

MEG CRANSTON & JOHN BALDESSARI - *Keep it Simple. Keep it Fresh.*

Michael Janssen Singapore

January 19 - March 10, 2013

Opening January 18, 2013, 7 p.m.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Michael Janssen Singapore is pleased to announce the exhibition ***Keep it Simple. Keep it Fresh.*** with a series of new works by American artists **Meg Cranston** and **John Baldessari**.

The paintings on view are the result of a collaboration between the two artists and consist of a text by Baldessari, handwritten on a colored canvas supplied by Cranston. The text chosen by Baldessari is an excerpt from one of his writings entitled *Advice to Young Artists* and states: *Whatever you decide to do, remember to keep it simple, keep it fresh, and have some idea of what you are going to do. "I wrote the text in 1968 but I think it still holds true today. It has always been a touchstone for me – to keep it simple but with luck, of course, to create some profundity too. I stand by the text. It still seems like a good idea",* says Baldessari.

Cranston determined the colors for the series drawing on her most recent work that reinvigorates color theory and investigates the business of color forecasting. She borrowed the colors determined by the Pantone Corporation for the spring-summer 2013 fashion and home design industry. *"I have always been interested in why some colors seem to dominate at certain times. I have learned that the reason is that they are largely programmed – determined, if you will, by organized forces, namely the Pantone Corporation. Pantone releases a color forecast every season that most manufacturers follow to determine the colors of their products. I used the same colors because I wanted the paintings to be realistic – to reflect current conditions",* says Cranston.

Collaboration itself is a way for the two artists to achieve new solutions. For the exhibition they allowed the planes of text and color to work simultaneously in order to achieve a new and unanticipated resonance and profundity. The idea behind it was to use a 40-year-old text and update it by blending it within the context of color trends. *"John and I are similar in the sense that we both like to work from a simple, almost neutral plan in the hopes of generating unexpected results. We both like to find ways to get beyond our own preferences and tastes so that we can generate something that we cannot anticipate. Paradoxically, for both of us, the lesson seems to be – the more neutral the plan the more surprising the result",* Cranston explains.

In her practice Cranston investigates the intersections between individual and shared experience and how imagery and objects acquire meaning in our culture. While oftentimes taking personal attributes or historical events as a jumping-off point, her work is ultimately concerned with the formal language of art and the role the artist plays in helping us see the world in new ways.

Since the 1960's, the works of Baldessari have developed into one of the most pioneering oeuvres of contemporary art. By means of productive gaps between image and word, he focuses on the relationship between language and power. Visual jokes and plays on words are the means by which he disrupts the strict classification of sense and nonsense and sets in motion processes of critical thought with regard to society.

*Meg Cranston: *1960 in Baldwin, NY. Lives and works in Venice, CA.*

Selected exhibitions: 2012: Made in L.A. (group). 2011: Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles (group). 2010: Gallery Brandstrup Oslo, Norway (group). 2009: Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen, Germany (solo). 2008: Getty Museum of Art, Los Angeles (group); Kuenstlerverein Malkasten, Duesseldorf, Germany (group). 2007: Artspace, Auckland, New Zealand (solo).

*John Baldessari: *1931 in National City, CA. Lives and works in Santa Monica, CA.*

Solo Exhibitions (selection): 2011: Australian Museum, Sydney and Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. 2010: Fondazione Prada. Milan; Gemini G.E.L. Los Angeles, CA. 2009: Tate Modern, London, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA and Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; Museum Haus Lange. Krefeld, Germany (solo).

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