ALMINE RECH

John Giorno
a labour of LOVE

Mar 15 — Apr 13, 2025 | Triennale Milano, Italy

From March 15 to April 13, 2025, Triennale Milano is presenting the exhibition 'John Giorno: a labour of LOVE' curated by Nicola Ricciardi with Eleonora Molignani and the support of Giorno Poetry Systems. The exhibition explores various different forms of friendship, interaction and support within the world of culture through materials drawn from the extensive archives of the American artist John Giorno (1936-2019). A poet who had a profound impact and a performer with an imposing dramatic presence, Giorno spanned sixty years of history and culture — from the Beat Generation to AIDS activism, taking in Andy Warhol's Factory and Robert Rauschenberg's Experiments in Art and Technology — leaving his own mark each time and elevating the spoken word into an art form.

Inspired by among friends, the curatorial theme for the 29th edition of miart, the international modern and contemporary art fair organized by Fiera Milano, the exhibition brings together a selection of about 100 documents made available by Giorno Poetry Systems (GPS), the no-profit organization founded by Giorno in 1965 to support artists, poets and musicians, that now supervises the artist's legacy and his extensive archives. The documents reveal traces of Giorno's many friendships and collaborations with some of the most significant figures in the world of 20th century art, literature and music: William S. Burroughs, John Cage, Allen Ginsberg, Keith Haring, Allan Kaprow, Jasper Johns, Patti Smith and Michael Stipe, to mention just a few, as well as Rauschenberg and Warhol referred to above.

In Cuore – the Research, study and archives center at Triennale Milano – visitors will be able to view first editions of Giorno’s volumes of poetry, LPs released under the GPS Records label, and previously unexhibited documents concerning Giorno’s relationship with Rauschenberg and many other friends and colleagues. There will also be a range of posters, private correspondence, contracts, archive film clips and original leaflets regarding public events involving poetry, the AIDS Treatment Project and other experiences from the 1960s and ‘70s.

The selection also includes *Dial-A-Poem*, the iconic and interactive work through which the artist made the voices of poets, artists and musicians reading their poems available through the telephone line for the first time. Originally launched in 1968 and now in the MoMA permanent collection in New York, *Dial-A-Poem* evolved and expanded over time, and includes hundreds of recordings that visitors can listen to by just picking up a telephone receiver that is accessible to all.

The exhibition design, curated by EX. (the design laboratory established by Andrea Cassi and Michele Versaci), has created a light and reversible display designed to involve both art enthusiasts and casual visitors, with the aim of making John Giorno: a labour of LOVE a platform that is always active, welcoming and free, so that visitors can discover and explore Giorno's enduring relevance in our contemporary debate.

Finally, an installation of John Giorno's paintings, presented on the Scalone d'Onore (the Grand Staircase) at Triennale, further emphasizes the artist's ability to liberate poetry from the limitations of the page, transporting it into the field of the visual arts. Here, a selection of his colorful "Perfect Flowers" emerges from a monumental mural displaying some of Giorno's best known lines of poetry.

The curator wishes to thank Fiera Milano, Massimo Giorgetti (MSGM), and Enzo Nembrini (Ecoedile) for their support; their involvement — in keeping with the principles of the miart 2025 theme — reaffirms the importance of a genuine support network involving institutions, fairs, patrons, artists, curators, entrepreneurs and galleries, maintained through the desire to consolidate the activities and cohesion of Milan's cultural system.
Our Institutional Partners Deloitte and Fondazione Deloitte, Lavazza Group and Salone del Mobile.Milano are again supporting Triennale Milano with this exhibition.