

Low
John Garcia
February 26 - April 6, 2024
Del Vaz Projects

Del Vaz Projects is pleased to present *Low*, the Los Angeles solo exhibition debut by poet, painter, and graffiti artist John Garcia. With *Low*, Garcia, who has become known for his highly-choreographed and spatially-coded text-based interventions on marginalized urban infrastructure and detritus, continues his quest towards the (structural) limits of language, the body, and architecture through a contemplation on Devotion, not only the act but also the word itself.

Through a wide-ranging practice that includes music, figurative painting, graffiti, and writing, Garcia attempts to divide the psychic and psychological experience of desire into two vials—that of pleasure and that of poison. For Garcia this endeavor is not only a way of tackling a contemporary prejudice of the emotional and contempt for love, but also an effort to arrest and exorcize its agony.

In *Eros the Bittersweet*, Anne Carson charges this agony to the existence of boundaries, specifically to the boundary of flesh and self between lover and the beloved. “It is the edge separating my tongue from the taste for which it longs that teaches me what an edge is,” she writes. For Carson, the real subject of love poems is not the beloved but rather the indissoluble boundary between lover and beloved, the edge, “that hole.” If the edge teaches the tongue what desire is, then what better than a vial of poison to lose the edges of your body?

Unlike the love poems Carson is alluding to however, Garcia’s poems are not only an attempt to reach the edge between lover and beloved, but also an endeavor to reach the edge of language itself. This analogous exploration to the limits of language and one’s self is foundational to Garcia’s praxis, whose text-based interventions never exceed four or five words. At times words are left isolated and at times Garcia tightly stitches them back together into bricolage poems that potentiate instability and fragility in various structural systems, whether linguistic, spatial, or corporeal.

Garcia begins composing his trance poems by lifting from a word bank notebook and responding to the surface of his chosen intervention, be it shower wall (*SANITY WASH*); agricultural observation tower (*COLD FIRES*); or gallery wall (*BODY EXILE*). Here, the units of composition are words, not phrases. Throughout these works, Garcia often employs a manipulated forced perspective, or reverse anamorphic technique, where words appear flat and unaffected from afar but become stretched, enlarged, or fractured as a viewer approaches them.

For *Low* at Del Vaz Projects, Garcia has composed three poems, each painted on oversized mirror, on the subject of (chronic) devotion:

