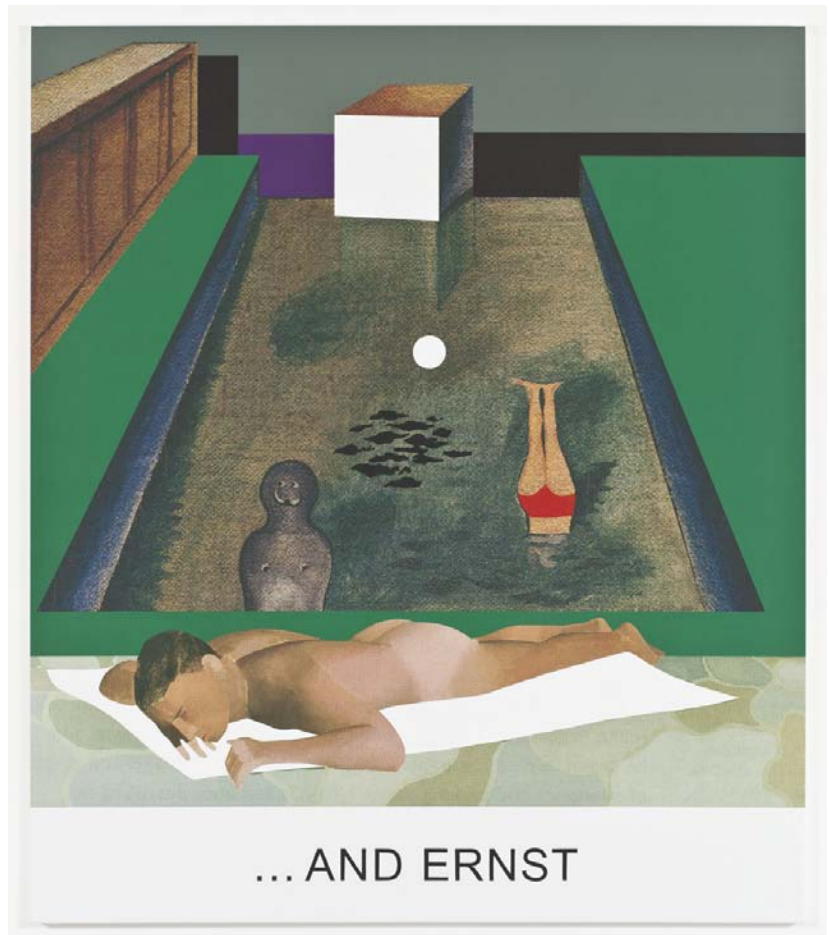


Pagel, David. "John Baldessari is joyously more than sum of its sources." *Los Angeles Times*, 18 May 2012.

If paintings had babies, they might look like the 11 works in "John Baldessari: Double Bill (Part 2)" — just like their parents, only different. At Margo Leavin Gallery, the 80-year-old artist plays the part of matchmaker, midwife and master of ceremonies, mixing and mashing masterpieces into hilariously original hybrids that make you wonder if art comes in parts or only in wholes.

To make each of his big inkjet prints, Baldessari chose two paintings that struck his fancy, say David Hockney's 1966 "Sunbather" and Max Ernst's 1919 "Aquis Submersus." Next, he selected sections from each and melded them digitally, moving the background of the Hockney into the foreground and cropping the background out of the Ernst.



*Double Bill (Part 2): ... and Ernst, 2012*

Using paint the way typists once applied Wite-Out, Baldessari then eliminated distracting details by covering them with gray, green and black, as well as red, yellow and purple. Under the image he added the caption "... AND ERNST," leaving viewers free to imagine more.

The results of Baldessari's efforts are far more fascinating than is a description of the process that brought them into being.

"Double Bill (Part 2): ... and Manet" embodies the taut elegance of a precisely tuned mandolin, sitar or banjo. "Double Bill (Part 2): ... and Gericault" is more schizophrenic, its figures' sinuous arms and muscular legs recalling the Hindu goddesses Lakshmi, Durga and Kali as well as William Bouguereau's painting of a satyr besieged by nymphs. Others are serenely surreal, strangely familiar yet hard to pin down.

No two are alike. Yet each is clearly a Baldessari — a whole lot more than the sum of its sources and nothing less than a pleasure to behold, a thrill to contemplate and a delight to dive into.