



PREFACE

This is the fifth installment of the John Baldessari catalogue raisonné. In 2005, the first year covered in this book, Baldessari purchased a building on a quiet residential corner in Venice to use as a studio. The property was only a few miles away from his Main Street Santa Monica studio, which he had occupied since 1971. Later in the year, in December, he moved into the space and immediately embarked on a new series titled "Prima Facie" (2005.14–66, 2006.1–27, 2007.37–47), which primarily juxtaposed photos of human faces with descriptive text.

This volume covers six years, from 2005 to 2010 in which Baldessari created a total of 361 unique works—comprising eight discrete series, most with multiple parts or, to borrow a musical phrase, "movements." The majority of the works from this period have as their subject the face and body: noses, ears, arms, legs, elbows, knees, eyes, eyebrows, foreheads, hands, and feet. We might entertain this as the artist finally revealing to the viewer what he previously had taken such great pains to conceal and obscure with his trademark colored disks and erasures. Perhaps this is partly true, but since his earliest days as an artist, Baldessari has never felt comfortable providing the viewer with the full picture.

Another aesthetic concern of Baldessari's during this period was expanding the picture plane into three-dimensional space, which he first employed in 2003's "Duress" works and continued in the various "body parts" series. By cutting out pictorial elements and affixing them to the picture surface while simultaneously, cutting into the picture surface to reveal a painted or printed element below, Baldessari creates a kind of a three-layer bas-relief that combined painting, photography, and sculpture. In 2007, he made two sculptural editions, that captured in three-dimensional form his love of verbal and visual puns: *God Nose* and *Beethoven's Trumpet (With Ear)*. In 2010, he produced his first freestanding large-scale sculptures, *The Giacometti Variations* (2010.54).

While Baldessari seemed always to be looking forward to the next sequence of work, interest in reassessing his complete oeuvre—unique pieces, prints and multiples, as well as film and video—was building. An expansive two-part, two-city retrospective opened in Austria in 2005, the same year a smaller career survey debuted in France. Both shows displayed paintings from early in his career. "John Baldessari: Music," a solo exhibition devoted to Baldessari artworks that depict or allude to the subject of music, took place in Bonn in 2007. Then in 2009, a full-scale retrospective, "Pure Beauty," opened at Tate Modern, London, and, the following year, traveled to Barcelona, Los Angeles, and New York. A similar traveling retrospective of his prints opened in 2009 in San Francisco, coinciding with the publication of a catalogue raisonné of his prints and multiples. In June of the same year, Baldessari received the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement given by the Board of the Venice Biennale. In 2010, three re-creations of his celebrated 1971 participatory performance "I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art" were staged in France, New York, and Slovenia.

Indeed, Baldessari was ubiquitous in these years. He often joked during the "Pure Beauty" retrospective that he was, at age seventy-eight, an overnight sensation.



JOHN BALDESSARI: A GUESSING GAME, 2005–2010

Hannah B Higgins

If I show you everything, it's going to be ho-hum. If I make a picture a guessing game, I might capture your attention for a little bit longer.¹

John Baldessari, 2011

On July 29, 2012 John Baldessari used his “List of Personal Art Epiphanies” in public conversation with the curator Hans Ulrich Obrist at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.² Here they are:

1. Young criminals have more use than I did.
2. A painting with only text painted by a sign painter is as visually exciting as a painting.
3. I can commission other painters to paint my paintings.
4. A photo can equal a painting. They should not be separate categories or histories.
5. Does a single image equal a single truth? Multiple images can mirror multiple truths.
6. Under paintings as frames in a movie.
7. Prioritize photos with no aesthetic intent. Real-estate, accident, police photos for example.
8. Question visual prioritizing.
9. Art is a document of thinking.

These nine “Personal Epiphanies” list forms, materials, and concepts used by the artist in his effort to “not make any more boring art.”³ They provide us with ways to think about the work. Together, they can be described as reference points in an ever-evolving guessing game that Baldessari has been playing with his audience for some sixty-plus years. Since these epiphanies are personal epiphanies, universal truths are not as much the point as the more localized process of making sense of specific works in the world as the artist encounters it. In the spirit of the guessing game, I propose matching epiphanies to artworks in this essay, in an effort to not make any more boring art history. As the opening lines indicate, this guessing game would be a boring game if all of the epiphanies appeared in all the works, or even in a single work. Baldessari calls this the “ho-hum.” Looking at the work, we must be focused, attentive.

The rules of a game shape the action. They exist at the *meta* level, separate from the gaming board or field of play, independent of the dice, as descriptors of what is possible. Rules circumscribe, describe, and choreograph the actions of players. This is a matching game, where like-seeks-like through the focusing mechanism of the characteristics of a list that can be considered alongside the artworks. The “List of Personal Art Epiphanies” was delivered in 2012, while the timeframe of the book they appear in, *More Than You Wanted to Know About John Baldessari Vol. 2*, is inscribed on the interior title page as 1975–2011. This admittedly minor editorial mistake has the effect of a sleight of hand, the kind of slip of the tongue or keyboard that fills this reader’s mind with myriad possibilities. Placed at the end of the 450 pages of text spread across the two volumes, these epiphanies structure a reflection on the works and words of this most prolific artist. Structured this way, the two volumes manifest a



2005,6

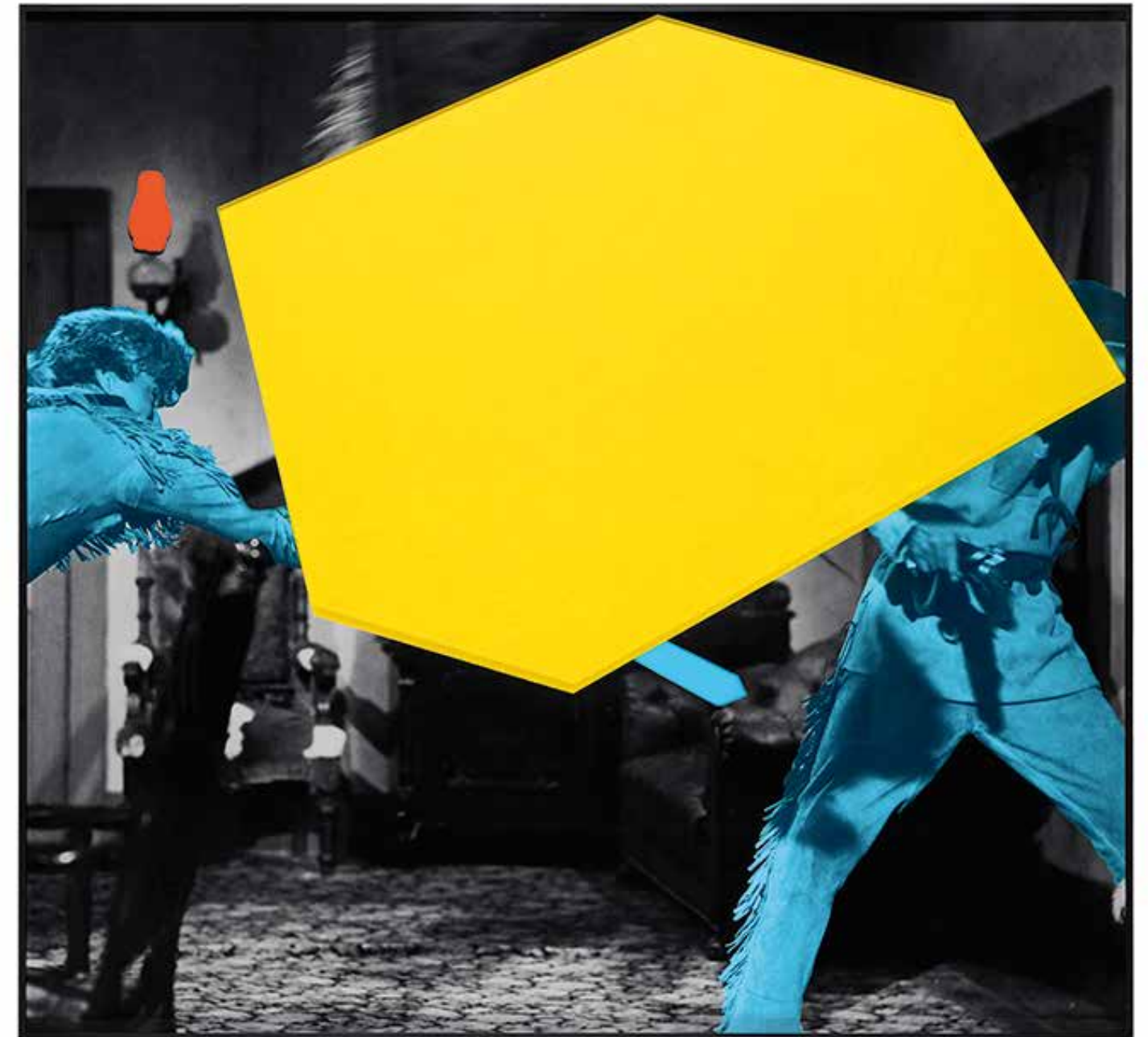
Blockage (Yellow): And Person with Sword (Violet)

2005
Digital photographic print and acrylic paint on two layers of foam PVC board
72 1/16 x 64 3/16 in. (183 x 163.4 cm)
Louis and Patrice Friedman, New York

Provenance
Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris

Exhibitions
Marian Goodman Gallery 2005 (solo);
*Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht 2008 (solo), ill.
p. 14.

Bibliography
Periodicals: Breerette 2005 (Mar), ill.; Perrée 2008,
ill.; Vesters 2008, ill. p. 52.



2005,7

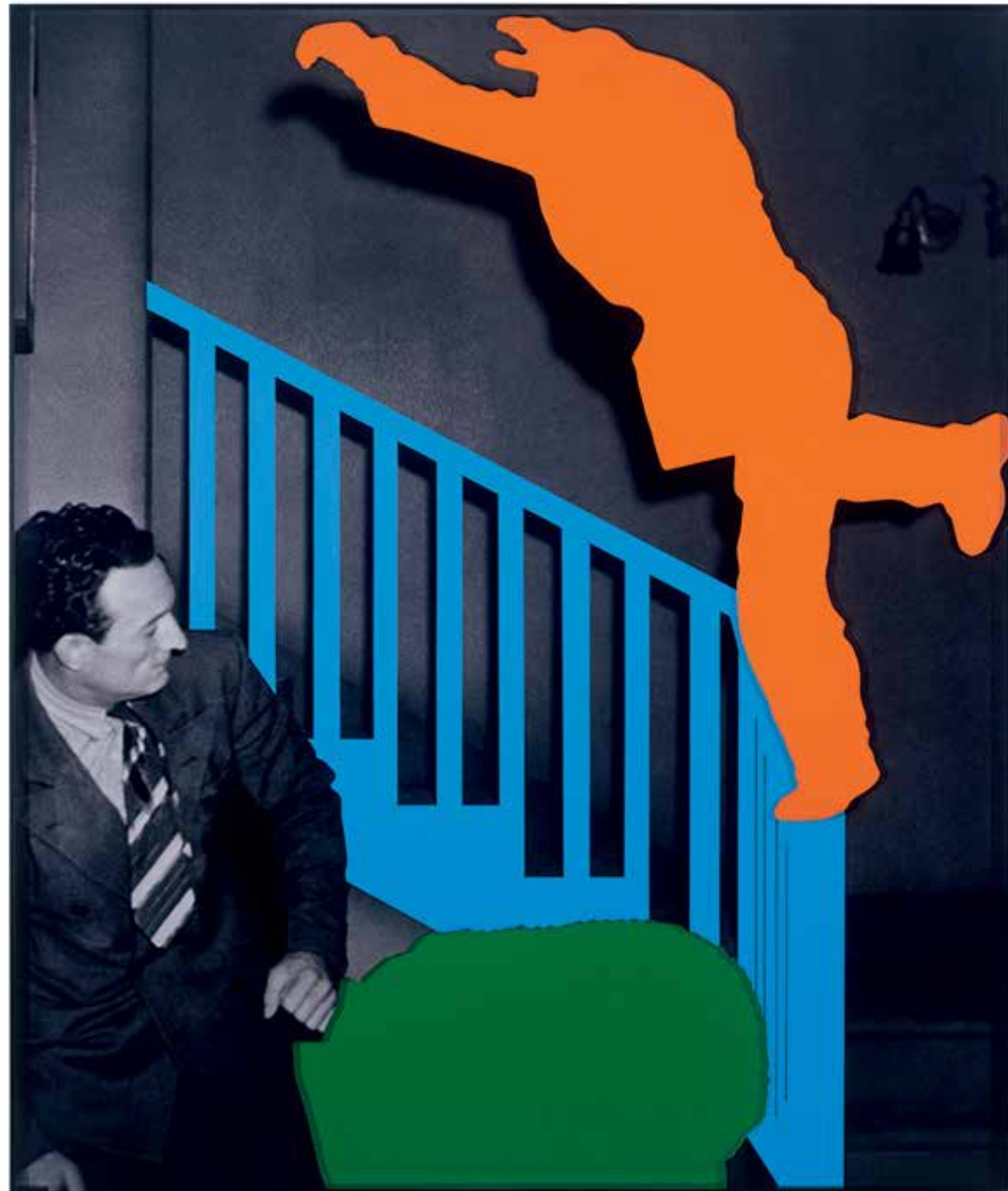
Blockage (Yellow): With Two Persons Fighting (Blue)

2005
Digital photographic print and acrylic paint on three layers of foam PVC board (with custom-cut raised and incised elements)
71 x 71 1/2 in. (180.3 x 181.6 cm)
Private collection, Belgium

Provenance
Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris

Exhibitions
Marian Goodman Gallery 2005 (solo);
*Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht 2008 (solo), ill.
p. 15; *Musée Juif de Belgique 2011; *Mönchehaus
Museum Goslar 2012 (solo), ill. p. 57.

Bibliography
Periodicals: Stech 2013 (i), ill. p. 162.



2005,10

**Two Figures: One Leaping (Orange);
One Reacting (With Blue and Green)**

2005
Digital photographic print and acrylic paint on three
layers of foam PVC board (with custom-cut raised
and incised elements)

84 x 70 7/8 in. (213.4 x 178.8 cm)

Jaime Frankfurt, New York

Provenance
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

Notes

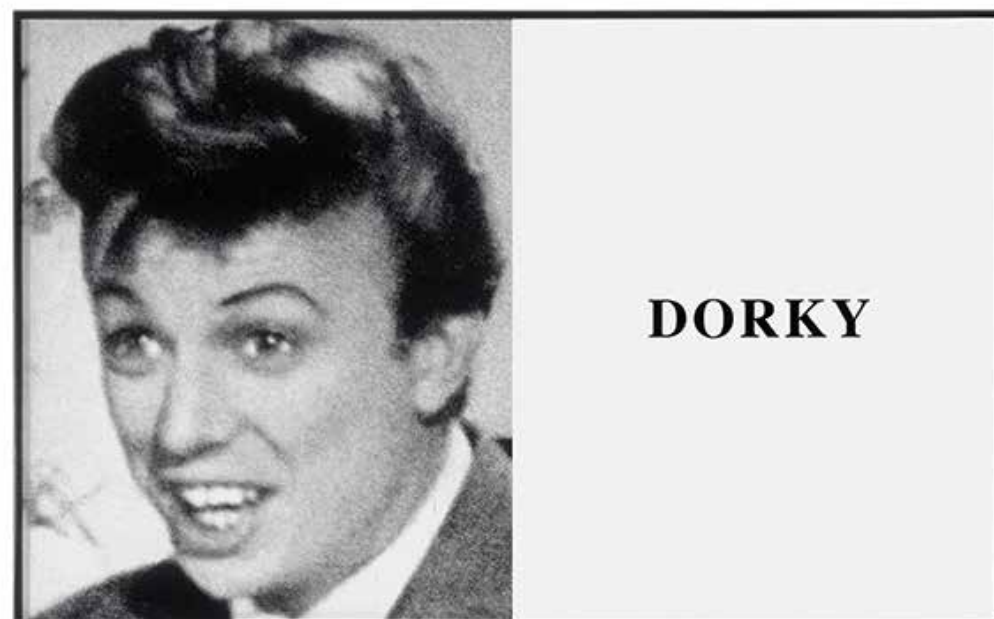
A related print, which uses the same image, was
also made. See Sharon Coplan Hurowitz, *John
Baldessari: A Catalogue Raisonné of Prints and
Multiples, 1971–2007* (Manchester, VT: Hudson
Hills Press, 2009), cat. no. 162.



