

# NSU ART MUSEUM FORT LAUDERDALE

## Wish Upon a Tree

### At-Home Art Activity

Inspired by Yoko Ono's Wish Tree

Yoko Ono is a multimedia artist who was born in Toyko, Japan in 1933, and lives and works in New York, NY. She is one of the featured artists in NSU Art Museum's *Happy!* exhibition.

Yoko Ono's Wish Tree is a conceptual art installation that is an exercise in hopefulness that asks viewers to help fulfill its purpose. It consists of live native trees and encourages it's audience to participate by following Ono's simple instructions:

*Make a wish. Write it down on a piece of paper. Fold it and tie it around the branch of a Wish Tree. Ask a friend to do the same. Keep wishing until the branches are covered with wishes.*



Yoko Ono, Wish Tree, 1981-2019. Image Credit Downtown Photo.

# Art vocabulary:

**Art installation** - A three-dimensional visual artwork usually designed for a specific site or environment.

**Wood grain** - Visible, directional arrangement of wood fibers, which usually creates a vertical pattern. This growth pattern may be seen on many wooden objects.

**Wood knot** - An imperfection in wood grain, usually an irregular circle of abnormal wood, which was once the base connection of a branch to a tree trunk.

**Conceptual Art** - A form of art in which the idea or concept is more important than the finished object.

## Materials:

- Brown cardboard, cardstock or other stiff paper, no larger than 12"x16" for tree trunk
- Recycled cardboard tube from paper towels or wrapping paper
- Assorted colored paper for leaves and tags
- Black or dark marker or crayon
- Scissors (to be used with adult supervision)
- Tape
- Hole puncher
- White glue such as Elmer's or glue stick
- Thin string or ribbon
- A handful of pebbles, coins or small hardware such as nuts and bolts
- Covering for your work surface

## Instructions:

**Step 1** - Always use a protective cover for your work surface. Several layers of newspaper, brown paper or a plastic tablecloth work well. This step is especially important if you are using permanent makers that may bleed through your paper.



**Step 2** – On the cardboard or stiff paper of your choice, using marker or crayon, trace your non-dominant hand and arm with fingers spread, adding points to each finger. This may be difficult to do alone and you may need an assistant to help.



**Step 3** – When finished tracing your hand, add a few additional points or branches to your tree. Keep in mind to only add a few simple branches for an easier job cutting out later.



**Step 4** - Add a wood grain pattern to your tree by drawing a series of irregular vertical lines. The lines should not be perfect and can touch in places. Faux tree knots may also be added to your wood grain pattern by creating irregular or pointed spirals within your line patterns. There is no right or wrong way to do this, a pattern of scribble also makes a successful tree.





**Step 5** - Carefully cut your tree out. A good tip for cutting cardboard is to start on the outside edge of the board, cutting into the center of your design and then cut in from another angle, removing small pieces of excess cardboard as you go which is easier than constantly turning the scissors trying to cut continuously all the way around your design.



**Step 6** - Close off one end of a cardboard tube using tape in a crisscrossed pattern and secure it to the back of your tree using a combination of glue and tape. Be sure to position the closed end of the tube at the base of your tree.



**Step 7** - When the glue has dried fill the tube with a handful of change, pebbles or hardware to weight the base of your tree. This will enable the tree to stand upright on its own. Be sure not over fill the tube or it may become top heavy and tip over spilling its contents.



**Step 8** - Select colored paper to create leaves for your tree. You may wish to cut your paper into smaller portions and fold it one or two times so more than one leaf is produced at a time. Leaves should be any shape you wish and can be drawn first and then cut or just cut out free hand.



**Step 9** - Glue leaves to the branches of your tree using tiny dots of white glue or a glue stick.

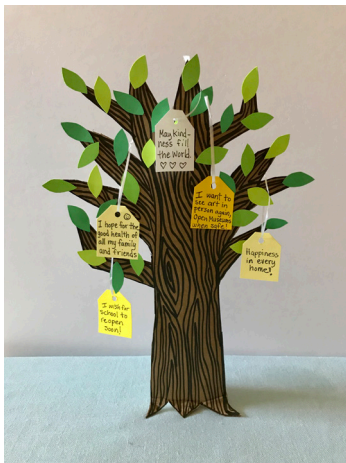


**Step 10** - Select colored paper to create tags on which to write your wishes. Cut your paper into small rectangles, no longer than 2 inches. Cut two corners off each of the rectangles. Feel free to make the tags any shape you like. Punch a hole in the end of each tag to tie strings or ribbons through.





**Step 11** - Write your wishes or positive thoughts for the future on the tags and then hang them on your tree. Keep a supply of tags handy to add more wishes to the tree each day!



### Variations and adaptations:

Make a Wish Tree in your yard or neighborhood by tying paper tags with wishes on an actual tree or bush. You may also use a house plant.



\*If you have any questions about these art activities  
please e-mail Sue at: [sgirardisw@moafl.org](mailto:sgirardisw@moafl.org)  
Now in her garage making art!

# We'd love to see your artwork!

## Take a photo and tag @nsuarmuseum



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