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	Tomkins	II.B.4

The "Gap"
"I don't think any artist sets out to make art. You're just doing something, doing what no one can stop you from doing. You also can't make life. So there's something in between there. If you try to separate the two, art can be very self-conscious. But life doesn't really need it, after all."

The Quilt, for Bed
Had been using it to cover the hood of his car inx winter, to keep the engine from freezing. When he came to NY he lost the car, so didn't need the quilt any more.

Reporter?
"I'm looking for information, for something I can pick up with my hands -- that's where my thoughts are.

(all from Diamonstein view)

of aluminum, ~~xxx~~ I've used it in paintings, but they thought it was terrible."

R. supported himself with this kind of work until his pictures began selling. Living on Front Street by then.

to make them feel restless." (may be an important point here). R. feels that a picture should not be able to be read too easily."

(Note: One of the ways R. used to get the nondescript, unprogrammed color he wanted in the paintings that culminated in Rebus was to buy, on sale at hardware stores, cans of paint whose labels had come off, so that there was no way of knowing what color they were until opened.)

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Tiffanys, etc.

Back in the early fifties, everybody had told R. that he ought to "do something" with his blueprints -- i.e. something commercial. He did get one ~~jnk~~ window decorating job at Bonwits, using the blueprint technique, but never considered that there was anything more to be done along those lines. Shortly before the Egan show, though, and for several years afterward, R. and Jasper did a good deal of commercial work and supported themselves on it. They worked mainly through Gene Moore, art director for Tiffany's and also for Bonwit Teller's.

"The only thing that made the work bearable was to do something we found interesting. But it was ideal, because we could do a job and then quit -- be free for the next few months without having to do anything. We'd get $500 a crack, and that would be plenty." (See also Cage intvw)

They specialized in highly realistic props, for windows and later for ~~xxxxx~~ commercial photographers to work with: Trees, stumps, rocks. For a Tiffany window, R. made meticulously realistic potatoes and set them in dirt, along with diamonds -- dirt, potatoes, and diamonds. Also, highly realistic Old Master still lifes in three dimensions, using plaster to make fruit, etc. This sort of realism was fascinating for them.

"Our best job was for Abbott Laboratories Medical Journal. We did a Christmas cover for the magazine, and the photographer won an advertising design prize for it -- all he did was take the picture. We set out about 700 candles on an inclined plane, and managed to get them all lit at the same time."

Also had a contract for Reynolds Aluminum showroom in NY, doing windows. Made "plants" out of aluminum funnels, sheets, etc. Had to withdraw from this highly lucrative contract, though, "because the Reynolds people were obsessed with the idea that aluminum was such an awful color. They always wanted us to paint it or disguise it somehow. I love the color of aluminum, ~~xxx~~ I've used it in paintings, but they thought it was terrible."

R. supported himself with this kind of work until his pictures began selling. Living on Front Street by then.

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Notebooks: R. keeps sketch boo[illegible]ionally jots things down on trains or in hotel rooms, but [illegible]ct of jotting probably makes the idea unusable. He showed m[illegible] Two large glass bottles bolted together ("very Dada"); two pan[illegible] a space between, one having a mirror at the top and painting below, the other with painting at top and mirror below -- the viewer sees his legs in one picture, his torso and head in other.

MMA Sixteen Americans (1959-60) - Satellite, Double Feature, Summer Storm, Cuffes, Magician, (Water.)

This was the first real official recognition, and it gave R. a big boost. But still no one was buying his stuff. MMA wanted to buy Magician (no sale)

Also represented: J Johns, Ellsworth Kelly, Alfred Leslie, Robt. Mallary, Louise Nevelson, R. Stankiewicz, Frank Stella, Jack Youngerman, e.a.

Spoleto Incident - 1958

R. and eleven other young American painters were selected to be shown in the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, 1958. The authority for the selection was Alfred Frankfurter of Art News, who gave job of organizing to Irving Sandler, then associate ed of ArtNews (now of NYPost). R. sent Bed and ? . The Italian authorities were so outraged by these two that they barred the entire U.S. entry. Italisn painters made pilgrimmages to see the banned Rauschenbergs. Emily Genauer wrote a diatribe agaibst R., later printed a partial retraction. There was a big flap over the censorship issue, and R. had a call from Mike Wallace (who scares him), but R. himself learned about it only from the papers.

Other Americans included Johns, Chamberlain, Manuel Escobar - Also other groups incl. Goodnough, Hartigan, Elaine de K, Al Leslie, Joan Mitchell, Resnick, Rivers, etc. (see Hess intv.)

[illegible] work with.

[illegible] a painting should not make [illegible]ed or uplifted. "It ought [illegible] important point here). R. feels that a picture should not be able to be read too easily."

(Note: One of the ways R. used to get the nondescript, unprogrammed color he wanted in the paintings that culminated in Rebus was to buy, on sale at hardware stores, cans of paint whose labels had come off, so that there was no way of knowing what color they were until opened.)

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Defacings - a constant problem with R., whose work evokes hostility. Rebus has been repainted twice, as a result of assaults with the new museum menace, the ballpoint pen (Fuck You, etc). Coca Cola Plan had an eye drawn in one of the squares, also with b.p. pen. The goat was sat on. Black Market "has been treated abominably" -- made for the Motion Show (as sort of protest against machine motion), it served as handy vehicle for people to write(in the Logs) violent and obscene comments on the show, on R., and on the U.S.

At the same time, R. feels that a certain amount of resistance to his work is necessary, for him to know where he is. "Too much acceptance is just -- empty." Agrees that this is a difficult time for the artist, for this reason. Confusion. When there's definite resistance, "you can track it back to its source, and see where you are."

then, was living on about .15 ¢ a day, scavenging green bananas from the wharfs and getting one meal a day at Nedicks (frankfurter and a drink).

