

# Yoko's marquee moment

## The Cosmopolitan marquee becomes a vehicle for art on the Strip

Las Vegas Weekly : - Yoko's marquee moment

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Yoko Ono's "Imagine Peace" is one of three video art pieces currently playing on The Cosmopolitan's Strip marquee.

One June evening in 2007, Fremont Street was riddled with the usual buzz of drunken tourists, sightseers and blinking signs screaming dinner deals in a general carnival atmosphere.

Silently, almost stealthily, odd phrases in white letters appeared above on the Fremont Street canopy: "You are so complex that you don't always respond to danger" and "In a dream you saw a way to survive and you were full of joy." The expressions were created for the canopy by artist Jenny Holzer, brought to town by the Americans for the Arts, which held its annual conference in Las Vegas that year.

Few noticed. It was not the flashy song and dance of techno images choreographed to thunderous sounds. The phrases came and went quietly and included "Protect me from what I want," a Holzer aphorism that famously appeared on a sign in front of Caesars Palace in 1986. Counter to the bombastic chatter of Las Vegas tourism, it was an offering, a pause for anyone who might notice. (Holzer now has a large permanent installation in a valet area at CityCenter.)



Photo: [Kristen Peterson](#)

Jenny Holzer's 2007 Fremont Street display went, literally, over the heads of most tourists.

Jump to 2010. The Cosmopolitan, slated to open in December, has begun "Pause," an art program in collaboration with New York's nonprofit Art Production Fund, that displays artwork on its marquee. It's currently showing Yoko Ono's "Imagine Peace" and two nature videos by T.J. Wilcox.



Photo: Glenn Pinkerton

Photo: Las Vegas News Bureau

### Yoko Ono's "Imagine Peace"

In Ono's video, the words "Imagine Peace," in gray letters, appear in various languages; when it gets to English, the words turn black.

Wilcox's videos feature a girl discovering a turtle in a pool, and the artist making pear brandy in his backyard. Both are from the film, "L'eau de Vie" that connects a trio of stories using the theme of water. Those works will be on display through Sept. 30. Cosmopolitan's marketing team will work with the Art Production Fund to curate the marquee installations.

"The choice to display public art on the marquee is distinctive and unexpected and creates a moment for someone walking down the street to smile or just pause," says John Unwin, CEO of The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas. "We want to be the brand that gives you that moment. Of course, we will leverage the marquee as a vehicle to market the property but we are going to do it in a fundamentally different way."

The project is one of many art endeavors that Cosmopolitan is undertaking.

Representatives say the property will incorporate more visual art (including new media), music, performance and design and will include "Art-o-mat" machines that will sell original works of art "on the go."

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