

**JOHN BALDESSARI**

Portrait, Various Identities with Name/Date Cards

1974

ten (10) black and white photographs

14 x 11 inches (35.6 x 27.9 cm) each

**Provenance:**

Sonnabend Gallery, New York (acquired from the artist)

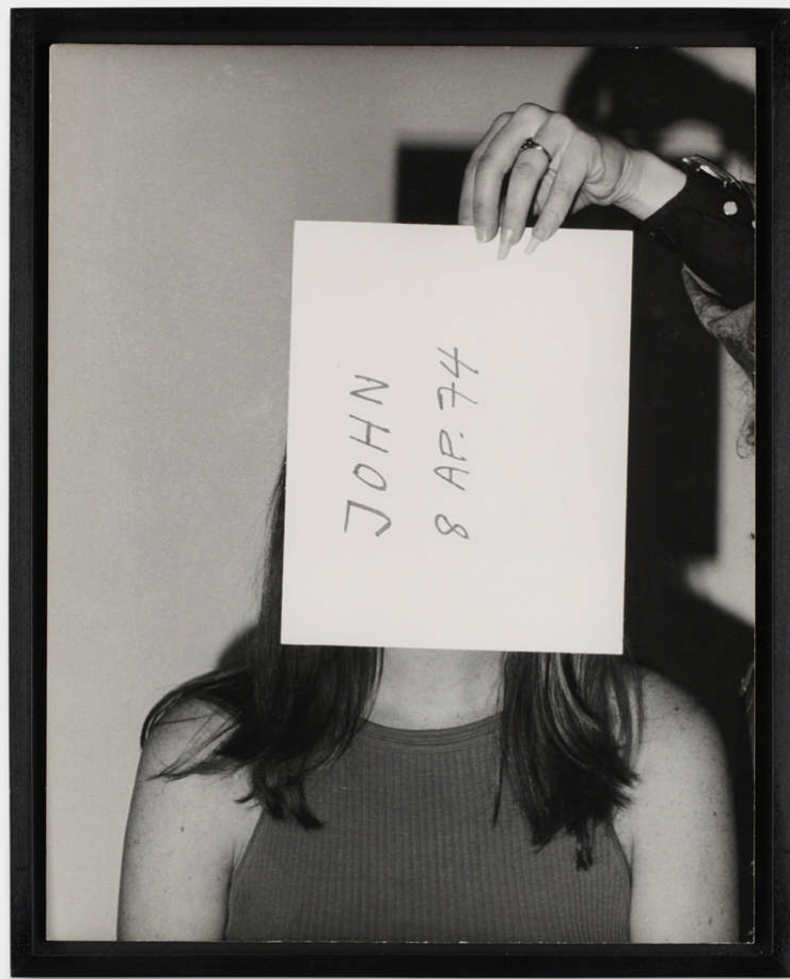
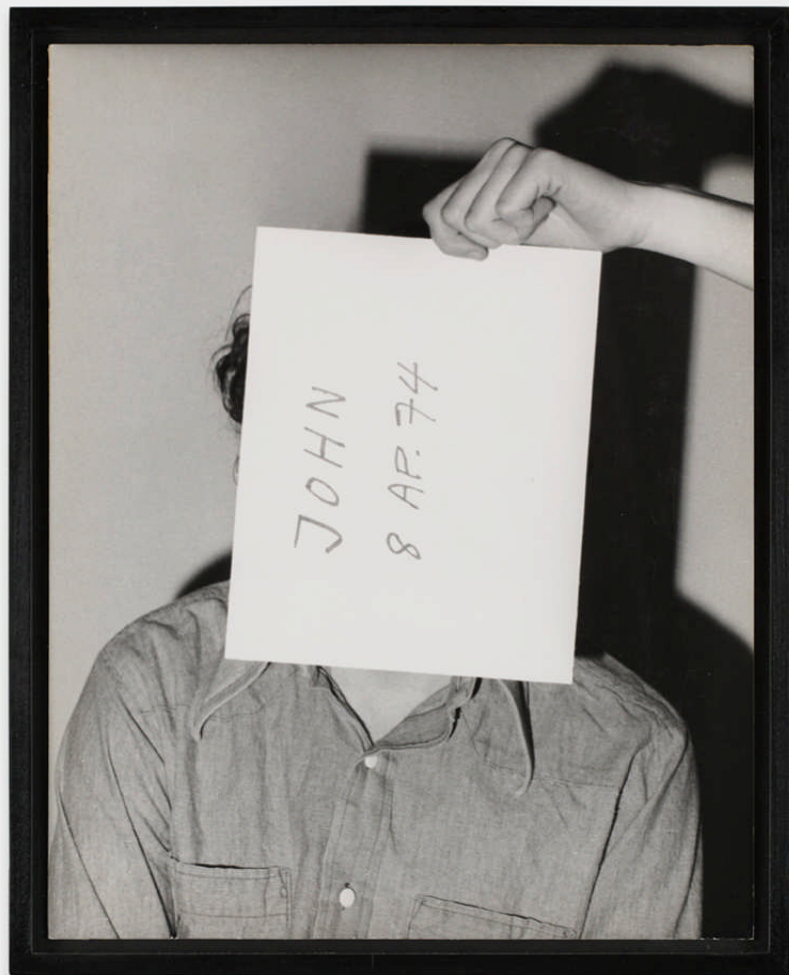
Private collection (acquired from the above c. 2000)