2005,11

Large Ball with Person (For Analia)

2005
Ink-jet print on paper
29 x 26 in. (73.7 x 66 cm)
Private collection



2005,26

**Prima Facie (First State): Dorky/
Annoyed**

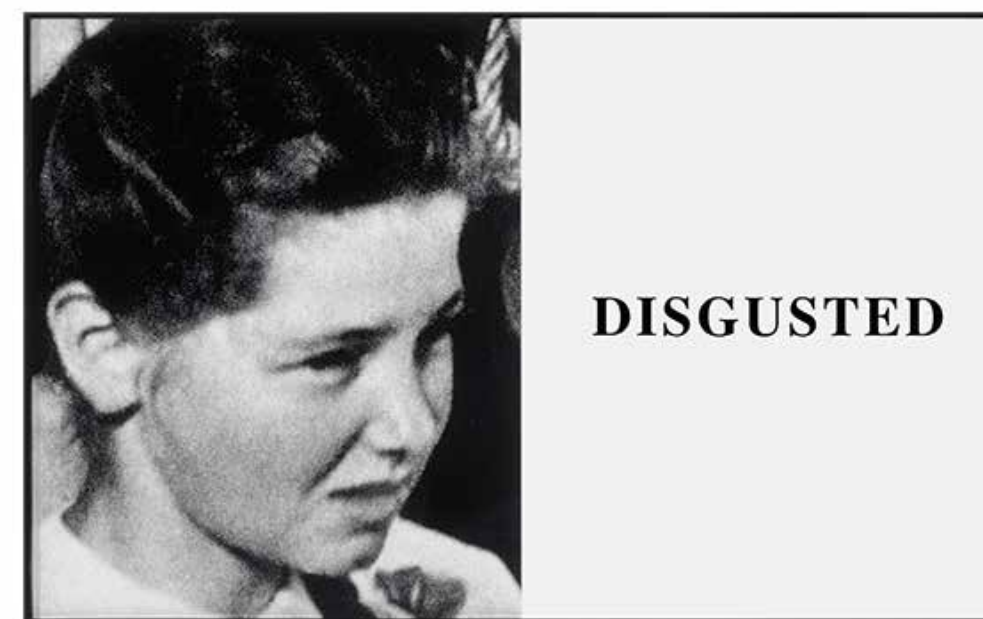
2005
Two ink-jet prints individually mounted on board
26 1/4 x 42 1/4 in. (66.7 x 107.3 cm) each
Overall installed dimensions variable
Collection of Jane and Marc Nathanson,
Los Angeles

Provenance
Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles

Exhibitions
Margo Leavin Gallery 2005 (solo).

Bibliography
Periodicals: Knight 2005, p. E24.
Publications: *John Baldessari* 2006 (Deurle), ill.
(unpag.).

Notes
See "Artist's Statements," p. 410.



2005,27

**Prima Facie (First State): Unpleasant/
Disgusted**

2005
Two ink-jet prints individually mounted on board
26 1/4 x 42 1/4 in. (66.7 x 107.3 cm) each
Overall installed dimensions variable
Private collection

Provenance
Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles

Exhibitions
Margo Leavin Gallery 2005 (solo).

Bibliography
Publications: *John Baldessari* 2006 (Deurle), ill.
(unpag.); Baldessari, Fowle, and Obrist 2013 (i),
ill. p. 122.

Notes
See "Artist's Statements," p. 410.



2005.36

Prima Facie (Second State): Magnetic
2005
Ink-jet print on canvas; enamel paint on canvas
47½ x 38½ in. (120.7 x 97.8 cm) each
47½ x 77 in. (120.7 x 195.6 cm) overall dimensions
Private collection

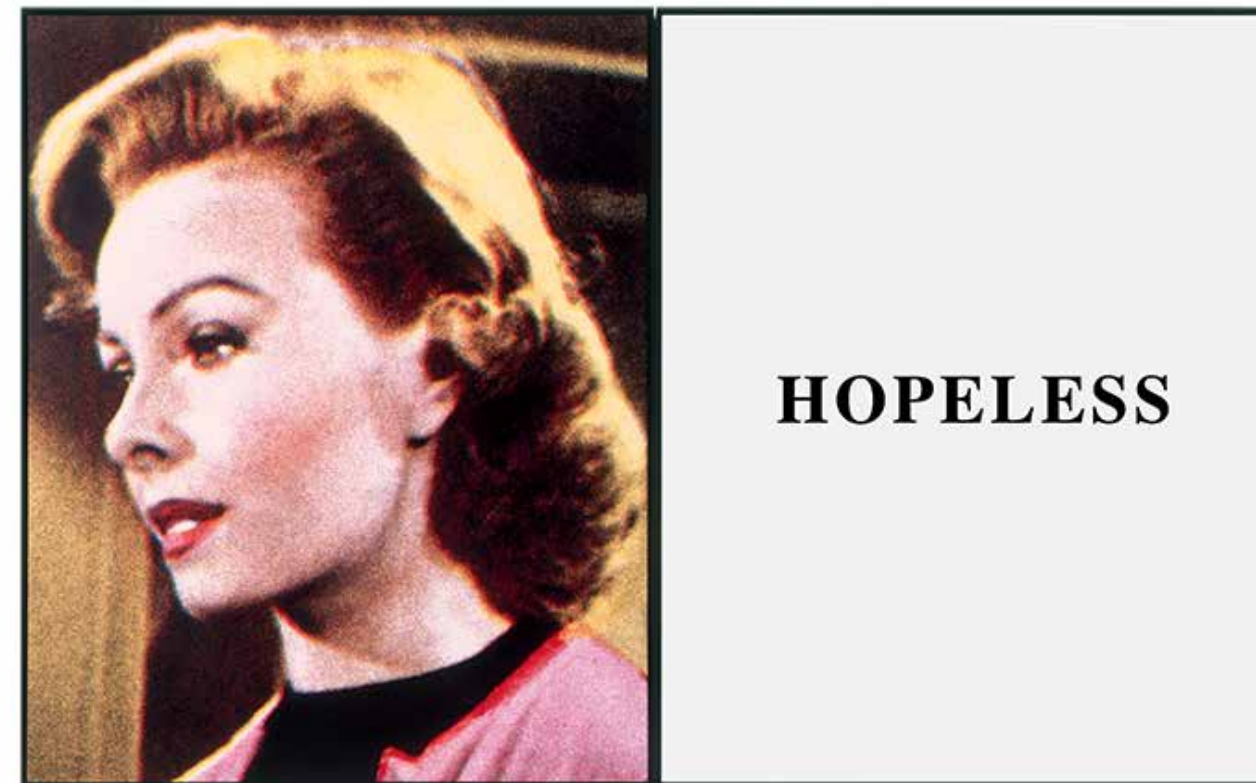
Provenance
Mai 36 Galerie, Zurich

Inscription
Signed and dated on verso.

Exhibitions
Mai 36 Galerie 2005 (solo); *Museum Dhondt-
Dhaenens 2006 (solo), ill. (unpag.).

Bibliography
Periodicals: Teuwsen 2005, ill.

Notes
See "Artist's Statements," p. 410.



2005.37

Prima Facie (Second State): Hopeless
2005
Ink-jet print on canvas; enamel paint on canvas
4 47½ x 38½ in. (120.7 x 97.8 cm) each
7½ x 77 in. (120.7 x 195.6 cm) overall dimensions
Collection of Michael J. Sacks

Provenance
Mai 36 Galerie, Zurich

Inscription
Signed and dated on verso.

Exhibitions
Mai 36 Galerie 2005 (solo).

Bibliography
Publications: *John Baldessari 2006 (Deurle), ill.
(unpag.).

Notes
See "Artist's Statements," p. 410.



2005,62

**Prima Facie (Fifth State):
Nacho Cheese/Strawberry Shortcake**

2005
Two ink-jet prints individually mounted on board
30½ x 48½ in. (77.5 x 123.2 cm) each
61 x 48½ in. (154.9 x 123.2 cm) overall dimensions
Private collection, Belgium

Provenance
Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris

Bibliography
Publications: *John Baldessari* 2006 (Deurle), ill.
(unpag.); *John Baldessari* 2009 (Los Angeles),
p. 313.

Notes
See "Artist's Statements," p. 410.



2005,63

**Prima Facie (Fifth State): Bunny Nose
Pink/Baby Boy Blue/Dollar Bill Green**

2005
Three ink-jet prints individually mounted on board
30½ x 48½ in. (77.5 x 123.2 cm) each
91½ x 48½ in. (232.4 x 123.2 cm) overall dimensions
Private collection, New York

Provenance
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

Bibliography
Publications: *John Baldessari* 2006 (Deurle), ill.
(unpag.).

Notes
See "Artist's Statements," p. 410.



2006.28

**Noses & Ears, Etc. (Part One):
Head (With Nose)**

2006
Digital photographic prints (one mounted on custom-cut PVC) and acrylic paint on foam PVC board
54 x 43¼ in. (137.2 x 109.9 cm)
Collection Nabil Aouad, Lisbon, Portugal

Provenance
Cristina Guerra Contemporary Art, Lisbon

Exhibitions
*Cristina Guerra Contemporary Art 2006 (solo), ill. p. 71; *Tate Modern 2009 (solo), p. 116, ill. p. 295.

Bibliography
Periodicals: Miles 2008 (*Tate Etc.*), ill. p. 98; Snow 2017, ill. p. 230.
Publications: **John Baldessari* 2009 (Bielefeld), ill. p. 113; **John Baldessari* 2009 (New York), p. 9.

Notes
See "Artist's Statements," p. 410.



2006.29

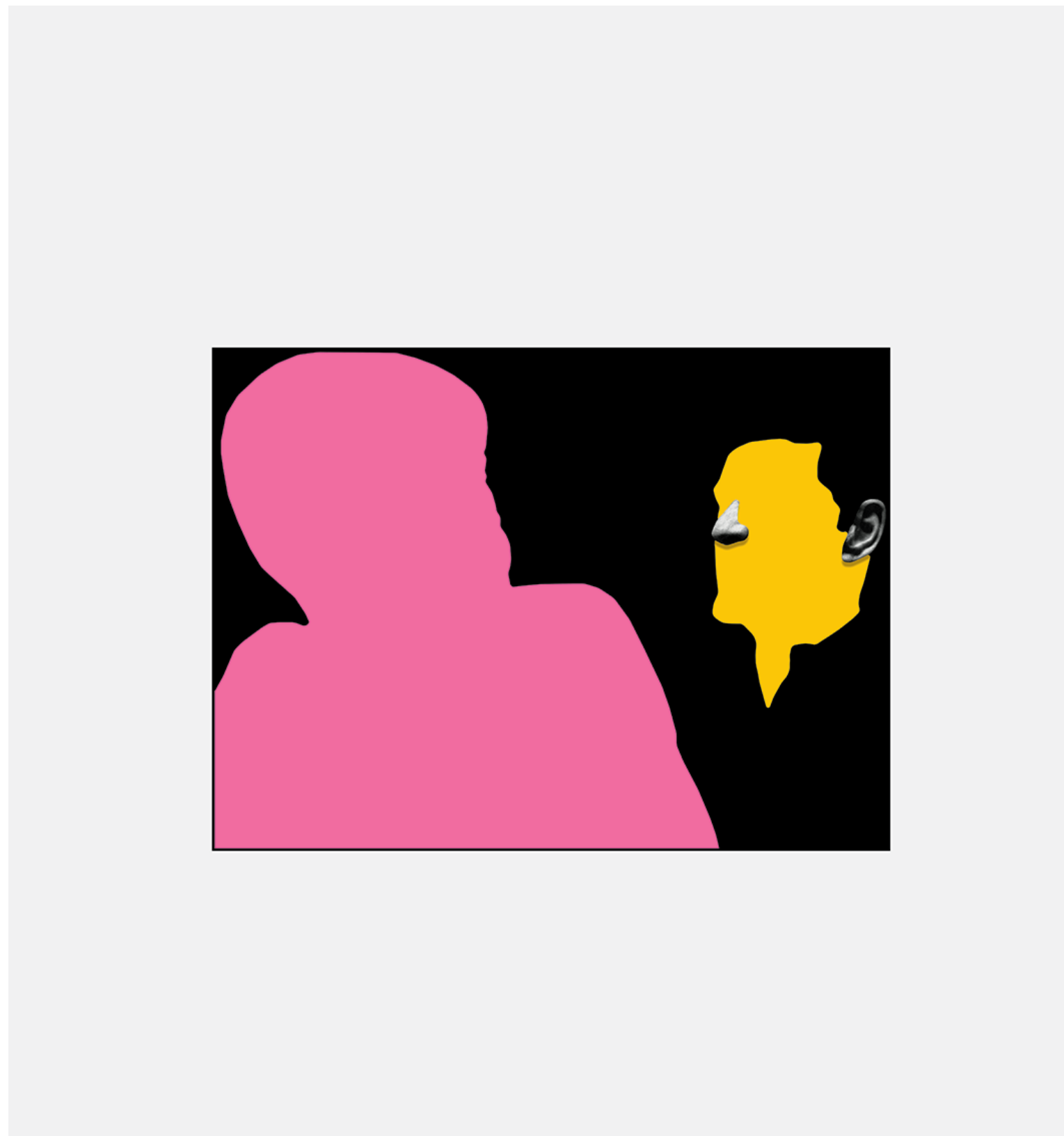
**Noses & Ears, Etc. (Part One):
Head (With Nose)**

2006
Digital photographic prints (one mounted on custom-cut PVC) and acrylic paint on foam PVC board
61¼ x 43¼ in. (155.6 x 109.9 cm)
Collection Helga de Alvear

Provenance
Cristina Guerra Contemporary Art, Lisbon

Exhibitions
*Cristina Guerra Contemporary Art 2006 (solo), ill. p. 57; *Centro de Artes Visuales Fundación Helga de Alvear 2011, ill. p. 99.

Notes
See "Artist's Statements," p. 410.



2006.34

**Noses & Ears, Etc. (Part One):
Torso and Head (With Nose and Ear)**

2006
Digital photographic prints (two mounted on
custom-cut PVC) and acrylic paint on foam
PVC board
43¼ x 58½ in. (109.9 x 148.6 cm)

Private collection, New York City

Provenance
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

Notes
See "Artist's Statements," p. 410.



