

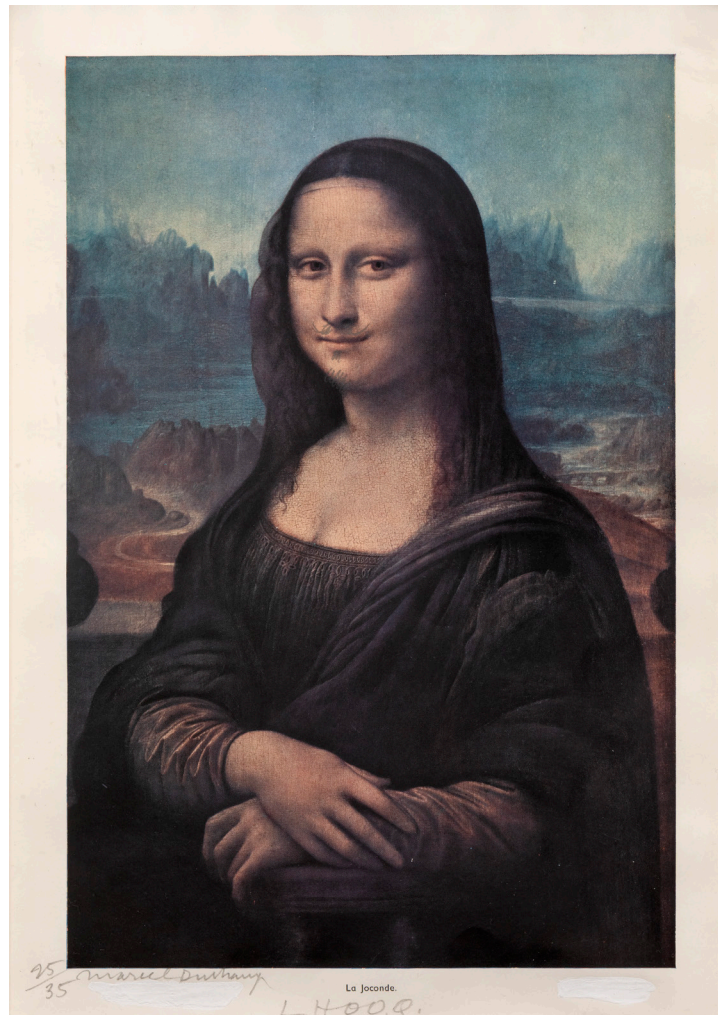
Press Release

# Marcel Duchamp

## L.H.O.O.Q.

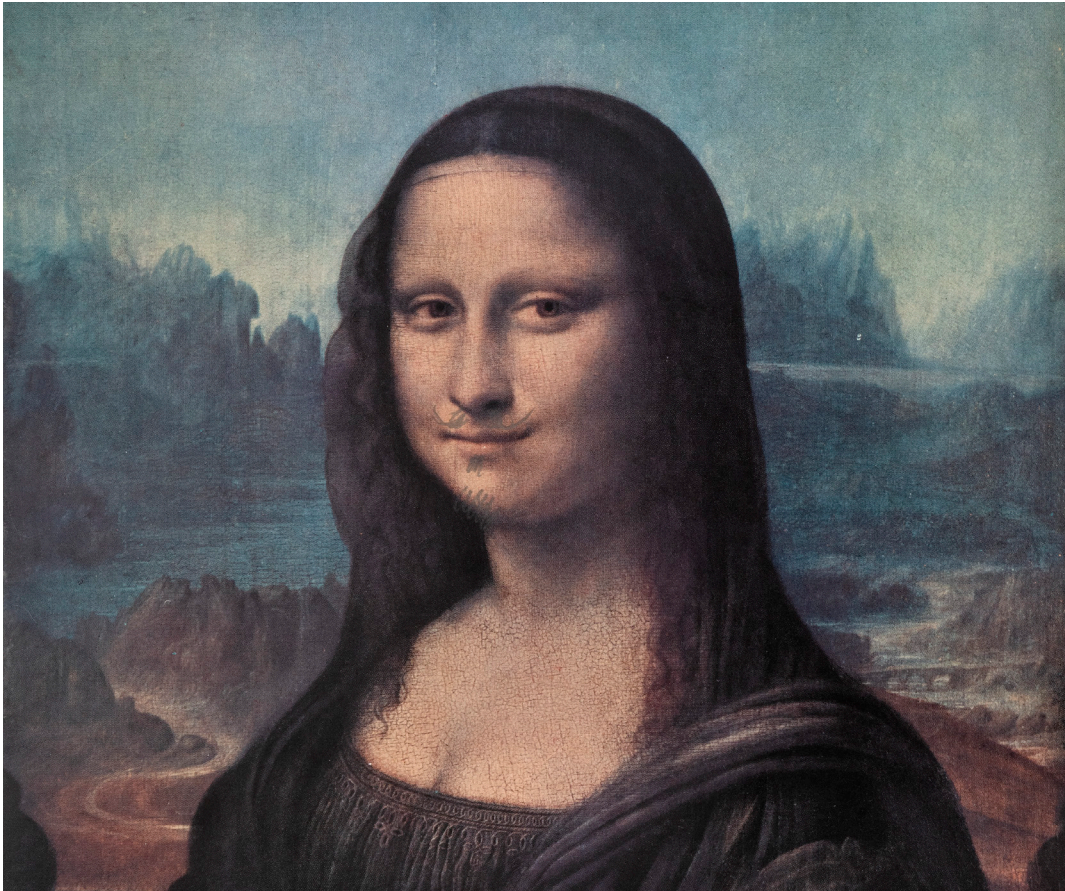
4 June—3 September 2022  
Opening 4 June 2022, 11 am