The Bed came in this period, too. R. woke up one morning, wanting to paint, but with nothing to paint on. He looked at the quilt on his bed. The quilt had come up from Black Mountain with him, had been used for a while to cover the engine of the old car he had, but the Fulton Street loft was so cold he needed it for sleeping. Now it was summer and he didn't need it any more. The colors and the pattern interested him. He made a stretcher for it. He tried painting on the surface, but something was wrong -- the pattern was too strong. He added his pillow, and this solved matters -- the quilt gave up and became a bed, stopped insisting on itself. Also, the pillow provided a nice area of white to work with.

Thinking about The Bed, R. said he felt a painting should not make someone looking at it feel relaxed or uplifted. "It ought to make them feel restless." (May be an important point here). R. feels that a picture should not be able to be read too easily."

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Post-Red

Charlene the last of the red paintings (the sections were done independently, put together later; they worked, too). After that, color went out of his work again.

R. had begun to notice that, although we are constantly surrounded by color, we don't really notice it as color unless we make a point of doing so. Don't see the color of someone's eyes. In a room full of people, someone may be wearing green shoes, or a red sweater, but we tend to see just a general blur in which no tone is insistent. R. set out to make paintings that would have this effect (i.e., more lifelike). Yellow the first color to come in after red, then others - funny papers as undercoating suggested other tones.

The important picture of this period was Rebus, in which he felt he had succeeded in doing just that. Rebus is "lean, not rich in color." It is also very "rough" (R.'s word for his paintings that some people find ugly). The title is apt -- a picture word; a kind of statement, that seems as though it can be read from left to right. R. owns Rebus, and until recently no one has shown much interest in it (now Henry Geldzahler wants it for the Met). Having painted it, though, R. didn't have to do any more -- the problem was solved. He was free to use color again. Rebus + Satellite were last ones painted at Fulton Street.

Rebus was painted on eight cheap drop cloths ($2. worth), later transferred to good canvas. He simply had no money for materials then, was living on about .15 ¢ a day, scavenging green bananas from the wharfs and getting one meal a day at Nedicks (frankfurter and a drink).

The Bed came in this period, too. R. woke up one morning, wanting to paint, but with nothing to paint on. He looked at the quilt on his bed. The quilt had come up from Black Mountain with him, had been used for a while to cover the engine of the old car he had, but the Fulton Street loft was so cold he needed it for sleeping. Now it was summer and he didn't need it any more. The colors and the pattern interested him. He made a stretcher for it. He tried painting on the surface, but something was wrong -- the pattern was too strong. He added his pillow, and this solved matters -- the quilt gave up and became a bed, stopped insisting on itself. Also, the pillow provided a nice area of white to work with.

Thinking about The Bed, R. said he felt a painting should not make someone looking at it feel relaxed or uplifted. "It ought to make them feel restless." (May be an important point here). R. feels that a picture should not be able to be read too easily."

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Post-1955 Work

After the general-color paintings that culminated in Rebus, R. began incorporating larger and larger objects into his work. No theory here, it just happened. He liked the idea of having another surface to work with, and the fact of a picture coming out into the room -- another dimension. Had been bringing back great quantities of stuff from the neach at Staten Island during summers.

In the window of a taxidermist shop on 6th Ave in the Village, R. saw a stuffed Plymouth Rock chicken that took his eye. "I didn't know what anybody used that kind of thing for -- I know now they get rented out to photographers as props and all that. Anyway, I went in and bought it." (Untitled Combine) Later, the same shop owner told R. he was getting him another chicken; R. was horrified, told him not to, but then walking past shop one day he saw white chicken inside. Quandary -- he hadn't wanted someone to kill a bird for him, but now that it had been done, it would be for nothing if he didn't use it. So he bought that too. Meanwhile, a friend had sent him a stuffed pheasant, minus tailfeathers, which he used atop Satellite. And he himself acquired, from ~~someone's~~ an old senator's estate, the great stuffed eagle that he tried unsuccessfully for years to get into a picture, and finally succeeded in doing with Canyon. Odalisk.
"I just liked working with these things as objects."

(Problem with people who send him things, like pheasant, is that they send objects ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ selected as being interesting. R. doesn't often use such objects. The main exception of the goat, his most exotic object, but partially neutralized by tire).

Secndd Stable Annual

R. was unhappy over selection policy. Despote his efforts, Sue Weil had not been reinvited to exhibit, and Jasper had not been asked. So R. incorporated works by both of them in a combine of his -- a flag painting of Johns, an oil of football players by Sue. This turned into a nasty situation later, when Johns and R. split up; question of value of Johns flag , ownership etc. R. considered giving back the two other works and destroying his own, but was talked out of this by Ileana. Picture is now in Santini Warehouse, untitled, waiting for time to cool things off. (Aftermath: Johns' stolen, see Leo Castelli note in Smithsonian cat.)

Work with ~~xxix~~ Paul Taylor -- see insert ff.

Work with Merce -- see inmus with Cunningham, Cage.

Musicians his only patrons for years. Earle and Carolyn Brown bought one work from Eleanor Ward gallery for $13.20, refund from telephone company. David Tudor bought another for a pittance, has clung on to it through lean years. Ileana was his first serious collector, but didn't start until .

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MONOGRAM - (1955-59)

First seen in window of secondhand office furniture store on 7th Ave. Man didn't want sell at first. Had bought it at railroad auction, right museum. Did sell, for $35. (R. paid $15 on acct, still owes $20.)

"I'd never used an object as large as that — a painting." Problem was how to incorporate it so it would look like it belonged there. First version had goat on shelf in painting, flat, with light bulbs under — no good, only one side showing. Then tried it with ~~chain~~ rear end to painting, but looked like he was pulling it. Tire added at this point — "something as familiar and unavoidable as the goat." Third version was such a simple & obvious solution R amazed it didn't strike him earlier: an environment, a place for him to be.

When R got goat, his fleece was covered with dirt and his face was bashed in. R. shampooed fleece with dog shampoo, fixed up face himself. But face was still badly discolored, looked wrong. So R. painted it. "So many people ask me why I put all that awful paint on his face — it's what bothers people most. But I know exactly why I did it, you see."

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CHRONOLOGY

Italicized comments are by Robert Rauschenberg.

