

MAI 36 GALERIE

John Baldessari

Opening: Sunday, June 12, 2016, 11 a.m.
Exhibition: June 11 – August 6, 2016
Opening hours: Tue–Fri 11 a.m. to 6.30 p.m., Sat 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Zurich Contemporary Art Weekend: June 11–13, 2016, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The exhibition by John Baldessari at Mai 36 Galerie, which has represented the artist for a quarter of a century, since 1991, presents a new group of works reminiscent of film stills. The artist uses a combination of text and image, linking vibrantly coloured pictures and captions to a contrasting white background.

In his oeuvre, Baldessari, who celebrates his 85th birthday in June, often questions the relationship between text and image by juxtaposing the medium of the written word alongside that of the visual image. In doing so, he contrasts two different means of communication and explores the complex relationship between two fundamental forms of human expression. Combining text and image within a work formulates new statements and, with that, opens up a whole new range of connotations, associations and innovative approaches that inspire different ways of thinking.

The subject matter in these new works appears to be randomly linked with the accompanying captions, sometimes to humorous effect. *Goethe* (2015), for instance, shows a person brandishing a weapon, while the caption GOETHE seems to be entirely unrelated. Similarly, *Radio* (2015) shows a scene in an abattoir with the title RADIO.

Customarily, a text explains an image and a picture illustrates a text. By providing captions that do not appear to be directly related to the image, Baldessari undermines conventional ways of reading. However perplexing these montages might be, the associations they trigger unleash a broad spectrum of meaning and open up surprising perceptual possibilities. And so, behind a seemingly random approach lurks an artistic idea that inspires the viewer to think out of the box.

American artist John Baldessari (*1931 in National City, California) has been regarded since the 1960s as one of the foremost and most versatile of conceptual artists, exploring such diverse media as painting, drawing, photography and video. As a professor at the California Institute of the Arts, he has influenced generations of artists and is revered as the father of the *Picture Generation* – a group of well-known artists such as David Salle, James Welling, Matt Mullican, Troy Brauntuch, and many others.

Baldessari's works are shown in leading museums and galleries throughout the world, including, most recently, in a 2015 solo show at the Städel Museum in Frankfurt.

Opening on Sunday, 12 June 2016 at 11 a.m.
Visual material available on request (office@mai36.com).

We look forward to welcoming you at the gallery and thank you for your interest.

Mai 36 Galerie
Victor Gisler

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