

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Nov. 18, 2022

Media Contact:
John DeFaro
305-467-7976
john@johndefaro.com

BIG LAWN
**Artist John DeFaro Highlights Environmental Self-Identity and
Garden-Based Healing Project
November 25, 2022-January 5, 2023**

Renowned dancer and choreographer Niurca Marquez and John DeFaro engage in guerilla performances with Mo, a battery-powered lawn mower.

Miami Beach, FL – John DeFaro is a queer, self-taught artist, environmentalist, and activist.

John DeFaro is deeply invested in celebrating his identity, love of gardening, and conservation. His project *BIG LAWN* links global warming to his earliest days of the HIV/AIDS crisis and his more recent substance addiction. John moved from fine art and home furnishing design in the 1980s and 1990s to work that emerged from the HIV/AIDS health crisis and now the urgency of climate change.

2020 began a period that forced individuals to confront and question their private environments, habits and relationships as house and garden domestic spaces became sites for healing, personal expression, and routine. For John DeFaro such confrontation and questioning began much sooner. At an early age, gardening was his desired household chore and later became the means of supporting himself. John's out-of-doors conversation with nature inspired an unbroken chain of inspiration, self-healing, and unstructured experimentation.

His life is bracketed by two epidemics—first in his early 20s and now his early 60s. In 1987 John tested positive for the HIV virus. Years followed with severe medicine, some experimental with side effects that manifested into an unsettling, challenging, and confusing life well into the 90s. This later led to drug abuse that compounded his isolation and questioned hope. This past September John celebrated 35 years as a healthy HIV and drug abuse survivor. His powerful will to live, confrontation of stigma, and 'garden-based healing' are linked to his art practice.

BIG LAWN involves looking at art from his early career to present day. Works on paper, paintings, and video will be displayed at his studio at Peekaboo Studios, 690 Lincoln Road, Suite 300, Miami Beach. At Peekaboo Studios his dreamlike landscape images and childish heart imagery depict comforting natural settings that investigate the boundaries of desire, sexuality, and loneliness. In addition, as an ephemeral art performance to the studio exhibition, John will push his 'Greenworks' battery-powered lawn mower (blade removed) on public sidewalks and roads interacting with dancer Niurca Marquez during Miami Art Week/Art Basel, 11/28 – 12/04.

BIG LAWN cont'd

Through his battery-powered lawn mower John addresses the fact that gas and oil powered lawn mowers contribute to climate change as they account for more air pollution than automobiles. In American culture, plush, green lawns are intertwined with status, ego, family, personal agency and more. Lawns are indicative of success. They are a physical manifestation of the American Dream of home ownership. John's activist project exposes the harsh environmental negative impact of everyday lawn care and maintenance.

BIG LAWN emphasizes the fragility and complexity of living on our shared planet, promoting the discussion of how everything can be taken away vs. what can be saved.

BIG LAWN collaborators include artist/researcher, and choreographer Niurca Marquez, clothing designer Karelle Levy, founder and owner of KRELwear tropical knitwear, maker Juan 'Erman' Gonzalez, video designer and sound editor Daniel Russo, and photographers Meg Pukel and James Mann.

###



BIG LAWN. 2022. Photo: John DeFaro

BIG LAWN cont'd



Nature Electric. 2022. Niurca Marquez with John DeFaro. Photo: James Mann



Romance Romance. 2022. Photo: James Mann