The chronology includes major one-man exhibitions through 1976 and important group exhibitions in which Rauschenberg participated through 1959. A separate list of selected group exhibitions from 1960 through 1976 follows the chronology.

Rauschenberg's dances and performances, briefly mentioned in the chronology, are described in more detail in the last section of the Catalogue of Works.

1925

Born October 22. (Christened ERNEST Milton, Rauschenberg adopted the name "Bob" while at the Kansas City Art Institute in the late 1940s and subsequently became known as "Robert.") Grew up in Port Arthur, Texas, an oil refinery town on Gulf of Mexico near Louisiana border. Was first child and only son of Ernest and Dora Rauschenberg; parents were of Dutch, Swedish, German, and Cherokee stock. Father employed by Gulf States Utilities, a local light and power company. Entire family active in Church of Christ. One sister, Janet, born in 1936. *At the age of sixteen, Janet was celebrated as Louisiana Yam Queen.*

Attended public schools in Port Arthur.

1942

Graduated from Jefferson High School. *I excelled in poor grades.* Planned to study pharmacy and enrolled in fall at University of Texas. *I was expelled within six months for not dissecting a frog in anatomy class.*

He was at UTexas for 1 semester (Fall) which would put all this in 1943

Drafted into United States Navy and received basic training at boot camp in Farragut, Idaho; was voted honor man.

Transferred to Navy Hospital Corps in San Diego, California, and was trained as neuropsychiatric technician. During free time, hitchhiked up and down West Coast. Was stationed for two and a half years at various hospitals in California. *This is where I learned how little difference there is between sanity and insanity and realized that a combination is essential.*

While stationed in San Diego, stumbled onto Henry E. Huntington Library and gardens in San Marino near Pasadena and there saw original paintings for first time. These included Thomas Gainsborough's *The Blue Boy,* 1770, Joshua Reynold's *Sarah Siddons as the Tragic Muse,* 1784, and Thomas Lawrence's "Pinkie," 1795, a portrait of Sarah Moulton-Barett. *This was my first encounter with art as art.*

Made a weekend visit - went to see the gardens - planned trip - art experience was unexpected

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1945

Discharged from Navy and returned to Port Arthur to find that his family had earlier moved to Lafayette, Louisiana.

1946

Returned to California and sought work in Los Angeles. While there met Pat Pearman, who suggested that he study art under G.I. Bill of Rights, at Kansas City Art Institute.

1947

Enrolled at Kansas City Art Institute in February and remained through February 1948. Studies included art history, design and composition, sculpture, music appreciation, anatomy, pictorial design, and fashion design. Worked at many odd jobs while attending school, including preparing window displays and fabricating movie sets and photographers' props. Saved money to study in Paris. *I was certain that one had to study in Paris if one were an artist. I think I was at least fifteen years too late.*

1948

Sailed from New York to Paris early in year and enrolled in Académie Julian. There became friends with fellow student Susan Weil, who was later to become his wife. *We each agreed that the other was the worst artist in the class.* While frequenting museums and galleries in Paris, saw his first paintings by such artists as Picasso and Matisse.

Deeply impressed by article in August issue of *Time* about disciplined approach to art of painter Josef Albers. Decided to return to United States in fall to attend Black Mountain College in North Carolina, where Albers taught. *I realized that energy and feelings alone could not get me past that dead end of material indulgence.*

1949

Attended Black Mountain College through spring semester, studying with Albers and his wife, Anni. Came in contact with members of department of music and dance, including choreographer Merce Cunningham, composer John Cage, pianist David Tudor, and composer Lou Harrison. *This was Albers' last year of teaching at Black Mountain and was reported to be his best by older students.* Left North Carolina with Susan Weil in fall and settled in New York on East Eighty-seventh Street. *It seemed important to be exposed to New York City activity after the rural isolation.* Through 1952 attended Art Students League, where he studied first under Morris Kantor and then under Vaclav Vytlacil, and also visited Black Mountain College at intervals during those same years.

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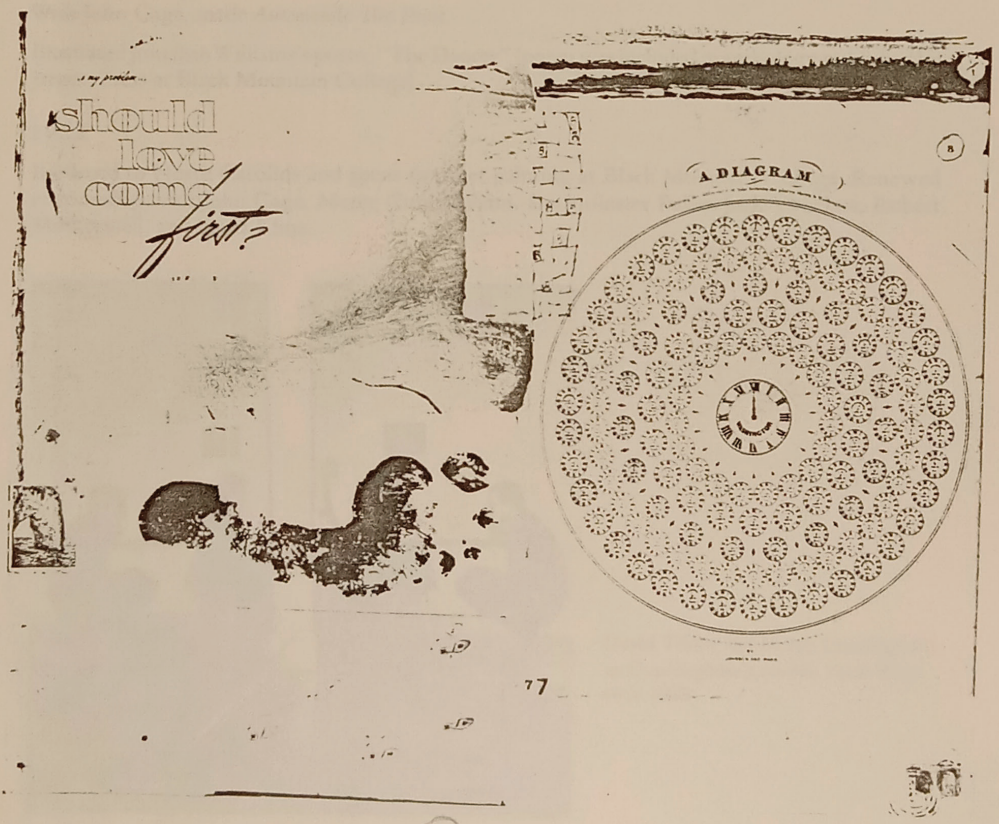
1950

Married Susan Weil in spring and spent summer with her family at their home on Outer Island, Connecticut.

