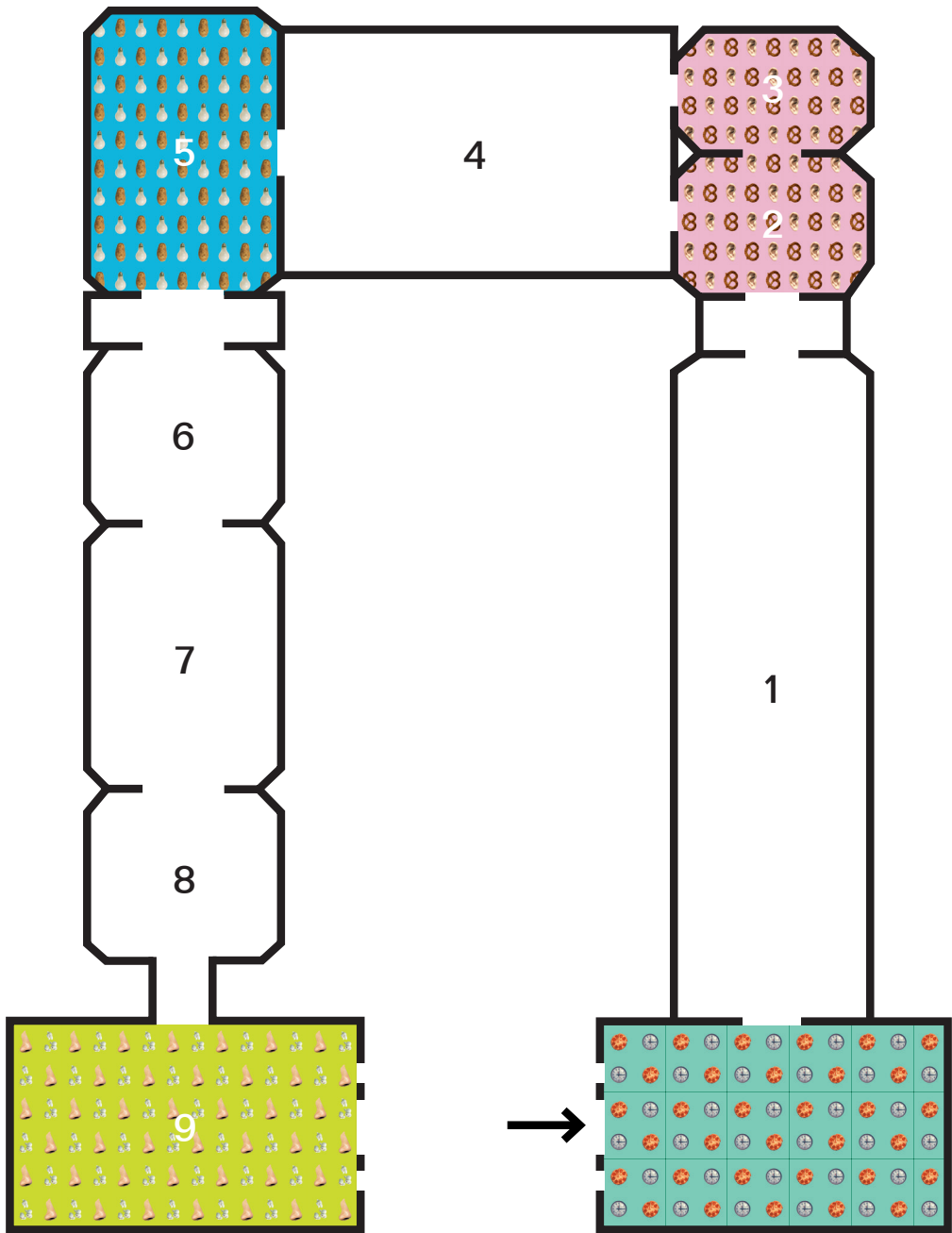


EN

JOHN
BALDESSARI

PARABLES,
FABLES,
AND
OTHER
TALL TALES

Room Plan



HELLO!