*RELIEF OF
MERCY
FORGIVENESS
FURY*

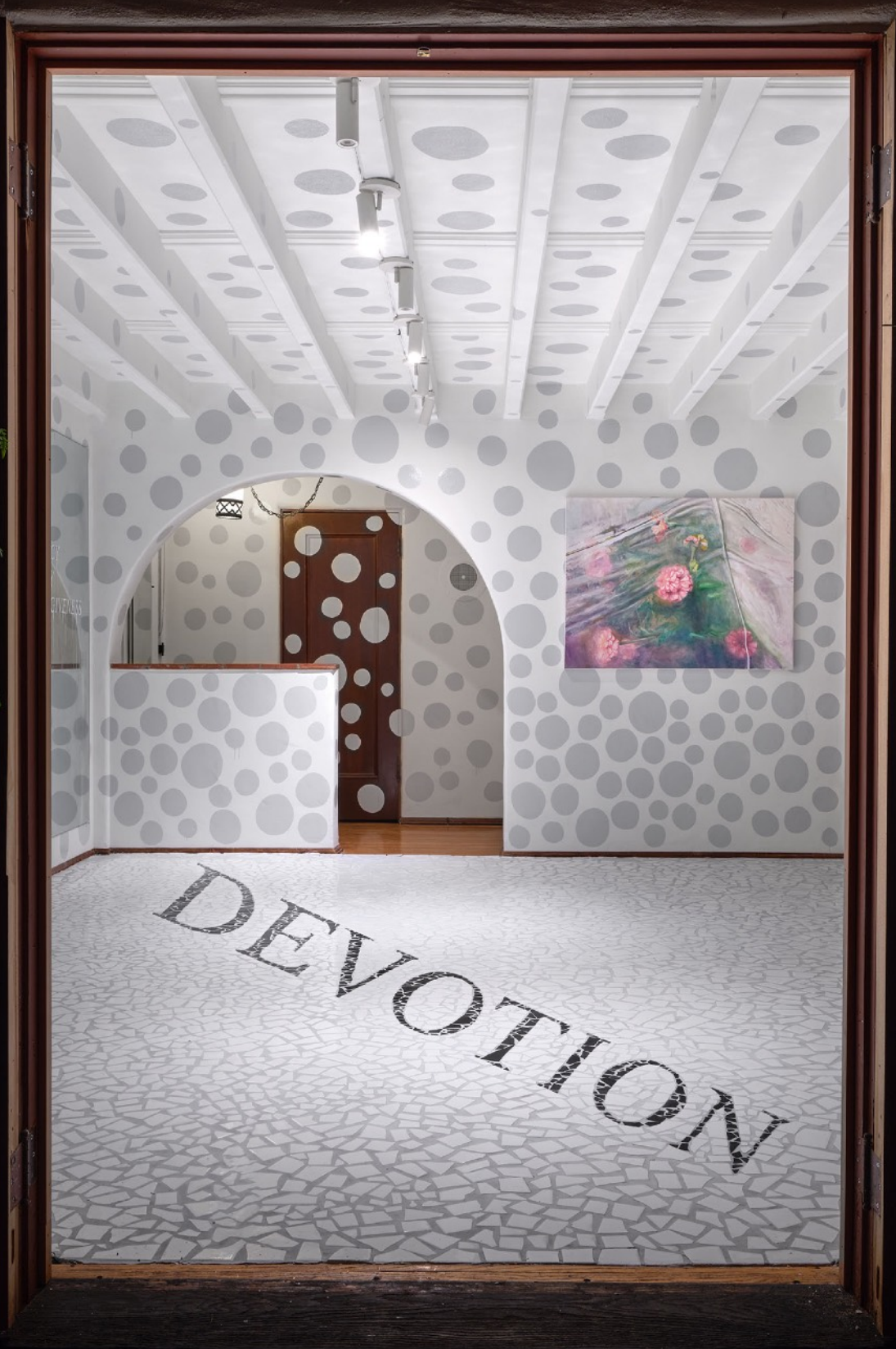
*SHATTERED
PRETENSE OF JOY*

*APPARITIONS
OF ECSTASY
OF LOSS*

Encompassing the entirety of the gallery floor, Garcia has installed a broken-tile mosaic with the word *DEVOTION*. From the gallery’s exterior, the word appears evenly distributed across the floor, but then begins to deviate, retreating away as one advances towards it. “Words, if you let them, will do what they want to do and what they have to do,” writes Carson.

With *Low*, Garcia asks of us: What do we *really* know of devotion? Devotion doesn’t want to be faithful and steadfast. Devotion wants to be stretched. It wants to be shattered and pieced back together. Devotion wants to slip away as you get closer. Devotion wants to run, and wants you to run after it.

