



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## JOHN GIORNO

### *Perfect Flowers*

September 20-November 4, 2017

Reception for the artist: Tuesday, September 19, 6-8pm

Elizabeth Dee is pleased to present the first show of the gallery's second season uptown, the highly anticipated exhibition of John Giorno's latest work, *Perfect Flowers*. This exhibition, occupying the entire building on two floors, is the largest overview to date of new work by the legendary artist, performer and poet. *Perfect Flowers* introduces twenty-five original compositions on the theme, expressed in metaphorical dimensions that illuminate the physical senses. Occupying the ground floor gallery, these works on canvas can be combined and read in multiple contexts from different points in space.

Giorno's show, over two years in the making, marks a high creative period for the artist's visual practice. The *Perfect Flowers* series explores new content that the artist began working on in the early 2000s, expanding on previously known lines and cadences around the topic. The result is a series of luminous new paintings with enriched surfaces that elevate the artist's recent writings.

Additionally, the continuation of the exhibition on the second floor will be devoted to graphic works on paper in two site-specific installations. The watercolors highlight the chromatic diversity and illuminate the attitudinal content in Giorno's boundary crossing works. In contrast, the graphite works in the adjacent gallery are smaller and more intimate. They employ handwriting on themes past and present, evoking a quality of line that is both raw and intensely energetic.

Following the conclusion of *UGO RONDINONE: I ♥ JOHN GIORNO*, the successful multi-venue retrospective collaboration in New York this year, *John Giorno: Perfect Flowers*, further focuses on a spectrum of the artist's ongoing and new directions. Works as exquisite and cutting as *CHERRY BLOSSOMS ARE RAZOR BLADES*, *CARNATIONS GLORIOUSLY SELF-SERVING* and *SNOW DAHLIAS SHARP AS CAT PISS*, provoke and acknowledge earlier subtexts in the work in new compositions, such as, *I WANT TO CUM IN YOUR HEART*, *BAD NEWS IS ALWAYS TRUE* or *GOD IS MAN MADE*. The frankness of Giorno's communication is at play, as it translates differently each time it is seen, heard or spoken in a rapidly evolving political and social landscape.

John Giorno's history and influence is well documented. Central to the visual and literary scenes,

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# ELIZABETH DEE

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he counted William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Rauschenberg and Andy Warhol as his closest collaborators. Meetings in the early 1960s with William Burroughs and Brion Gysin not only furthered his interest in applying cut up and montage techniques to found texts but also inspired his first audio poem pieces.

Touring rock clubs in the 1970s with Burroughs, Giorno continued to develop an amplified, confrontational performance poetry that has been the subject of his visual practice. In 1982 he made the album *Who Are You Staring At?* with Glenn Branca and was prominently featured in Ron Mann's 1982 film *Poetry in Motion*. He stopped using found elements in his poetry in the early 1980s, and has since pursued a kind of experimental realism, incantatory and repetitive yet lyrical.

In 1965, he founded Giorno Poetry Systems, a nonprofit production company designed to introduce new, innovative poetry to wider audiences. In 1967, Giorno called upon fellow artists, including William S. Burroughs, Frank O'Hara, Patti Smith, John Ashbery, Ted Berrigan, John Cage, Gary Snyder, Vito Acconci, Laurie Anderson and Philip Glass to record poems for his Dial-a-Poem project, which used the telephone to connect listeners to recordings of poems. Dial-a-Poem received considerable critical acclaim in the 1970 exhibition *Information* at The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Marcus Boon writes in his forward to *Subduing Demons In America*, a comprehensive selection of Giorno's poetry from 1962-2007: "In the age of sampling cut and paste, digital manipulation of text, appropriation as an art form—which finds its peak in hip-hop and the textual orgy of the [internet]—the world is finally catching up with techniques and styles that Giorno pioneered several decades ago."

For more information, please contact the gallery at +1.212.924.7545 or Florence Lynch at [florence@elizabethdee.com](mailto:florence@elizabethdee.com).

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