Returned to New York and took apartment in West Nineties.

Did freelance work, designing window displays for Bonwit Teller and Tiffany department stores. Used photographic blueprints for works such as *Female Figure*, circa 1949. *Sue and I were experimenting with the photographic blueprint process, partially because of the economy. This period was exciting and prolific even if quality was erratic. We were both doing a minimum of five works a day. Clyfford Still came to the house to select a show with Betty Parsons. I was so naïve and excited that by the time of the opening several months later, the selected show had been painted over dozens of times and was a completely different concept. Betty was surprised.*

PROBABLY 1950
1951 probably
— MAY



Robert Rauschenberg, *Should Love Come First?*, 1950–51, oil on canvas with collage, approximately 30 x 36 inches (destroyed).

ptg is 1951 as stated above — all ptgs reptd.

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1951

Participated in "Artists Annual" exhibition at Ninth Street Gallery, New York, showing two "White Paintings."

all the 9th St. Shows are confusing - BOBIS TDD

Robert and Susan Rauschenberg's "Blueprints" featured in three-page article, "Speaking of Pictures," *Life,* April 9, pp. 22–24. *Sue and I then contacted our friend Alexander Liberman and Alexis Brodavich, hoping to get some work after our quick notoriety. Lots of provocative promises, no jobs.*

First one-man exhibition of seventeen paintings held May 14–June 2 at Betty Parsons Gallery, New York. Included were *22 The Lily White,* circa 1950; *Crucifixion and Reflection,* 1951; *Mother of God,* circa 1951; *Stone, Stone, Stone,* 1950; and *Should Love Come First,* circa 1950–51. After exhibition, some of these paintings were stored at Weil summer home on Outer Island and were later destroyed by a fire there.

OR even 1951

Susan and Robert Rauschenberg's son, Christopher, born July 16. Spent early part of fall at Black Mountain College.

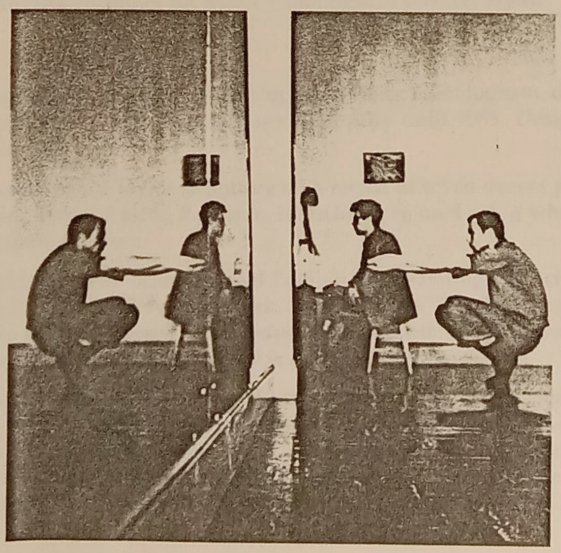
With John Cage, made *Automobile Tire Print.*

Illustrated Jonathan Williams's poem, "The Dancer" (poem was included in anthology published by Jargon Press at Black Mountain College).

1952

Returned to North Carolina and spent summer painting at Black Mountain College. Renewed relationship with John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Buckminster Fuller, Jack Tworkov, Robert Motherwell, and Franz Kline.

at BMC



David Tudor and Merce Cunningham in Cunningham's studio, New York, circa 1952.

Fulton Street studio, circa 1953.

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While at Black Mountain, participated in *Theater Piece #1* by John Cage. Descriptions of this event vary. Rauschenberg recalls that Merce Cunningham improvised a dance around and through the audience, John Cage read a lecture on Meister Eckhart, M. C. Richards recited from a ladder, David Tudor played the piano, and he himself projected slides of his paintings onto a screen while playing old records on a handwound Victrola.

Went to Europe in fall with Cy Twombly and traveled with Twombly in Italy, France, and Spain. Continued alone to North Africa and worked in Casablanca, Morocco, for Atlas Construction Company.

1953

Became ill and in February left North Africa for Italy.

Was given two exhibitions in Italy of small objects, called *Scatole contemplative e feticci personali* made in North Africa. First exhibition opened March 3 at Galleria dell'Obelisco in Rome; second opened March 14 at Galleria d'Arte Contemporanea in Florence. Upon advice of local critic, threw most of works exhibited into Arno River. *It saved the packing problem.*

Returned to New York in spring, and moved into studio on Fulton Street. Began "red" paintings.

Concurrent exhibitions of works by Rauschenberg and Cy Twombly held September 15–October 3 at Stable Gallery, New York. Rauschenberg exhibited "White Paintings" and "Black Paintings," as well as rock and wood sculpture.

Participated in "Second Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture," which opened January 11 at Stable Gallery, New York; show was a continuation of earlier Ninth Street Gallery exhibitions.

Designed costumes for Merce Cunningham's dance, *Septet.*

1954

Began long working relationship with Merce Cunningham, designing sets and costumes for the Merce Cunningham and Dance Company until 1965. Designed set for Cunningham dance, *Minutiae.*

Assisted Paul Taylor in putting on a recital of seven dances presented at Hunter College, New York. For one piece, *Resistance,* Rauschenberg used a dog whose function was to cue beginning and end of dance.