2006.35

**Noses & Ears, Etc. (Part One): Dog,
Object, and Head (With Nose and Ear)**

2006
Digital photographic prints (one mounted on
custom-cut PVC) and acrylic paint on foam
PVC board
43¼ x 71½ in. (109.9 x 181.6 cm)

Paulo Santo

Provenance
Cristina Guerra Contemporary Art, Lisbon

Exhibitions
"Cristina Guerra Contemporary Art 2006 (solo), ill.
p. 35.

Notes
See "Artist's Statements," p. 410.



2006.70

Noses & Ears, Etc. (Part Three): (Blue) Face and (Orange) Nose, (Green) Face and (Red) Nose, and School Bus

2006
Digital photographic prints and acrylic paint on foam PVC board (with custom-cut raised and incised elements)

71 x 91¾ in. (180.3 x 233 cm)
Private collection

Provenance
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

Notes

See "Artist's Statements," p. 410.



2006.71

Blockage (Orange): With Dog

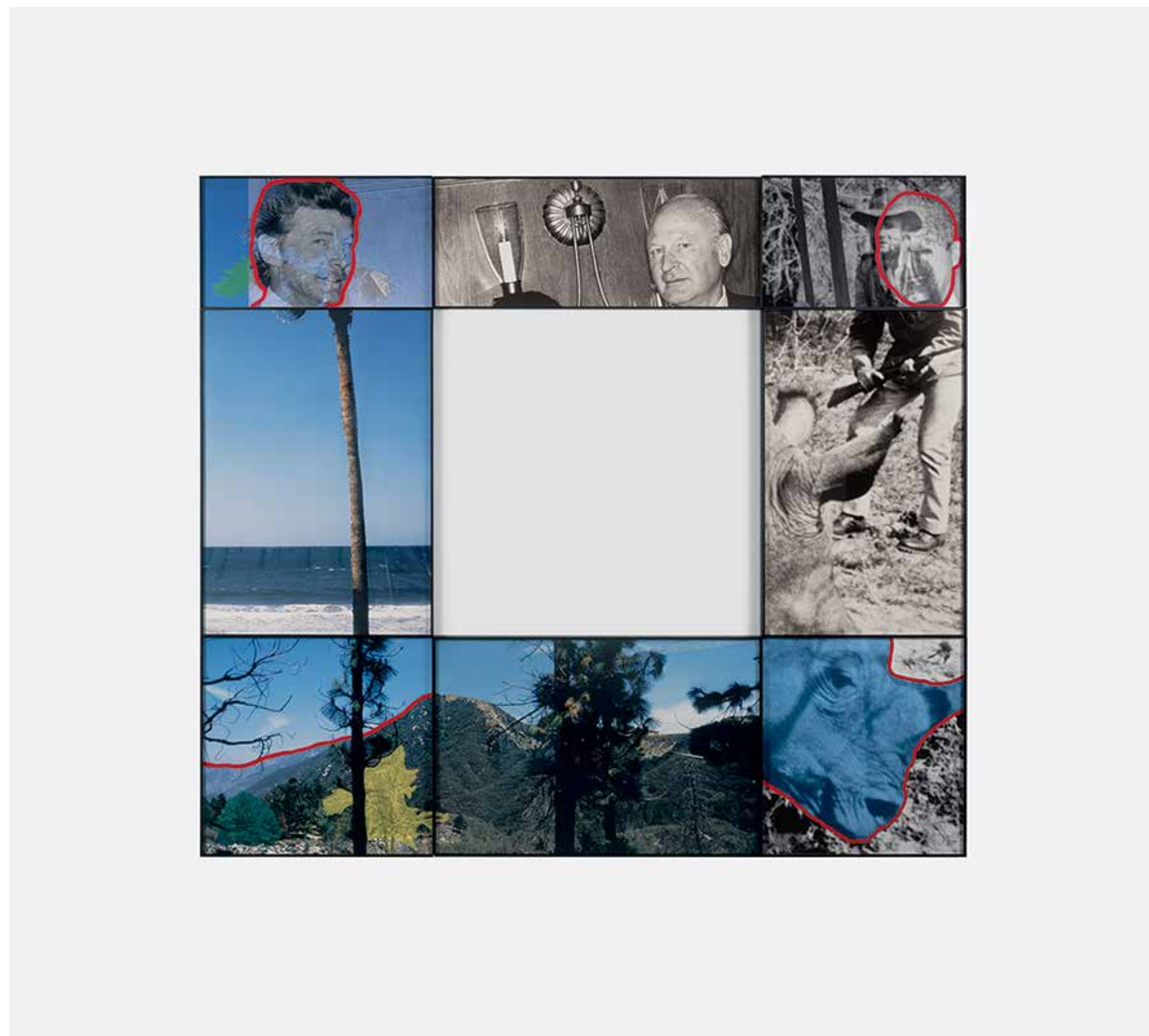
2006
Digital photographic print and acrylic paint on two layers of custom-cut foam PVC board
84½ x 67¾ in. (214.6 x 172.1 cm)
Claudia and Jay Khalifeh Collection, São Paulo

Provenance

Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

Notes

A study for this work, listed as "Untitled (Maquette)," appears in the 2005 solo exhibition catalogue *John Baldessari: Life's Balance: Works 84-04*, p. 217.



2006,76

Junction Series: Seascape, Landscape, Man (With Rifle) and Rhinoceros, Three Men (With Lamp)

2006
Eight digital photographic prints (four with acrylic paint) mounted on foam PVC board

85 x 94¾ in. (215,9 x 240,7 cm)
Private collection, Belgium

Provenance
Art Affairs Gallery, Amsterdam

2007



2007,1

Eden: Adam and Eve (With Ear and Nose) Plus Serpent

2007
Three ink-jet prints on vinyl (two mounted on plaster-coated and painted foam); shaped and painted drywall; interior house paint on gallery walls

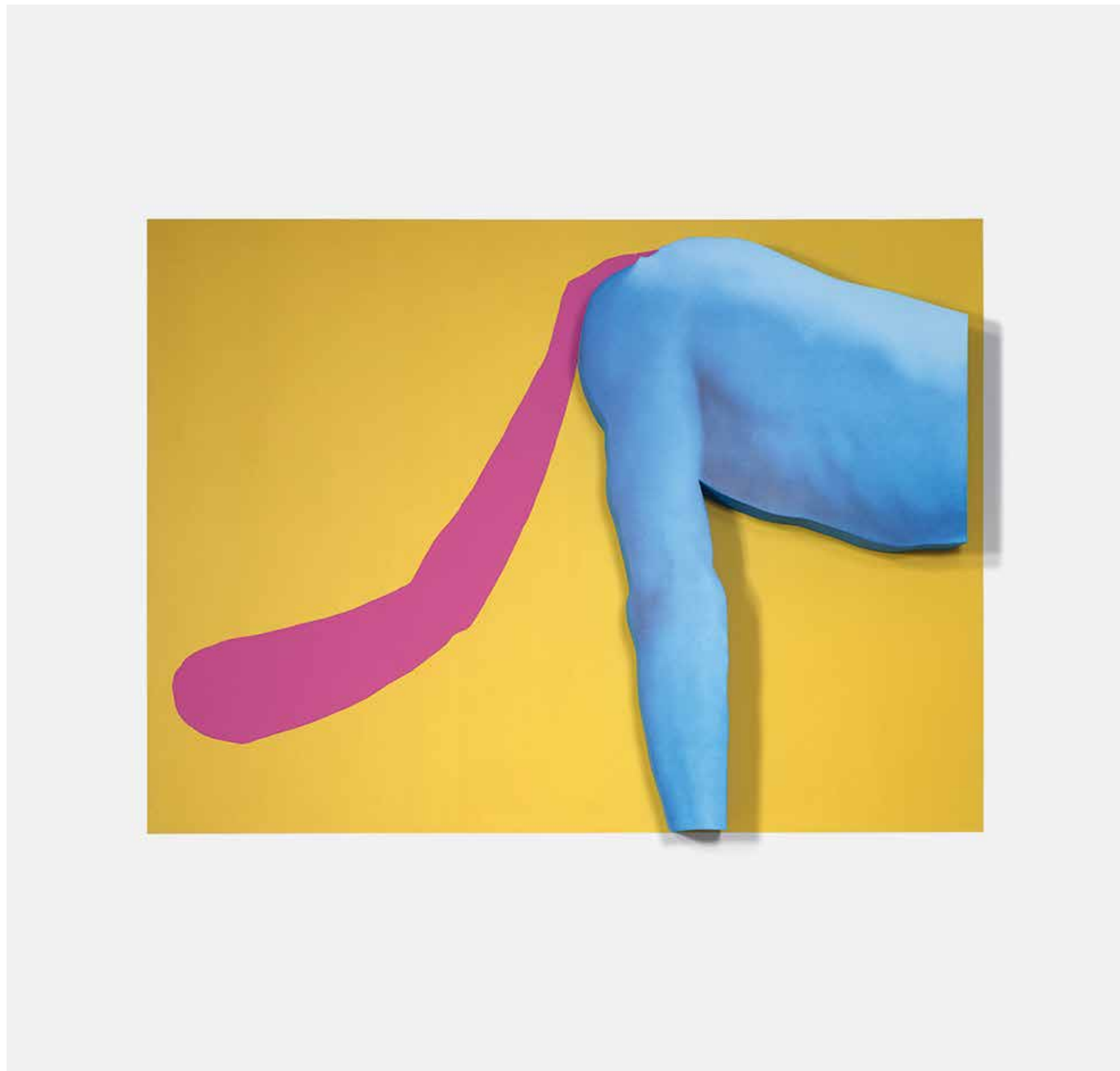
Cutout ear shape: 13 ft. 5 in. x 8 ft. 4 in. (4,1 x 2,5 m)
Cutout nose shape: 14 x 12 ft. (4,3 x 3,7 m)
Ear/nose walls: 19 ft. 8 in. x 65 ft. 7 in. (6 x 20 m)
Snake image: 19 ft. x 12 ft. 10 in. (5,8 x 3,9 m)
Snake wall: 19 ft. 8 in. x 26 ft. 3 in. (6 x 8 m)
Collection of the artist

Exhibitions
Portikus 2007 (solo).

Bibliography
Periodicals: Crüwell 2007, ill.; Huther 2007; Pisano 2007; Rosenau 2007 (i), ill.
Publications: *John Baldessari: Music 2007*, p. 127, ill.

p. 28; Bayrle 2009; *John Baldessari 2009* (Bielefeld), p. 19, ill. pp. 16–17; Bayrle 2017, ill. p. 81.

Notes
See "Artist's Statements," p. 410.



200752

Arms & Legs (Specif. Elbows & Knees), Etc. (Part One): Blue Torso and Pink Arm

2007
Ink-jet print and acrylic paint mounted on shaped canvas; interior enamel paint on wall
78 x 105½ in. (198.1 x 268 cm) overall dimensions
Holma/Ellipse Collection, Lisbon, Portugal

Provenance
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

Exhibitions
*Marian Goodman Gallery 2007 (solo), pp. 7, 13, ill. p. 21; Ellipse Foundation Art Centre 2008.

Bibliography
Periodicals: Goddard 2008.
Publications: *2008 Biennial Exhibition 2008, p. 99, ill. p. 98; Busch 2016, ill. p. 291.



200753

Arms & Legs (Specif. Elbows & Knees), Etc. (Part One): Arm and Leg (With Column)

2007
Ink-jet prints and acrylic paint on three layers of foam PVC board (with custom-cut raised and incised elements)

78¼ x 59 in. (198.8 x 149.9 cm)
Würth Collection, Germany

Provenance
Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris; Essl Museum, Klosterneuburg/Vienna

Exhibitions
*Marian Goodman Gallery 2007 (solo), p. 13, ill. p. 23; Essl Museum 2008.

Bibliography
Periodicals: Maulmin 2007, ill.



200754

**Arms & Legs (Specif. Elbows & Knees),
Etc. (Part One): Two Arms (With Three
Noses)**

2007
Ink-jet prints and acrylic paint on three layers of
foam PVC board (with custom-cut raised and
incised elements)

62¾ x 59 in. (159.4 x 149.9 cm)
Collection Nabil Aouad, Lisbon, Portugal

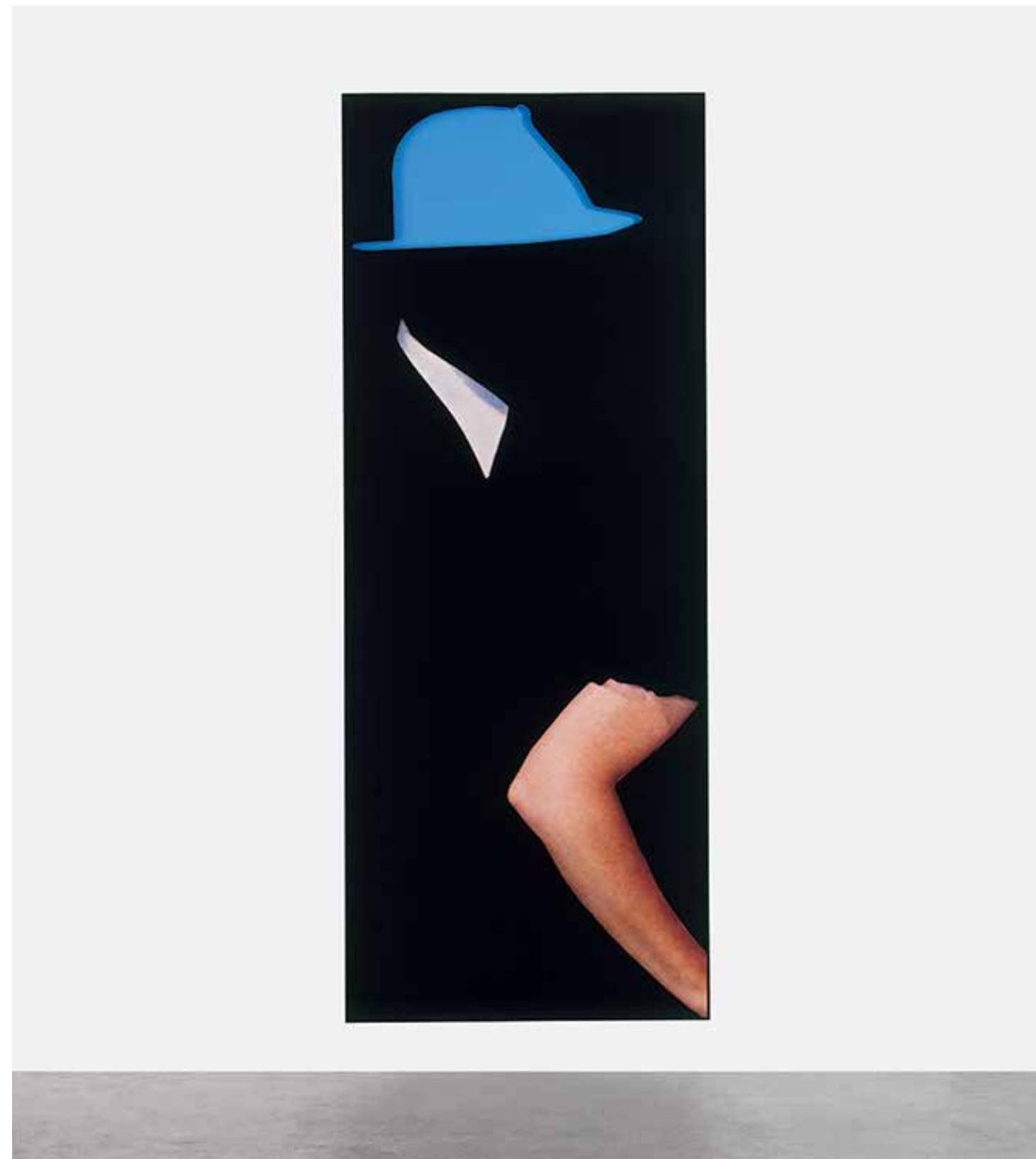
Provenance
Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris

Exhibitions

*Marian Goodman Gallery 2007 (solo), ill. p. 25.