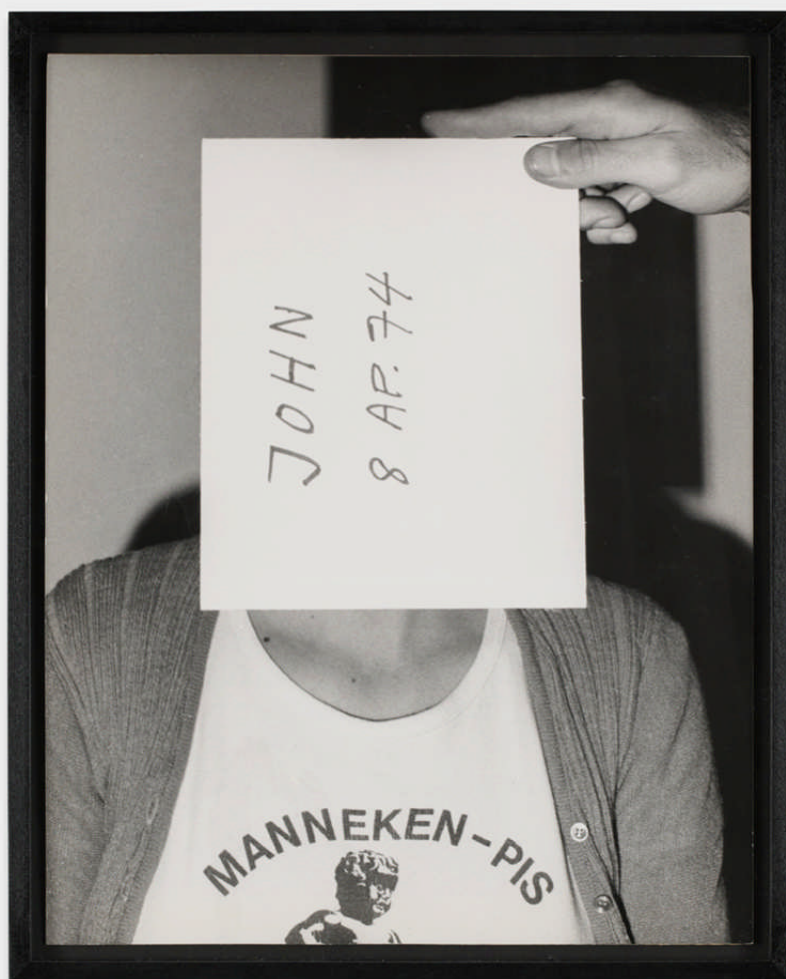
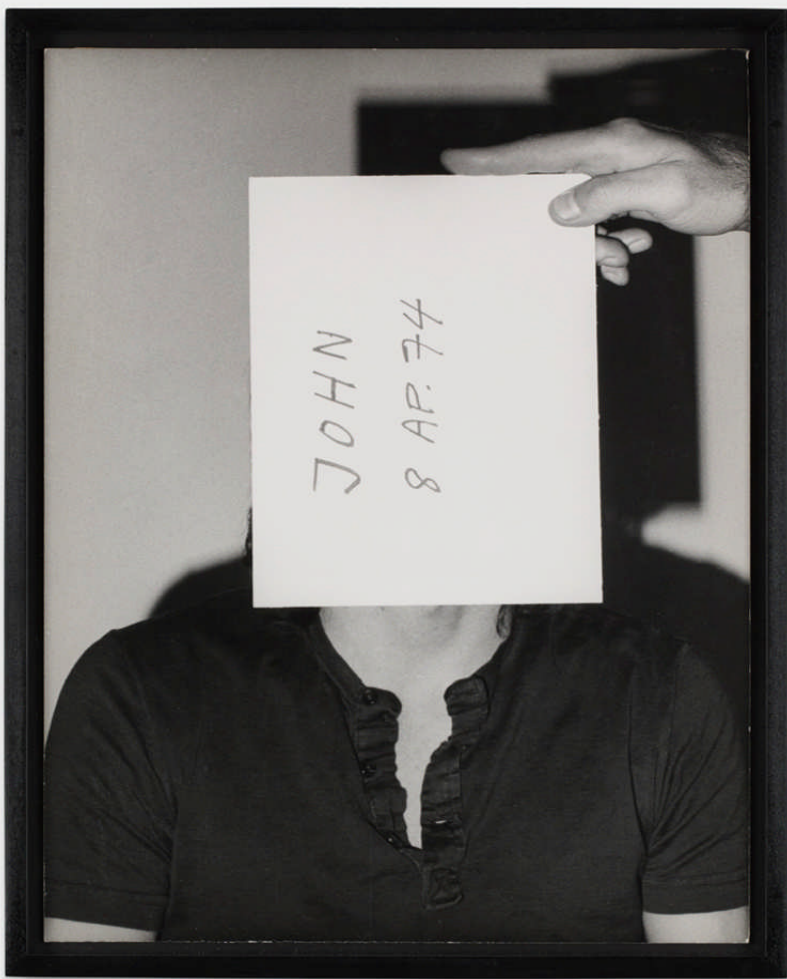
Private collection