Participated in "Third Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture" held January 27–February 20 at Stable Gallery, New York. Exhibited one "Black Painting" and one "grass painting." *The grass painting was earth, seeded and watered into growth. Only one example of this work was kept and cared for until it was exhausted by the cold in the Fulton Street studio.*

Work brought by artist Jack Tworkov to attention of Charles Egan, an art dealer in New York. One-man exhibition of "red" paintings held December 1954–January 1955 at Egan Gallery; two were purchased by John Blair Lynn Goodwin, half-brother of sculptor David Hare. Rauschenberg arranged for concert by composer Morton Feldman to be held in Egan Gallery on Christmas Day. Event has since become known as "Morton Feldman Concert with Paintings."

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1955

Moved in January from Fulton Street to new studio on Pearl Street in lower New York. Artist Jasper Johns had studio in same building and became a close friend. With Johns, attempted to support work by preparing window displays for Tiffany and Bonwit Teller department stores. With Emile de Antonio as agent, both artists realized other freelance possibilities.

Exhibited in "Fourth Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture," held April 26–May 21 at Stable Gallery, New York. Works shown included his *Short Circuit,* which contains a painting by Susan Weil, a collage by Ray Johnson, and a flag painting by Jasper Johns. ORIGINAL STOLEN. COPY BY S. STURDEVANT

Designed costumes for two Paul Taylor dance performances, and for Taylor's dance, *Circus Polka.*

1956

Designed sets and costumes for a Cunningham production, *Nocturnes.*

Designed costumes for Paul Taylor dances, *3 Epitaphs, 4 Epitaphs,* and *Untitled Duet,* and provided taped score and costumes for *The Least Flycatcher,* performed by the Paul Taylor Dance Company at Henry Street Settlement Playhouse.

Participated in "Fifth Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture," held May 22–June 16 at Stable Gallery, New York.

1957

Continued collaboration with Paul Taylor and Merce Cunningham. Constructed set for *The Tower* (costumes by Jasper Johns) and provided sets and costumes for *Seven New Dances* for Taylor's dance company. Both productions were presented at the Kaufman Concert Hall of the YM–YWHA at Ninety-second Street, New York.

Participated in "Artists of the New York School: Second Generation" exhibition held March 10–April 28 at The Jewish Museum, New York.

1958

Moved from Pearl Street to new studio on Front Street, near Wall Street.

Exhibited for first time at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, in one-man exhibition held March 3–29. Works shown included *Bed*, 1955; *Rebus*, 1955; *Interview*, 1955; *Factum I* and *Factum II*, both 1957; and *Memorandum for Bids*, 1956.

Participated in exhibition, "Collage International, from Picasso to the Present," held February 27 – April 6 at Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston.

With Jasper Johns and Emile de Antonio, organized retrospective concert of music of John Cage, covering previous twenty-five years. Concert, held in May, was financed by ticket sales and contributions of $1,000 each from the three organizers.

Invited to participate in "Festival of Two Worlds" in Spoleto, Italy. Submitted *Bed,* which shocked officials who refused to show it in the main gallery. *Bed* was placed, instead, in storage room of exhibition building. maybe behind a partition?

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Designed sets and decor for two Merce Cunningham productions, *Antic Meet* and *Summerspace*. Designed sets and costumes for Paul Taylor's production, *Rebus*.

In late 1958 or early 1959 began work on series of drawings based on the thirty-four cantos of the "Inferno," from Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy*. Devoted almost two years to completing project, with several months of intensive concentration spent in small fishing village near Saint Petersburg, Florida.

Participated in "The 1958 Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture," held December 5, 1958–February 8, 1959, at Carnegie Institute.

Participated in "Beyond Painting: An Exhibition of Collages and Constructions," held December 29, 1958–January 24, 1959, at The Alan Gallery, New York.

1959

Designed costumes for Merce Cunningham's dance, *Rune*.

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, obtained *Painting with Red Letter S*, 1957, for its collection; reputedly first painting by Rauschenberg to be acquired by an American museum.

One-man exhibition of drawings opened May 30 at Galleria de Tartaruga, Rome.

Participated in following group exhibitions:

"Art and the Found Object," The American Federation of Arts, New York. Traveling exhibition; opened in Time-Life Building, New York, January 12–30.

"Three" (Rauschenberg, Bluhm, and Dubuffet), April, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York

"The Newport Jazz Festival Exhibition," summer, Rhode Island

Documenta II: Kunst nach 1945, July 11–October 11, Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, West Germany

V Bienal de São Paulo, September 21–December 2, Museu de Arts Moderno, Brazil

Première Biennale de Paris: manifestation biennale et internationale des jeunes artists, October 2–25, 1959, Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris

"Out of the Ordinary: The Audience as Subject," November 26–December 27, Contemporary Arts Association of Houston

"School of New York: Some Younger Artists," December 15, 1959–January 9, 1960, Stable Gallery, New York

Exposition International de Surréalisme, December 15, 1959–February 1960, Galerie Daniel Cordier, Paris

"Sixteen Americans," December 16, 1959–February 14, 1960, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

[Selected group exhibitions after 1959 are separately listed in next section.]

1960

Introduced by Nicolas Calas to Marcel Duchamp.

Held one-man exhibition of paintings March 29–April 16 at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York.

Exhibition of drawings for Dante's "Inferno" held April 22–May 30 at Galerie 22, Düsseldorf; and December 6, 1960–January 7, 1961, at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York.

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Rauschenberg in Front Street studio, New York, 1958. Left to right: *Interview,* 1955; *Untitled* (combine), 1955 [final state]; *Bed,* 1955; *Odalisque,* 1955–58 [early state]; foreground: *Monogram* [second state], circa 1956.

Won $3,000 for *Inlet* (combine painting, 1959), in "Society for Contemporary American Art Annual Exhibition XX and 20th Anniversary Exhibit at The Art Institute of Chicago," May 17–June 18.

Moved from Front Street to studio on Broadway, New York, some time between 1960 and 1961.

1961

Became lighting director and stage manager of Merce Cunningham and Dance Company, New York. Until 1965, traveled with company when it toured.

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One-man exhibitions held in April at Galerie Daniel Cordier, Paris; in October at Galleria dell'Ariete, Milan; and November 7–December 5 at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York.

