

Thanx 4 Nothing

JOHN GIORNO

Exhibition, performances and readings

May/June 2009

Exhibition: May 1st – June 27th 2009

Preview from 6pm on May 1st as part of *Gallery Weekend Berlin*

Performance by John Giorno on Saturday 6th June at 7pm

Events at the gallery

Friday May 15th at 7pm

Reading by **Thomas Kapielski** - *Kunst ist schlimmer als Heimweh!* Texte in, um und um Kunst herum

Friday May 29th at 7pm

Reading by **Ann Cotton** – Concrete Poetry

Saturday June 6th at 7pm

Live Poetry by **John Giorno + Allroh** (Sitar and Singing)

Friday June 12th at 7pm

“Keine gute Tat bleibt ungestraft” (No good deed goes unpunished) – Giorno in German.

Saturday June 27th at 8pm

An evening of discussion with **Thomas Marquard**

Closing event: *Deutschfranzösischelektronischund-acappellapoetry* a performance by **Céline Robinet, aka KcoSónia**

To accompany the exhibition of *Poem Prints* and drawings by the artist and performance poet John Giorno, the Jordan Seydoux Galerie is proud to present a series of events entitled *Thanx 4 Nothing*. The exhibition opened on May 1st as part of the *Gallery Weekend Berlin* and will play host to special events until it ends on June 27th. A live poetry performance with the New Yorker artist on June 6th is the centrepiece of the series. Giorno is one of the original pioneers of Live Poetry and has travelled on tour all over the world since the beginning of the seventies.

With his *Poem Prints*, Giorno succeeded in extending the trans-genre scope of art prints and consciously giving artistic ideas a broader means of expression, beyond the limits of the spoken word. The exhibition will display these prints, created in Paris in 2005, for the first time in Berlin, alongside a selection of new drawings by the artist: "Catch a falling Knife", "Eating the Sky", "You have to burn to shine" ... Giorno's works begin as an extract from his poetry but free themselves on paper, released from their original poetic context.

The programme features readings, performances and discussions in which the artists and authors Thomas Kapielski, Ann Cotton, Céline Robinet and John Giorno's German translator Thomas Marquard, will offer a range of perspectives on Giorno's graphic work.

The series *Thanx 4 Nothing* also marks the first anniversary of the Jordan Seydoux Galerie's opening. The organisers are proud to be able to present the first exhibition in Berlin devoted to the graphic work of John Giorno since 1992, and to be making it possible for Berlin's inhabitants and its many visitors to experience the artist up-close. The visit of this multi-talented artist constitutes a rare and significant high point in the town's cultural life.

JORDAN SEYDOUX – Drawings & Prints
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John Giorno, born in 1936 in Roslyn, Long Island, New York, Giorno knew, even at the age of fourteen, that he would become a poet. Since moving to Manhattan in 1955, he has become one of the most brilliant and influential personalities of the New York cultural scene. His career has spanned more than half a century and he remains prolifically productive today. While in search of his own voice, he was inspired by pop music and the Beat poets, and he developed close friendships with Andy Warhol, Allen Ginsberg, William S Burroughs, Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns and other eminent artists in the 1950s and '60s as he resolved to set about a radical and fundamental renewal of poetry by channelling its presentation into new forms. Like hardly any other before him, he has revelled in the role of the unconventional poet as a new medium of communicating revelation, provocation, divine inspiration, political agitation and social responsibility. He completed trend-setting and boundary-breaking art projects such as *Giorno Poetry Systems*, *Dial-a-Poem* and the *AIDS Treatment Project*.

1965 saw the foundation of *Giorno Poetry Systems*, in which Giorno uses innovative technical solutions in order to expand the scope of his poetry. He made recordings of texts, adding music to poetry to create a disorienting effect, and managed to reach a whole new audience through entirely novel performance spaces. During the *Giorno Poetry System* over 40 LPs and CDs of poems and texts with music were recorded, and often arranged and produced as live performances. Numerous videos of unusual short films and recordings of his performances were also created.

Dial-a-Poem was another of Giorno's ideas born in 1968: dial a number on the phone and hear a poet performing a poem. The concept was adapted in several cities and became known around the world.

The *Aids Treatment Project* was begun in 1984, long before AIDS became a common topic to address in public. It constituted John Giorno's passionate and early attempt to cement the tragedy of AIDS in the public consciousness.

Thomas Kapielski, born in Berlin in 1951, a former student of literature, physical geography and philosophy, now a writer, artist, musician and lecturer, lives in Berlin. His works "Davor kommt noch. Gottesbeweise IX-XIII" (1998) and "Danach war schon. Gottesbeweise I-VIII" (1999) ("Proofs of God's existence I-XII") transformed him from a little-known writer to one with cult status. In 1999 he was awarded the Ben-Witter Prize and the Sprengel Prize for fine arts. The jury praised the author as "a universal, philosophical spirit, a knave with a baroque wit and sharp sense of humour, which laconically captures the unnoticed absurdity of daily life with no respect for conventional genre boundaries". In 2009 his book "Mischwald" ("Mixed Wood") was published by Suhrkamp, while "Ortskunde. Eine kleine Geosophie" was published by Urs Engeler.

Ann Cotten, born in Iowa in 1982, moved to Vienna in 1987 and has lived in Berlin since 2006. She studied German literature and graduated with a dissertation on concrete poetry. Her first book is "Fremdwoerterbuchsonnette" ("Foreign Word sonnet"). In 2007, her debut work was awarded the Reinhard-Priessnitz Prize, and in 2008 she received the George-Saiko travel scholarship and the Clemens Brentano funding prize for literature in Heidelberg.

Thomas Marquard was born in Berlin in 1953. He works as a teacher and devotes his free time to music and translating several well-known authors, such as John Giorno, Robin Blaser and Emmette Williams. On June 12th he will hold a talk in the gallery about Giorno's subversive influence on poetry and culture, and elaborate on the "history of networks" which Giorno has belonged to over more than 40 years of artistic creation.

Céline Robinet was born in France in 1977. She has published two collections of short stories and among the many collective volumes featuring her work is an anthology of slam poetry in France. A writer, journalist, translator and spoken word performer, Céline Robinet struggles to give each word the right nuance with intelligence and humour, as if her soul's salvation were at stake. Embracing formal virtuosity, stylistic boldness and wordplay, her writing is by turns poetic, serious, absurd, funny and unashamedly trash. Céline Robinet lives and works in Berlin.

With the kind support of Zitty, Literaturen and Exberliner.

For further information and pictures, please contact Amélie Seydoux at galerie@jordan-seydoux.com.