Welcome to Bozar – Center for Fine Arts! Today, you're going to discover the amazing world of a very unusual artist: John Baldessari. He loved playing with pictures and words. He would take photos and turn them into something funny, strange, or surprising. Sometimes he added bright colours, cut out images, or added unexpected things. Back in 1970, he said: "I will not make any more boring art." – and he really kept his promise!

In this exhibition, you'll see how he invented his own way of making

art, breaking the rules but always with humour and imagination.

Here are a few tips for your visit:

- Take your time and explore at your own pace. You don't have to see everything – choose what catches your eye.
- Choose artworks because they move you or intrigue you, not necessarily because you find them pretty.
- Don't hesitate to share your impressions. Your interpretation counts!
- And above all, have fun!

Enjoy your visit!

A quick reminder:

An exhibition is a space for discovery where valuable things are shown.

You are not allowed to:



You are allowed to:

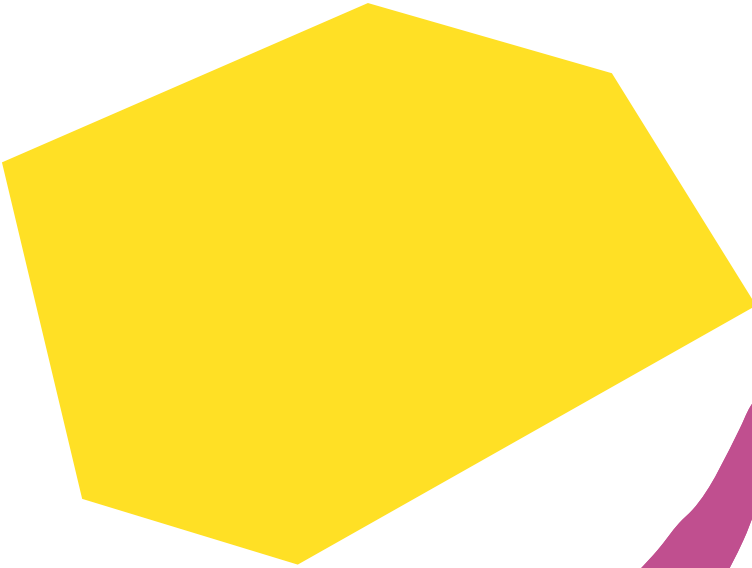


Rooms 1–8

IN THIS ACTIVITY you'll go hunting for details from an artwork.

Can you spot them?

- Which artwork has this shape?



- And this one?



- And the one on the cover of this booklet?

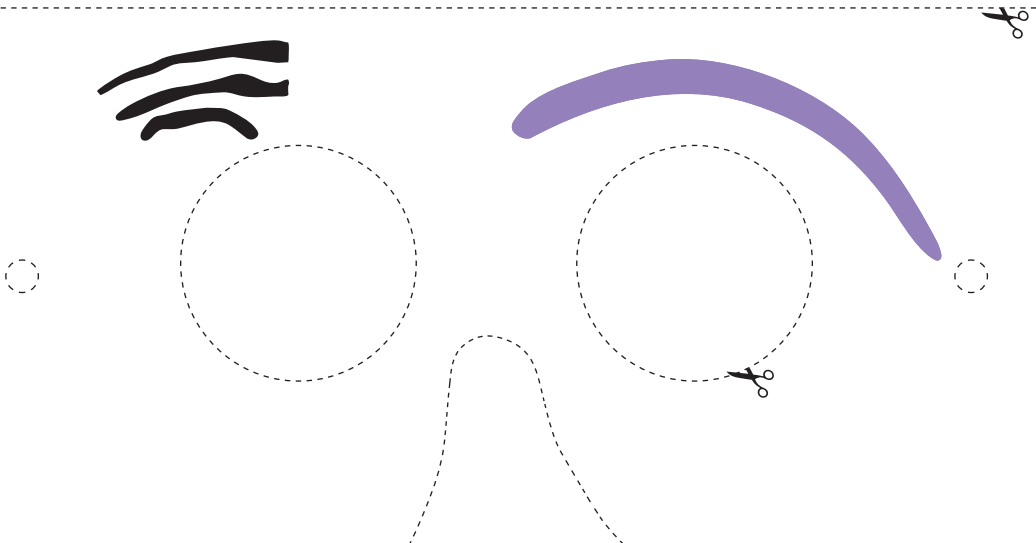
Room 2

JOHN BALDESSARI was curious to explore whether you can see emotions on someone's face. He asked himself: Can you tell from someone's face if they are angry? Or sad? Or maybe surprised?

