

# JOHN BALDESSARI MOVIE SCENARIOS



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ELECTRONIC ARTS INTERMIX



# JOHN BALDESSARI: MOVIE SCENARIOS

EAI is pleased to present a special screening of **John Baldessari's** early film and video works, introduced by the artist.

John Baldessari is one of the most influential figures in contemporary art. From his text-and-image canvases and photo series to his films and videos, Baldessari's works are informed by popular culture, movies in particular. Film stills, Hollywood and genre movies, scripts, and the tropes of cinematic language are all deployed, with wit and irony, as source material.

## PROGRAM

### **The Hollywood Film**

*1 min, color, silent, Super 8mm film on video*

### **Water to Wine to Water**

*1972-1973, 0:30 min, color, silent, Super 8mm film on video*

### **Easel Painting**

*1972-1973, 1:26 min, color, silent, Super 8mm film on video*

### **Ed Henderson Reconstructs Movie Scenarios**

*1973, 24:04 min, b&w, sound, (7:48 min excerpt)*

### **Title**

*1972, 18:33, b&w and color, sound, 16 mm film on video*

### **Ed Henderson Suggests Sound Tracks for Photographs**

*1974, 27:51 min, b&w, sound, (4:53 min excerpt)*

### **Script**

*1974, 50:25 min, b&w, sound, 16 mm film on video, (12:43 min excerpt)*

**Total Running Time:** *46:53 min*

**The Hollywood Film** 1 min, color, silent, Super 8mm film on video

Flat discs (possibly Cracker Jack prizes) are tilted in the artist's hands, each revealing a mirrored surface and the face of a beautiful woman. In this absurd demonstration of "cinema," Baldessari reduces movie magic to its barest elements: actresses and lighting.

**Water to Wine to Water** 1972-1973, 0:30 min, color, silent, Super 8mm film on video

Baldessari performs an amateur magician's rendition of the holy miracle.

**Easel Painting** 1972-1973, 1:26 min, color, silent, Super 8mm film on video

The artist composes a picture through the action of thrusting his fingers into jars of pigment powder.

**Ed Henderson Reconstructs Movie Scenarios** 1973, 24:04 min, b&w, sound, (7:48 min excerpt)

Demonstrating how pop cultural narratives are embedded in the American collective unconscious, Baldessari introduces his sometime collaborator Ed Henderson, who is called upon to interpret a series of movie stills. The blurred photographs act as springboards for a series of self-contained narratives, revealing the extent to which the mythic language of cinematic genres has permeated the American consciousness.

**Title** 1972, 18:33, b&w and color, sound, 16 mm film on video

Baldessari progresses from simple, static images, such as a rock in an empty room, to complex narrative scenes, like a woman eavesdropping on her next-door neighbor. Through the gradual integration of cinematic techniques—motion, color, sound, acting, editing and arc—the artist inverts the traditional Hollywood model, stressing structure over narrative coherence.

**Ed Henderson Suggests Sound Tracks for Photographs** 1974, 27:51 min, b&w, sound, (4:53 min excerpt)

Exploring the relation between what is heard and what is seen, Baldessari appropriates deliberately clichéd imagery and generic film music to construct a series of surreal mini-movies. Baldessari describes photographs from National Geographic magazine to Ed Henderson, who picks out pieces of mood-setting stock music and sound effects to pair with the images.

**Script** 1974, 50:25 min, b&w, sound, 16 mm film on video, (12:43 min excerpt)

*Script* is the opposite of an improvisational exercise. Seven couples, all amateurs, are handed pages from random movie scripts and instructed to enact the absurd text through force of imagination, without direction or knowledge of what the others are doing.

(over)

**John Baldessari** was born in 1931 in National City, California and lives in Santa Monica. He received a B.A. and an M.A. from San Diego State College, and also studied at U.C. Berkeley, UCLA, Otis Art Institute and Chouinard Art Institute. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from San Diego State University in 2003, and in 2004 was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1986 and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, he was also awarded the Oscar Kokoschka Prize and the California Governor's Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Visual Arts. He has taught at Southwestern University, California; the University of California at San Diego; and the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia. His work has been exhibited internationally in numerous group exhibitions, and in one-person shows at Marian Goodnan Gallery, New York; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Sonnabend Gallery, New York; Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany; Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among many others. In 2009 the major retrospective exhibition *John Baldessari: Pure Beauty* opened at the Tate Modern, London. It traveled to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 2010. The retrospective is accompanied by a catalogue publication, also entitled *John Baldessari: Pure Beauty (2009)*.

EAI is pleased to announce that a selection of Baldessari's films, including *Title, Script, Four Short Films* and *Six Colorful Inside Jobs*, are now available on video through EAI. For more information on Baldessari's films and videos, please visit:

**[www.eai.org](http://www.eai.org)**

**About EAI:** Founded in 1971, Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) is one of the world's leading nonprofit resources for video art. A pioneering advocate for media art and artists, EAI fosters the creation, exhibition, distribution and preservation of video art and digital art. EAI's core program is the distribution and preservation of a major collection of over 3,500 new and historical media works by artists. EAI's activities include viewing access, educational services, extensive online resources, and public programs such as artists' talks, exhibitions and panels. The Online Catalogue is a comprehensive resource on the artists and works in the EAI collection, and also features extensive materials on exhibiting, collecting and preserving media art: **[www.eai.org](http://www.eai.org)**

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**Electronic Arts Intermix** 535 West 22nd Street, 5th Floor New York, NY 10011  
**info@eai.org** (212) 337-0680 tel (212) 337-0679 fax **[www.eai.org](http://www.eai.org)**