

The Galerie Marian Goodman in Paris is very pleased to announce an exhibition of new works by John Baldessari titled “Double Bill”, to open on April 5 through May 12, 2012.

The exhibition consists of a new series of seven paintings on canvas through which John Baldessari plays with the art historical canon, mixing and conflating two iconic works by the likes of De Kooning, Manet, Duchamp and Picabia into collaged hybrids. Each work is a one-man “cadavre exquis”, accompanied at the bottom by a text indicating only one of the sources: “...AND MANET”, “...AND DUCHAMP”, leaving it to our memory and imagination to divine the other source work and decode the new proposition.

«On one hand I think the older an image is the more it is exhausted of meaning – where it is a cliché. It’s dead. Because clichés are dead. I like the idea of playing Dr. Frankenstein and reinvesting the dead, a metaphor, with life again. Because clichés are true – they just have lost their meaning. And I can pump another kind of meaning back into it, but you are still aware of the source and where I’m directing the traffic.»¹

In a classic format that recalls Baldessari’s iconic “National City” paintings of the late 1960s, the appropriated imagery is reproduced in print and certain areas of each image have been repainted, deepening the interplay of gestures and media. By strategically cropping and juxtaposing found images, whether from publicity photographs, advertising or art history Baldessari questions the legitimacy of originality and the nature of authorship. The poignant and often humorous juxtaposition of images suggests relationships, narratives and threads that break down as quickly as they are pieced together.

«Maybe it’s closer to the truth that I am interested in what happens when two images abut each other. It’s like when two words collide and some new word in some new meaning comes out of it. I go back and forth to that one.»²

John Baldessari was born in 1931, in National City, California. He lives and works in Santa Monica (CA). He was on the faculty of the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia (1970-1988) and the University of California, Los Angeles (1996-2007).

John Baldessari is responsible for over 50 years of artistic practice in astounding depth and breadth. He is considered one of the founders of conceptual art, and his work has reshaped and expanded the very definition of the artist’s role and territory, while expanding and interrogating the limits of photography, painting, video, drawing, sculpture and installation.

John Baldessari was recently awarded the 2011 Kaiser Ring Award by the city of Goslar, Germany (past recipients have included Matthew Barney, David Lynch and Rosemarie Trockel). He was also awarded the Golden Lion Award for Lifetime Achievement at the 2009 Venice Biennale. In 2008 he received the Biennial Award for Contemporary Art from the Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht.

He was also the subject of a recent lifetime retrospective organized by the Tate Modern, London that traveled to MACBA Barcelona; LACMA, Los Angeles. The Metropolitan Museum of New York celebrated him in a major exhibition John Baldessari: Pure Beauty in 2010-2011 which retraced his career from 1962 to 2010.

The first volume of John Baldessari: Catalogue Raisonné is due to be published during this exhibition, which will cover his unique works during the years 1956-1974.

1 John Baldessari in conversation with Ann Goldstein in Köb, Edelbert and Pakesch, Peter ; John Baldessari : Life's Balance, Work 84-04, (Cologne : Buchhandlung Walther König, 2004), page 91.

2 Ibid, page 81.

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