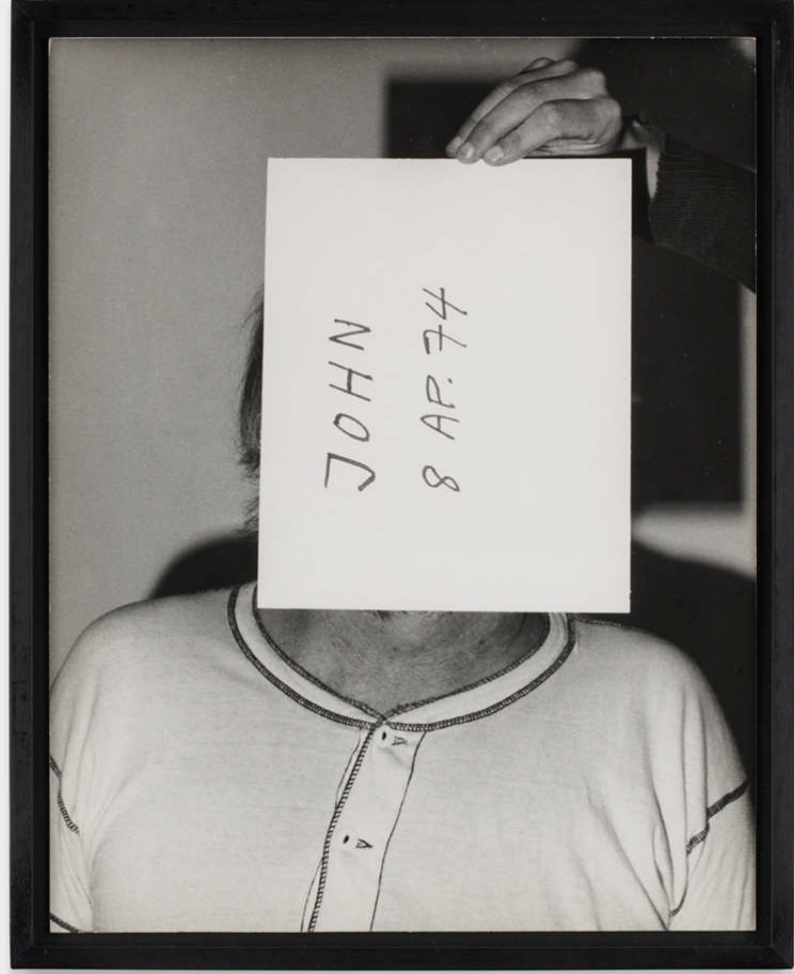
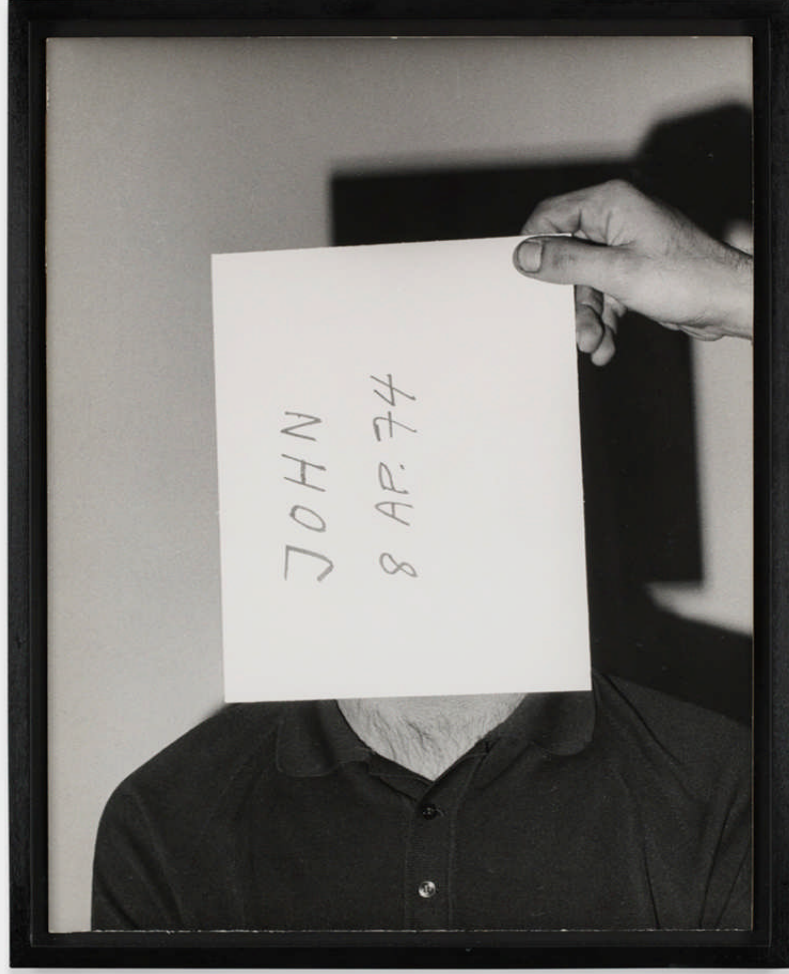
**Note:**

