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DAZED

Artist and poet John Giorno's iconic Dial-A-Poem project arrives in the UK

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By Thom Waite



Photo Gianfranco Mantegna, via
Instagram/@giornofoundation

Callers can dial in to hear work by Patti Smith, Robert Mapplethorpe, William Burroughs, Debbie Harry, and many more

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Text Thom Waite

Dial-A-Poem, the seminal project from the New York artist and poet John Giorno, has officially arrived in the UK, alongside a new London exhibition. First launched in 1968 after a conversation with William Burroughs, the ongoing project allows callers to access an archive of poetry and political tracts by dialing in from their own phone.

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The new, UK version of the phone service comes alongside an exhibition of the late artist's works at London's Almine Rech gallery, which features two collections of visual art titled *Rainbow* (2015) and *Perfect Flowers* (2017).

Previously, the long-running Dial-A-Poem service could be found via a US phone number — which provided a delightful distraction in lieu of IRL art shows during lockdown, if you were willing to pay the international calling charges — but has now been extended to a UK phone number, free of charge to local callers (see below).

Access was developed alongside the New York-based John Giorno Foundation, with the foundation's director, Elizabeth Dee, telling the *Art Newspaper*: "Initially it was a challenge. We've had to re-code all of the files." She adds: "The plan is for the phone line to be active long term. John was always at the forefront of technology."