



**A Postcard.**

**A Pencil.**

**A Masterpiece.**

**L.H.O.O.Q. (1919)**

**A stark introduction to the object:**

A cheap chromolithograph bought on the rue de Rivoli, modified with pencil and white gouache by Marcel Duchamp. It is a combination readymade and iconoclastic Dadaism.

*"The young artist of tomorrow will pass through the looking glass of the retina to reach deeper mines of expression."*

**Marcel Duchamp**



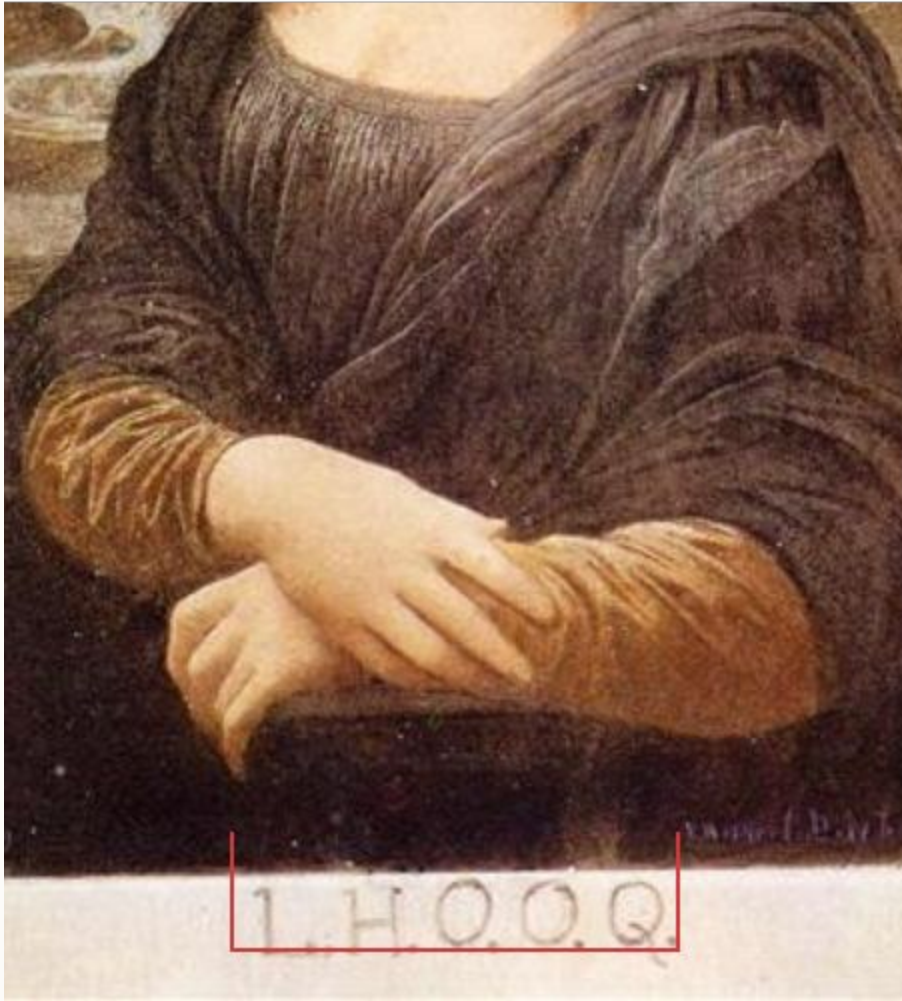
# L.H.O.O.Q.

