

(sundaymarket.nl). 12.00-18.00. This month has an extra Saturday 'Sunday' market because of the public holiday. With stalls manned by designers selling ceramics, jewellery and vintage fashion, there's plenty of opportunity to meet local artisans and buy their wares. There are also workshops to keep the kids out of trouble and the entirety of Westerpark in which to play.

Sunday 6 & Sunday 20

Jazz Experience Heineken Experience, Stadhouderskade 78 (523 9222/heinekenexperience.com). 11.00-14.00, €49.50. Brewing behemoth Heineken teams up with Arrow Jazz FM for a lazy Sunday of sweet jazz sounds, great food and sweeping city views. Sunday 6 sees Giovanca performing, while Sunday 20's artist is yet to be announced at time of print.

Thursday 10 & Friday 11

What Design Can Do Stadsschouwburg, Leidseplein 26 (whatdesigncandoin.nl). €175 per day. This international conference-cum-workshop celebrates the power and problem-solving aspects of design. Renowned designers from many disciplines will speak and lead discussions with the audience. Ticket price includes lunch, a book to which the public can contribute and an afterparty – plus you might contribute to a better world.

Friday 11

1000 Drawings Amsterdam Vlaams Cultuurhuis de Brakke Grond, Nes 45 (622 9014/1000drawingsamsterdam.nl). 20.00-01.00; €12.50 pre-sale, €15 door. A5 drawings from established and up-and-coming arty professionals, and also from amateurs are displayed and sold for the charity FairPen. You can send in gems from your own oeuvre. A music and dance programme complements the art.

Wednesday 16

FAMILY Cleaning the Aquarium Artis, Plantage Kerklaan 38-40 (0900 278 4796 [€0.15/minute]/artis.nl). 14.00; €18.95, seniors €17.50; ages 3-9 €15.50, under-3s free. See how the scuba divers do the spring cleaning amongst the enormous fishes in the zoo's tropical aquarium.

Thursday 17-Sunday 20

FREE CRITICS' CHOICE Het Weekend van de Rollende Keukens Westergasfabriek (rollendekeukens.nl). 13.00-23.00. Westerpark goes food truck crazy, with mobile catering vans descending for a whole weekend. Be prepared to queue, but the convivial atmosphere and live music keep things fun.

Wednesday 23

FREE Versal 10 Party BoCing, Lange Leidsedwarsstraat 53-59 (versaljournal.org). 19.00; RSVP before 14 May: rsvp@versaljournal.org. First place at the New York Book show is reason enough to celebrate, but 'Versal' – Amsterdam's international literary and arts journal – has also hit double figures. The dress code for their tenth birthday party is 'Gold Tie', no less.