Installation Views



DEVOTION



DEVOTION

ETENSE OF JOY

RELIEF OF

MEMORIAL
PURE
FORGIVENESS



APPARITIONS

OF ECSTASY
OF LOSS

DEVOTION

SHATTERED PRETENSE OF JOY

RELIEF OF

MERCY
RURY
FORGIVENESS



MERCY
FURY
FORGIVENESS

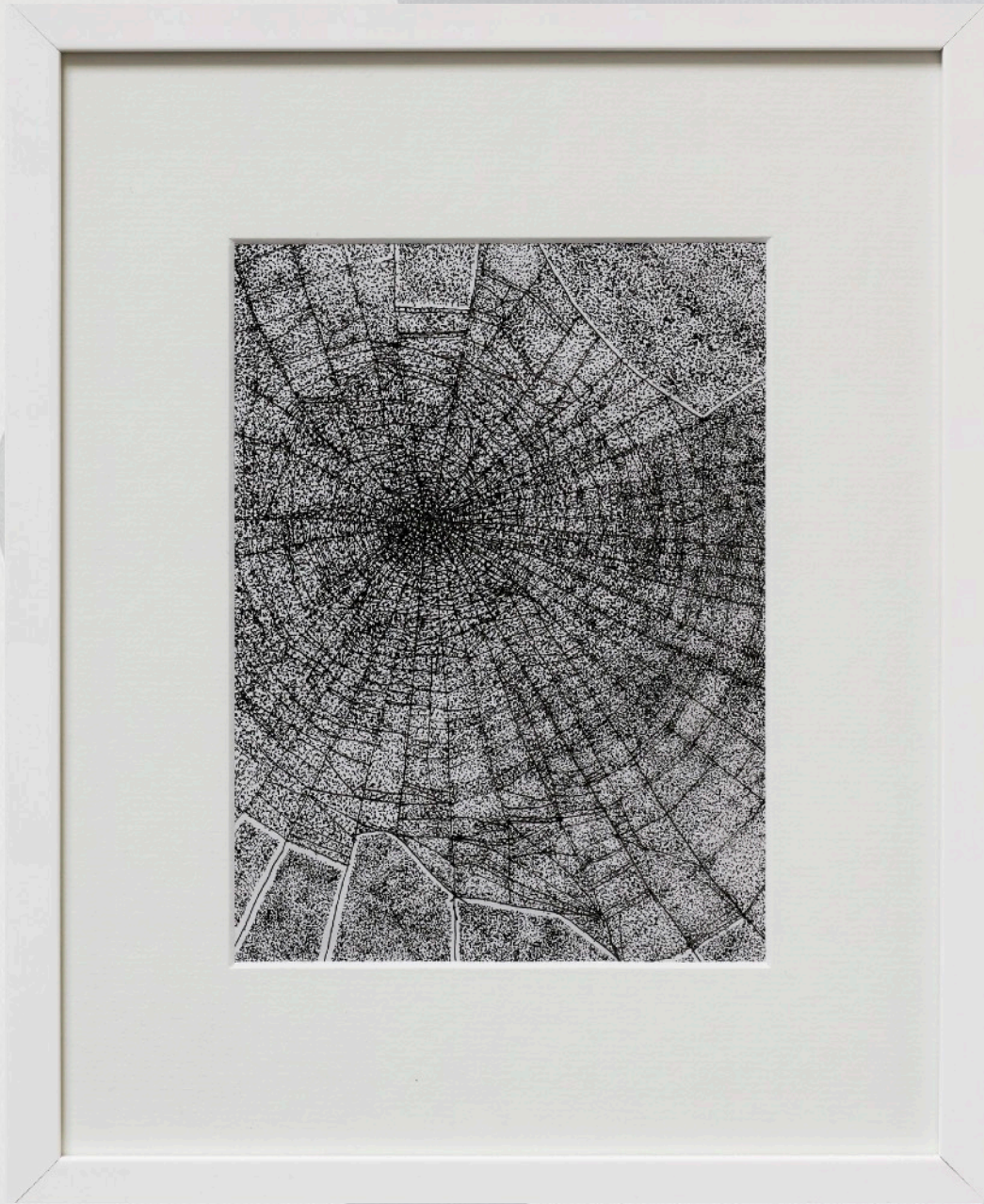




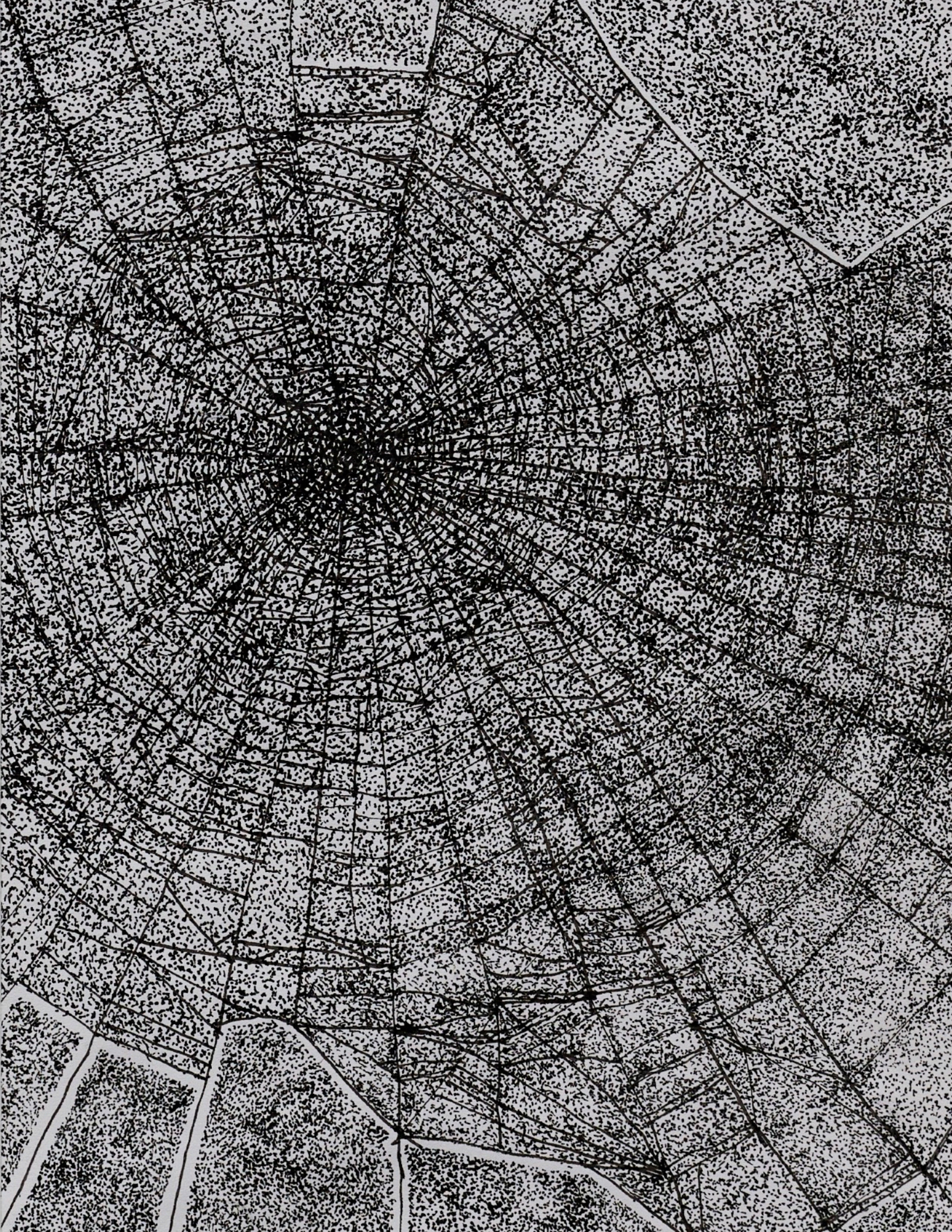
APPARITIONS



Individual Works



John Garcia *Dana*, 2023
Ink on paper
9 x 12 inches unframed (22.86 x 30.48 cm)





John Garcia *PRETENSE OF JOY*, 2023
Polished mirror and paint
78 x 39 inches (198.12 x 99.06 cm)

PRETENSE OF JOY

APPARITIONS



SHATTERED

PREP
ALPHABET



John Garcia *Val Champagne*, 2019
Oil on linen
10 x 20 inches (25.4 x 50.8 cm)



RELIEF OF

MERCY
FURY
FORGIVENESS

John Garcia *MERCY FURY FORGIVENESS*, 2023
Polished mirror and paint
78 x 39 inches (198.12 x 99.06 cm)

MERCY

FURY

FORGIVENESS

RELIEF OF



John Garcia *Finos World*, 2023
Oil on canvas
48 x 30 inches (121.92 x 76.2 cm)







