

**Contact:** Brooke Daniels  
617-369-3605  
bdaniels@smfa.edu



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Honors Renowned Artist John Baldessari  
at the 2015 Medal Award Gala, May 18**

*Annual gala raises funds to support resources and scholarships for SMFA students*

---

**Boston, MA (February 18, 2015)**—For over five decades, John Baldessari has influenced generations of artists as both an educator and creator. No matter the medium—be it painting, prints, video, mixed media works, or sculpture—his interest lies “in what gets us to stop and look, as opposed to simply consuming images passively.” The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA), is proud to celebrate iconic artist and long-time educator Baldessari at the Medal Award Gala on May 18, 2015, in the Ruth and Carl J. Shapiro Family Courtyard at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. First presented in 1996, SMFA’s Medal Award annually recognizes notable artists and influential art patrons for their commitment to and impact on the art world.

From his early text-and-image paintings to the more recent photo-collages, Baldessari has continued to make art that addresses the social impact of mass culture, often playfully, and always with a sly profundity. His lifelong exploration of the gap between the verbal and the visual has probed the very nature of communication and perception.<sup>1</sup>

“John Baldessari has spent his career making transformative and critically important work while tirelessly dedicating himself to his students—we could not imagine a more meaningful honoree for the SMFA Medal Award this year,” says Committee Chair Abigail Ross Goodman. “His unrelenting commitment to his practice as artist and teacher, and his ongoing critique of image-making, has been profoundly influential on generations of students and fellow artists, as well as the broader public. We are proud to be able to include him in our history at SMFA.”

John Baldessari (b. 1931) studied at San Diego State College, U.C. Berkeley, UCLA, the Otis Art Institute, and the Chouinard Art Institute. 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.

He has received numerous awards including the Goslar Kaiser Ring, Germany (2012); the Golden Lion Award for Lifetime Achievement, La Biennale di Venezia, Italy (2009); the B.A.C.A. International, Maastricht, The Netherlands (2008); The Archives of American Art Medal, Washington, D.C., (2007); and The Americans for the Arts Lifetime Achievement Award (2005). He has been inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2008) and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2004). He has received an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from the National University of Ireland (2006); an honorary Ph.D. from San Diego State University, California (2003); and an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from the Otis Art Institute, California (2000).

Baldessari has been featured in more than 200 solo exhibitions and in over 900 group exhibitions worldwide. Recent retrospectives of his work include “Pure Beauty” (2009–2010), which traveled from the Tate Modern, London to the Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), Spain; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California; and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and “John Baldessari: Life’s Balance (Works 1984–2004),” Kunsthaus Graz am Landesmuseum Joanneum, Graz,

---

<sup>1</sup> *JOHN BALDESSARI: PURE BEAUTY*, Jessica Morgan and Leslie Jones, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Delmonico Books/Prestel, 2009).

Austria (2005); and “John Baldessari: A Different Kind of Order, (Works 1962–1984),” Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna, Austria (2005). Recent solo exhibitions were mounted at the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow, Russia (2013); the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, The Netherlands (2012); and the Monchehaus Museum Goslar, Germany (2012). Upcoming exhibitions include the Staedel Museum, Frankfurt, Germany (2015–2016).

Two volumes of *John Baldessari’s Catalogue Raisonné* of unique works have been published by Yale University Press: Volume 1 (1956–1974) and Volume 2 (1975–1986). Volume 3 (1987–1993) is forthcoming in fall 2015.

The 2015 gala event includes seated dinner, award presentation, and a silent auction of student work. The Medal Award, endowed through the generosity of the Haynes Family Foundation, has been awarded to Glenn Ligon, Sarah Sze, Ellsworth Kelly, Ellen Gallagher and Julian Schnabel, among others.

“We’re privileged to celebrate John’s extraordinary career, as both an influential artist and a committed teacher—his work challenges us to appreciate a more conceptual world shaped by images,” said SMFA President Chris Bratton. “We look forward to honoring him at the 2015 SMFA Medal Award gala.”

Visit [smfa.edu/medal](http://smfa.edu/medal) for more information and to purchase tickets.

***About the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston:***

*Founded in 1876 and accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA), is one of only two art schools in the country affiliated with a major museum—the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Our mission is to provide an education in the fine arts—for undergraduate and graduate artists—that is interdisciplinary and self-directed. This education values cultural, artistic and intellectual diversity; it embraces a wide range of media; it stresses the development of individual vision and its relation to culture in general; it values equally the knowledge gained by thinking and doing; it is deeply engaged with the world as a whole. If the mission is constant, its practice is always transforming. For more information about our programs and partnerships, visit [www.smfa.edu](http://www.smfa.edu).*

###