

MOUSSE

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Ugo Rondinone “I ♥ John Giorno” at various venues, New York

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Angela Bulloch and Anne Collier Giorno Poetry Systems, Ugo Rondinone “I ♥ John Giorno” at White Columns, 2017

Ugo Rondinone: I ♥ John Giorno—the first major U.S. exhibition about the American poet, artist, activist and muse John Giorno—has opened simultaneously across 13 locations in New York City. I ♥ John Giorno is a work of art by Giorno’s husband, the Swiss artist Ugo Rondinone. The exhibition is a celebration of the life and work of John Giorno—an artist whose work has influenced generations. Taking place in his chosen hometown, the exhibition affords a unique opportunity for Giorno’s contributions to be recognized within the canons of American poetry and art history, and celebrates the artist’s 80th birth-year.

I ♥ John Giorno is an unprecedented collaboration between leading non-profit and alternative spaces across New York, which are joining forces for the first time to mount a multilayered exhibition on a single subject. Partner venues include: Artists Space, High Line Art, How! Happening, Hunter College Art Galleries, The Kitchen, New Museum, Red Bull Arts New York, Rubin Museum of Art, Sky Art, Swiss Institute, White Columns, and 80WSE Gallery. Reconfigured as a festival, including installations in galleries and public spaces, as well as a full roster of public programs and events, I ♥ John Giorno is free and open to the public.

Expanding upon the exhibition that took place at Palais de Tokyo in Paris from October 2015 to January 2016, *I ♥ John Giorno* has been re-conceptualized specifically for New York, highlighting Giorno's significant relationship with the city, and his singular role in creating and fostering community here. The 18-part exhibition has been divided by Rondinone into chapters reflecting the layers of Giorno's life and work, his longstanding influence on and dedication to his chosen hometown of New York City, and his relationships with artist friends, lovers and collaborators including: Richard Bosman, Phong Bui, Angela Bulloch, Anne Collier, Verne Dawson, Judith Eisler, John Giorno, Mark Handforth, Matthew Higgs, Pierre Huyghe, Françoise Janicot, Scott King, Elizabeth Peyton, Ugo Rondinone, Erik Satie, Kendall Shaw, Michael Stipe, Billy Sullivan, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Peter Ungerleider, Joan Wallace, and Andy Warhol, whose work will be presented as part of the festival.

The exhibition format echoes the symbiotic relationship between Ugo Rondinone and John Giorno, who have been both partners and collaborators for the past two decades. Rondinone describes the show saying: "*I ♥ John Giorno* is a kaleidoscopic exhibition about the life and work of American poet and Tibetan Buddhist John Giorno, whose rich and stimulating life has woven many threads of American culture and spirituality. Within the dreamscape of the exhibition, one is invited to wander through the juxtaposed realm of art and poetry where image and language build upon themselves in a layered stream of consciousness driven by the biographical, the conceptual, and the emotional."

On view at Sky Art is Ugo Rondinone's *THANX 4 NOTHING* (2011), a video work in which Giorno reads his poem of the same name, declaring: "I give enormous thanks to all my lovers, / beautiful men with brilliant minds, / great artists, / Bob, Jasper, Ugo, / may they come here now / and make love to you." Written on his 70th birthday, this work reflects on his life with gratitude, mixing biting irony with Buddhist wisdom. Sky Art will also display the archive of *john giorno* (1936- ongoing), which is a facsimile of Giorno's original archive that includes over 12,000 texts, photos, and documents across his private and artistic life.

In addition to work by Giorno's partner, Ugo Rondinone, the exhibition features works by peers that have looked to Giorno as a muse. Highlights include: Andy Warhol's iconic *Sleep* (1963) accompanied by Erik Satie's *42 Vexations* (1893) at Swiss Institute, which features Giorno sleeping for five hours and twenty minutes; Pierre Huyghe's *Sleeptalking* (1998) at Howl! Happening, filmed 35 years after Warhol's *Sleep* on the same bed; and Michael Stipe's *We All Go Back To Where We Belong* (2011) at High Line Art, a video portrait of John Giorno made in the style of Andy Warhol's *Screen Tests*. Additional portraits of Giorno by artists including Phong Bui, Verne Dawson, Judith Eisler, Elizabeth Peyton, and Billy Sullivan will be shown at White Columns; while Kendall Shaw's paintings and photographs of Giorno dancing will be shown at The Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Gallery at Hunter College. Also on view there will be "*Grasping at Emptiness*," a collaboration with Richard Bosman that pairs his drawings with Giorno's eponymous poem. Rirkrit Tiravanija's piece *JG Reads* (2008), a replica of Giorno's Bowery studio, inside of which is projected film of Giorno performing his poetry, memoirs, and music accompanied by a bench by Mark Handforth, will be shown at The Kitchen. In addition to a sculptural portrait work by Joan Wallace, over 80 photos of Giorno's life on stage between 1974-1999 taken by Françoise Janicot, who traveled to performance and poetry festivals around the world documenting Giorno, will also be on view at The Kitchen.

A leading member of the Beat Generation of poets, Giorno revived the genre of 'found poetry' and worked to make poetry accessible through viral strategies. His *Dial-A-Poem*, an iconic work of art that anticipated mass media communication and the commercial success of hotlines, will be reactivated and on view at Red Bull Arts New York. First staged at the Architectural League in 1969, and again at MoMA in 1971, *Dial-A-Poem* uses phone lines connected to answering machines, allowing anyone to

call in and listen to prerecorded poems by William S. Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Joe Brainard, Anne Waldman, and John Cage, to name a few. Giorno's sound poems—made with sound engineer Bob Bielecki and representative of his pioneering work in experimental electronic audio—will also be presented along with songs from The John Giorno Band, which Red Bull Arts New York will release as an LP. A vast collection of works by Giorno Poetry Systems, the nonprofit and record label John founded in 1965 as a means of distributing poetry and performance recordings, will be available for listening at White Columns. Visitors can sit in bean bag chairs designed by Angela Bulloch, accompanied by slideshows by Anne Collier made using the albums as source material.

Tibetan Buddhism has long informed Giorno's life and art. Following his travels to India throughout the 1970s Giorno became a disciple of Dudjom Rinpoche, and actively helped to grow his Nyingmapa lineage in the United States. A curated group of thankga paintings will be on view at the 205 Hudson Gallery at Hunter College, selected by Giorno from the Rubin Museum of Art collection. These works will be paired with Giorno's personal shrine, relocated from his home to the gallery space, as well as weekly teachings by a Lama of the Nyingmapa lineage. Also on view at Hunter College will be documentation of Giorno's AIDS Treatment Project which organized benefit concerts and sold LP series by Allen Ginsberg, Patti Smith, Laurie Anderson and more, in order to provide direct cash grants, "given with love and affection" as described by Giorno, for emergency situations to patients living with AIDS. Peter Ungerleider's film "Loving Kindness" that documents Giorno's initiative amidst his larger musings on death within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition will also be on view.

In an ode to the iconic "I ♥ NY" logo, Scott King's graphic identity for the festival uniquely celebrates the life of Giorno as a New York icon. The logo of the exhibition's title will be on view throughout New York City, with notable locations including the Washington Square Park facing windows of 8OWSE and the lobby of the New Museum.

Readings, performances and discussions throughout the summer will be organized by Artists Space, including poetry performances from Giorno's vast oeuvre as well as talks and symposia providing critical and historical contextualization for his work and its influence on other poets and artists. The Brooklyn Rail will dedicate their summer issue to the exhibition which will be guest edited by Laura Hoptman and Monica de la Torre.

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