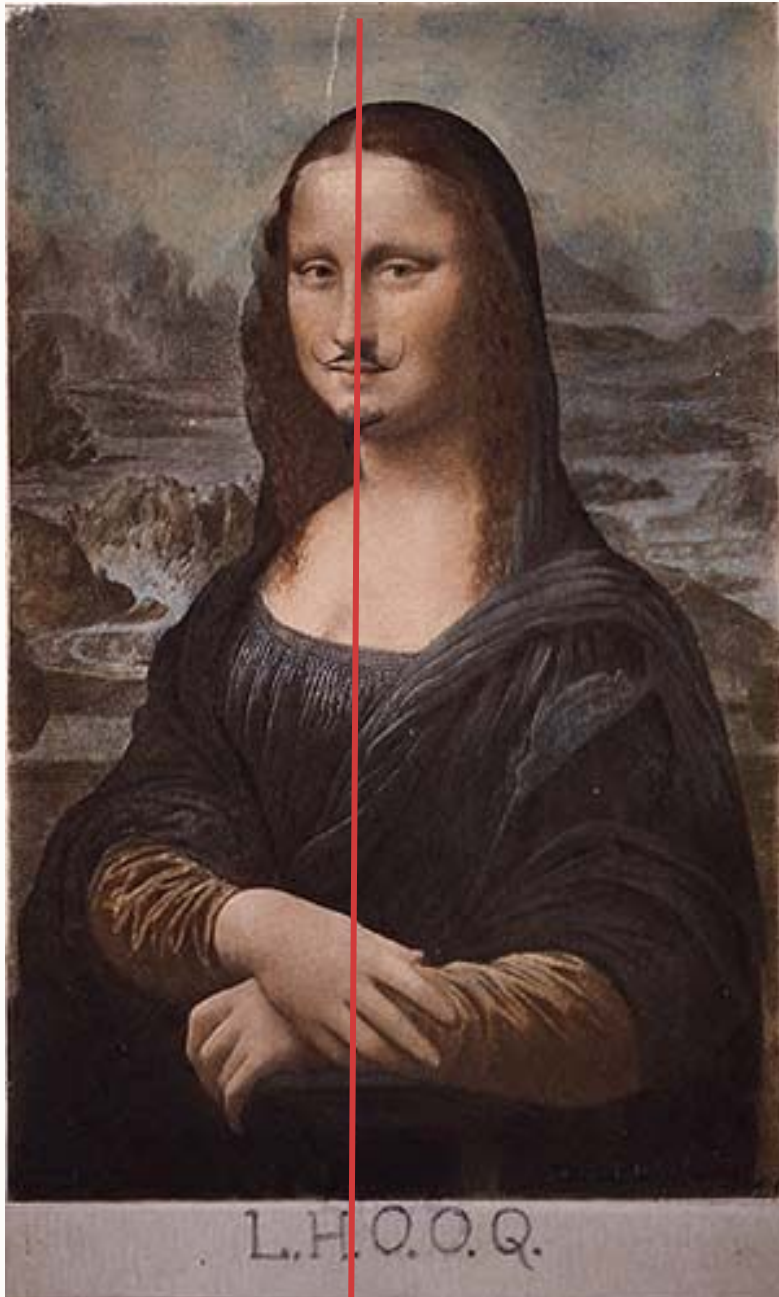
## The Phonetic Code

1. The Letters:**L.H.O.O.Q.**
2. The Phonetic:**Elle a chaud au cul**
3. The Translation:**She has a hot arse.**

While the image mocks the 'Cult of Respect' surrounding the Louvre's prize, the text provides the punchline.

Duchamp later offered a looser translation: "There is a fire down below."





# A Real Man

Duchamp insisted this was not a woman in disguise. "The curious thing about that moustache and goatee is that when you look at the Mona Lisa, it becomes a man. It is not a woman disguised as a man; it is a real man, and that was my discovery."

## Forensic Detail:

**The Geometry:** A vertical line drawn from the top of the work through the center of the mustache passes exactly along the nose and lands "down below" between the letters L.H. and O.O.Q.

**The Composite:** Duchamp noted the result was a "composite portrait," resembling himself and the boxer Georges Carpentier.

# 1911

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## **The Theft that created the icon.**

## **The Cult of Respect**

Duchamp chose his target carefully. The 1911 robbery of the Mona Lisa from the Louvre had elevated the painting to unprecedented fame. 1919 marked the 400th anniversary of Da Vinci's death.

**The Constraint:** The number 400 acted as a constraint for the title: 4 letters (L, H, O, Q) and the double zero (O, O).

LHOOQ.

