

john giorno

*life is a killer*

august 29— october 10,  
2026

opening  
august 29, 1— 4 pm

kurimanzutto  
gob. rafael rebollar 94  
col. san miguel chapultepec  
11850 mexico city

tue – thur, 11am – 6pm  
fri & sat, 11am – 4pm

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kurimanzutto and Giorno Poetry Systems present *John Giorno: LIFE IS A KILLER*, the artist's first solo exhibition in Mexico City.

Mexico City, August 2026 — kurimanzutto, in collaboration with Giorno Poetry Systems (GPS), presents *John Giorno: LIFE IS A KILLER*, the first solo exhibition in Mexico City dedicated to the pioneering American artist, poet, and activist John Giorno (1936–2019). On view from August 29 to October 10, 2026, the exhibition brings together paintings, works on paper, sound, film, performance, and archival material to explore how Giorno transformed poetry from something we read on the page into something we experience across visual art, sound, performance, and public life.

Spanning more than five decades of Giorno's multidisciplinary practice, *LIFE IS A KILLER* explores an artist who continually reimagined the possibilities of language. Moving between poetry, painting, sound, performance, and recording, the exhibition reveals how Giorno challenged conventional distinctions between artistic disciplines, transforming poems into visual, spatial, and collective experiences.

Taking its title from one of Giorno's most iconic recurring poetic statements, the exhibition is a testament to the idea that poetry is not a fixed concept. Instead, it acquires new meaning each time it is reimagined through a new medium, voice, or encounter. At the core of the exhibition are his celebrated *Poem Paintings*, which can be seen alongside monumental wall works, immersive listening environments, film, archival materials, and participatory installations. Seen together, these works invite audiences to experience poetry as something that can be seen, spoken, heard, performed, read, translated, and shared.

The gallery's project room presents **Tiravanija's *untitled 2008 (john giorno reads)* (2008)**. Filmed over several days at Giorno's home at 222 Bowery in New York, the ten-hour film follows the artist performing poems, memoirs, and music spanning five decades of his career. It reflects the longstanding friendship and creative dialogue between the two artists while preserving the vitality of Giorno's performances. It also offers visitors an intimate glimpse into where Giorno lived, worked, and performed.

The exhibition marks the first major presentation of Giorno's work in Mexico, bringing his multidisciplinary

practice into dialogue with one of Latin America's most vibrant galleries for contemporary art, poetry, independent publishing, and performance. Rather than simply introducing Giorno's work to Mexican audiences, the exhibition creates new opportunities for dialogue between his practice and the city's rich literary, artistic, and cultural communities, reaffirming a longstanding tradition of experimentation, collective practice, and cross-cultural exchange, which both kurimanzutto and the artist also have in common.

John Giorno was a defining artistic voice of the twentieth century. His practice challenged institutional boundaries while amplifying artists, poets, and experimental voices that were often overlooked by mainstream arts and cultural institutions. In 1965, he founded **Giorno Poetry Systems (GPS)**, the nonprofit organization that continues to preserve and advance his legacy. He then launched *Dial-A-Poem*, the pioneering public art project that made poetry accessible to hundreds of thousands of people by telephone. Today, his groundbreaking legacy continues to influence generations of artists working across disciplines. As an openly gay artist and an outspoken advocate for LGBTQIA+ rights and visibility, Giorno was also a committed HIV/AIDS activist. He firmly believed that art could foster empathy, solidarity, and collective action.

**Public programming** forms an integral part of the exhibition, extending Giorno's practice beyond the gallery through readings, performances, workshops, and conversations with artists, poets, and cultural organizations across Mexico City. These events continue Giorno's collaborative model by inviting new audiences to experience poetry as a collective act of exchange.

Highlights include a poetry translation project developed in partnership with **La Americana** bookstore. The project brings together poets, editors, and translators to create new Spanish translations of Giorno's work. These workshops will culminate in live performances at kurimanzutto, broadcasts on Montez Press Radio, and a zine produced by La Americana and kurimanzutto libros. These include readings, performances, exhibition tours, and public events, which will further position *LIFE IS A KILLER* as a living platform for artistic exchange and cultural participation.

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On September 9, Giorno Poetry Systems will also activate its historic headquarters at 222 Bowery in New York with a live performance by artist **Abraham Cruzvillegas** and performer **La Bruja de Texcoco**, extending dialogue between Mexico City and New York while reflecting the international community of artists, writers, and performers that Giorno cultivated throughout his life through GPS.

More than six years after his death, Giorno's work continues to resonate today. At a time when collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and collective authorship have become defining pillars of contemporary art, *LIFE IS A KILLER* demonstrates the enduring relevance of Giorno's practice and its ability to connect artists, writers, and audiences across cultures, languages, and generations.

*John Giorno: LIFE IS A KILLER* is a testament to Giorno's lifelong commitment to expanding poetry beyond the page and into public life. It creates new opportunities for participation, collaboration, and cultural exchange, extending Giorno's legacy into new contexts while reaffirming poetry as a living, collective, and continually evolving art form.

For media inquiries:

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(Mebrak Tareke and Adriana Gil)

Click [HERE](#) to view the press kit.

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#LifeisaKiller