



Hands & Feet: Hands, Gloves & Person, 2017
 9 color screenprint
 26 1/4" x 36" (66.7 x 91.4 cm) Edition of 50

For Immediate Release

John Baldessari – *Hands & Feet*

Opening Reception Saturday, September 23, 4-7 pm

Gemini G.E.L. is pleased to present *Hands & Feet*, a new series of eight screenprints by John Baldessari. Over a span of 26 years Baldessari has steadily collaborated with Gemini G.E.L., prolifically utilizing the printmaking medium to playfully reference art history, explore themes of appropriation, repetition, the power of language, and the narrative potential in images.

Known for using found, mass-produced source imagery, Baldessari recomposes carefully selected 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. Having experimented with different methods of working for previous editions, *Hands & Feet* is a full circle return to the techniques employed by the artist in his very first series of Gemini prints, published in 1991. Much like the first series, which also incorporated tightly cropped selections from film images and newspaper sources, text is physically absent from the *Hands & Feet* works. But in the artist's typical impish style, he's communicating with a different form of language: one of gestures. In all eight pieces there are only two human faces – one obscured by a washed out white dot and the other cropped to the corners, the emotive sources of reference on the face (eyebrows, corners of the mouth) falling just outside the frame. Our attention is therefore directed at the gestures being made by various hands and feet which – voluntary and subconsciously -- convey as much as verbal or written language. What we do with our hands and how we present our bodies is an integral part of social interaction, informing others of (and giving a clue to) internal feelings and affecting social outcomes. Inferences of emotional states can be made based on the perceived posture or signal made: arms and fists up = a universal expression for success, of winning -- a hand outward = indicates desire -- the clenching of knees = discomfort.

Baldessari reveals just enough of an image to establish the setting, cropping his material deliberately and hiding recognizable features. By choosing moments where the viewer can almost piece together the before-and-after scenes, pinnacles of intrigue, victory, possibility, each images is a singular moment of tension or action. Will the drink fall on her striking silk dress, or is she the one who has tossed the drink? Will he catch the ball and strike out the home team, or miss it and lose it all? Individually the eight scenes are seemingly obscure and virtually



unrelated, however when examined together moments of repetition are apparent (if not blatant) in subject, shape, and overall composition. Formally, Baldessari also not only acknowledges the Ben-day dot, dither or moiré pattern that makes up his source material, but enhances and magnifies it. Get close enough and the image is almost indiscernible, allowing the viewer to get lost amongst the dancing dots. On piecing together meaning for his work, the artist says *"For me there is an image junk pile, and I'm a scavenger. Images are like random words that one might cull from a dictionary, and I'm trying to put them back together in some way, reassembling them."*

John Baldessari was born in National City, California in 1931. He attended San Diego State University and did post-graduate work at Otis Art Institute, Chouinard Art Institute and the University of California at Berkeley. 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 projects include artist books, videos, films, billboards and public works. 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 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 traveling retrospective "John Baldessari: Pure Beauty." John Baldessari Catalogue Raisonné, Volume One: 1956-1974 was published by Yale University Press in 2012, Volume Two: 1975-1986 was released in 2014, and Volume Three: 1987-1993 was released in 2016; A collection of his writings titled, More Than You Wanted to Know About John Baldessari Volume 1 and Volume 2 was published by JRP|Ringier in 2013.

Please join us at the reception for the artist on Saturday, September 23 from 4:00 to 7:00pm.

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

For further information please contact Gemini G.E.L. at 323 651 0513 or visit www.geminigel.com

