest against the war in Vietnam: the two of them in bed. Maybe the piece didn't end the war, but it was one of the few political statements that captivated worldwide attention. Ono, however, could have been famous earlier. In *Cut Piece*, another equally innovative performance in 1964, the artist sat on a stage wearing a fancy dress; members of the audience were invited to approach her and cut the garment off her body, piece by piece, until she was virtually naked. It's an act that could just as easily have happened yesterday. Ono was one of the first feminist artists to put her body on the line, using herself as a metaphor for violence, desire, and sexual exploitation. Her early works were brave and brilliant.

We can go back further, to 1961, when Ono presented a new group of paintings at the AG gallery, run by Fluxus's George Maciunas. The canvases, placed all over the floors and walls of the space, required the public's participation to be completed. For instance, *Smoke Painting* invited viewers to light up a cigarette (those were the days) and burn a hole in the canvas; the painting was finished when it was all burned up. These "Instruction" paintings were some of the first conceptual works to be shown in New York. They deserve to be known not only because they were early, but because they were significant.

The star performer has another, quieter side. Ubu is also showing a series of abstract ink drawings done with a rapidograph, her latest, ongoing body of work. They are on uniform pieces of paper about the size of a book page. Ono began these drawings outdoors, at her farm, during the summer of '94. Each one is made of countless dots that curl and swirl into round, sensual forms. Some have weight and density, while others are more wispy. They look wet, almost liquid, like water. In a gallery statement, Ono describes her spontaneous process of drawing as "automatic writing." Individually, or collectively, the works are meditative and seductive, like the musings of a feminist Buddhist. She has also completely subverted the necessity to find any meaning in them. Critics beware. ♦



Yoko Ono: *Exhibit P* from *Family Album: Blood Objects* (center, 1993); drawings from *Franklin Summer* series (1994, 1995)

born with different issues: She's an Asian woman who makes work that is not easy to label. So, despite her illustrious status as a wealthy widow, she's been relegated to the periphery. This is frequently where the most radical (and the most alienated) artists reside.

I went up to the Ubu Gallery not knowing what I would find (if you've been looking for Rosa Esman, this is where she's surfaced with two new partners, Adam Boxer and Jack Banning). Just the invitation—a "blood"-stained key from Ono's *Family Album* in an evidence envelope—was ample bait. The show includes two bodies of work that are as different as day and night and as complementary. Seventy-three elegant ink drawings from a series called *Franklin Summer* surround a group of more aggressive objects, mundane items that have been cast in bronze and splattered with red paint. There's a mirror with bullet holes, a pair of spiky high heels, a lumpy bag that looks like it might contain a small baby, an ordinary hairbrush, a perfume bottle, and more. The obvious subject is violence, and we all know the Yoko Ono story—don't we?

Every once in a while, a critic is in the right place at the right time. It was

She is definitely the center of attention at the Ubu Gallery.

The early conceptualist is friendly; she's willing to chat for a while. I ask if she feels that her work has been misunderstood. "I'm not sure whether it's been misunderstood or just ignored," she says smiling. Which is worse? "Sometimes misunderstandings actually work out pretty well. Except when a critic misunderstands the work—that can hurt. People really believe critics." She tells me a complicated story about a piece at the Whitney that she felt was unjustly chastised. Some of Ono's best friends, it seems, are not critics.

Are the *Blood Objects* autobiographical? "Most people assume that they are about that night in 1980." Well, aren't they? "That night is like a handicap for me," Ono says, much to my surprise. "Everything I make is perceived autobiographically. But we all experience violence, not just me." For Ono, violence is more generic and more gendered: "Going through the birth canal is the first bloodbath for all of us. When the umbilical chord is cut—that's the first act of violence. My work is about the way women experience violence. But I think of it like folk art. It's for everyone."

about the artist's intentions. Even her own publicist thought it was in bad taste. Ono has not shown the piece since the furor.

"When I'm making work, I try to forget that I'm John Lennon's widow," says Ono emphatically. "Artists have many challenges—this is mine."

Visions of the Beatles fade as I clear my mind to look again at Ono's work. There's a black box with blood dripping out of its cracks. "That was the first one in the series," explains Ono. "I had this box and suddenly in my mind it started to bleed." Then she tells me that other objects around her also began to bleed; this period of her life sounds like a Stephen King novel. "But instead of panicking," says the artist, "I decided to make them."

Ono wants to speak about the shoe piece, called *Exhibit M*. (All the sculptures are tagged and labeled as if evidence in a judicial proceeding.) "Those shoes are mine, and I know the feeling of my body in them." The bronze shoes make the originals look as if they were incredibly expensive and incredibly uncomfortable. Is the piece an attempt to damn the lifestyles of her own milieu? "It's not about a lifestyle, it's about a social ritual that is created