

ALMINE RECH GALLERY

JOHN GIORNO — PAINTINGS

14.09 — 12.10.12 / Paris

Almine Rech Gallery is pleased to present the third solo exhibition of John Giorno.

John Giorno was born in New York in 1936. He was recently the subject of a solo exhibition, entitled *'Thanx 4 Nothing'* at the Faux Mouvement Centre d'Art contemporain in Metz. In 2010, he produced the *'Diagonales'* exhibition at the Centre National des Arts Plastiques in Puteaux and *'Sonopoetics (de la parole à l'image, de la poésie au son)'** at the Institut supérieur pour l'Etude du Langage Plastique in Brussels.

John Giorno assigns the divine, the sacred and the pragmatic to the poet's function. His work embraces two disciplines: poetry and art, which have been a source of mutual fascination and inspiration for centuries. His paintings *'Poem Paintings'* with their strong vibratory intensity, are excerpts from his poems, phrases that have continually haunted him, *'Thanx 4 Nothing'*, *'Don't wait for anything'*, *'I resigned myself to being here'*. The canvases of this New York icon move comfortably from punchy black and white works to watercolours in all hues of the rainbow, and vary from the large format to the smaller and more intimate square piece. The word alone has the right to quote or to challenge in his oeuvre. After liberating poetry from its shackles from the very start of his artistic career, thanks to the Giorno Poetry System and projects such as *'Dial A Poem'*, which allowed the public access to poetry readings by a mere phone call, John Giorno continues to push until he tears the very limits of his own art. It is almost impossible to evoke Giorno's work without speaking of his encounters, of the eras he traversed, of the Holy Trinity of Warhol, Johns and Rauschenberg, whom he knew intimately. Giorno was in fact the subject of Warhol's 1963 film *'Sleep'*. The artists that formed his entourage fuelled his desire to reinvent poetry. *'I want to cum in your heart'*, *'Eating the sky'*, *'I want it to rain for the rest of my life'*. These phrases find their inspiration among the founding fathers of the Beat Generation; Burroughs, Ginsberg, Gysin, of whom Giorno is the last messenger, both at the heart of the New York underground rock movement and Tibetan Buddhist meditation, of which he is an avid practitioner. For Giorno, the concept of artistic medium seems to be incidental: almost nothing seems to stop this great preacher in his pursuit of sound, rhythm and the absolute image.