Bibliography

Periodicals: Baldessari and Welling 2009 (i), ill. p. 31.



200755

**Arms & Legs (Specif. Elbows & Knees),
Etc. (Part One): Elbow (With Blue Hat)**

2007
Ink-jet prints and acrylic paint on three layers of
foam PVC board (with custom-cut raised and
incised elements)
119¾ x 46½ in. (304.2 x 118.1 cm)

Susan and Leonard Feinstein

Provenance
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

Exhibitions

*Marian Goodman Gallery 2007 (solo), p. 13; ill. p. 27.

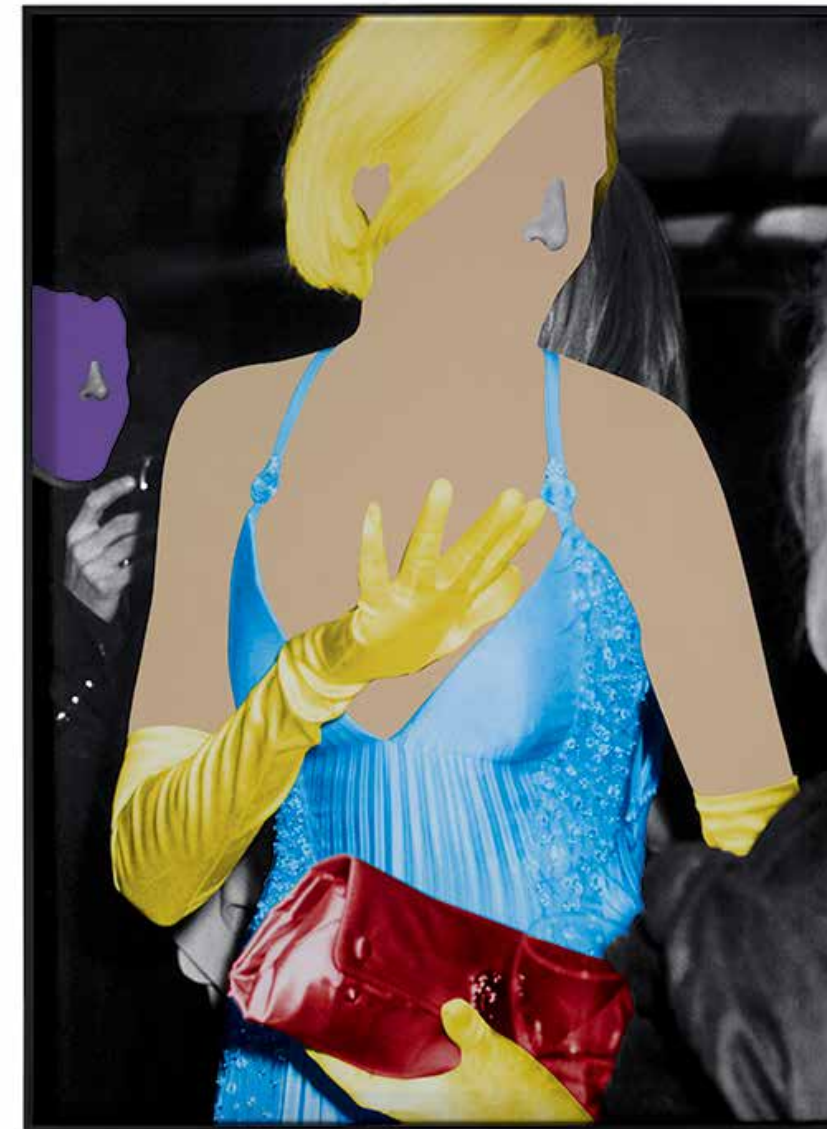


2010.5

W/Studio 54 Series: Person Holding Drink/Person with Pencil and Gesturing

2010
Ink-jet print and acrylic paint mounted on aluminum composite sheet
79 3/4 x 53 7/8 in. (202.6 x 136.8 cm)

Private collection of Wolfgang and Gelila Puck



2010.6

W/Studio 54 Series: Person with Yellow Gloves/Person with Red Handbag

2010
Ink-jet print and acrylic paint mounted on aluminum composite sheet
44 x 32 1/4 in. (111.8 x 81.9 cm)

Private collection of Wolfgang and Gelila Puck



PORTION OF MATISSE PAINTING AND JACKET

2010.37

Sediment (Part Two): Portion of Matisse Painting and Jacket

2010
Ink-jet print with oil, acrylic, and enamel paint on canvas
70 x 54 in. (177.8 x 137.2 cm)
Lauren and Brian Frank

Provenance
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York; Private collection; Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

Exhibitions
Marian Goodman Gallery 2010 (solo).

Bibliography
Publications: *John Baldessari* 2015, ill. p. 99;
Matisse and American Art 2017, ill. p. 113.



SHOE, CHAIR AND COAT

2010.38

Sediment (Part Two): Shoe, Chair and Coat

2010
Ink-jet print with oil, acrylic, and enamel paint on canvas
70 x 54 in. (177.8 x 137.2 cm)
Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro, New York

Provenance
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

Exhibitions
Marian Goodman Gallery 2010 (solo).



2010.41

Sediment (Part Two): Sheep and Rocks
 2010
 Ink-jet print with oil, acrylic, and enamel paint on
 canvas
 70 x 54 in. (177.8 x 137.2 cm)
 Collection of the artist



2010.42

**Sediment (Part Two): Car, Trunk
 and Branches**
 2010
 Ink-jet print with oil, acrylic, and enamel paint on
 canvas
 70 x 54 in. (177.8 x 137.2 cm)
 Collection of Susan and Leonard Feinstein

Provenance
 Marian Goodman Gallery, New York



The photographs on these two pages show all eighteen variations of the sculptures, each with its respective persona.

CHRONOLOGY

1931

John Anthony Baldessari is born June 17 at Paradise Valley Hospital in National City, California, the second of two children of Antonio Baldessari (1877–1976) and Hedvig Marie Thuesen Jensen (1896–1950). The son of a poor Italian farmer, Antonio immigrated to America from Albiano (then part of Austria, now Italy) in 1903, reaching Ellis Island on March 4. Antonio worked his way west through Colorado, Texas, Mexico, and northern California before ending up in San Diego, where he met Hedvig, a shopkeeper's daughter originally from Vejle, Denmark, who was employed as a private nurse by a wealthy couple. Antonio and Hedvig married in 1927; a daughter, Betty Ann, was born the following year. The family eventually settled into a house built by Antonio at 1121 E. 2nd Street, in National City, a town south of San Diego near the U.S.-Mexico border.

Though Antonio is Catholic and Hedvig Lutheran, the children attend First Methodist Church of National City. Antonio is self-employed as a carpenter and builder, tearing down houses and salvaging the materials for use in new buildings or selling the scrap in a shop he owns. With the money from the business, he is able to purchase land of his own. On the family property Antonio grows vegetables and fruit and raises animals for pets and food.

1934

In the summer, Baldessari visits Denmark with his sister and mother, staying for six months.

1936

Begins kindergarten at Central Elementary School.

1941

Becomes a member of the local YMCA.

His mother enrolls Baldessari in piano lessons. In May, has first piano recital.

1942

Finishes fifth grade; his report card reads: "has a keen interest in history," "enjoys group singing," "does very good art work," "does well in cartooning."

1943

In the fall, Baldessari begins seventh grade at National City Junior High School.

1944

Develops an interest in chemistry, and through that an interest in photography. Begins reading books on cameras and the fundamentals of photography.

Accompanies father to county fairs, where Antonio loves looking at tractors and farm equipment. Baldessari prefers scrutinizing the works of painters who exhibit at the fairs and copies down some of their names.

Makes use of a storage shed on his parents' property as a makeshift "studio," where he experiments and builds things. He also acquires a small printing press, on which he learns to set type.

1945

In the summers while in high school, Baldessari helps his father in the family salvage and building business.

Purchases his first camera, a German-made Exakta 35mm. He later acquires a Rolleiflex medium-format camera.

1946

Enters Sweetwater Union High School in National City. Throughout high school, works evenings and weekends at a local hardware store, Whiting-Mead, earning seventy cents an hour.

With his father, builds a darkroom in the house and acquires an enlarger. Baldessari learns the basics of darkroom photography.

1947

In his junior year at high school, takes Commercial Art I and Freehand Drawing I. Becomes a staff photographer for his school's yearbook. Enters American Legion Poppy Poster Contest and receives an award for his design.

1948

As a senior, enrolls in advanced classes in Commercial Art and Freehand Drawing. With his Rolleiflex, takes numerous black-and-white photos, whose subjects include family and friends, objects, and landscapes. After processing the negatives, makes careful notes regarding the film type, exposure time, f-stop, and type of developer. Joins local camera club, taking trips with group to photograph landscapes and models.

1949

A high school art teacher encourages Baldessari to enter the National Scholastic Art Competition. His photograph is awarded a certificate of merit and a Gold Achievement Key. It is then exhibited at the "Scholastic National High School Art Exhibition" at the Fine Arts Galleries, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh. Another Baldessari photograph wins a prize in the San Diego Junior Chamber of Commerce's Family Fair Foto Contest, which invited entrants to photograph a family scene.

Serves as art director for a senior-class musical, *Stardust*, overseeing the design and building of the stage sets.

June 14, graduates from high school.

With the encouragement of his sister, enters San Diego State College in the fall. Enrolls in his first college painting course, taught by Jean Swiggett. Other classes include art history, literature, philosophy, and secondary education training.

Continues taking black-and-white photos with Rolleiflex, sometimes rephotographing magazine pinup girls and retouching them.

1950

On February 18, Hedvig Baldessari dies.

1951

Joins the Sigma Chi fraternity.

1952

Further college art courses include costume design, poster art, ceramics, etching, and lithography. Makes prints *Seven Bottles* and *Old House*.

Is elected senior-class vice-president and is made chairman of the extra-curriculum committee.

1953

Begins teaching Saturday drawing classes at the San Diego Fine Arts Gallery and subsequently joins the San Diego Art Guild. Participates in his first public exhibition, "San Diego Art Guild All-Media Annual," held at the San Diego Fine Arts Gallery. In March, at the Fine Arts Gallery, delivers a lecture on the history of oil painting, with a focus on Venetian painters.

June 19, receives from San Diego State College a B.A. with a major in art and a minor in literature as well as a teaching credential, which allows him to teach in secondary schools. Is elected a member of the Blue Key National Honor Fraternity.

Antonio gives Baldessari a new car as a graduation gift. Travels to Europe with a group of college friends, his first trip there since going as a child to Denmark. Visits Venice, Rome, Amsterdam, Paris, and London, among other cities, in order to, in his words, "see all the art that he had only seen projected in art history class."

Makes lithograph *Melons and Bricks*.



Baldessari in sailor outfit, 1934



Top: The Baldessari family home in National City, 1930s
Below: Baldessari's senior picture, San Diego State College, 1953

1954

In February, Baldessari is made studio manager for the San Diego Art Guild and oversees classes there.

Designs theater programs and posters for two productions of the Aztec Theatre Guild in San Diego: Samuel Spewack's *Two Blind Mice*, and Truman Capote's *The Grass Harp*.

Is included in the 1953–54 edition of *Who's Who among Students in American Universities and Colleges*.

From September 1954 to April 1955, attends the University of California, Berkeley, with the intention of getting a Ph.D. in art history. While at Berkeley, tries to cross-reference on paper everything he had ever read in his life up to that time, making himself "literally ill" in the process.

1955

Leaves Berkeley and returns to San Diego State College to pursue a master's degree in studio art. Moves back to family house in National City.

Teaches art classes at Pacific Beach Junior High School in San Diego.

1956

Makes earliest extant painting (1956.1)—a still life depicting kites resting on two chairs.

Teaches a painting class at San Diego State College, his first academic teaching position. At the same time, teaches art classes at several area junior high and high schools.

Joins the La Jolla Art Association.

In August, travels to Mexico City, where he visits the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes and the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.

1957

Makes linocut print titled *Rose Bush*.

Participates in two exhibitions at the Art Center in La Jolla: "First Semi-Annual All Media Membership Exhibition," where he shows *Old House*; and the "Second 1957 All-Media Membership Exhibition," where he shows *Manipulated Surface* (CP57:10).

Exhibits a still-life oil painting, *Chairs, Table, and Flowers* (1957:5), in "42nd National Orange Show: Painting and Sculpture" in San Bernardino. Jules Langsner in *ARTnews* mentions Baldessari's painting as having received a blue ribbon in the exhibition.

In May, completes master's thesis, "A Series of Creative Paintings," which consists of five oil paintings: *Potted Plant* (1957:1), *Chairs, Table, and Flowers*, *Three Students* (1957:9), *Bulldozer* (CP57:2), and *Plant on Chair* (CP57:12), plus a summary of his techniques and intentions.

On June 14, receives his M.A. in painting in San Diego State College's 59th Annual Commencement Ceremony.

Continues to paint in a representational style but also starts to experiment with pure abstraction and collage. Befriends the painter Richard Allen Morris. The two share a mutual respect for each other's paintings and commitment to art. In addition to painting, continues teaching at San Diego area schools, including a class on lettering.

Enrolls in a summer studio painting course with the artist Rico Lebrun at the University of California, Los Angeles. Baldessari feels Lebrun is the first "real artist" he has met, and Lebrun becomes a mentor to the younger artist. On the final day of class, Lebrun devotes his lecture to Baldessari's *Manipulated Surface*. Lebrun encourages Baldessari to take classes at the Los Angeles County Art Institute, which later becomes the Otis Art Institute.

1958

Baldessari quits his teaching jobs in San Diego and moves to Los Angeles. He enrolls in classes at the Los Angeles County Art Institute, where he studies with Fletcher Martin, Herb Jepson, and Joe Mugnaini. During this time produces numerous figure drawings as well as paintings under the influence of the abstract expressionists. Later in the year, moves to Pasadena.

Shows drawings in "Second Annual Los Angeles Area Drawing Exhibition" at the Exodus Gallery in San Pedro and in "Second 1958 All-Media Membership Exhibition" at the Art Center in La Jolla. Also exhibits a print, *Rose Bush #2*, in "Tenth San Gabriel Valley Artists Exhibition" at the Pasadena Art Museum.

1959

Baldessari also takes classes with Robert Chuey and Richards Ruben at Chouinard Art Institute, where his friend Guy Williams is teaching. Others studying there at the time are Ed Ruscha, Joe Goode, Larry Bell, and Llyn Foulkes.

Travels to New York, where he sees Roman wall fragments in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He is attracted to the white plaster areas that filled in the missing wall pieces. This experience inspires work from this period, as well as the subsequent "Fragments" series of 1966, and informs his growing fascination with the relationship of the part to the whole.

Still unsure about whether to commit to a career in art or art education, applies to the Princeton Theological Seminary but is not accepted.

