

MEDIA RELEASE

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Positive Perceptions

September 10th – November 5th, 2011

Opening Reception: September 10th from 6:30 to 9:00 pm

ROBERT INDIANA WILLIAM JOHN KENNEDY JONAS MEKAS J D MILLER
YOKO ONO MCKAY OTTO PHILIP J ROMANO ULTRA VIOLET

Deborah Colton Gallery is pleased to announce *Positive Perceptions*, a group exhibition, curated by Deborah M. Colton. *Positive Perceptions* opens Saturday, September 10, 2011 with a public reception with the artists from 6:30 to 9:00 pm. As part of the exhibition, the Yoko Ono **IMAGINE PEACE** public art installation is prominently displayed on a major highway billboard going into downtown where hundreds of thousands of people will view it each day.

If you can SEE what is in the future for you in positive ways, it can BECOME. The exhibition reveals the extent that art with a positive vision can influence perceptions and make an impact on the current human condition. It is reality. It CAN make a difference and artists like Yoko Ono and Robert Indiana, Ultra Violet have exemplified this world wide. The Texas artists with a following regionally that have been included in the show have equally important visions, and their voice should be heard.

In the 1960's, Robert Indiana created a vision of LOVE at a time when the United States was at war. Indiana's LOVE sculpture inspired John Lennon to write the song for the Beatles, "All You Need Is Love". Jonas Mekas, known as an artist, filmmaker, art critic, curator and icon of contemporary American Culture, documented this era through his acclaimed independent film and still frame photography featuring Yoko and John during "Happy Birthday John" and "Bed-In for PEACE". William John Kennedy documented at the same time the then young and inspired artists, Robert Indiana, Ultra Violet and Andy Warhol. Although the exhibition starts with this foundation in the 1960's, it shows how the same ideas now transcend into the 21st century as a new vision going into the future.

In this new millennium, Robert Indiana created a vision of HOPE. Yoko Ono's current "IMAGINE PEACE," traces its roots back to John and Yoko's "IMAGINE" and "THE WAR IS OVER if you want it to be," but was created after the September 11th, 2001 tragedy. Ultra Violet keeps her focus on LIGHT.

Robert Indiana has always envisioned that his four letters can help change the world in the future. Thus his instincts told him more recently that times are ripe for a new vision of HOPE. "HOPE is very special. It is both a noun and a verb. These four simple letters can be so powerful. It's the way they are arranged as a sculpture. The O leaning forward in my sculptures reveals we all lean forward into the future with an open heart and HOPE for a more peaceful world."

Yoko Ono, an artist, composer, poet, celebrity, activist, a visionary who believes if you dream the same dream with others, that dream can turn into reality...and the power she places in simple words to uplift humanity has reached billions of people worldwide. Her belief in the power of the mind to create good through positive visualization is an art form she perfected from her fluxus–conceptualist background since the sixties. Since then Yoko Ono has been a leader in the PEACE movement through her art and music in all continents, with many important projects about to unfold this fall also.

The **IMAGINE PEACE** billboard first came to Houston September of 2006 in conjunction with the Deborah Colton Gallery's **WORD** show on a large commercial billboard going into downtown Houston at the intersection of I-45 and I-10. The unveiling of the **IMAGINE PEACE** billboard caught Houston by surprise. Within days, all local TV stations were featuring the billboard, as was the written press. At the time when national security and airport checks were tightened even further in September of 2006, the Gallery received literally hundreds of phone calls and emails with people emotionally touched by what those two simple words did for the tone of the city, with many people wanting to contribute to make this public space art billboard a permanent installation.

Since then, Yoko Ono's PEACE movement has grown even stronger. In 2007 Yoko Ono unveiled IMAGINE PEACE TOWER, which is located on Viðey Island in Reykjavik, Iceland and is dedicated to her late husband John Lennon. Yoko Ono shared her affirmation "the IMAGINE PEACE TOWER will give light to the strong wishes of World Peace from all corners of the planet and give encouragement, inspiration and a sense of solidarity in a world now filled with fear and confusion. Let us come together to realize a peaceful world." IMAGINE PEACE TOWER will be lit this year from October 9th – December 8th and December 21st - 31st, 2011. Yoko Ono participated in the opening ceremony for the 2006 Winter Olympic reading a poem calling for peace in the world. Yoko Ono continues to exhibit her installation Wish Trees in different cities all over the world- asking the audience members to contribute their wish to help heal our planet. Eventually all of the wishes from Wish Trees will be collected and they will be incorporated into IMAGINE PEACE TOWER in the future. There are now over a million collected wishes from all of the world. Yoko Ono recently received the Hiroshima Art Prize and opened her exhibition THE ROAD OF HOPE at the Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art in Japan.

Andy Warhol Factory super star, Ultra Violet is debuting a new series of text-based neon works, with each word being a different color from the rainbow. "These neon words bring LIGHT, both conceptually and aesthetically. LIGHT is essential and there is no greater embodiment of light and optimism than the rainbow. Rainbows provide a universal inspiration to many since they always come after a dark storm to reveal the beauty of a normal day. Rainbows are free, can be seen all over the world and have no social, racial or economic boundaries", Ultra Violet says. She feels that by accepting and acknowledging the dark, but overpowering it with a vision of good and light, that we as a society have the capacity to create universal peace and harmony by going to a higher level than the material stratifications or myopic, ethnocentric thinking that divides rather than unites people. "We can rise above this with LIGHT". Ultra Violet is featured this Fall Season also at the Moscow Museum of Art and several institutions throughout New York for her work based on 9-11.

More regionally, Texas Artists, JD Miller and Philip J. Romano have created Reflectionism to define their role as artists today. To JD Miller: "I call myself a Reflectionist artist because I believe that the universe mirrors each of us in a unique way. My goal is to interpret that phenomenon. The concept is what you give out to the universe is what you get back. This is based on a theory, in its most basic form, that says "what you think is what you get." It's that simple. You can create your own reality....The universe is like an infinite holographic projection room."

McKay Otto, also a Texas artist, uses light as an essential ingredient in his work, tapping its wide-ranging associations - spirituality, divinity, illusion, impermanence, inspiration, hope, and energy. The transparent surfaces of Otto's paintings invoke the presence of something sacred or transcendent, like a living embodiment of light which McKay describes as transcending beyond. Appealing to viewers who believe in art's transformative power, McKay's works allow us to see our faith in art reflected back without judgment or intercession. Offering no political viewpoint and telling no story, but are a purely visual self-sustaining language that causes the viewer to consider the fabric of reality, the space/time construct, and the nature of perception.

As Deborah Colton, who has hosted exhibitions from many continents, including the Arab World states, "Art can touch the deepest depths of our souls and is a universal language which has the power to uplift and connect all of humankind. *Positive Perceptions* is a combination of many enlightened and sensitive artists who feel it is their responsibility in life to share their vision through their art to try to make a positive difference in the world. At the time of the ten year memorial of the September 11th 2001 tragedy, we felt it was important to do our small part to feature just a few of the millions of artists worldwide who feel this way".

Deborah Colton Gallery is founded on being an innovative showcase for ongoing presentation and promotion of strong historical and visionary contemporary artists world-wide, whose diverse practices include painting, works on paper, sculpture, video, photography, performance and conceptual future media installations.