In his art series *Prima Facie* (which means: "at first sight"),

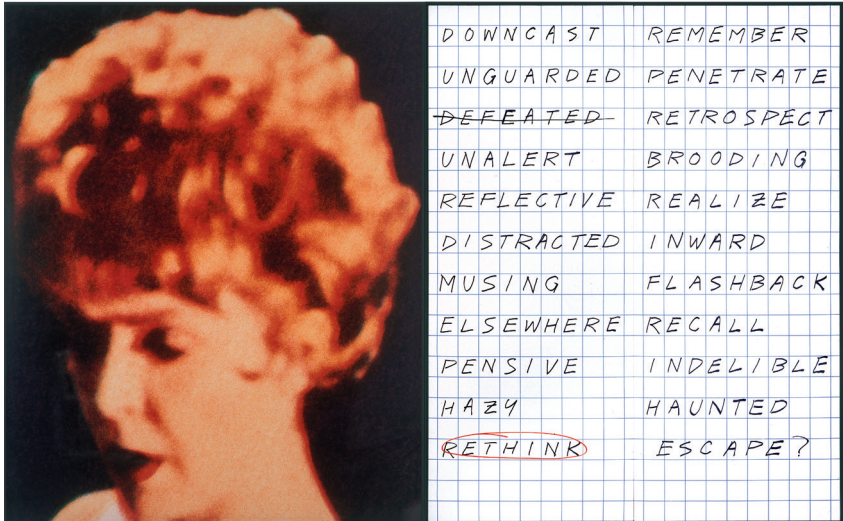
he combined photos of faces with words like "angry", "happy" or "worried". But... do the words correspond to the facial expression? Maybe "uncertain" fits better than "angry" for that face. Or "tired" instead of "sad".

What do you think?



Room 3

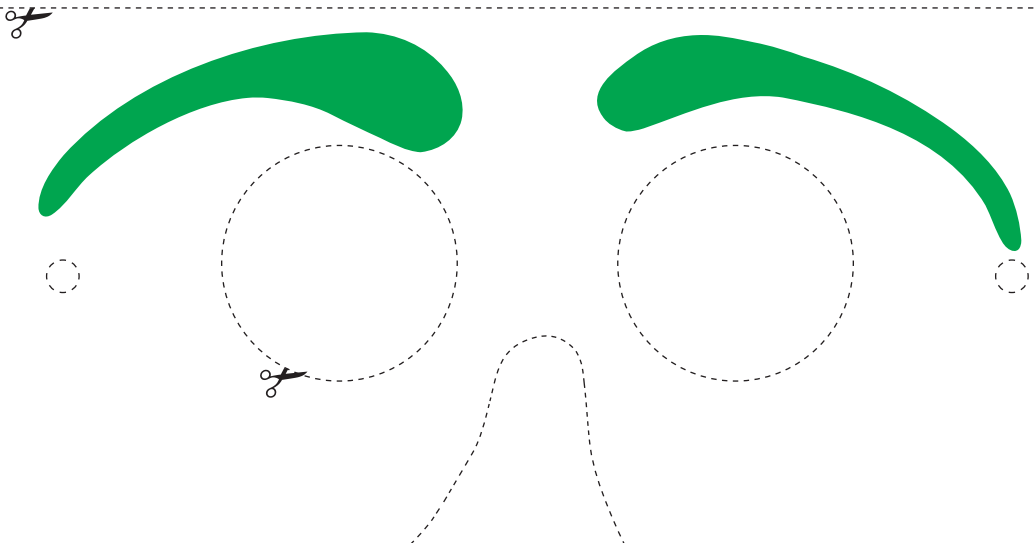
LOOK at the faces in the artworks. What do you think they are feeling?