In the summer, feeling disillusioned with a prevailing Los Angeles style in art, leaves Chouinard and the Los Angeles County Art Institute and moves back to the family house in National City. Converts the back of a laundromat owned by his father at 111 National City Boulevard into an art studio.

Takes a job as a technical illustrator drawing Atlas missiles for engineering handbooks but soon quits. Also quits another junior high teaching job.

Partly due to his imposing stature (6' 7"), is hired by the California Youth Authority to teach for six weeks at a camp east of San Diego for juvenile delinquents. Baldessari sees that the young detainees have little interest in any type of instruction, but they ask him if he would open up the arts and crafts room at night so that they could work there. His experience there moves him: "I realized how magical and powerful art could be; they valued art more than I did."

Paints a series of works depicting the rocky cliffs in La Jolla overlooking the Pacific Ocean. He refers to these as the "La Jolla Pines" series, heavily impastoed works, painted "en plein air," that are stylistically more expressionistic than representational.

Develops friendships with fellow San Diego artists Don Dudley, Russell Baldwin, and Bob Matheny.

Creates a flyer advertising private classes: "Problems in Advanced Painting – Instructions by John Baldessari – write for prospectus."

Begins subscribing to national magazines such as *ARTnews*, *Art International*, *Arts*, *Art and Literature*, and *It Is*.

1960

Has first solo exhibition, "John Baldessari: Paintings," at the Art Center in La Jolla, March 23–April 24. Some of the eighteen paintings in the show are: 1959.5–6, 1959.12, *Micropainting* (1960.4), *Isolated Germ* (1960.8), *Torrey Pines* (1960.9), and *Yellow Moon*. Landscapes, gestural abstractions, and Miró-like organic shapes dominate the canvases. The works range in price from \$25 to \$90.

In August, has solo exhibition of paintings at Vroman's Bookstore in San Diego, where art is exhibited on the mezzanine and in the store windows. Other San Diego artists-friends, including Guy Williams,



Baldessari in his studio, National City, c. 1960

Richard Allen Morris, Don Dudley, and Sheldon Kirby, had all shown previously at Vroman's.

His painting *Yellow Moon* is included in "1960 Annual Exhibition: Artists of Los Angeles County and Vicinity" at the Los Angeles County Museum of Science, History, and Art. The jurors for the show are Richard Diebenkorn; Henry S. Francis, curator at the Cleveland Museum of Art; and Clement Greenberg.

Participates in the exhibition "Arts of Southern California—VIII: Drawing," organized by the Long Beach Museum of Art. Baldessari contributes four drawings to the show. The catalogue contains a brief text by Baldessari: "After being able to do a classical, admirable drawing—then what? We sense that there is more to drawing than that. Cracks in a sidewalk, a patch of asphalt, a shadow—aren't these as valid subjects for a drawing as the model? And aren't our fears about the future and our thoughts about visual material equally valid?"

From 1960 to 1963 is a member of the California Water Color Society and participates in its "40th Exhibition" at the Los Angeles County Museum of Science, History, and Art.

Uses father's pickup truck to take paintings to galleries in Los Angeles. None show interest.

Teaches art classes at San Diego Adult School. Also between 1960 and 1961 teaches art at Gompers Junior High School, where he becomes the head of the art department.

1961

Begins painting on a larger scale, such as the "Signboard" series, which uses parts of billboards, cutout letters, and strips of wood; concurrently makes small-scale collages and watercolors.

Has solo exhibition of paintings and drawings at Southwestern College.

Continues to show in regional annuals: "24th Annual Drawing, Print, and Sculpture Exhibition of the San Francisco Art Association," at the San Francisco Museum of Art; "1961: California South," at the San Diego Fine Arts Gallery; "Arts of Southern California—X: Collage," at the Long Beach Museum of Art; and "1961 Annual Painting and Sculpture Exhibition—All California Artists," at the Art Center in La Jolla. Baldessari's text in the catalogue for the Long Beach show reads: "Any materials are valid and categories annoy me. Art should look inevitable. Categories dissolve when one sees a tightrope case which denies a label. I look to the eventful show that omits them. Art is more than brushes and oil paint!"

1962

Baldessari marries Carol Ann Wixom, a Montessori teacher from Riverside County, on June 23 at First Baptist Church, Hemet, California. Later, the two also have a wedding party—described as "wonderfully Dadaist" by friend Don Dudley—at Baldessari friend Marlene Williams's i Gallery in La Jolla. Moves with Carol to 738 Jamaica Court in San Diego.

In August, resigns from the San Diego Art Guild, citing the Fine Arts Gallery's lack of commitment to contemporary art.

October 13, participates in "Jazz at the Art Center #5" at the Art Center in La Jolla. Baldessari's contribution to the program is "Surreal Painting Poem from National City," consisting of a slide show with poem. Four of his large assemblages also hang above the stage (CP62.17–20).

Is hired to teach painting and drawing at the University of California, Los Angeles, Extension art program held at various locations in San Diego.

Undertakes "X" series of mixed-media works, addressing themes such as religion (see 1962.1) and the Holocaust (see CP62.10). Many prominently feature a painted or constructed "X," connoting themes

such as negation and cancellation and which Baldessari describes as "running the gamut of feelings from condemnation and crucifixion to something exalted and redemptive." The works are presented in a solo show, "John Baldessari: X Exhibition," at the Art Works Galleries in La Jolla. The exhibition causes a minor controversy in conservative La Jolla. Regarding the work *X Sign for a Crucifixion* (1962.1), Baldessari is quoted in a review: "Brutal means evoke the Crucifixion more sincerely, perhaps, than a small golden cross worn round the neck."

Baldessari creates *Bird #1* (1962.17), in which he paints over a fragment of a billboard advertisement. He begins accumulating hundreds of poster fragments from a friend at an advertising agency. These are mounted onto board, then painted or written over. This process culminates in the 1966 "Fragments" series.

Begins using his camera as an aid to his art, photographing walls and other flat surfaces and utilizing the photographic images as source material for his paintings (compare 1962.12 and CP62.14).

1963

While driving from Los Angeles to Santa Barbara, photographs the backs of all the trucks he passes, ostensibly to be used as studies for paintings. Selects and prints thirty-two of the shots in color to make a completed photo work, *The Backs of All the Trucks Passed While Driving from Los Angeles to Santa Barbara, Calif., Sunday 20 Jan. 63* (1963.1).

Serves with Robert Irwin and Peter Voulkos to select entrants for the juried competition of the "Fourth Annual California Painting and Sculpture Show" at the Art Center in La Jolla. From a field of 363 paintings and 106 works of sculpture, the three fail to choose a single artist.

Is a finalist in the "James D. Phelan Awards Competition Exhibition" at Barnsdall Gallery, Los Angeles.

Begins a series of paintings based on billboard fragments, often painting over the fragment and isolating a particular body part or feature.

In October, Baldessari sees the Marcel Duchamp retrospective organized by Walter Hopps at the Pasadena Art Museum, which makes a substantial impression on him.

1964

Daughter, Annamarie, born March 31.

In March, exhibits at Southwestern College six "body part" paintings in a group show called "Snap, Crackle and Pop," with Richard Allen Morris and Fred Cooper. Participates in a panel discussion called "Something Will Happen-ing" at the college in conjunction with the show, featuring impromptu performances by the students and teachers. In June, Baldessari and Morris have a two-man show of paintings at the UCSD Extension Office. In July, Baldessari, Morris, and Cooper show at the downtown San Diego Public Library. Baldessari exhibits a series of abstract black-and-white photographs. He is quoted in the *San Diego Union*: "Such photos are a good defense for people that say of abstract painting, 'I've never seen anything like that!' Also I feel that more painters should try photography which may help bring that field out of the sand dune and fence salon photo school, as well as possibly bridging the gap between painting and photography. Discovering the image is the important thing—I guess it really doesn't matter how it's done."

Teaches adult and children's art classes at the La Jolla Museum of Art, joining friends Donald Lewallen, Donald Brewer, and Richard Allen Morris. Helps mount an exhibit of works created in the children's summer art program.

Makes *Art Lesson* (1964.1), a mixed-media painting on canvas that illustrates common mistakes made when composing a painting, anticipating the text and photo-text works of 1966–68.

In October, Baldessari becomes part of the Extension teaching staff at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD).



Two of Baldessari's paintings (CP62.18–19) hanging above the stage at "Jazz at the Art Center #5," 1962

A PAINTING THAT IS ITS OWN DOCUMENTATION

JUNE 19, 1968 IDEA CONCEIVED AT 10:25 A.M.
 NATIONAL CITY, CALIF. BY JOHN BALDESSARI
 JULY 30, CANVAS BUILT AND PREPARED
 JULY 31, TEXT PREPARED AND EDITED
 AUGUST 1, PAINTING COMMISSIONED
 AUGUST 3, PAINTING COMPLETED
 OCTOBER 6, FIRST SHOWING, MOLLY
 BARNES GALLERY, LOS ANGELES

NOTE
 FOR EACH SUBSEQUENT EXHIBITION OF
 THIS PAINTING. ADD DATE AND LOCATION
 BELOW. FOR EXTRA SPACE, USE AN
 ADDITIONAL CANVAS.



Baldessari in front of *A Painting That Is Its Own Documentation* (1968.32), at his "Pure Beauty" opening at Molly Barnes Gallery, 1968

1965

Baldessari exhibits a sculpture, *The Color Cannon*, in the "Polychrome Sculpture" show at Southwestern College in January. He contributes an essay, "Polychrome Sculpture and Donald Duck," for the exhibition brochure, in which he writes: "Sculpture, which seems so exciting with promise currently, is actually quite late compared to painting, as far as color revolution goes. What in sculpture is to compare with Fauve, Expressionist, or Action Painting, etc. Why was there no parallel development in sculpture?" In February, contributes another sculpture to the "Invitational Sculpture Exhibition" at San Diego State College.

Makes two oil paintings, *God Nose* (1965.1) and *The Falling Cloud* (1965.2), which recall both René Magritte and the flat, cartoonish quality of contemporary pop art. A similar painting, *My Heart Belongs to Dada, But I Know Motherwell* (CP65.1), depicts a big toe poking out from a black sock.

Influenced by Ludwig Wittgenstein's aphorisms, as well as his own earlier experiments with billboard fragments, begins the "Fragments" series on pieces of aluminum. Baldessari bends and shapes the aluminum to resemble scraps of paper, spraying them white and painting over them with swaths of color and "Benday dots" that he creates with "faucet washers attached to wooden sticks."

Becomes a faculty member in the Southwestern College Art Department in Chula Vista.

In December, Baldessari and family move to 1120 E. 1st Street, adjoining the property and house on E. 2nd Street where he grew up and where his father still lives.

1966

Is profiled by Marilyn Hagberg in the January issue of *San Diego Magazine*; the accompanying photograph shows Baldessari in his studio working on the "Fragments" series.

In March, exhibits forty-two works from the "Fragments" series at the La Jolla Museum of Art in a solo show. The exhibition poster features a double-exposed photograph of Baldessari in the pose of Leonardo's drawing of the "Vitruvian Man" (1966.45).

Outgrowing the back of the laundromat, Baldessari convinces his father to let him use one of his properties, an abandoned movie theater at 4762 Ridgeway Drive, as a new studio.

Begins making a series of small works, some with words on raw canvas, others with black-and-white photographs printed directly on the canvas. This series develops into the larger text-based and photo-text-based canvases whose texts are chosen by the artist and painted by a professional sign painter. According to Baldessari, the impetus for these works was an ambivalence about his surroundings: "I was in charge of a lecture series at Southwestern College, south of National City, near the Mexican border. Some friends of mine in Los Angeles had talked Sam Francis into coming down and speaking. As I was interviewing him for the students, I asked him what he found interesting about this area, and he said, 'Well, it's the end of the line. You can't get any further away from the U.S. than this!' And that's how I felt. Who'd want to be there? And that's how it felt to make the photo-text canvases, which were pushing the limits at the time. I thought, I'm not using paint, it's a photographic process, and so you can't claim that they're paintings."

1967

Ceases all part-time teaching jobs and continues teaching only at Southwestern College. In January, Baldessari creates sound effects for a one-day Dada-inspired performance at the college.

Contributes poems to the journal *Duck Duck*, edited by Richard Allen Morris.

Makes *The Lesson #3* (1967.1), a painting based on a Xeroxed sheet of paper that he found in an art classroom at UCSD (the paper showed examples of drawing objects in perspective).

Makes a painting based on a biblical tract/flyer handed to him by a man on the street; the painting, executed in a painterly style, reads: *Suppose It Is True After All? What Then?* (1967.2).

Continues working on his text and photo-text paintings. For the text pieces, employs a local National City sign painter. One of the first text paintings is *A Two-Dimensional Surface without Any Articulation Is a Dead Experience* (1967.26), of which Baldessari was initially critical, as he wanted the lettering to be less "alive" and more "dead." The size of many of these works, 59 x 45 inches, was the maximum for the paintings to fit into his van. For the photo-text paintings, he uses liquid photographic emulsion, which is painted onto gessoed canvas prior to projecting a negative image onto the canvas, then developing and fixing the resultant work like a traditional black-and-white photographic print.

Shows text and photo-text works to galleries in Los Angeles, including Rolf Nelson and Ferus. Nicholas Wilder expresses interest and, though he doesn't exhibit the work, introduces Baldessari to the New York dealer Richard Bellamy, who views the new paintings in Guy Williams's L.A. studio. Bellamy is intrigued by the paintings and tells Baldessari, "I'm not sure what you're up to, but there are some artists in New York that you might feel some connection with." He suggests contacting Dan Graham, Joseph Kosuth, Robert Barry, Lawrence Weiner, and Douglas Huebler.

Son, Antonio (Tony), is born May 9.

1968

In February, curates an exhibition for Southwestern College called "Some L.A. Cats," featuring artists Pat O'Neill, Philip Rich, Greg Card, Roger Zimmerman, Joseph Vaughn, Steve Peterson, and Al Shear.

Gives lecture, "On Bruce Nauman's Sculpture: An Explanation," at Southwestern College in defense of the college's purchase of a sculpture by Bruce Nauman described as "Four feet by four feet by four inch slab of steel with the word *DARK* written on the bottom."

In the summer, travels to New York, where he meets Robert Barry, Joseph Kosuth, Douglas Huebler, and Lawrence Weiner, establishing friendships with them. Frequents artists' bars Cedar Tavern and Max's Kansas City. Meets painters Larry Poons, Al Held, and Edward Dugmore, curator Lawrence Alloway, and critic Gregory Battcock. Baldessari remembers feeling animosity from the New York painters. Shows photos of his text and photo-text works to galleries. On his final day in New York, walks into Richard Feigen Gallery, where he meets Michael Findlay, the gallery director. Findlay likes the work and later contacts Baldessari to ask if he would be interested in being part of a group show in the gallery's new space in SoHo. Baldessari sends four text paintings (*Quality Material* [1968.13], *What This Painting Aims to Do* [1968.20], *Solving Each Problem as It Arises* [1968.23], and *Subject Matter* [1968.26]) for the show, which opens on October 12. While in New York for the opening, meets artists Robert Smithson, Carl Andre, Richard Serra, Richard Long, and Sol LeWitt as well as critic Lucy Lippard.

Is hired by Paul Brach as a lecturer in the Department of Visual Arts at UCSD, joining fellow artists-teachers Emmett Williams, Eleanor Antin, David Antin, and Allan Kaprow on the faculty. Is given studio-office space in a Quonset hut on the La Jolla campus. Ceases teaching at Southwestern College.

