

Waddington Galleries

PRESS RELEASE

Peter Blake

1-10 (Collages, Constructions, Drawings & Sculpture) & the Marcel Duchamp Paintings

19 October – 12 November 2005



Marcel Duchamp's World Tour: Playing Chess with Tracey 2003-2005

"I am a tree, so to speak. The trunk is straight and fairly traditional. Where my art has left to go on different excursions there are branches like Pop Art, wood engraving, and Ruralism. They all may look unlike but they come off the same stem. What I am working at now is in direct line with what preoccupied me years ago; the same fantasies."

Peter Blake

Peter Blake, one of the leading figures of British Pop Art, exhibits work from two series '1-10' and 'Marcel Duchamp's World Tour' in his forthcoming exhibition at Waddington Galleries.

'1-10' emphasizes "the fact that I don't always work in one style." Blake explores various techniques from drawing, collage and assemblage, to sculpture and painting using diverse materials from paper, wood and stone, to found objects, pencil, and bronze. The amount of works incorporated in each group increase according to their number. In No.1, 'Museum of the Colour White 1', small objects are assembled on one board into a careful and studied meditation on the colour white. No. 8 consists of eight small panels of collections of wood, stone, paper and found objects; each a small memento of family holidays, moments with friends, walks on the beach. No. 10 consists of ten equally sized frames, each assemblages of collected and found objects made up of personal souvenirs and tokens of popular culture.

Peter Blake is a fan; from movie stars and pop icons such as Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley to influential artists such as Joseph Cornell and Kurt Schwitters. In No.2 two collage-paintings display images of Marilyn Monroe mounted above symmetrical fields of bright solid colours; thus combining the intimacy of fan memorabilia with the impact of public signs. In No. 3 and No. 6 Blake pays homage to those artists that he admires. In works such as these "He surrendered his personal style in order to enter the mindsets of his idols Kurt Schwitters, Joseph Cornell and Max Ernst, amongst others. He selected subjects they would have chosen, and carried out an extensive performance to bring them to fruition."(Nathalie Rudd)

A fully illustrated catalogue with a text by Lewis Biggs will accompany this exhibition.
For further information and images, please contact Louise Kybert.

Waddington Galleries, 11 Cork Street, London, W1S 3LT
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'Marcel Duchamp's World Tour' is based on Blake's belief that wherever Marcel Duchamp stopped in the art world he had a strong effect on it. Each painting follows a fantasy journey in which Marcel Duchamp travels through unidentified places meeting other artists (e.g. Damien Hirst, Pablo Picasso, Edward Hopper) and popular idols (Tarzan, Elvis, The Spice Girls). As he tours the world in his rock 'n' roll bus, fantasy situations play out around him. In 'The Artist's Fancy Dress Ball', Blake borrows well known images from high art painted with naturalistic brilliance: Picasso, dressed as Touchstone from Shakespeare's 'As you Like it' taken from Johan Zoffany's late 18th Century portrait of Thomas King leads the party, joined by Edward Hopper and Marcel Duchamp dressed as figures from Picasso's 'Family of Saltimbanques' with Damien Hirst as Watteau's 'Pierrot'. In 'Playing Chess with Tracey' (2003-2005), Duchamp plays chess with Tracey Emin in the desert surroundings of her video self-portrait, 'Sometimes...' (2000), while three enigmatic cowboys wait by the bus.

Born in 1932 in Dartford, Kent, Sir Peter Blake studied at Gravesend School of Art before being accepted into the Royal Academy of Art, London. He graduated in 1956, having completed his National Service, and received the Leverhulme Research Award to study popular art whilst travelling to Holland, Belgium, France, Italy and Spain. Following this, Blake taught for a number of years in various London art schools, including St. Martins and the RCA, all the while working and exhibiting. Blake's first one-man exhibition was held in 1962 at the Portal Gallery; subsequently solo shows followed at the Robert Fraser Gallery in 1965 and at Leslie Waddington Prints in 1969. Since the early '70s, his work has been exhibited regularly in one-man shows throughout the world, including the Nishimura Gallery, Tokyo in 1988 and the Govinda Gallery, Washington D.C. 1992. His first Retrospective exhibition was held as early as 1969 at the City Art Gallery, Bristol. Subsequent Retrospectives were held in 1973 at the the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, touring to Hamburg and Brussels and at the Tate Gallery in 1983. In 1994 he was made the Third Associate Artist of the National Gallery, London. Blake's work has been included in numerous key group exhibitions on an annual basis since 1954. He was elected a member of the Royal Academy in 1981, and was knighted in 2002. His works are held in many public collections including that of the Arts Council England, Museum Moderner Kunst (Vienna), Tate Gallery (London), Museum of Modern Art (New York), and the Thyssen-Bornemisza.

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