

Two Figures (One with Shadow), from Hegel's Cellar
portfolio
John Baldessari



Date : 1986

Photogravure and sugar-lift aquatint on torn Rives BFK paper with deckle, printed almost to the edges

20 1/2 x 19 3/4 in.

Edition of 35

Pencil signed and numbered on verso

Artist bio

Throughout his career, John Baldessari has defied formalist categories by working in a variety of media —creating films, videotapes, prints, photographs, texts, drawings, and multiple combinations of these. In his use of media imagery, Baldessari is a pioneer “image appropriator”, and as such has had a profound impact on post-modern art production.

Born in 1931, John Baldessari studied art, literature, and art history at San Diego State College and the University of California, Berkeley. Baldessari initially studied to be an art critic, but growing dissatisfied with his studies, he turned to painting.

Inspired by Dada and Surrealist literary and visual ideas, he began incorporating photographs, notes, texts, and fragments of conversation into his paintings. Baldessari remains fundamentally interested in de-mystifying artistic processes, and uses video to record his performances, which function as “deconstruction experiments”. These illustrative exercises target prevailing assumptions about art and artists, focusing on the perception, language, and interpretation of artistic images.

Allowing pop-cultural artifacts to function as “information” as opposed to “form”, Baldessari’s works represented a radical departure from, and often a direct critique of, the modernist sensibility that dominated painting for decades.