Creates works from two commercially produced lighted message units (a precursor to LED signs), which he orders from Salescaster Displays Corporation in Linden, New Jersey. Each unit can display up to 230 characters. Baldessari sends in two texts, *Viewpoint* (1968.35) and *Isocephaly* (1968.36)—the former from his own notes on art, and the latter from a book on composition—that are "punched" into the vinyl tape and create the messages.

At the recommendation of David Antin, Baldessari meets Molly Barnes, who offers him a show of his new paintings at her gallery at 631 N. La Cienega Boulevard, his first solo exhibition in Los Angeles. The show, titled "John Baldessari: Pure Beauty," opens on



Top: Baldessari at Pier 18, New York, 1971
Below: Baldessari on a field trip with CalArts students, c. 1972

anticipate leaving teaching through the sale of my works, though maybe soon. I'm told, and it looks that way to me, that I will have better financial reception in Europe where I'll be showing this year. I keep thinking, if I could just get at least a year off to really work."

In December, has four works included in the exhibition "Monoprints" at the Montgomery Art Center at Pomona College, curated by Helene Winer. Baldessari sends works that play on the word *print*: *Art Endures* (1970.5), *Scale, Proportion, Shape, Mass (A Sculpture)* (1970.6), *Evidence* (1970.8), and *A Potential Print* (1970.9).

1971

In January, Baldessari submits instructions for a work for the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (1971.8): "From ceiling to floor should be written by one or more people one sentence under another the following statement: 'I will not make any more boring art,'" which the artist calls "a Punishment piece." Baldessari also makes a video of himself writing the sentence out numerous times into a notebook and sends a page from the notebook to be used as the announcement of the show. The exhibition takes place from April 1–10 in the Mezzanine Gallery, and the sentence is written nearly four thousand times by twenty people. Baldessari is subsequently invited to make a lithograph of the piece with the school's Lithography Workshop. He approves their use of his notebook page, and the resulting work becomes his first acknowledged print.

In February, participates in "Situation Concepts" at Galerie im Taxis-palais in Innsbruck and "Conceptual Extension" at Galerie 16 in Kyoto.

In March, Baldessari is one of a group of artists invited by Willoughby Sharp to do a site-specific work at an abandoned pier along the Hudson River in collaboration with the photographers Harry Shunk and János Kender. Baldessari does five sequences of photographs in which he is both the subject and participant (1971.3–7). A resulting exhibition, called "Projects: Pier 18," opens at the Museum of Modern Art in June.

On May 12, Baldessari enacts a piece called *Police Drawing* (1971.9), in which he enters a drawing class taught by George Nicolaidis and walks around for ten minutes. The class is then asked to describe Baldessari to a police sketch artist who is subsequently brought in. The ensuing work consists of the police artist's drawing of Baldessari, as well as documentary photos and a video, and is exhibited in "Arte de Sistemas" at the Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAYC), Buenos Aires, in July.

Becomes friendly with the Dutch artists Ger van Elk and Bas Jan Ader, who are living in Los Angeles at the time. They, along with Lawrence Weiner, encourage Baldessari to contact Adriaan van Ravesteijn, whose Amsterdam-based gallery, Art & Project, shows conceptual artists from Europe and the U.S. Baldessari sends Ravesteijn his "Art Disasters" series of fictional art (1971.11) that in Baldessari's view had "gone bad." The work is exhibited in July and marks Baldessari's first solo European exhibition.

Baldessari makes the video *Folding Hat: Version 2*, commissioned by the German video curator Gerry Schum.

From June to August, Baldessari teaches a summer semester at Hunter College in New York. Takes mescaline with Robert Smithson and Tony Shafrazi while in New York.

In September, moves into William Wegman's old studio at 2001½ Main Street in Santa Monica.

Creates the work *Ingres and Other Parables* (1971.10), which is exhibited at Konrad Fischer Galerie in Düsseldorf in October. Six of Baldessari's films are shown in the "Prospect 71: Projection" exhibition at the Städtischen Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf, the same month.

Baldessari is introduced to Ileana Sonnabend at Konrad Fischer's booth at the Cologne Art Fair, who suggests a meeting on his return to the U.S. In New York, Baldessari meets with Sonnabend and her husband, Michael, as well as gallery director Antonio Homem and

Ealan Wingate. Sonnabend offers to represent him. Baldessari says he "will let her know" once he returns home to California. He begins showing with the gallery the following year.

In November, CalArts opens its new campus in Valencia.

In December, Baldessari participates in the "California Institute of the Arts Faculty Show," exhibiting three mixed-media pieces, including *Choosing a Text, a Color, a Date, and a Photograph* (1971.14), which had its genesis in the "Commissioned Paintings" from two years prior. Participates in an evening of performances by CalArts faculty, in which he plays his high school theme song on a Hawaiian steel guitar—"the only time I ever performed."

The Contemporary Art Council of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art acquires the photo-text painting *Wrong* (1968.7) directly from the artist as a result of his receiving the museum's "Young Talent Award" three years prior.

1972

In February, Baldessari makes six black-and-white videos in his new Main Street studio: *Baldessari Sings LeWitt, I Am Making Art, Three Feathers and Other Fairy Tales, Inventory, Xylophone, and Teaching a Plant the Alphabet*.

Creates the "Choosing (A Game for Two Players)" series of photographs (1972.3–13), which begins with a participant selecting three like objects from a larger grouping.

In March, participates in the exhibition "Konzept—Kunst" at the Kunstmuseum Basel.

As part of "Post-Studio Art" at CalArts, Baldessari institutes class field trips; random spots are picked on a map of Los Angeles and surrounding areas, and students are encouraged to make a work on the trip or about the trip. On one of these field trips, Baldessari makes *Rolling: Tire* (1972.19), assisted by students. Baldessari later notes the complementary nature of his teaching and art making.

Makes *Floating: Color* (1972.16), a six-photo work that features rectangular sheets of colored paper floating out from a two-story house. Baldessari later comments: "The color wheel, when looked at in another manner, is a natural organizational device, a way of bringing together six elements by other than aesthetic choice. When things share a common denominator, a new order can arise."

In April, travels to Europe for three solo exhibitions: Jack Wendler Gallery in London, Galleria Toselli in Milan, and Galerie MTL in Brussels. He brings back to CalArts catalogues of numerous European exhibitions.

In May, shows *Ingres and Other Parables* in "13 Artists Chosen for Documenta" at Sonnabend Gallery in New York, his first exhibition with the gallery.

In June, participates in the 36th Venice Biennial; "420 West Broadway at Spoleto Festival" and "XV Festival dei Due Mondi: Filmperformances," Museo Civico, both in Spoleto; "Encuentros 1972 Pamplona," Museo de Navarra, Pamplona; and "Documenta 5," Kassel.

An artist's book, *Ingres and Other Parables*, is published by Studio International in London. A second artist's book, *Choosing: Green Beans*, is published by Edizioni Toselli in Milan.

Has second solo show at Art & Project in July and second solo show at Galerie MTL in September.

Between 1972 and 1973, makes numerous photo series, such as "Attempting to Roll," "Throwing Balls," and "Cigar Smoke," that are structured like games or improbable experiments. In Baldessari's words: "An artist is a person who can see connections in unlikely circumstances. A piece starts with a hunch, an intuition with no clear work in mind. I set up structure situations with rules I make for myself, then I try to solve it. In this lies the joy of discovery."



Baldessari's Main Street studio, Santa Monica, c. 1974

Baldessari's narrative works from the same period, such as *The Mondrian Story* (1973.19–22), *The Pencil Story* (1973.23), *A Different Kind of Order (The Thelonious Monk Story)* (1973.26), and *A New Sense of Order (The Art Teacher's Story)* (1973.27), extend the ideas first explored in *Ingres and Other Parables*.

Birdcalls, a sound work by artist Louise Lawler, features Baldessari's first name as part of male artists' names converted into birdcalls.

1973

Baldessari Sings LeWitt is included in the Whitney Biennial, which opens in January.

In March, conceives of *The Songs* (1973.61), which he envisions as a visual equivalent to a musical score. Makes videos *Ed Henderson Reconstructs Movie Scenarios* and *The Meaning of Various News Photos to Ed Henderson*, featuring one of his CalArts students; *How We Do Art Now; Haste Makes Waste; Practice Makes Perfect; and The Way We Do Art Now and Other Sacred Tales*.

In March, the books *Choosing: Green Beans* and *Ingres and Other Parables* are included in "Artists Books" at Moore College of Art, Philadelphia.

In April, the video *The Way We Do Art Now and Other Sacred Tales* is included in "Circuit: A Video Invitational," a traveling exhibition.

Has first solo exhibition at Sonnabend Gallery in New York in April, followed by his first show at Sonnabend's Paris gallery in May.

Contributes five typewritten texts—*On the Mixing of Paint and Pencil, The Camping Story, On Artists' Shoes, Two Questions, and The Renoir Story* (1973.65–69)—to the exhibition "Deurle 11/7/73" at the Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium.

In August, receives a grant of \$3000 from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

Also in August, has a second solo exhibition at Konrad Fischer Galerie in Düsseldorf.

Makes a series of color Super 8 films (all film loops)—*Easel Painting, Time-Temperature, Water to Wine to Water, The Hollywood Film, and Throwing Leaves Back at Tree*—as well as a 16mm color film, *Title*. The Super 8 films were originally shown projected as small images on a wall alongside a group of still photos to be like "photographs but with movement," according to Baldessari.



Video still of Baldessari from *I Am Making Art*, 1972

In September, applies again for (but again does not receive) a Guggenheim Fellowship. In the application Baldessari states as the title of his project: "An application of some of the attitudes of structural and narrative art to the making of a film serial."

Baldessari's *The Mondrian Story (Version 1)* (1973.19) is featured on the cover of the October issue of *Artforum*, which also includes an essay on his work by James Collins.

Makes artist's portfolio *Throwing Three Balls in the Air to Get a Straight Line (Best of Thirty-Six Attempts)*, published by Giampaolo Prearo Editore and Galleria Toselli in Milan.

Makes two related works in the driveway outside his studio: *Trying to Roll a Disc in a Straight Line from Bottom to Top and Top to Bottom (Four Photographs per Second)* and *Trying to Roll a Ball in a Straight Line from Bottom to Top and Top to Bottom (Four Photographs per Second)* (1973.50–51). Both involve the artist rolling an object along a line in the concrete grid of the driveway in an attempt to match or mimic that line. About these works, Baldessari wrote: "A major portion of my work is concerned with attempting things that cannot ideally be realized. One aspect of this concern is aligning improbable things (not normally aligned) with an ideal line."

1974

In January, participates in "Open Circuits: An International Conference on the Future of Television" at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. After the conference, Baldessari writes an essay titled "T.V. (1.) Is like a Pencil and (2.) Won't Bite Your Leg," in which he observes: "To have a three-day conference on video is akin to having a conference on 'the pencil.' That is, I think to have progress in T.V., the medium must be as neutral as a pencil. Just one more tool in the artist's toolbox." The piece is published in the journal *Art-Rite* in the fall of 1974 and the book *The New Television* by MIT in 1977.

Baldessari and William Wegman are the subject of "You Call That Art?," a television documentary on art hosted by Allan Kaprow. The program airs in March on KCET, the Los Angeles PBS affiliate.

Undertakes four new photographic series, "Portrait," "Extended Corner," "Binary Code," and "Embed"; in each, the artist manipulates the subject of the photograph or the photograph itself.

In April, travels to Europe for one-man exhibitions at Galleria Toselli in Milan and Jack Wendler Gallery in London.

With Ed Henderson, Baldessari produces a series of drawings in which he plays a record of sound effects to Henderson, instructing him to draw what he hears (1974.40–41).

Returns to Europe in July, then travels with wife to Iran, Thailand, Singapore, Australia, Fiji, and Hawaii.

In August, receives an NEA grant for \$7500.

In September, has last solo exhibition at Galerie MTL in Brussels and a solo exhibition at Art & Project/MTL in Antwerp.

For the third time, applies for (but does not receive) a Guggenheim Fellowship.

Makes film loops *Ice Cube Sliding, Taking a Slate: Ilene and David (#1), Taking a Slate: Ilene and David (#2), Taking a Slate: David, and Ted's Christmas Card*.

Is commissioned by Art/Tapes/22, in Florence, to produce *The Italian Tape*, a video described by Baldessari as "a hypothetical dialogue between an American artist and an Italian critic."

Baldessari discovers a movie memorabilia shop in Burbank. In the cheap bins, finds unidentifiable movie stills as well as newspaper press photos. Over a period of years, buys photos that interest him for around ten cents apiece and builds up an inventory of images. Baldessari states, "I started to realize that because they came from



Baldessari installing an *Alignment Series* work (1976.55) for "Rooms P.S. 1," 1976

movies and often fell into conventional categories, people were carrying images like them around in their heads in a collective unconscious, and that I could begin to play with that."

1975

Baldessari's video work is included in the exhibitions "Video Art," at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; "Projects: Video III," at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; "The Video Show: Festival of Independent Video at the Serpentine Gallery," at the Serpentine Gallery, London; "Projected Video," at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and "Southland Video Anthology I," at the Long Beach Museum of Art.

In relation to his photo and video work, begins to remove himself as a subject or performer but continues to explore conceptual-perceptual themes in his "Kissing," "Strobe Series/Futurist," "Action/Reaction (Synchronized)," "Top View," "Stereogram," "Thaumatrope," "Structure by Color," "Color Card," "Pathetic Fallacy," and "Word Chain" series.

Makes second print edition, *Five Pickles (with Fingerprints) in the Shape of a Hand*, as part of the "Artists & Photographs" portfolio published by Multiples, Inc. According to the portfolio brochure: "Baldessari's strategy is to be as impersonal as possible, deliberately attempting to avoid conventional good taste in his photographs. He claims to be 'annoyed' by beautiful photographs and he occasionally shoots at random in order to eliminate the prejudicial consequences of his own eye and taste."

Creates artist's book, *Throwing a Ball Once to Get Three Melodies and Fifteen Chords*, based on a 1973 action and published by the University of California at Irvine Art Gallery. A second artist's book, *Four Events and Reactions*, based on four new works in his "Action/Reaction (Synchronized)" series, is published in Florence by Centro Di.

Applies for a fourth Guggenheim Fellowship, which he doesn't receive. In the application he writes: "I have continued to exhibit, more in Europe and elsewhere overseas than in America. I will do my first museum show in Europe this year at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. I received a second NEA grant (\$7,500). I have continued to teach, since I still do not make enough from my art to support myself and my family. I applied for a Guggenheim again with no success. I now seem to be fairly successful in terms of exhibitions and other offers around the world, but I would now like

to show less in order to have more time to work on my art. It's the classic story—I need some sales in order to purchase time."

Guest lectures at Oakland College, Rochester, Michigan; the University of Chicago; the School of the Art Institute of Chicago; N.A.M.E. Gallery, Chicago; Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois; Rutgers College, New Jersey; and Hartford Art School, Connecticut.

In the fall, at his Main Street studio, hosts performance by fellow CalArts teacher and artist Wolfgang Stoerchle. Also during this period, Baldessari opens up his studio to his students for impromptu exhibits, performances, and critiques of his own works in progress and hosts parties with such artists-friends as Lawrence Weiner, Robert Barry, Jonathan Borofsky, and David Askevold.

In October, has second solo show at Sonnabend Gallery, New York, followed by a solo show at the gallery's Paris location in November.