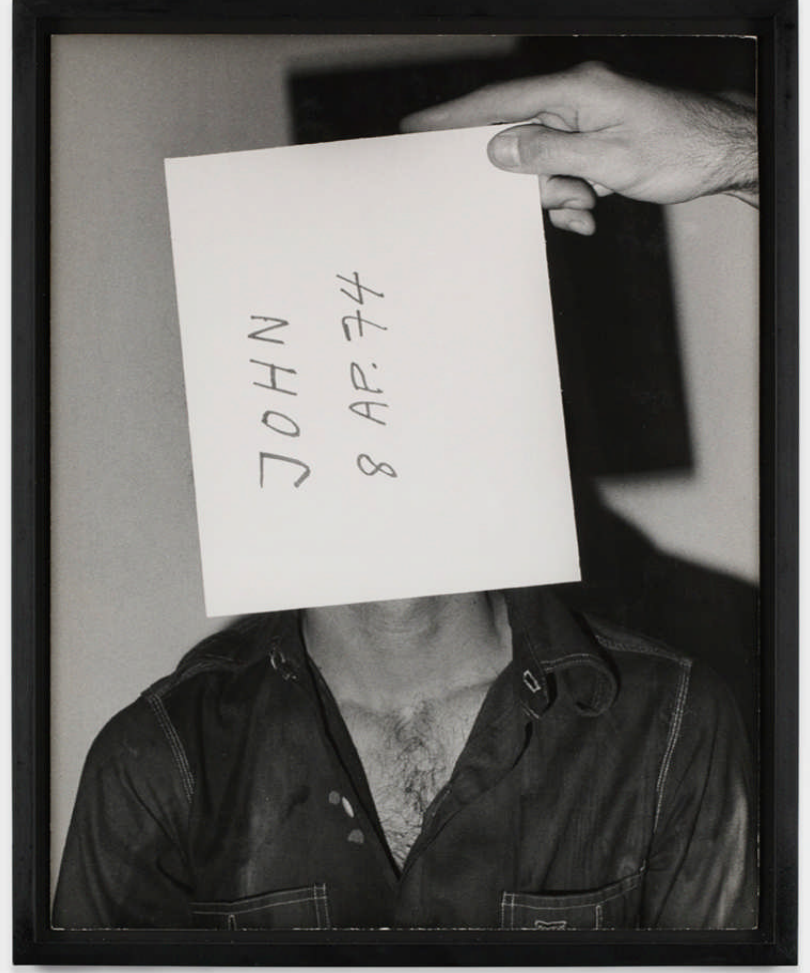
This series of images depicts various different people, each with a card inscribed with the name "John" and the date, held by another person in front of their faces. A related work (in the artist's personal collection) represents one person (the artist) behind various cards inscribed with different names.

