ALMINE RECH

John Giorno
I □ JOHN GIORNO

Jun 21 — Aug 30, 2017 | 80WSE Gallery, Artists Space, High Line Art, Howl! Happening, Hunter College Art Galleries, The Kitchen, New Museum, Red Bull Arts New York, Rubin Museum of Art, Sky Art, Swiss Institute, and White Columns New York

'I <3 John Giorno' is a sprawling, multi-part exhibition that presents the extraordinary life and work of the poet, artist, activist and muse, John Giorno. Encompassing thirteen venues around Manhattan and featuring paintings, films, sound installations, drawings, archival presentations, and a video environment, this retrospective includes work both by Giorno himself, as well as work that he has inspired.

'I <3✌ John Giorno' is also a work of art by Giorno's husband, the Swiss artist Ugo Rondinone, who has been creating sculptures, paintings, drawings and multi-media installations for almost three decades. With this project, Rondinone presents a prismatic portrait assembled from thoughtful arrangements of the materials, experiences and relationships that have defined Giorno's astonishingly wide-ranging artistic career. Foremost, though, the project is a joyous celebration of
Giorno's ubiquitous presence in contemporary culture, as well as his myriad contributions to it.

'I <3 John Giorno', is the latest, and by far, the most ambitious collaboration of Giorno's career. The project unfolds in eighteen chapters, each a distinct exhibition sited in a non-profit or alternative space in Manhattan. Every chapter takes the form of an immersive installation designed by Rondinone and dedicated to a body of work, an interest, a relationship, or a collaboration that has marked Giorno's life. This includes his poetry, painting, sound work and performance; his recording projects, and his founding of Giorno Poetry Systems; his AIDS activism; his Tibetan Buddhism and his vast personal archive that comprises a history of radical art and poetry in New York during the second half of the twentieth century. Several installations feature portraits
of Giorno by different generations of filmmakers, painters, videographers, and musicians. One consists of a single work; a multi-channel video installation by Rondinone consisting of multiple images of Giorno performing one of his recent epic poems.

Ugo Rondinone: I ✌✌ John Giorno is a unique artistic and curatorial experiment. The cooperation between so many disparate nonprofit and alternative institutions in New York in the presentation of a single project is similarly unprecedented. The singularity of this monumental hybrid of artwork and exhibition is testament to the breadth, variation, and longevity of Giorno's ongoing career, as well as Rondinone's artistic vision. Those lucky or stalwart enough to visit all eighteen chapters of the exhibition will come away with an idea of both of these artists' achievements. In its size and ambition, *I ✌✌ John Giorno* can be seen as a citywide work of public art. At the same time, it is an intimate expression of love and inspiration between two artist partners. It is an astonishing gesture of love on Giorno's part to give the sum total of his life's work to Rondinone as material for his own artwork. Perhaps it is equal only to Rondinone's conception of an artwork as big as Manhattan to do justice to that gift.

Laura Hoptman