On November 22, his first solo European museum show, "John Baldessari: Recent Work," opens at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

1976

Influenced by Susanne K. Langer's text "The Logic of Signs and Symbols," creates *Brutus Killed Caesar* (1976.56), thirty-three pictorial sentences in which the protagonists face off in the same two photographs across a changing middle panel that suggests the means by which one person presumably has "killed" the other. The work is also published as an artist's book by Emily H. Davis Art Gallery, University of Akron, which hosts, from February 23 to March 12, the second leg of the American solo exhibition "John Baldessari: Recent Work."

Produces eight bodies of new work: the "Structure by Color," "Pangram," "Repair/Retouch," "Retouch/Rubin's Effect," "Violent Space," "Violent," "Car Color," and "T.V." series.

On April 20, his father, Antonio Baldessari, dies. Baldessari is made executor of the estate.

Produces with Cirrus Editions the "Raw Prints" print portfolio, a series of six lithographs that makes use of the color wheel and is based on snapshots taken by the artist in a Santa Monica mall. In each, one area of color and one line are chosen and enlarged in proportion to each photograph. According to Baldessari, the title refers to the fact that the viewer could "complete the prints in their mind or leave them 'raw.'"

In June, has first retrospective exhibition, "John Baldessari," which originates at George Paton Gallery, University of Melbourne, and travels throughout Australia.

Contributes site-specific piece, *Alignment Series: Disaster Story Line (Getting It Straight)* (1976.55), to the inaugural "Rooms" exhibition at P.S. 1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, Long Island City, New York.

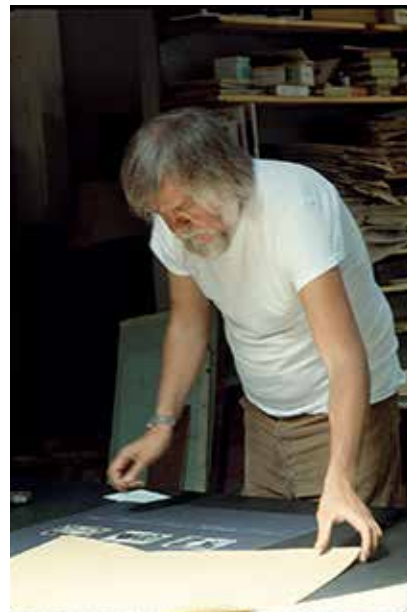
"John Baldessari: Recent Work" opens at James Corcoran Gallery, Los Angeles, September 23, his first solo Los Angeles gallery show since 1970.

1977

Recent photo works and the 1972 video *Inventory* are included in "1977 Biennial Exhibition," held at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, February 19–April 3.

Lectures at State University of New York at Buffalo, the Albricht-Knox Art Gallery, and the Detroit Institute of Arts.

From October 10–15, holds a six-day performance/exhibition titled "John Baldessari: Six Colorful Inside Jobs." The event takes place at a temporary space at 1493 West Washington Boulevard, Los Angeles, in which a worker hired by the artist paints a room six different colors, one color on each day. The action is recorded by



Top: The artist assembling a "Blasted Allegories" work, 1977
Below: Cover of *Art in America*, featuring a detail from a "Blasted Allegories" work (1978.58), May 1981

time-lapse photography and eventually becomes the film *Six Colorful Inside Jobs*. The work was described by Baldessari as follows: "It also was an installation piece. Each five minutes of color represents two hours of painting time the evening of that day mentioned in the film. Thus, red on Monday for two hours, and so on. It can be seen as a three-dimensional painting, a painting that makes itself, art-as-work/work-as-art, etc. Ideally, it should go on endlessly. I used to paint slum apartments as a kid. There was a fine line between just painting a wall and Painting. Also what is interesting is how the painting paints the painter—since he is wearing white, he acts as a canvas that slowly changes in color as the one color is painted over another. But that was not planned, and sounds suspiciously like art. There is also, I notice, something about Sisyphus in this. It could be a kind of painter's hell. But essentially, it is about work with some small amount of pleasure attached."

After the completion of the *Six Colorful Inside Jobs* film and the *Six Colorful Tales* and *Two Colorful Melodies* videos, Baldessari largely abandons working again in either media.

Creates the artist's book *Fable—A Sentence of Thirteen Parts (With Twelve Alternate Verbs) Ending in FABLE* (published by Anatol AV und Filmproduktion, Hamburg), which consists of two axes of photographs on which words have been printed in yellow. The horizontal axis features nouns and adjectives, while the bisecting vertical axis consists of verbs. Together the two axes combine to make a kind of open-ended rebus that hints at new pictorial possibilities.

Begins a new series, "Blasted Allegories," inspired, in part, by Claude Lévi-Strauss's book *Structural Anthropology*. The series brings together elements of earlier works such as *Brutus Killed Caesar*, *Fable*, the "Violent Space" and "Word Chain" series, as well as the video *Six Colorful Tales*. In an unpublished interview from 1983, Baldessari says about the "Blasted Allegories" series: "That's probably the most inaccessible work that I've done, and I just had to get that stuff out of my mind because in a way those are chartings of how I usually think about my work, but I don't usually show people that. For once I thought it would be interesting to show people just what kinds of stuff my mind goes through; it's just like seeing verbal information instead of making it into art, I mean, why should you convert it? I guess by and large—I'm a paradoxical person—I would like to have it look utterly simple and childlike and have an infrastructure of incredible complexity. That's why somebody like Matisse or Giotto or Modigliani has always fascinated me, because it's utterly simple but utterly complex."

Does an audio work featuring a former student entitled "Dorit Cypis Attempts Insults in a Second Language (Trying for the Worst)," which is featured in the exhibition "Narrative Themes/Audio Works" at the Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, August–September.

1978

In January, moves with family to 3552 Beethoven Street, in the Mar Vista neighborhood of West Los Angeles. Also in January, attends the College Art Association meeting in New York. Participates in panel discussion, "The Education of the Artist," in which he reads a paper from a former CalArts student who had originally submitted it for inclusion in the panel but had it rejected.

Solo exhibition, "John Baldessari: Blasteds Allegories," opens at the Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Oregon, on January 20.

In March, speaks to a graduate workshop at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago on the subject "The Don'ts of Photography."

In September, the solo exhibition "John Baldessari: Recent Work. Blasteds Allegories (Colorful Sentences)" opens at Sonnabend Gallery, New York.

1979

Receives a Mellon Foundation grant stipend for a full year of academic leave, which CalArts allows him to use beginning

September 1980 (to May 1981).

In March, participates in the "1979 Whitney Biennial"

Installs *Three Metaphorical Measurements* (1979.1), a three-wall piece for InK. Halle für Internationale Neue Kunst, Zurich, in August. The installation is comprised of photos and three texts placed directly on the wall: "As far as east is from west," "The back of beyond," and "As high as heaven and as deep as hell." This work signals a new direction and a desire by Baldessari to create larger-scale, more expansive pieces.

Curates a group exhibition titled "Masters of Love" at the alternative space 80 Langton Street, San Francisco, held November 7–30.

In December, in Washington, D.C., sits on an NEA advisory panel for "Artists Spaces" program.

1980

Starts weekly psychotherapy sessions with Judith Vida-Spence in Pasadena, sometimes bartering art for services.

Inspired by literary sources, Baldessari undertakes a new form of visual essays, starting with *Baudelaire Meets Poe* (1980.1), which he intends as a kind of visual equivalent of how the nineteenth-century French poet Charles Baudelaire might have felt upon reading for the first time the work of Edgar Allan Poe. The work consists of three individual photographs representing a symbolic metamorphosis akin to what motivates an artist or writer to create or imagine.

A similar series, "Fugitive Essays," is shown at Sonnabend Gallery, New York, in October.

1981

First major solo retrospective, "John Baldessari: Work 1966–1980," organized by Marcia Tucker for the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, opens March 14 and later travels to the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, and the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. A different iteration of the exhibition, "John Baldessari: Werken 1966–1981," travels to the Municipal Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, and Museum Folkwang, Essen.

Produces artist's book *Close-Cropped Tales* (Buffalo: CEPA Gallery), which plays on the cropping of various black-and-white film stills and furthers his forays into breaking out of photography's conventional "four corners."

A detail from a work in the "Blasteds Allegories" series is featured as part of a cover story by Craig Owens in the May issue of *Art in America*.

Undertakes "Vanitas" series (1981.3–16), photographic diptychs and triptychs playing on the Dutch sixteenth- and seventeenth-century still-life paintings that commented on the transience of life through the depiction of symbolic objects.

In September, presents *Virtues and Vices (For Giotto)* (1981.2)—fourteen photographs examining the seven heavenly virtues and seven deadly vices—at the Municipal Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven.

Is invited to do a site-specific project for the exterior of the Vienna Secession Building in conjunction with "5th Vienna International Biennale: Erweiterte Fotografie," held at the Wiener Secession, October 22–November 22. Utilizing elements of his earlier "Pangram" series, creates *The Vienna Work: People, Places, Foods. To the Age Its Art, To Art Its Freedom (Der Zeit Ihre Kunst, Der Kunst Ihre Freiheit)* (1981.18).

In November, according to his notes and correspondence from this time, starts to feel financial and career pressures and undergoes a period of deep anxiety and depression.

1982

In January, as part of the exhibition "California Photography" at the



Unused photo from "National City" series, taken by Baldessari of his old high school, 1996

seemed emotionally difficult for Baldessari to be back in National City.

1996

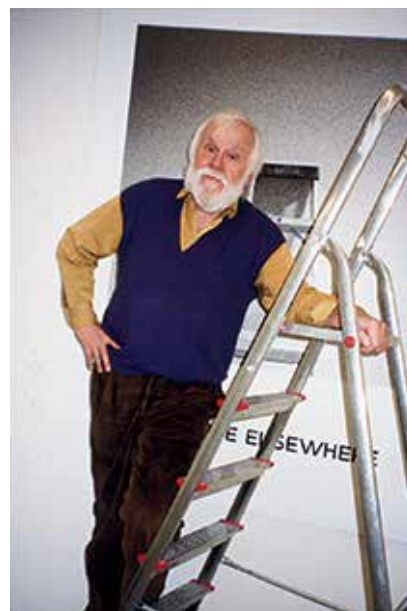
In March, "John Baldessari: National City" opens at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego. The show features a number of text and photo-text paintings from 1966–68 as well as eleven new works on canvas (1996.4–14) made by Baldessari explicitly for the exhibition: six canvases with black-and-white images and painted text, and five canvases with color images and painted text. These new works recalled the 1960s ones in their size, appearance, and subject matter. One of the works, *Wrong (Version #2)* (1996.g), an updated riff on one of his most well-known works (1968.7), shows a now sixty-four-year-old Baldessari posed in front of the same palm tree as some thirty years before. The black-and-white works use photographic emulsion as before, while the color works use digital ink-jet printing, his first foray into the digital realm. For the painted text captions for each work, Baldessari used a professional sign painter based in Los Angeles, Norm Laich.

In conjunction with these new National City works, Baldessari also produces a National City portfolio for Patrick Painter Editions: eight color photographs that were taken in National City but were marred by a light leak in the camera and that for this edition were painted over with large circles in varying shades of gray from white to black.

Is hired to be visiting professor in UCLA's Department of Art beginning in the fall, with teaching duties in the New Genres curriculum. Baldessari is brought on at the suggestion of Henry Hopkins, then director of the Hammer Museum. In this role Baldessari influences a new generation of younger artists.

Creates an outdoor billboard project, *Stream of Violence: From Front to Torrent (The Beginnings)* (1996.22), installed on the facade of the Technical City Hall building, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, in connection with the exhibition "Prospect 96: Photographie in der Gegenwartskunst," at Frankfurter Kunstverein, March 9–May 12.

Receives Oskar Kokoschka Prize, Vienna, Austria—the country's highest award for applied contemporary art. In his acceptance speech, Baldessari graciously thanks his parents, teachers, and artistic collaborators, in perhaps a humorous reference to the Oscar film award.



Baldessari at Mai 36 Galerie, installing works from "Goya" Series, 1997

In June, has first solo exhibition in South Korea, at Seoul's PYO Gallery, in which he shows a selection of works from the late 1980s/early 1990s.

In response to a June 30 *Los Angeles Times* article asking artists to name three movies that best sum up the American character to a foreigner, Baldessari answered:

"*Hud*"—*Ambivalence—having your cake and eating it, too. The film features these oppositions: 1) Looking out for No. 1 versus doing the right thing; 2) Protecting nature versus making a quick buck, and 3) The business of America is business versus the business of America is the public good.*

"*The Hustler*"—*The desire to win and what that means and how it blinds us to other values.*

"*Touch of Evil*"—*Our sense of black and white morality and how the end justifies the means. We don't like messiness or loose ends. Recent pertinent example: the Simpson trial. Our xenophobia—if you act white and/or look white you are above suspicion. Otherwise you are up to no good.*

1997

Produces "Goya" Series (1997.1–26), a new body of twenty-six works based on phrases from Francisco de Goya's *Disasters of War* print series. Baldessari takes photographs of everyday objects and presents them on canvas with text below, which recall both the previous year's National City works in their presentation as well as his two "Pangram" Series pieces (1976.5–6), which featured photos of banal household items.

In April, has first solo show at Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris, where he exhibits a selection of works from 1963 to the present, including eight studies for "Goya" Series works.

In April, a selection of "Goya" Series works is shown at Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles, and in June seven "Goya" Series works are exhibited at "La Biennale di Venezia: 47th International Art Exhibition," Venice, Italy.

Receives Governor's Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Visual Arts, sponsored by the California Arts Council.

Has five paintings—three text and photo-text paintings from 1966–68 and two 1996 National City works—included in the exhibition "Sunshine & Noir: Art in L.A. 1960-1997," an important survey that opens at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark, in May and, after two more European venues, travels to the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, the following year.

In June, after a solo show at Theoretical Events in Naples, travels along the Amalfi Coast and then to Procida, a small island off the coast.

His participatory instructions for "How to kill a bug" are included in the exhibition "Do It," organized by Hans Ulrich Obrist for Independent Curators International (ICI), New York, which extensively toured the exhibition. The artist's deadpan directions (accompanied by a simple illustration) are:

1. Place bug on end of wooden plank A.
2. Strike area where bug is located on plank A with plank B.
3. Remove remains of bug from both planks and repeat with successive bugs as necessary.

Collaborates with longtime friend and fellow artist Lawrence Weiner on the outdoor courtyard for the exhibition "Installations/Projects" at P.S. 1 Center for Contemporary Art, Long Island City, New York, which reopens in October after an extensive renovation. Baldessari shows large photographs of colorized lamps (1997.35), while Weiner contributes his signature text pieces.

1998

Works with the C Project, an initiative started by two Miami businessmen to encourage artists to experiment with holographic technology, to create four holographic photographs as part of a larger multi-photo work *It's Alive* (1998.16).



Top: Baldessari's 1998 flip-book, *Zorro (Two Gestures and One Mark)*

Below: "I Will Not Buy Any More Boring Art" leather wallet, 1999

Opposite: Baldessari at Sprengel Museum Hannover, 1999

Creates a black-and-white flip-book, *Zorro (Two Gestures and One Mark)*, for Oktagon Verlag in Cologne. The book features a sequence of images of actors Jean-Paul Belmondo raising his thumb to his lips in the movie *Breathless*, Tyrone Power as Zorro making the signature Z with his sword in *The Mark of Zorro*, and Humphrey Bogart bringing his hand to his face, perhaps to stifle a laugh, in *The Harder They Fall*. A limited-edition print is also published.