Participated in group exhibition, *Les 41 presentent Iris Clert,* which opened May 15 at Galerie Iris Clert, Paris. Having forgotten to make a promised portrait of the director of the gallery, he sent a telegram that was included in the show. It read: "This is a portrait of Iris Clert if I say so.—Robert Rauschenberg."

Participated in performance arranged by gallery director Dorothea Speyer on June 20 at American Embassy, Paris. Simultaneous events were staged by pianist David Tudor, and artists Niki de Saint-Phalle, Jean Tinguely, Jasper Johns, and Rauschenberg. As his contribution, Rauschenberg created a painting, amplifying sound of its construction with contact microphones attached to canvas.

Participated in symposium held October 19 at The Museum of Modern Art in conjunction with exhibition "Art of Assemblage." Other panelists were Lawrence Alloway, Richard Hulsenberg, Marcel Duchamp, William Seitz (moderator), and Roger Shattuck. *Marcel was writing during the symposium, and I was curious to know what he found so interesting. I questioned him later, and he showed me a sheet of paper with intense doodling. The only recognizable image was an ear. It became one of the most important works in my collection.*

Designed cover for *Art International* 8 (October 20, 1961).

1962

One-man exhibition held March 4–31 at Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles.

Performed in play by poet Kenneth Koch, *Construction of Boston,* which opened May 5 at Maidman Playhouse, New York. Merce Cunningham was director, and cast included Irving Blum, Oyvind Fahlström, Henry Geldzahler, Billy Klüver, Niki de Saint-Phalle, and Jean Tinguely. (In his book *The Bride and the Bachelors,* Calvin Tomkins describes Rauschenberg's contribution, which was to construct "a set resembling a furnished apartment and have two dancers. . . go through the routine of an ordinary day, which included being rained on by an elaborate Rauschenberg rainmaker.")

Commissioned by Tatyana Grosman of Universal Limited Art Editions (U.L.A.E.) to make his first lithograph (color), *Abby's Bird,* for New York Hilton Hotel.

Won Ohara Museum Prize at "Third International Biennial Exhibition of Prints," held at National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.

Designed sets and costumes for Paul Taylor dance, *Tracer,* performed at Theatre Lutèce, Paris.

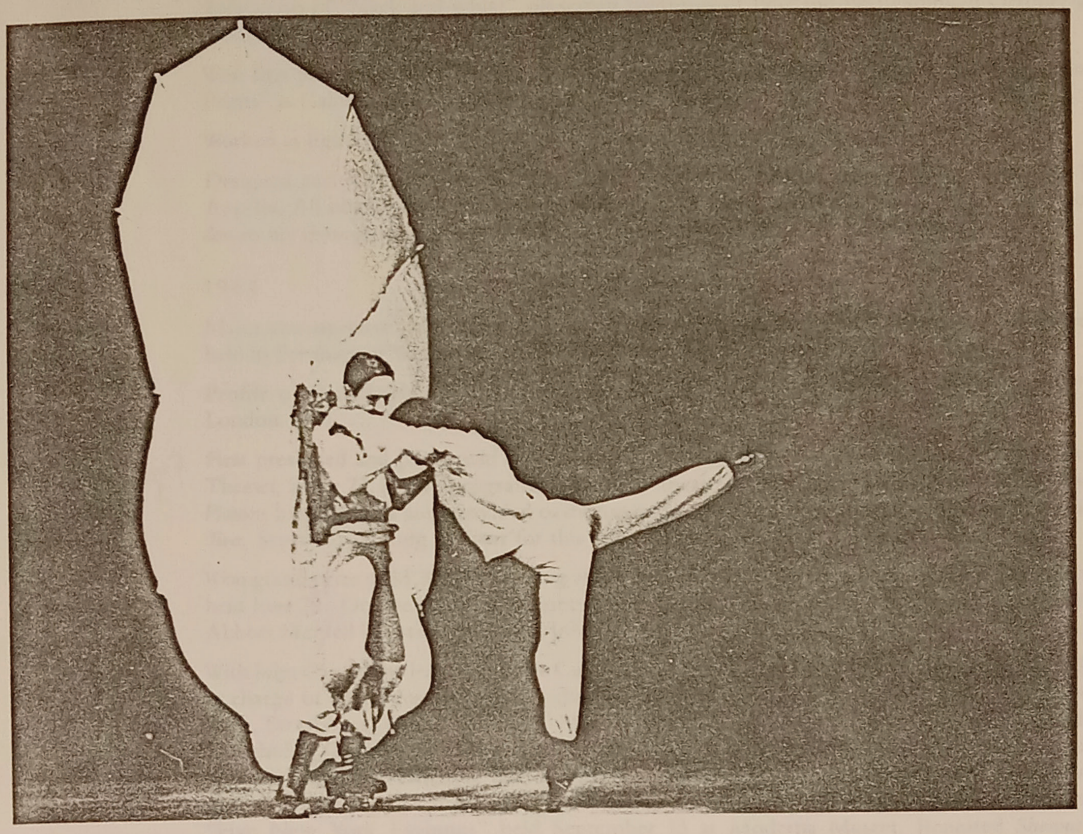
Participated in exhibition, *Dylaby (Dynamische Labyrint),* held in September at Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

1963

Participated in February in exhibition at Allan Stone Gallery, New York, for benefit of Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts. Proceeds from sales of works donated by artists were used to aid avant-garde performers and composers.

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Rauschenberg and Carolyn Brown performing in *Pelican,* Washington, D.C., 1963.

Consecutive exhibitions held in Paris by Galerie Sonnabend: *Première Exposition,* held February 1–16, included works from 1954–62; *Seconde Exposition,* held February 20–March 9, included works from 1962–63.

went 2 times

Invited to Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, as visiting artist during spring semester. While there, held one-man exhibition of paintings, February 3–28.

Major exhibition of works from 1949–63 held March 31–May 12 at The Jewish Museum, New York. Exhibition organized by Alan Solomon, who also wrote essay for catalogue.