Prima Facie (Fourth State): Rethink and Et Cetera, 2005, digital photographic print mounted on foam PVC board; paint marker and ink-jet print on canvas, private collection

Cut out this mask at home, with its colorful eyebrows inspired by

Baldessari's *Raised Eyebrows*, and wear it on your nose!



Room 3

Write down words to express their emotions – or make up other

feelings and words that you
imagine for these faces!

[illegible]

Room 5

SOMETIMES BALDESSARI
used film stills in his art – these
are single frozen moments
from movies. He liked to explore
these tiny pauses in time and
turn them into something new
and surprising.

- What do you think happened seconds before the picture froze?
- What might happen if you press play?
Will someone start moving?
Will they say or sing something?
Will the image change?

Choose a work in this room.

Use your eyes *and* your imagination!

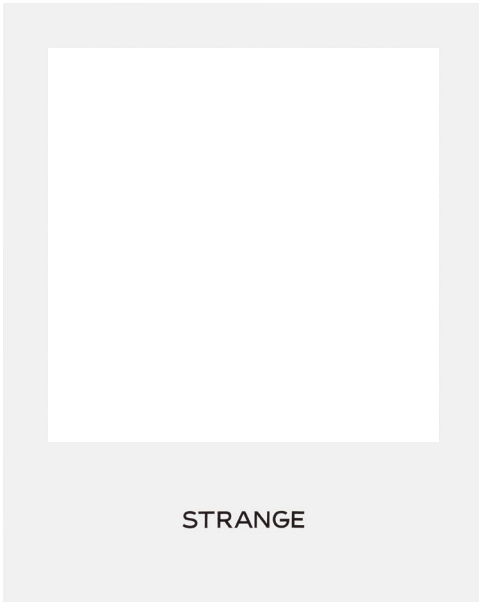
Room 8

John Baldessari was inspired by the mysterious and poetic titles of another artist: Goya. Sometimes those titles don't match the image you see at all. And that's the fun part! Because... what happens when you combine a title and an image that don't really belong together? Something new appears: something unexpected, funny, or even a little bit strange.

Choose an artwork in the exhibition.

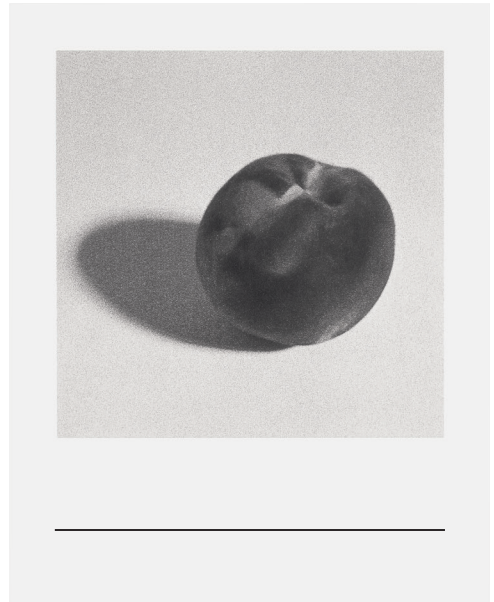
- Look at it closely. What do you notice? What stands out?

FUN FACT:
You can see Goya's
amazing work right now in another
exhibition at Bozar!



Goya Series: Strange, 1997, Ink-jet and enamel paint on canvas, Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung, Depositum in der Öffentlichen Kunstsammlung Basel

- Draw a new picture that has nothing to do with the title!



