

Riddles and Video

High art, profound ideas, and laughs — a decidedly rare combination — can be found in a strong pair of exhibitions — John Baldessari and New T.V. New York. *Art as Riddle* is an appropriate title for an exhibition of Baldessari's wry and witty photographs, drawings, paintings and videotapes. Though much reduced from its origins at The New Museum, New York, the show, organized by Robert Pincus-Witten, provides an uncommon opportunity to see a progression of the artist's work. Baldessari, *eminence gris* of L.A. conceptual art, has been influenced by the best of Dada and Surrealism. Irreverent canvases painted by amateur artists hired by Baldessari are included in the exhibition; photos of a famous profile facing itself, thus creating a vase shape in the middle and recalling that popular visual trick "Which do you see?"; and Futurism as reflected in the photos of a woman walking her dog, *For Balla*. Baldessari's work is Byzantine, acting on countless levels from the most obvious joke to the most recondite personal concerns. The thinking person's artist.

New T.V. New York, curated by Nancy Drew, includes Mitchell Kriegman's amusing *Likely Stories*, a lengthy tape of his protestations against suspected infidelity, intercut with short segments dealing with male/female relationships. In the middle, there is a hysterical business titled *Dancing Man* by John Irwin. Other tapes on view include Matthew Geller's *New Thoughts on Thinking*; Ed Bowes/Karen Achenbach/Tom Bowes' *How to Fly*; Deans Keppel's *Quit Kicking Sand in Our Face*; Michael Smith's *It Starts at Home*; and Tony Oursler's *Grand Mal*.

—Hunter Drohojowska

All continue at the Long Beach
Museum of Art, 2300 East Ocean
Blvd., thru June 20. Call 439-2119 for
info.