



Press Release

16 January 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Yoko Ono exhibition opens new arts building at Leeds Arts University

Yoko Ono at Leeds

8 February - 14 March 2018

The new arts building at Leeds Arts University will officially open with an exhibition by international artist Yoko Ono.

Yoko Ono (b.1933) is a renowned multimedia artist and peace activist. A chief proponent of the Fluxus movement, Yoko Ono is known for her performance and instruction based artworks which have been shown internationally. For this exhibition, a selection of her interactive installations, *Wish Trees*, *Mend Piece*, *Add Color Painting (Refugee Boat)*, and *ARISING*, will be on display. The exhibition will open on Friday 8 February.

This is the first time work by Yoko Ono has been shown at the University since she performed at its Vernon Street building in 1966, as British surrealist artist Patrick Hughes recalls:

"In 1966 [...] Fluxus artist, Yoko Ono, visited with her then husband Anthony Cox, and their three-year-old daughter Kyoko. When we came into the lecture theatre, Yoko and Anthony were hidden in a large black bag on the dais and a full auditorium of students and staff looked at the bag for an hour. They did not move much. We could not see them, but we learnt that they could see us through the material."

The exhibition is being held in the new Blenheim Walk Gallery at Leeds Arts University, part of a £22m state-of-the-art building expansion which includes a 230-seat performance auditorium and industry standard film and photography studios. The new site has allowed the University to expand its course provision, creating a more diverse mix of creative courses, including the introduction of BA (Hons) Filmmaking and BMus (Hons) Popular Music Performance. The building will house the growing portfolio of opportunities for postgraduate study at Leeds Arts University, with a larger specialist arts research and reference library and a new postgraduate study suite.

The Blenheim Walk Gallery is situated in an open plan atrium-style entrance, which also includes Dot the Lions, an independent coffee bar delivered by the team behind Laynes Espresso, which is open to the public.

Professor Simone Wonnacott, Vice-Chancellor, Leeds Arts University said:

"It is very rewarding to see our ambitious plans for the future of Leeds Arts University realised in the opening of our new specialist arts building, providing world-class studios and facilities for our students to help them fulfil their ambitions in the creative industries."

"We are delighted to open the doors to our new arts building with an exhibition from such an iconic artist as Yoko Ono, and look forward to welcoming visitors to our new site."

Sheffield design agency Peter & Paul were commissioned by the University to create two bespoke large-scale art pieces for the building interior.

The first is situated within the entrance of the building, and has been created using quotes from 46 alumni, gathered from their thoughts and memories of their time at Leeds Arts University. Each individual quote has then been turned into a unique poster, with Peter & Paul working with current University students on the designs. Featuring typography, illustration, photography and mixed media, the posters reflect the diversity of creative practice at Leeds Arts University.

The second spans the length of the photography department, stretching across a wall over 30 metres long and two storeys high. More abstract in design, the wall shows intertwined arms engaged in creative activity.

-ENDS-

Editor's Notes

For more information, images or to arrange interviews contact: Sophie Miller Wallace, PR & Communications Officer, 0113 202 8044 or sophie.millerwallace@leeds-art.ac.uk

The exhibition will run from **8 February - 14 March** at The Blenheim Walk Gallery, Leeds Arts University, Blenheim Walk, Leeds, LS2 9AQ.

Images:

Yoko Ono, Wish Trees for Beijing (1996/2015), installation view at Faurschou Foundation Beijing, Beijing, China, 2015. Photo: Emma Zhang.

Leeds Arts University internal alumni quote feature wall

Leeds Arts University internal feature wall.

Leeds Arts University, Blenheim Walk building exterior.

Leeds Arts University

Founded in 1846 as the Leeds Government School of Art and Design, Leeds Arts University (formerly Leeds College of Art) has contributed significantly to the development of art education in Britain and across the world. In 2016 the University was granted Taught Degree Awarding Powers, and in 2017 was awarded full university status, making it the only specialist arts university in the North of England.

Leeds Arts University has been previously recognised for its industry-standard facilities at the Whatuni awards (winners in 2014 and 2016, runner up 2017), is the highest ranked specialist arts university in the UK for student satisfaction in the National Student Survey 2018, and the number one University for Design & Crafts in the Guardian University League Table 2019.

The new build development was delivered by construction contractor ISG on the former car park area at Blenheim Walk using a bespoke design drawn up with architects DLA Design. WYG were the structural engineers; GVA the project management consultants; TB+A the mechanical & electrical engineers; and Rex Procter & Partners were the quantity surveyors. The new music and film studios have been fitted out by Studio People. HSBC have helped to finance the building development. The building has many sustainable features including solar energy panels and an urban roof garden; and will achieve a high BREEAM rating.