

Lennon exhibit rolls into Rock Hall

Yoko Ono will open display on life and work of late Beatle next Thursday in Cleveland

By Hank Inman
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Yoko Ono, widow of rock legend John Lennon, will celebrate her late husband's birthday next Thursday when she unveils an exhibit at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum honoring the former Beatle.

The exhibit, *Lennon: His Life and Work*, opens to the public on Oct. 20, and will be on display through next summer.

The Cleveland showing will be the only one in the United States.

Ono recently opened the John Lennon Museum in Yono, Japan, 15 miles north of Tokyo, in the corner of a huge sports complex.

Lennon would have turned 60 on Monday. He was killed on Dec. 8, 1980. Ono wanted the dates of the Japan opening and the Cleveland exhibit to have significance.

However, the recent decision in New York denying parole to Mark David Chapman, convicted of killing Lennon, was coincidental. On the heels of that decision, Ono told Japanese reporters: "Their decision is something I respect. I cannot say anything more than that, as I think you can imagine."

Ono, intent on perpetuating the Lennon legend, was more forthcoming on the Japanese museum and the Cleveland exhibit.

"John was a multi-faceted person, and I wanted to show this by showing the things he lived with and used," she told a news conference in Japan. "As I walked through the (Japanese) museum, I thought it was very expressive."

Ono said of the Cleveland exhibit, "John, the singer/songwriter in him, would have been especially pleased that the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum is doing this as a tribute. It's an honor he would have accepted with joy."

While the artifacts displayed permanently in Japan are similar to those scheduled for Cleveland, they are not on loan from Japan, said Jim Henke, head of the museum's curatorial and exhibitions department and curator of the exhibit.

"Yoko has just divided up some of them," said Henke. "Then after they've been on display here in Cleveland, it is my understanding that Yoko will keep them in New York."

The Cleveland exhibit contains such artifacts as the Steinway piano from Lennon's office in the Dakota apartment building in New York City; the bed used by Lennon and Ono; more than 10 of Lennon's guitars; original lyric manuscripts; and school report cards and other items from his childhood.

Displayed from Lennon's wardrobe will be the black leather jacket he wore when the Beatles performed in Hamburg, Germany, in 1960 and '61; the white tuxedo he wore in the film *Magical Mystery Tour*; the collarless Beatles jacket featured on the picture sleeve of *I Want to Hold Your Hand* and the denim jacket he frequently wore during the '70s.

Ono met Lennon in November 1966, at an art exhibit in London. An artist, she has been involved in exhibits since 1961. Her work is on display in galleries in East Hampton, N.Y., Detroit and in Spain.

While the Japanese museum and the Cleveland exhibit are official firsts for Lennon artifacts, there have been other similar showings of Beatle memorabilia. However, most haven't been successful.

Said Richard Porter, author and past-president of the London Beatles' fan club, "Beatle museums and exhibits, by-and-large, have not been good business ventures.

"There have been several attempts in the past 20 years, but most have failed – likely from bad marketing."