In November, has last solo exhibition, "John Baldessari: The Commissioned Paintings," at Sonnabend Gallery, New York.

1999

After a period of protracted ambivalence, Baldessari decides to leave Sonnabend Gallery in favor of Marian Goodman Gallery. Baldessari had worked with Goodman as early as 1975, when he produced a print for her company Multiples, Inc.

In February, the exhibition "Ich habe es gesehen: Baldessari und Goya (I Saw It: Baldessari and Goya)" opens at the Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna. The show pairs paintings and studies from Baldessari's "Goya" Series with the etchings from Goya's *Disasters of War* that inspired them.

Begins the "Tetrad" Series (1999.1–17), which consists of four panels each: a photo of an everyday object or objects, an enlarged detail from a Goya print or painting, a brief phrase taken from Portuguese writer Fernando Pessoa's *The Book of Disquiet*, and a movie still photographed off a television monitor. This series marks a shift in working methods for the artist, as he commits to using digital scanning and printing as opposed to traditional photographic processes. In the "Tetrad" Series, Baldessari took the photographs of the objects, Goya details, and movie stills. The negatives were then processed, scanned, converted into digital files, and then outputted as ink-jet prints on canvas. For the white-on-black text panels, pieces of canvas were painted black and the phrases then painted in white and given a final coat of varnish. With a few exceptions, producing finished works by digital means becomes Baldessari's modus operandi.

Embarks on a related series of works, the "Elbow" Series (1999.18–41), which combines photographs of details of heads/faces from Goya paintings, photos of plants, and painted three-letter animal names (e.g., emu, hog, yak).

Receives the Distinguished Artist Award for Lifetime Achievement, awarded by the College Art Association, New York.

Oversees manufacture of a limited-edition wallet stamped with the phrase "I Will Not Buy Any More Boring Art" for Sonnabend Sundell Editions.

In April, has first solo show at Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, "John Baldessari: Tetrad Series."

Two "Tetrad" Series works containing stills from Alfred Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* are included in the exhibition "Notorious: Alfred Hitchcock and Contemporary Art," Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, July 11–October 3.

Collaborates with Lawrence Weiner on *The Metaphor Problem Again*, which is issued by Ink-Tree Editions and Mai 36 Galerie as a diptych print as well as a hardcover and softcover book. Baldessari furnishes the texts and Weiner the photographs.

In September, is the subject of a survey of recent works, "Baldessari: While Something Is Happening Here, Something Else Is Happening There: Works 1988–1999" at the Sprengel Museum Hannover, Hannover, Germany. The exhibition travels to the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden and, in slightly different form, to the Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Trento, Italy, in 2000, and the Reykjavik Art Museum, Reykjavik, Iceland, in 2001.



For Hollywood talent firm Creative Artists Agency, creates a photomural, *Birth of an Idea (With Eleven Rejects)* (1999.52), a glib photographic essay about the creative process.

Receives the SPECTRUM International Award for Photography, sponsored by the Foundation of Lower Saxony, Hannover, Germany.

2000

Is commissioned by the J. Paul Getty Museum to produce a piece in response to a work in the museum's collection as part of the exhibition "Departures: 11 Artists at the Getty." Baldessari creates *Specimen (After Dürer)* (2000.15), a large ink-jet print of a bug on canvas with a giant metal pin stuck through it. The image is from a watercolor and gouache work, *Stag Beetle* (1505) by Albrecht Dürer.

In March, designs billboard for "Projekt Fassade" exhibition at the Vienna Secession. *Smile (With Hair and Moustache)* (2000.14), shows a drawn yellow smiley face next to a white smiley face next to a smiley face in the style of Adolf Hitler, with his hair and trademark moustache.

Does new video installation piece, *Five 1968 Films (New)*, for the exhibition "Quartett: Baldessari, Kabakov, Kosuth, Pistoletto" at Kunsthalle Basel in September. Baldessari selects four films made in America and showing in Los Angeles movie theaters on August 21, 1968, when armies of the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia and put an end to the Prague Spring. The date, according to Baldessari, was significant in that it marked the end of the socialist utopia. In the installation, cropped sections of the four films—each representing a different genre: *The Green Berets* (war), *Planet of the Apes* (science fiction), *Rosemary's Baby* (horror), and *The Thomas Crown Affair* (romance)—were projected on separate screens, while a fifth screen united all four parts onto one screen.

Contributes song lyrics, "Learn to Draw," for a CD compilation, "The New Now Sounds of Today!" produced by Art Issues Press. Artists

Workers positioning part of Baldessari's installation at Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, 2009



2009

In March, in Krefeld, Germany, Baldessari's architectural intervention of Museum Haus Lange, *BRICK BLDG, LG WINDOWS W/ XLENT VIEWS, PARTIALLY FURNISHED, RENOWNED ARCHITECT*, opens. Baldessari covers the exterior of the Ludwig Mies van der Rohe building with faux-brick material and furnishes the interior with Mies van der Rohe furniture; specially made wall sconces in nose shapes; a couch in the form of an ear; and color photographs of Southern California landscapes.

For the "Beaufort 03/Triennial for Modern Art" in Ostende, Belgium, Baldessari contributes a banner bearing the phrase "NO MORE BORING ART" pulled by a plane over Ostende.

His 1974 film *Script* is included in the exhibition "The Pictures Generation, 1974–1984," at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and both the exhibition and accompanying catalogue underscore Baldessari's influence on the artists of this group and era.

For the Venice Biennial in June, Baldessari exhibits *Six Colorful Inside Jobs (1977)* video in the "Making Worlds" international section. He also creates *Ocean and Sky (With Two Palm Trees)*, a photomural installed on the facade of the Palazzo delle Esposizioni. At the biennial, is also awarded, along with Yoko Ono, the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement, presented by Daniel Birnbaum, director of the biennial.

In July, a touring retrospective of his prints and multiples, "John Baldessari: A Print Retrospective from the Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundation," commences at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

In October is featured in the "Systems" episode of the documentary art series *Art21* on PBS. An accompanying book is published as well. About systems, Baldessari comments: "What's a system? I think my idea is this: not so much structure that it's inhibiting or that there's no wiggle room, but not so loose that it could be anything. I guess it's like a corral around your idea, a corral that you can move—but not too much. And it's that limited movement that promotes creativity. Did I just say something profound?"

"John Baldessari: Pure Beauty," an extensive traveling retrospective organized by Tate Modern and LACMA opens at Tate Modern in London. An accompanying catalogue is published. The exhibition includes two early paintings from 1962 and has representative work from all phases of his career and includes artist's books, films and videos, and a multimedia installation, *Brain/Cloud*. Of the retrospective, Baldessari remarked: "Retrospectives are useful to artists—you get to see the arc of your life and how your work has evolved. I keep trying to reinvent myself, but there is always a thread going back through the work."

Unveils the first of the two-part "Hands and/or Feet" series at Marian Goodman Gallery Paris, October 17. The second half is on view at Sprüth Magers Berlin, Berlin, Germany, November 20–January 16, 2010.

In November, the *John Baldessari Catalogue of Prints and Multiples (1971–2007)*, a comprehensive survey of the artist's editioned works edited by Sharon Coplan Hurowitz, is published by Hudson Hills Press.

At the 2009 Beaufort Triennial, a plane pulls a signature Baldessari phrase.



2010

In February, "Pure Beauty" exhibition opens at Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), Barcelona, Spain.

Baldessari's 1971 performance piece *I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art (1971.8)* is re-created in March at École nationale supérieure d'architecture de Montpellier, France; in July as part of "Off the Wall, Part 1: Thirty Performative Actions," at the Whitney Museum, New York; and in October at the Conceptual Art Center Bukovje, Slovenia, as part of artist Eric Doeringer's interpretation of Baldessari's original piece.

A solo retrospective of Baldessari's early film and video works goes on view at VOX, Centre de l'image contemporaine, Montreal, Canada, April 1.

In May, the artist's "Sediment" series of painted ink-jets on canvas opens at Margo Leavin Gallery.

In June, "Pure Beauty" travels to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, marking his first career retrospective in Los Angeles since his 1990's show at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

Baldessari collaborates with street-wear brand Supreme on three limited-edition skateboard decks using nose imagery.

In October the final leg of the "Pure Beauty" exhibition opens at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. In her *New York Times* review of the show, critic Roberta Smith writes that the retrospective "reveals his career as a vital, unbroken through line from Pop to 1970's Conceptual Art to 1980's appropriation art, a movement that is unthinkable without his unusually direct influence."

Produces two large-scale canvas banners for the Metropolitan



Skateboard decks designed for Supreme, 2010

Museum's Great Hall: *Palm Tree/Seascape* and *Brain/Cloud*.

Is profiled by Calvin Tomkins in a piece called "No More Boring Art" in the October 18 issue of *The New Yorker*.

In late October, "John Baldessari: The Giacometti Variations" debuts at the Prada Foundation, in Milan, Italy. The exhibition consists of nine sculptures based on the "Grande Femme" elongated figures of Swiss sculptor Alberto Giacometti, although Baldessari's versions, at 14 ft. 9 in., are more than five feet taller than Giacometti's. Due to a lawsuit by the Giacometti Foundation alleging copyright violation, the Prada Foundation is forced to close the exhibition a week earlier than intended while the legal issues are resolved.

Creates an artist's book, *Miracle Chips*, containing images of celebrated faces "mysteriously" found on potato chips. Of the book, Baldessari writes: "Can one look at a potato chip and not see some image hidden within its surface? Do not people's faces often look like potato chips?"



EXHIBITION HISTORY: SOLO EXHIBITIONS

*indicates catalogue published

1960

"John Baldessari: Paintings." | Art Center in La Jolla, La Jolla, California, March 23–April 24, 1960.

"John Baldessari: Recent Paintings." | Vroman's Bookstore, San Diego, California, August 1–31, 1960.

1961

"John Baldessari." | Corridor Gallery, San Diego Public Library, San Diego, California, July 1961.

"John Baldessari: Paintings and Collages." | Art Department Gallery, Southwestern College, Chula Vista, California, November 13–December 8, 1961.

1962

"John Baldessari: X Exhibition." | Art Works Galleries, La Jolla, California, June 29–July 19, 1962.

1964

"John Baldessari Paintings." | Actors' Quarter Theatre Gallery, San Diego, California, February–March 1964.

1966

"John Baldessari: Fragments." | La Jolla Museum of Art, La Jolla, California, March 30–April 24, 1966.

1968

"John Baldessari: Pure Beauty." | Molly Barnes Gallery, Los Angeles, California, October 6–November 7, 1968.

1970

"John Baldessari." | Eugenia Butler Gallery, Los Angeles, California, February 17–March 7, 1970.

"John Baldessari: Recent Paintings." | Richard Feigen Gallery, New York, New York, March 14–April 4, 1970.

1971

"John Baldessari: I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art." | Mezzanine Gallery, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, Canada, April 1–10, 1971.

"John Baldessari: Art Disasters." | Art & Project, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, July 3–15, 1971.

"John Baldessari: Ingres and Other Parables." | Konrad Fischer Galerie, Düsseldorf, West Germany, October 8–22, 1971.

1972

"John Baldessari: Video Tapes." | Jack Wendler Gallery, London, United Kingdom, April 7–21, 1972.

"John Baldessari: Choosing, Aligning, Floating." | Galleria Toselli, Milan, Italy, from April 14, 1972.

"John Baldessari: 1. Choosing: Mushrooms. 2. Xylophone (Videotape)." | Galerie MTL, Brussels, Belgium, April 28–May 15, 1972.

"John Baldessari: Choosing: Carrots, Asparagus." | Art & Project, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, July 8–22, 1972.

"John Baldessari, Floating: Stick (One Figure), Version 1." | Galerie MTL, Brussels, Belgium, from September 19, 1972.

"John Baldessari." | Sperone/Fischer Gallery, Rome, Italy, October 10–November 7, 1972.

1973

"John Baldessari: Paintings 1967–69." | Boehm Gallery, Palomar College, San Marcos, California, April 19–May 13, 1973.

"John Baldessari." | Sonnabend Gallery, New York, New York, April 28–May 12, 1973.

"John Baldessari." | Galerie Sonnabend, Paris, France, from May 23, 1973.

"John Baldessari." | Galleria Schema, Florence, Italy, May 30–July 30, 1973.

"John Baldessari." | Konrad Fischer Galerie, Düsseldorf, West Germany, August 4–31, 1973.

1974

"John Baldessari." | Galleria Toselli, Milan, Italy, from April 30, 1974.

"John Baldessari." | Jack Wendler Gallery, London, United Kingdom, May 3–24, 1974.

"John Baldessari." | Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAYC), Buenos Aires, Argentina, from August 9, 1974.

"John Baldessari." | Galerie MTL, Brussels, Belgium, September 2–26, 1974.

"John Baldessari." | Art & Project/MTL, Antwerp, Belgium, September 17–October 19, 1974.

1975

"John Baldessari: Songs." | Fine Art Gallery, University of California, Irvine, Irvine, California, January 7–February 9, 1975.

"John Baldessari." | Saman Gallery, Genoa, Italy, March 25–April 8, 1975.

"John Baldessari." | Galerie Felix Handschin, Basel, Switzerland, April 1975.

"John Baldessari: The Italian Tape." | The Kitchen, New York, New York, April 8–12, 1975.

"John Baldessari." | Sonnabend Gallery, New York, New York, October 4–November 12, 1975.

"John Baldessari." | Southwestern College Art Gallery, Chula Vista, California, October 10–31, 1975.

"John Baldessari: Recent Work." | Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, November 22, 1975–January 4, 1976.

"John Baldessari." | Galerie Sonnabend, Paris, France, from November 27, 1975.

"John Baldessari: Affectionate Yellow/Giallo Affezionato, Morbid Red/Rosso Morboso, Vindictive Blue/Azzurro Vendicativo." | Lucio Amelio, Naples, Italy, from December 6, 1975.

1976

"John Baldessari: Recent Work." | Gallery of Fine Art, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, February 2–14, 1976; Emily H. Davis Art Gallery, University of Akron, Akron, Ohio, February 23–March 12, 1976.

"John Baldessari." | George Paton Gallery, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Australia, June 1–8, 1976; Experimental Art Foundation, St. Peters, Adelaide, Australia, June 28–July 16, 1976; Undercroft Gallery, University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia, July 26–August 20, 1976; Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia, September 5–October 3, 1976; Institute of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia, October 11–29, 1976.

"John Baldessari: Recent Work." | James Corcoran Gallery, Los Angeles, California, September 23–October 23, 1976.

1977

"John Baldessari: Photographic Works." | Robert Self Ltd., London, United Kingdom, February 22–April 16, 1977.

"John Baldessari." | Galleria Massimo Valsecchi, Milan, Italy, from March 2, 1977.

"John Baldessari: New Works." | Julian Pretto Gallery, New York, New York, April 9–May 3, 1977.

"John Baldessari: MATRIX 32." | Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, June 7–September 18, 1977.

"John Baldessari: Six Colorful Inside Jobs." | 1493 West Washington Boulevard, Los Angeles, California, October 10–15, 1977.

1978

"John Baldessari: Blasted Allegories." | Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Portland, Oregon, January 20–February 19, 1978.

"John Baldessari: Recent Work. Blasted Allegories (Colorful Sentences)." | Sonnabend Gallery, New York, New York, September 23–October 14, 1978.