



John Baldessari
TRIAD, 2018
JBA17-5409
10 color screenprint
34 ½" x 28" (87.63 x 71.12 cm)
Edition of 50

For Immediate Release

John Baldessari
Emoji Series

On View November 7th
Reception Saturday, November 17th 6-8 PM

Gemini G.E.L. is pleased to present new works by John Baldessari, *Emoji Series*, on view from November 7th.

John Baldessari is a Los Angeles based conceptual artist known for using found imagery that he recomposes by carefully selecting pictures, sometimes pairing them with text and often overlaying them with large dots and swaths of color, to mask or bring attention to areas of detail. By reimagining and dislocating images, Baldessari raises questions of how we exchange and understand information. Taking this interest in issues of context and cultural specificity further, the new *Emoji Series* reevaluates the ubiquitous, seemingly innocuous emoticons that we use in everyday conversation. Related to a series of animal emoji paintings from 2017, Baldessari has matched nine food emojis with unexpected words and short phrases for his new *Emoji Series* at Gemini. Some of the text is ironic and suggestive, while some seems completely random, thus challenging the viewer to make sense out of the pairings.

Though playing upon the popularity of these 21st century images, this new body of work fits well within Baldessari's long tradition of pairing images and texts to bring attention to language and the way we communicate. While emojis are straightforward images that take place of their real life words, Baldessari's works seem to suggest that their



meanings are actually not set and are subject to interpretation. Indeed, these apparently democratic, universal images that transcend cultural, social, and linguistic boundaries are easily subverted when removed from their iPhone context and paired with different text. Even the hyper-bright white of the background of the works seems to recall the lighting of the phone background where these are typically seen, thus making the artwork itself represent something beyond its material nature.

John Baldessari was born in National City, California in 1931. He taught at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, CA from 1970 - 1988 and the University of California at Los Angeles from 1996 - 2007. Baldessari's artwork has been featured in more than 200 solo exhibitions and in over 1000 group exhibitions in the U.S. and Europe. His awards and honors include the 2014 National Medal of Arts Award, an award from the International Print Center New York in 2016, memberships in the American Academy of Arts and Letters and in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Americans for the Arts Lifetime Achievement Award, the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, the BACA International 2008, the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement, awarded by La Biennale di Venezia and the City of Goslar Kaiserring in 2012. He has received honorary degrees from the National University of Ireland, San Diego State University, Otis Art Institute of Parsons School of Design, and California College of the Arts. He currently works in Venice, California.

Recent projects include *Learning to Read with John Baldessari*, a major survey of the artist's work at Museo Jumex in Mexico City from 2017 and 2018, exhibitions at Spruth Magers Gallery Los Angeles in 2016, the Städel Museum in Frankfurt, Germany in 2015, Marian Goodman Gallery London in 2015, an exhibition at the Garage Center of Contemporary Culture (Moscow, Russia) in 2013 and the 2009-2010 retrospective *John Baldessari: Pure Beauty* that was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Tate Modern, and traveled to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

For inquires, please contact Renee Coppola, Director of Sales at renee@geminigel.com

For further information please contact the gallery at: 323 651 0513 or visit www.geminigel.com