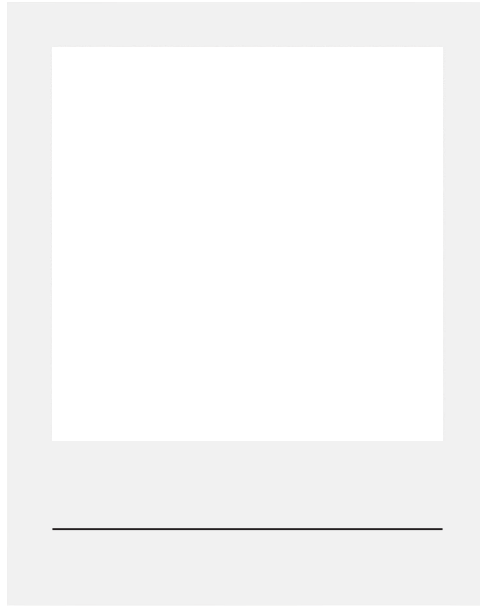
Goya Series: Less Than Perfect, 1997, Ink-jet and enamel paint on canvas, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam

- Write a new title that has nothing to do with the picture!

Room 8

Now make up a new title and a new drawing.

They don't have to match – have fun and be creative!



Baldessari sometimes covered people's faces with colourful dots. This makes the faces a little mysterious, so you can imagine what they might be feeling or

thinking. Sometimes he even covered whole figures with flat colours! Can you imagine the story hiding behind the faces under these dots?









- How many of these colored balls can you find throughout the entire exhibition?

IN THIS SPACE you can hear the artist John Baldessari singing. But he's not singing a song like the ones you hear on the radio... He's singing sentences written by another artist: Sol LeWitt.

Those sentences are about conceptual art – art that's more about ideas than how it looks. And you know what's fun? In art, you get to make up the rules yourself!

What is something important to you when you are drawing, painting, or making things?

For example:

- "Art doesn't have to be neat."
- "Always use at least one wobbly shape."
- "Smiling is compulsory while drawing."
- "It's okay to colour outside the lines!"

SING YOUR ART RULE!

Do what John Baldessari did: sing your art rule out loud! You can make up your own melody. It doesn't have to sound beautiful, as long as it's *your* voice.

BONUS BONUS BONUS BONUS BONUS BONUS BONUS

Get others to join in!
Can you create a choir with your friends, classmates or family?
Everyone sings their own art rule!

John Baldessari.

Parables, Fables, and Other Tall Tales

Bozar – Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels
19 Sept. '25–1 Feb. '26

Curators

Rita McBride, Bartomeu Marí and David Platzker
in collaboration with Zoë Gray and
Alberta Sessa (Bozar)

Scenography

OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen

Graphic Design

Joris Kritis assisted by Emil Kowalczyk

KIDS GUIDE

Texts

Oriana Lemmens

Graphic design

Joris Kritis assisted by Emil Kowalczyk

Coordination

Laurence Ejzyn, Oriana Lemmens

Translations

Guillaume De Grieve^(NL), Astrid Jansen^(FR)

Editing

Laurence Ejzyn, Zoë Gray, Anamaria Pazmino

All images

© Courtesy Estate of John Baldessari © 2025;
Courtesy John Baldessari Family Foundation;
Sprüth Magers

R.E.:

Christophe Slagmuylder,
rue Ravensteinstraat 23
1000 Brussels

Acknowledgments

Bozar warmly thanks the curators, Craig Robins Collection, The John Baldessari Family Foundation, The Estate of John Baldessari, Sprüth Magers Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), all the lenders, scenographers, subsidising authorities, and the numerous individuals who assisted us in realising this project, whom we cannot name here.

Partners

The John Baldessari Family Foundation, the Estate of John Baldessari & Sprüth Magers, Craig Robins Collection, Miami

Support

Vlaamse Overheid, uhoda, Sprüth Magers, Maharam, Fondation Jean-François Peterbroeck



Vlaanderen
verbeelding werkt



Sprüth Magers



Structural partners



loterie nationale
loterij



Funded by the
European Union
NextGenerationEU



De Standaard



knack



Interested in our special activities for children?



Visit bozar.be

**19 Sep. '25–
1 Feb. '26**

Bozar