APPARITIONS

OF ECSTASY
OF LOSS

John Garcia *OF ECSTASY OF LOSS*, 2023
Polished mirror and paint
78 x 39 inches (198.12 x 99.06 cm)

OF ECSTASY
OF LOSS





APPARITIONS



John Garcia *Dana*, 2023
Oil on canvas
18 x 24 inches (45.72 x 60.96 cm)





John Garcia *DEVOTION*, 2023
Ceramic tile, grout and plywood
156 x 180 inches (396.24 x 457.2 cm)



1010

1010



John Garcia *Shadow*, 2022
Gouache on paper
9 x 12 inches unframed (22.86 x 30.48 cm)





John Garcia *Valentine's Day*, 2022
Gouache on paper
9 x 12 inches unframed (22.86 x 30.48 cm)



John Garcia
Lives and works in LA and NY

Education

2012 BFA / Parsons the New School for Design / New York, NY

Solo & Two Person Exhibitions

2023 - Breeze / Carlye Packer / CA

2023 - MUD / Baba Yaga Gallery / NY

2023 - Grass / Material Room / VA

2022 - Sweet Dreams (with Dana Powell) / Simian Gallery / Denmark

2021 - A Good Day to Die (with Dana Powell) / Green Gallery / WI

2019 - Al Garcia: CIAO!

2015 - An Echo is an Echo is an Echo / Still House Group / NY

Group Exhibitions

2023 - Group Shoe 3 / House of Seiko / CA

2023 - Flora & Fauna / 1053 Gallery / NY

2022 - Read Desert / Rockaway Artist's Alliance / NY

2021 - Hissing Haze / In Lieu Gallery / CA

2020 - Dallas to Baum Bridge / Anna Frost / CA

2020 - Passing Time / Online

2020 - Beast on Its Back / Anna Frost / CA

2020 - Polly / Insect Gallery / CA

2019 - Replica / Insect Gallery / CA

2019 - For My Lovers Only / CFCP / NY

2016 - Return Policy / Howard St / NY

2013 - Charity Auction / Robert Berman Gallery / CA

2013 - Reading Paintings / AM Space / NY

2012 Permanent Collection / Nancy Margolis Gallery / NY

2012 No Way Out / Biko House / CA

Press & Publications

2023 - Contemporary Art Daily / "Group Shoe 3"

2023 - The Daily Star / "Flora and Fauna"

2022 - Art Viewer / "Sweet Dreams"

2022 - Contemporary Art Daily / "Sweet Dreams"

2021 - NY Times / "TriBeCa Gallery Guide"

2021 - NY Times / "3 Art Gallery Shows to See Right Now"

2020 - Solo Show / "Poems Across America"

2020 - Tsvetnik / "Beast on its Back"

2020 - Tsvetnik / "Xmas Tree of Lucy Bull"

2020 - Bomb Magazine / "An Artist Driven Channel"

2020 - Contemporary Art Daily / "The Xmas Tree of Lucy Bull"

2020 - Los Angeles Review of Books / "Los Angeles Plays Itself as Itself"

2017 - Tique Art Paper / "Six Questions"

2016 - Purple Magazine / "Return Policy" / Silviera, Paige

2015 - Large Up / "Visual Culture..." / Serwer, Jesse

2012 - Featured Art / The Baffler / No. 19

2012 - Bunyan, Jess / "Works by John Garcia" / Sweat / Issue 11

2011 - Goren, Leah / "Sketchbooks" / Book By its Cover

Curatorial

2022 - Read Desert / Rockaway Artist's Alliance / NY

2019 - For My Lovers Only / CFCP / NY

2018 - Mature Themes / Foxy Production / NY

2017 - Tell Me What I Mean / To__Bridges__ / NY

Writing

Lucy Bull for BOMB

Julia Wachtel for BOMB

Brook Hsu for Manual Arts

Sondra Perry for AO

Elizabeth Orr for AO

Amanda Ros-HO for AO

Amy Yao for AO

Julien Ceccaldi for AO

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