Thaddaeus Ropac  
Salzburg Villa Kast  
Mirabellplatz 2, 5020 Salzburg



1. Marcel Duchamp, L.H.O.O.Q., 1964

**Thaddaeus Ropac**  
London Paris Salzburg Seoul



2. Marcel Duchamp, *L.H.O.O.Q.* (detail), 1964

*I had the idea that a painting cannot, must not be looked at too much. It becomes desecrated by the very act of being seen too much. It reaches a point of exhaustion. [...] The curious thing about that moustache and goatee is that when you look at it the Mona Lisa becomes a man. It is not a woman disguised as a man; it is a real man, and that was my discovery, without realising it at the time.*

—Marcel Duchamp, 1961

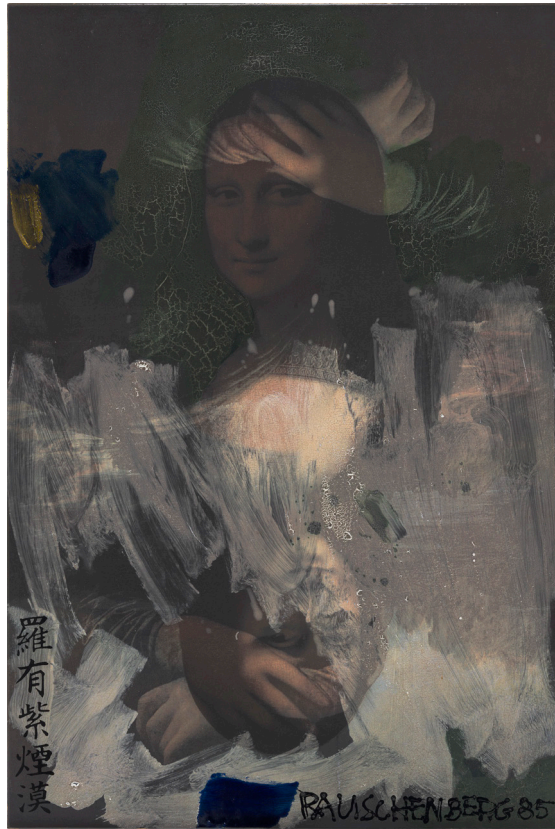
Thaddaeus Ropac Salzburg presents selected works by Marcel Duchamp in the Annex building of the gallery, on view in parallel with the ongoing exhibition of Robert Rauschenberg's *Japanese Clayworks*. Duchamp and Rauschenberg shared a close friendship and maintained a lively artistic exchange over many years. In 1959, Rauschenberg acquired Duchamp's *Bottle Rack* for his personal collection, a work Duchamp referred to as his first readymade (now in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago). For Duchamp, the ideas embodied in a work of art were of greater importance than the physical work itself. To this effect, he said: 'A duplicate or a mechanical repetition has the same value as the original.' When it came to incorporating unorthodox materials into his works – many of which have fetishistic associations – Duchamp was one of the most adventurous among his contemporaries.

The proximity to Duchamp's revolutionary understanding of art is evident in Rauschenberg's work, especially through his enduring fascination with found objects. By including everyday objects, which he called 'gifts from the street', he revolutionised the picture plane, expanding the boundaries of what can be considered an artwork in an ongoing dialogue between painting and sculpture, and between the artist's hand and the mechanically reproduced image.