1919

**The 400th Anniversary of Da Vinci.**



# The Case of the Missing Goatee

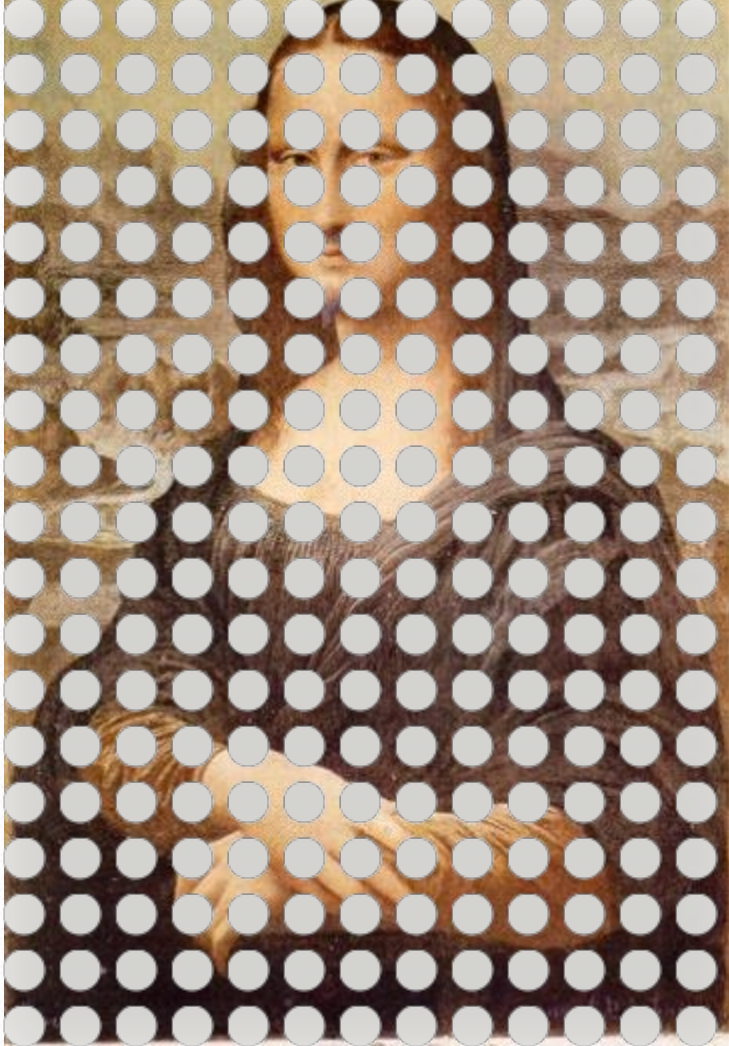
When Francis Picabia wanted to publish the work in his magazine 391 (March 1920), the original hadn't arrived from New York. Picabia drew the mustache on a reproduction himself but forgot the goatee. Duchamp later corrected this "Picabia version" in 1942, highlighting that while the concept of the Readymade was transferable, the specific visual details remained crucial to his gender-bending discovery.



L.H.O.O.Q.

Barbiche par Marcel Duchamp (Goatee by Marcel Duchamp)

# Authenticating the Fake



## Clause 1: The Object:

A "cheap chromo" (chromolithograph) purchased on the rue de Rivoli. Technically not a postcard, as it lacked the address back.

## Clause 2: The Certification:

In 1944, Duchamp hired a notary to certify the work as an "original".

## Clause 3: The Notary:

Elsie Jenriche.

The Code: Her name is a metatextual pun. A mix of "Else" (She/Elle) and "Jenre" (Genre/Gender).

## Clause 4: The Irony:

An official legal certification of originality for a defaced, mass-produced copy.



# Redacted: Artist's Identity

## Autonomous Art

By applying white gouache to hide the artist's name and institution in later versions, and by applying his specific "graffiti," Duchamp destroyed the painting's original identity.

**Conclusion:** L.H.O.O.Q. is not merely a defaced Da Vinci. It is a declaration of independence from artistic tradition—a manifesto where a "cheap chromo" becomes a vessel for complex gender theory and iconoclastic wit.