

GALERIE MARIAN GOODMAN

JOHN BALDESSARI
HANDS AND/OR FEET (PART ONE)

17 October – 28 November 2009
Opening reception, Saturday 17 October from 6 – 8 pm

Galerie Marian Goodman is very pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by John Baldessari that will open to the public on October 17th and will be on view through Saturday, 28 November 2009.

A new series "*Hands And/Or Feet (Part One)*" will be on view. These works continue the artist's exploration of human identity through the fragmentation of parts of the body. This is further reinforced by the composition of each work, by a vertical or horizontal separation, for the most part in which the two different found black-and-white photographs with colored areas are mounted together. In this way John Baldessari contextualizes human extremities with animals and/or objects. Animals feature in most but not all of the works and are depicted in relation to or within a human environment.

As in the artist's prior series "*Raised Eyebrows/ Furrowed Forehead*"; "*Noses & Ears, Etc.*," or "*Arms and Legs (Specif. Elbows and Knees), Etc.*", these new works can be seen as a result of Baldessari's immersion in thinking about totality-- what to leave out and what to leave in--which continues to be a central concern in his work. Alongside this thought is his ongoing interest in the relief of motif and the three-dimensional aspect of his work; the segment as visual syntax; the unexpected hybrid; the merging of photography, painting, and sculpture.

"*Hands And/Or Feet (Part One)*" highlights not only the animated dialogue in which painting and photography have long and successfully been engaged in Baldessari's work, but also the tradition in his work of "fragmenting single motifs or areas of a canvas or picture to defy narrative logic and standard interpretation".¹

Association and dissociation have also been one of the central drives of his work: "What intrigues me here (and this is a method in most of my work) is establishing a set of conditions that make things difficult to occur, but not so difficult that they couldn't possible occur."²

John Baldessari has been an innovative force in contemporary art redefining its parameters to include its role as a visual evocation of language, and leading the way in bringing photography to the forefront of contemporary art. Over five decades of conceptual practice he has embraced painting, photography, film, video, books, prints, objects and installation. His use of appropriation, alteration, and montage to disrupt a

¹ Rainer Fuchs, in *John Baldessari catalogue*, Marian Goodman Gallery, NY, 2006

² John Baldessari, in *Works 1962-1984*, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna, p. 268

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narrative or to construct an entirely new meaning out of recombined fragments has been utilized in disparate ways in different bodies of works spanning his career, from early text paintings, to conceptual works and found pictures; from erased identity works of the 1980s and 90s to more recent series in the past five years in which he investigates new issues of painting.

A retrospective exhibition is currently on view at Tate Modern, London, which will travel to MACBA, Barcelona; LACMA, Los Angeles; and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, through 2011. A multi-volume Catalogue Raisonné of the artist's work is currently being prepared. The first volume, covering works from 1953-1978, is projected for release in Spring 2011.

Recent important solo exhibitions of the artist's work have been held in 2009 at Haus Estes, Krefeld, at the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, in 2008/09 and at the Bonnefanten Museum, The Netherlands, which coincided with the 2008 B.A.C.A. International Award.

A major retrospective in two parts: 'Works 1962-1984' was shown at the Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna, and 'Works: 1984-2005' at Kunsthaus Graz am Landesmuseum Joanneum, in 2005; Other solo shows include Carré d'Art Musée Contemporain de Nîmes, France (2005-2006); Deutsche Guggenheim Berlin (2004); Museo d'Arte Moderna Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Trento, Italy (2000-2001); Sprengel Museum, Hannover, (1999-2000); and Albertina im Adademiehof, Vienna (1999).

Among the artist's many honors and awards, he received the 2008 Biennial Award for Contemporary Art, Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, The Netherlands; American Academy of Arts & Letters, 2008; Archives of American Art Medal, Washington, D.C., 2007; the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, 2006-2007; the Lifetime Achievement Award, Americans for the Arts, New York, 2005; and American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2004. In April 2006 John Baldessari was the recipient of a Doctor of Fine Arts, honoris causa, National University of Ireland.

Most recently the artist was awarded the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement, La Biennale di Venezia, 53. Exposizione Internazionale d'Arte, June 6, 2009.