Participated in "Pop Festival," organized by Alice Denney of The Washington Gallery of Modern Art, Washington, D.C., April 18–June 2. Gave premiere performance May 9 of *Pelican,* first dance production he choreographed and designed, at roller-skating rink, America on Wheels.

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Exhibition of "black and white" silkscreen paintings of 1962 and 1963 exhibited October 26 – November 21 at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York.

Won first prize with *Accident* (U.L.A.E. lithograph, 1962) in "Fifth International Exhibition of Prints" at Gallery of Modern Art, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia.

Worked as lighting director for Yvonne Rainer's performance of *Terrain*.

Designed costumes and sets for Cunningham dance production, *Story,* first performed in Los Angeles. All objects used in sets were found in local areas where dance was performed. *Neither dancers nor choreographers ever knew what to expect until curtain.*

1964

Major retrospective exhibition, "Robert Rauschenberg, Paintings, Drawings and Combines," held in February at Whitechapel Gallery, London.

Profile of Rauschenberg presented February 2 on BBC television program, "Monitor," in London.

WORDING?

First presented and performed *Shotput* on February 10 and 17 in New York at Surplus Dance Theater, Stage 73, in two programs at "Sur +" theatrical evenings. Also performed in *Colorado Plateau* by Alex Hay and provided costumes and a prop for Deborah Hay's *All Day Dance with Two*. Served as lighting director for this series of programs.

Won grand prize of $3,200 for painting at *XXXII Esposizione Biennale Internationale d'Arte Venezia,* held June 20 – October 18. (Rauschenberg was the third American to win this prize, after James Abbott McNeil Whistler and Mark Tobey.)

With John Cage, traveled with Merce Cunningham and Dance Company to Europe and Asia. Was in charge of decor, costumes, and lighting for dance company. Itinerary (June 3 – December): Paris, Strasbourg, Bourges, Venice, Milan, Vienna, Mannheim, Cologne, Les Baux, London, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Warsaw, Brussels, Leverkusen, Antwerp, Toulon, Baroda, Ahmedabad, Delhi, Calcutta, Tokyo, Honolulu, Seattle, Eugene, and Vancouver. While in Stockholm, gave only performance of *Elgin Tie* and performed *Shotput* during series of events entitled "Five New York Evenings" held September 13 at Moderna Museet. Repeated *Shotput* in November at Sogetsu Art Center, Tokyo.

One-man exhibitions held, at Art Moderna, Turin, in June; and at Galerie Sonnabend, Paris, in May.

Painting *Buffalo II* used for jacket of book entitled *Of Poetry and Power,* edited by Erwin A. Glikes and Paul Schwabe (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1964).

Exhibition of paintings held September 12 – October 18 at Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, West Germany.

Installed silkscreen painting *Skyway* (oil on canvas mounted on masonite, 18 x 16 feet), at New York World's Fair. (*Skyway* is now in the Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi.)

Rauschenberg in Broadway studio, New York, circa 1964.

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Rauschenberg's dog Laika, circa 1964.

1965

Purchased building (former orphanage) on Lafayette Street, New York; finished converting it into a studio about a year later.

Guest of honor at "Purim in Venice Ball" held March 27 at The Jewish Museum, New York, as grand prize winner of Thirty-second Venice Biennial of 1964.

One-man exhibition of drawings held January 8 – April 2 at Amerika Haus, West Berlin.

Won William A. Clark gold medal and prize of $2,000 for *Axle* (1964) at "The 29th Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting," held February 26 – April 18 at Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Performed in "Two Evenings of Modern Dance by Yvonne Rainer," held March 6 and 7 at Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut.

One-man exhibition of drawings opened April 13 at Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles.

Set of prints illustrating Dante's "Inferno" exhibited April 22 – 30 at Sperone Gallery, Turin.

Major retrospective, "Robert Rauschenberg, Paintings 1953–1964," held May 3–June 6 at Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

Helped sponsor series of dance concerts for "First New York Theater Rally," held at television studio on Eighty-first Street and Broadway, New York. First performed his piece *Spring Training* in "Dance Concert II," held May 11 – 13. During "Dance Concert III," held May 24 – 26, he performed *Pelican*. In honor of Theater Rally organizers Steve Paxton and Alan Solomon, collaborated in "Dark Horse Concert," a series of surprise performances held simultaneously with regular program of dance concerts. Upon being asked to submit statement about his role in these events, Rauschenberg wrote: *About Dance or Anything Else: 1965. I am sick of talking about What and Why I am doing. I have always believed that the WORK is the word. Action is seen less clearly through reason. There are no shortcuts to directness.*