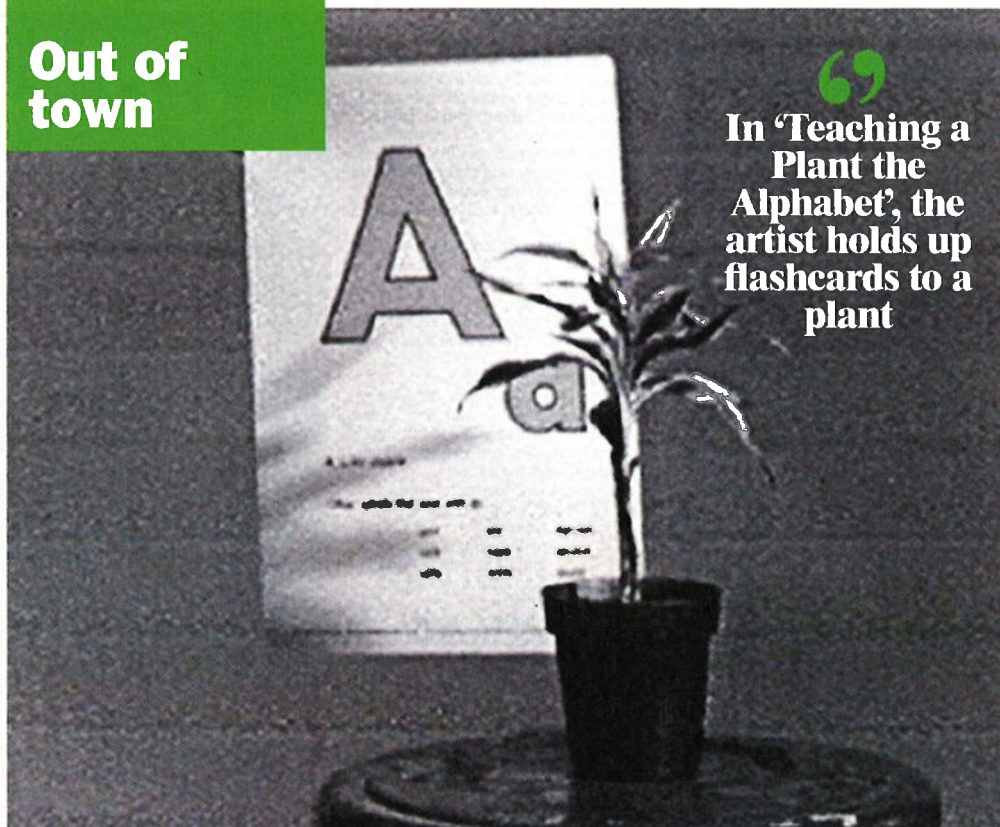
Friday 25 & Saturday 26

Sweelinck Festival Oude Kerk, Oudekerksplein 23 (625 8284/oudekerk.nl). €25 for an evening concert, day tickets €60-€75. To mark the 450th anniversary of the birth of Holland's most famous composer, Jan Pieterzoon Sweelinck, a programme of recitals of his works for harpsichord will be held in and around the very church where he worked as organist from the age of 15.

Thursday 31-Sunday 3 June

CRITICS' CHOICE Taste of Amsterdam Amstelpark (tasteofamsterdam.com). Various times; see website for details. €14-€55. Find the poshest nosh in the Amsterdam environs at this outdoor food extravaganza. Twelve of the city's best restaurants dish up their finest, with live demonstrations and entertainment.

Out of town



In 'Teaching a Plant the Alphabet', the artist holds up flashcards to a plant

John Baldessari: Video Works 1970-1977

Catherine Somzé heads south to Eindhoven and back to the past to immerse herself in conceptual video art's beginnings

★★★★★

Irony man

Put mildly, exhibitions of early video art tend not to be crowd magnets. The typically black-and-white works are often disarmingly simple; some are even readily available to peruse on YouTube. Put brutally, why bother going to a museum when you can watch free videos that lack the formal intricacies, immersive experience and production values of contemporary video art... at home?

The Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven may have the answer, in the shape of its considerable collection of works from the 1970s by American conceptual artist John Baldessari. The 23 works, including the famous 'I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art' from 1971 – a close-up of Baldessari's hand writing the same phrase for half an hour in an ironic exercise that contradicts its title – are on show in the 'tower' of the museum for the majority of this year.

These videos are key to understanding the work of an artist who's inspired the likes of Barbara Kruger and set the benchmark for the important features of postmodern culture, such as the widespread use

of appropriation as an artistic strategy. More importantly perhaps, the way in which the works are arranged and displayed in this dedicated exhibition space redoubles the explanatory power of the videos.

At first sight, Baldessari's video work represents everything that gives conceptual art its rep for inaccessibility and beard stroking. There are no beautiful images, a lot of text and (yes) a bearded white man (Baldessari) who often looks at the camera with a deadpan gaze. In 'I Am Making Art', Baldessari minimally moves his arms while, poker-faced, he repeats the title of the piece over and over again. In 'Teaching a Plant the Alphabet', the artist holds up children's alphabet cards to a plant while repeating the letters. And in 'Baldessari Sings LeWitt', he endeavours to sing in a popular fashion an arcane theoretical treatise by minimalist artist Sol LeWitt.

Such works are charming, humorous and self-critical, offering up ironic commentary on art and the art world. In 'I Am Making Art' he's parodying performance art; in 'Teaching a Plant the Alphabet', he ridicules conceptual art's obsession with the gap between different forms of representation (images and

spoken and written language, in this case) and in 'Baldessari Sings LeWitt', he elevates pop culture to high art (and vice versa) in a manner that's both witty and demystifying.

The displays at the Van Abbe can be said to translate this 'meta' dimension of Baldessari's work to the museum's building and its own institutional power to bestow authority on works of art from the past and the present. Just as Baldessari's oeuvre constitutes an amused commentary on conceptual art, so the wooden tree-like geometrical structure that serves as a support for the many black flat screens here invites viewers to look at the space in a different manner and to consider their own place within it. 'John Baldessari: Video Works 1970-1977' doesn't just reveal the wry and self-critical nature of Baldessari's work; it also 'performs' what the concept is all about: creating distorted views on familiar things.

John Baldessari: Video Works 1970-1977 Van Abbemuseum, Bilderdijklaan 10, Eindhoven (040 238 1000/vanabbemuseum.nl). ▶ 7 Oct. €10, see website for discounts. Open Tue-Sun 11.00-17.00.