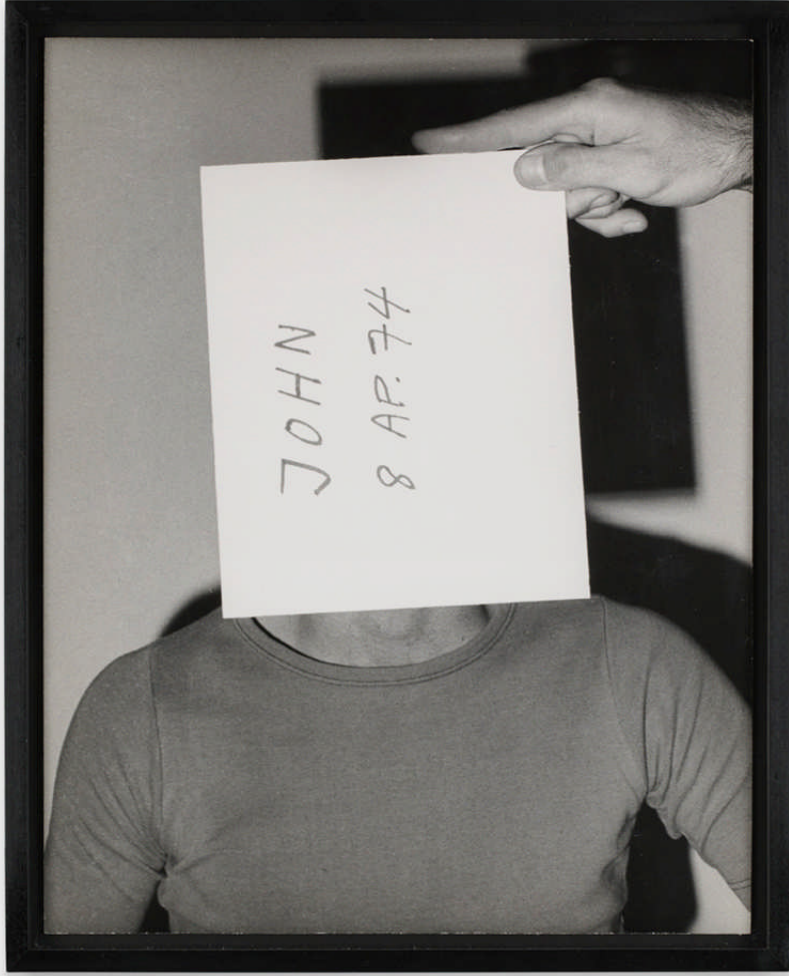












**JOHN BALDESSARI**

Strobe Series/Futurist: Dog on Leash (for Balla)

