



FRIENDS OF THE HIGH LINE

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HIGH LINE ART PRESENTS

JOHN BALDESSARI
THE FIRST \$100,000 I EVER MADE

NEW ART COMMISSION LAUNCHES THE HIGH LINE BILLBOARD SERIES

ON VIEW FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2 TO FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2011



John Baldessari, *The First \$100,000 I Ever Made*. Print on Vinyl, 25 x 75 feet. Installation view. Photo by Friends of the High Line, Courtesy of John Baldessari and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York.

New York, NY (December 2, 2011) – High Line Art, presented by Friends of the High Line, today unveiled *The First \$100,000 I Ever Made*, a new work created by legendary artist John Baldessari for the 25-by-75 foot billboard next to the High Line on 10th Avenue at West 18th Street. This is the first of three works to be presented as part of a new series called HIGH LINE BILLBOARD, thanks to the generous support of Edison Properties, the owner of the property on which the billboard stands. *The First \$100,000 I Ever Made* will remain on view until Friday, December 30, 2011.

John Baldessari is one of the seminal figures in the conceptual art movement. Since the 1960s, Baldessari has greatly influenced generations of artists with works that explore the connections among representation, language, and popular culture. Friends of the High Line invited Baldessari to launch HIGH LINE BILLBOARD, and with his distinct deadpan approach, the artist has created a new, thought-provoking roadside attraction for 10th Avenue with a gigantic representation of a \$100,000 bill.

The \$100,000 bill plays a special role in the history of currency in the United States. For a three-week period spanning 1934 and 1935, in the throes of the Great Depression, the United States government printed 42,000 of these bills and released them as gold certificates to Federal Reserve Banks that had equal amounts of gold in the

Treasury. The bills were never circulated among the general public, and in the 1960s, the government recalled the bills following advances in wire transfer technology. Most of the bills were destroyed, but some relics remain at branches of the Federal Reserve and the Smithsonian Museum. The \$100,000 bill holds the record as the highest denomination currency ever issued by the United States and carries an image of Woodrow Wilson, the 28th President of the United States.

“HIGH LINE BILLBOARD presents an extraordinary opportunity for art to generate conversation, and that is why I am thrilled to launch the series with this new work by John Baldessari,” said Cecilia Alemani, the Curator and Director of High Line Art at Friends of the High Line. “One of his first works recited the phrase, ‘I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art,’ and for more than 40 years he has continued to surprise us. With its larger-than-life proportion, this new work can be viewed in many ways: a photo opportunity for High Line visitors, a commentary on the world’s financial situation, or a giant object of desire.”

About the Artist

John Baldessari was born in 1931 in National City, California. He attended San Diego State University and did post-graduate work at Otis Art Institute, Chouinard Art Institute, and the University of California at Berkeley. He taught at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, CA from 1970 – 1988 and the University of California at Los Angeles from 1996 – 2007. Baldessari’s artwork has been featured in more than 200 solo exhibitions and in over 1,000 group exhibitions in the U.S. and Europe. His projects include artist books, videos, films, billboards, and public works. His awards and honors include memberships in the American Academy of Arts and Letters and in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Americans for the Arts Lifetime Achievement Award, the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, the BACA International 2008, and the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement, awarded by La Biennale di Venezia in 2009. He has received honorary degrees from the National University of Ireland, San Diego State University, Otis Art Institute of Parsons School of Design, and California College of the Arts. Recent projects include exhibitions in New York, Europe, and Los Angeles; installations at the Museum Haus Lange (Krefeld, Germany), the Temporary Stedelijk 2 (Amsterdam, the Netherlands) and the Manchester International Festival (Manchester, United Kingdom); an exhibition with the Fondazione Prada in Milan, Italy; in 2009, his retrospective exhibition *John Baldessari: Pure Beauty* opened at the Tate Modern in London, and traveled to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York in 2010.

About High Line Art

High Line Art commissions and produces public art projects that take place on and around the High Line. Founded in 2009, High Line Art has been showcasing a wide array of artworks including site-specific commissions, exhibitions, performances, video programs and a series of billboard interventions. High Line Art invites artists to think of creative ways to engage with the uniqueness of the architecture and design of the High Line and to foster a productive dialogue with the neighborhood and urban landscape.

High Line Art is presented by Friends of the High Line and the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation. High Line Art is supported by Vital Projects Fund, Inc., and, in part, with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. In-kind sponsorship for HIGH LINE BILLBOARD is provided by Edison Properties.

About the High Line and Friends of the High Line

The High Line is a public park built on an historic freight rail line elevated above the streets on Manhattan’s West Side. It is owned by the City of New York, and maintained and operated by Friends of the High Line. Founded in 1999 by community residents, Friends of the High Line fought for the High Line’s preservation and transformation at a time when the historic structure was under the threat of demolition. It is now the non-profit conservancy working with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation to make sure the High Line is maintained as an extraordinary public space for all visitors to enjoy. In addition to overseeing maintenance, operations, and public programming for the park, Friends of the High Line works to raise the essential private funds to support more than 90 percent of the park’s annual operating budget, and to advocate for the transformation of the High Line at the Rail Yards, the third and final section of the historic structure, which runs between West 30th and West 34th Streets.

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