Rauschenberg's understanding of the role of the artist echoes Duchamp's self-conception, and throughout his career he worked collaboratively with dancers, choreographers or – as for his *Japanese Clayworks* – with specialised craftsmen. The multi-layered influences of Duchamp's work on Rauschenberg, however, also include direct iconographic references such as the appropriation of Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* (1503–19). For *L.H.O.O.Q.*, Duchamp appended a moustache and goatee in pencil to a postcard reproduction of the iconic image – the beard suggesting that the figure was actually a man in drag.

Rauschenberg also incorporated postcards of the *Mona Lisa* into his artworks, for instance for *Untitled [Mona Lisa]* (1952) from his series of *North African Collages*. In the early 1980s, while working on the *Japanese Clayworks* at the Otsuka Ohmi Ceramic Company factory, Rauschenberg came across reproductions of historical masterpieces from Western art that the company specialised in manufacturing, and these reproductions inspired him to create his *Japanese Recreational Clayworks*. He used 'readymade' recreations of the *Mona Lisa* for several works, overlaying her portrait with motifs from his own photographs and gestural brushstrokes.





3. Robert Rauschenberg, *Lisa Fugue #1*, 1985

The exhibition's title is borrowed from Duchamp's work of the same name. *L.H.O.O.Q.* is a play on words; pronounced in French, the letters sound like 'Elle a chaud au cul', a vulgar expression that implicates a woman's sexuality. The works presented at Thaddaeus Ropac Salzburg – including two objects that he made in the 1950s and issued in bronze editions the following decade – highlight the central role of eroticism and fetishism in the artist's practice. *Objet-Dard* is blatantly phallic, while *Female Fig Leaf* fails to conceal the erogenous zones. This sensual, erotic dimension is indivisible from Duchamp's radical questioning of the very nature of the artwork and the role of the artist.



4. Irving Penn, *Marcel Duchamp (1 of 2)*, New York, 1948

### About the Artist

Marcel Duchamp was born in Normandy in 1887 into a family of artists, which included his two older brothers – the painter Jacques Villon and the Cubist sculptor Raymond Duchamp-Villon – and his younger sister Suzanne Duchamp-Crotti, who was active in the Dada movement. He received academic training at the Académie Julian in 1904–05, and his early paintings reveal the influence of Cubism, as in his *Nude Descending a Staircase (no. 2; 1912)*, which caused a sensation when shown at the New York Armory Show in 1913. However, by the late 1910s he had renounced painting in favour of a more singular and radical approach to art-making.

For most of his life, Duchamp divided his time between France and the USA, living primarily in New York from 1915–23 and then in Paris from 1923–42, before returning to New York. He became a naturalised American citizen in 1955. His first solo exhibition was held at the Arts Club of Chicago in 1937, followed by his first American retrospective at the Pasadena Art Museum in 1963, and his first European survey at the Tate Gallery, London, in 1966. Since his death in 1968, Duchamp's work has been the subject of countless exhibitions and can be found in the permanent collections of the most important museums worldwide. The Philadelphia Museum of Art houses the most extensive holdings of Duchamp's work, due to a generous donation by Louise and Walter Arensberg, who were his lifelong friends and patrons.

# Thaddaeus Ropac

London Paris Salzburg Seoul

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**1. Marcel Duchamp, *L.H.O.O.Q.*, 1964.** Pencil and white gouache over a colour reproduction of the Mona Lisa, moustache and goatee added in pencil. 30.1 x 23 cm (11.85 x 9.06 in), Ed. 25 of 35. © Succession Marcel Duchamp / Bildrecht, Wien 2022. Photo: Charles Duprat. **2. Marcel Duchamp, *L.H.O.O.Q.* (detail), 1964.** Pencil and white gouache over a colour reproduction of the Mona Lisa, moustache and goatee added in pencil. 30.1 x 23 cm (11.85 x 9.06 in), Ed. 25 of 35. © Succession Marcel Duchamp / Bildrecht, Wien 2022. Photo: Charles Duprat. **3. Robert Rauschenberg, *Lisa Fugue #1*, 1985.** Transfer and glaze on high-fired Japanese art ceramic. 81.8 x 55 x 2 cm (32 1/4 x 21 5/8 x 3/4 in) © The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation / ARS, New York 2022. Photo: Ron Amstutz. **4. Irving Penn, *Marcel Duchamp (1 of 2), New York*, 1948.** Gelatin silver print, print made 1984. 24.4 x 19.4 cm (9,625 x 7,625 in). © The Irving Penn Foundation.  
All images Courtesy Thaddaeus Ropac gallery, London · Paris · Salzburg · Seoul.