1975

eight (8) black and white photographs

11 x 11 inches (27.9 x 27.9 cm) each

**Provenance:**

Sonnabend Gallery, New York (acquired from the artist)

Private collection (acquired from the above c. 2000)

Private collection

**Literature:**

R. Fuchs, et. al., *John Baldessari: A Different Kind of Order (Arbeiten 1962 - 1984)*, exh. cat., Vienna: Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, 2005, p. 223.

**Note:**

Baldessari's *Strobe Series/Futurist* works (1975) comprises a group of humorous evocations of Futurism's painterly representations of dynamic movement, while also referencing 19th-century time-lapse photography. However, unlike his predecessors, Baldessari made use of mundane objects and activities.

With regard to this series, Baldessari notes that his concerns were “the opportunity to explore sequentiality within the single photograph, to apply a ‘What will happen if ...’ approach, and to explore some of the ideas of Futurism, essentially idioms of movement.” (Quoted in C. van Bruggen, *John Baldessari*, Rizzoli: New York, 1990, p. 53.)

Photographed while a strobe light was being flashed at a poodle on a leash, *Dog on a Leash* represents a tongue-in-cheek attempt to produce a photographic version of Italian Futurist Giacomo Balla's painting *Dynamism of a Dog on Leash* (1912). Baldessari created the abstract, beautiful images that comprise this series by employing a number of playful devices: In *Dog on a Leash (for Balla)*



and *Girl with Flowers Falling from her Mouth (for Botticelli) #1* (collection of the artist), the movement evoked in the art-historical referents is recreated. However, Baldessari also invented games to generate his imagery in works such as *Trying to Get a Straight Line with a Finger* (collection of the artist), and *Game for Two People* and *Two Ping Pong Balls*. Lastly, visual puns and wordplays were used in *Passing the Buck* and *Pulling Leg*.

Each of the individual works from the *Strobe* series is unique. There exists a separate *Dog on a Leash* work comprised of different strobe images of the same poodle (Sonnabend Collection). Note that this work is to be installed horizontally; and the order of the individual images and their spacing is not set (according to the artist, it can be installed in any sequence).

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**JOHN BALDESSARI**

Untitled (Directional Piece)

1972-73

photographic work in twenty-two (22) parts

3 1/2 x 5 inches (8.9 x 12.7 cm) each

**Provenance:**

Sammlung Marzona, Bielefeld

David Zwirner, New York

Private collection

Private collection

**Exhibited:**

Vienna, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien im Palais

Liechtenstein, *Die Sammlung Marzona: Arte Povera, Minimal Art, Concept Art, Land Art*, June - September 1995, p 82 (illustrated, incorrectly dated 1970).

**Note:**

This work embodies the playfulness, experimentation, and innovation that characterized Baldessari's art of the 1970s. Already well-known for displacing the familiar with the unexpected, and including surprising spaces and gaps, with *Untitled (Directional Piece)* Baldessari challenges the viewer's inclination to extract narrative implied not only by the painted red arrows but also ordinarily by any sequential arrangement of images. The artist plays with conventional composition devices, arranging images according to the direction in which the subjects in the photographs appear to be moving (arrows pointing right or left are painted onto each respective images). The upper row shows figures "moving" to the right, while the bottom rows shows them "moving" to the left. "Children learn the game of life from adults, who think they're going somewhere," he once remarked, "and in fact are going nowhere, just keeping moving." (Quoted in C. van Bruggen, *John Baldessari*, Rizzoli: New York, 1990, p.160.)



