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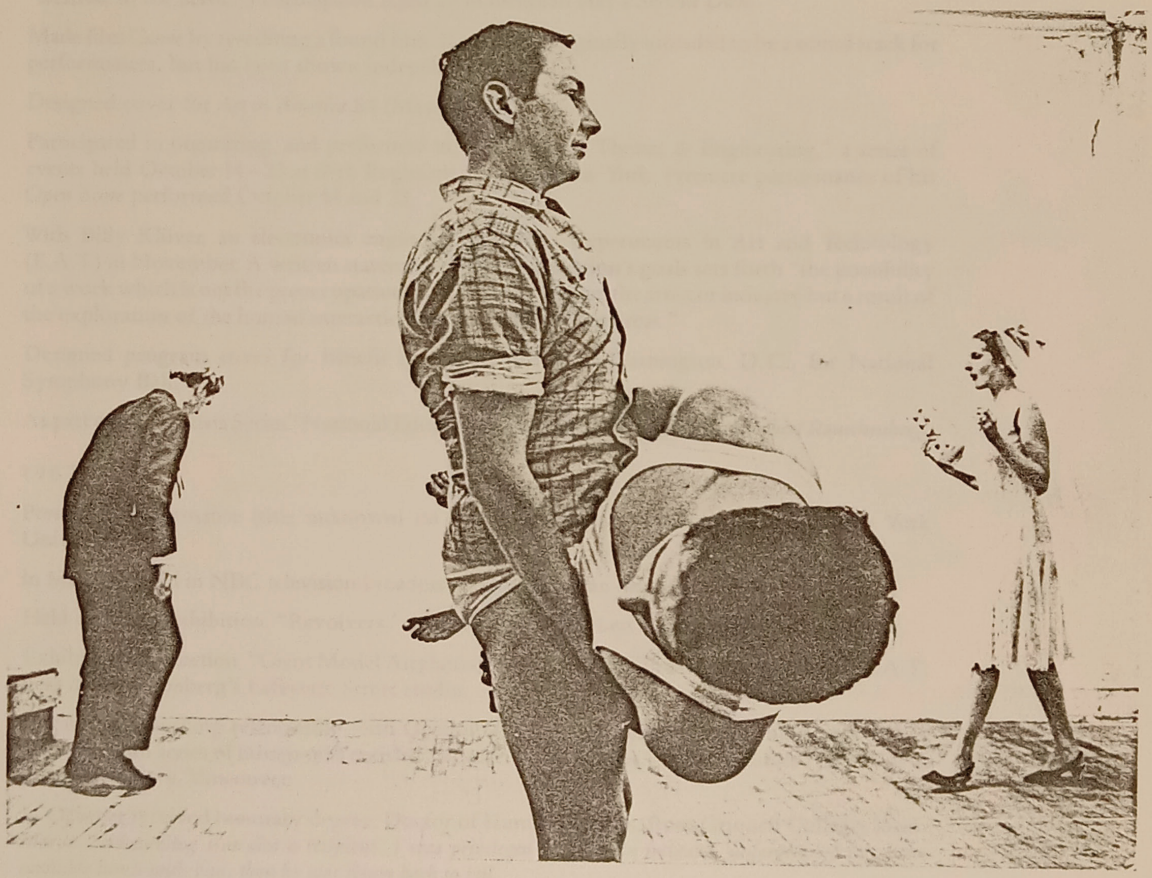
Exhibited *Oracle* May 15–June 19 at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, with Billy Klüver as engineer.

Repeated *Spring Training* on September 18 in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and later in year at Milwaukee Art Center. WITH ONCE GROUP PROGRAM

Performed his *Map Room (I)* in November at Goddard College, Plainfield, Vermont.

Premiere performance of his *Map Room II* presented in New York at "Film-Makers Cinematheque" held December 1–3 and 16–18.

Exhibition of drawings for Dante's "Inferno" held December 21, 1965 – May 6, 1966, at The Museum of Modern Art, then circulated throughout Europe under auspices of International Council of The Museum of Modern Art.



Rehearsal for Rauschenberg's *Spring Training*, 1965. Left to right: Alex Hay, Rauschenberg, Steve Paxton, and Trisha Brown.

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1966

Participated April 13, 20, 22 in "Five Choreographers in Three Dance Concerts," sponsored by Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Performed *Map Room II* (1965) on April 13, and *Pelican* (1963) on April 20 in Rollerdrome, Culver City, just outside Los Angeles. Same place – Inc. Bev. Hills

Participated April 26–May 1 in "Now Festival," organized by Private Arts Foundation, Washington, D.C. and on April 26 gave premiere performance of *Linoleum* at National Roller Skating Rink, same city. (A film version of *Linoleum* was included in a National Educational Television program, "Matisse to the Scene.") Participated April 29 in Deborah Hay's *Serious Duet*.

Made film *Canoe* by re-editing a found film. (*Canoe* was originally intended to be a sound track for performances, but has been shown independently.)

Designed cover for *Art in America* 54 (May–June).

Participated in organizing, and performed in, "9 Evenings: Theatre & Engineering," a series of events held October 14–23 at 69th Regiment Armory, New York. Premiere performance of his *Open Score* performed October 14 and 23.

With Billy Klüver, an electronics engineer, cofounded Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.) in November. A written statement of the organization's goals sets forth "the possibility of a work which is not the preoccupation of either the engineer, the artist or industry but a result of the exploration of the human interaction between these three areas."

Designed program cover for benefit held December 9 in Washington, D.C., for National Symphony Ball.

As part of the "Artists Series" National Educational Television produced film *Robert Rauschenberg*.

1967

Presented performance (title unknown) on March 17 at Loeb Student Center of New York University.

In May appeared in NBC television broadcast, "The American Image."

Held one-man exhibition, "Revolvers," May 13–June 10 at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York.

Exhibition and auction, "Giant Model Airplanes," organized by Christie's of London for E.A.T.; held in Rauschenberg's Lafayette Street studio.

Began long working relationship with Gemini G.E.L., a printing and publishing firm in Los Angeles, with series of lithographs entitled "Booster and 7 Studies." Series exhibited July 5–31 at Douglas Gallery, Vancouver.

In October received honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters, from Grinnell College, Iowa. *Martin Luther King was also a recipient. I was privileged to share an intimate, unforgettable two-hour cardtable lunch with him, then he was flown back to jail.*

Participated in "Fall Gallery Concerts," organized by School of Visual Arts, New York; performed his piece *Urban Round* on November 10 and 19. Participated on November 20 in Elaine Sturtevant's performance, *Picabia's Ballet Relasche*.

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Rauschenberg and Teledyne engineers viewing *Mud-Muse* experiment, 1969.

"Revolvers" featured in CBS television broadcast "Eye on New York: The Walls Come Tumbling Down."

Designed cover for book *Poems* by John Giorno (New York: Mother Press, 1967).

Designed cover for *Time* issue of December 8.

1968

Autobiography first exhibited January 2 at Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Soundings shown in one-man exhibition held February 23–April 7 at Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Exhibition circulated to Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, April 19–May 26; and to Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, June 7–July 14.

Exhibition of paintings held March 7–April 14 at Peale Galleries of Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia.

On May 28 participated in "Spring Gallery Concert" by performing his *Linoleum;* concert held in studio of painter Bert Stern, New York.

Began collaborating in September with Teledyne, Inc., for construction of *Mud-Muse, With brilliant and pleasurable assistance by Frank La Haye and Lou Elmore.*

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Exhibition of drawings held in October at Galerie Sonnabend, Paris.

Exhibition, "White Paintings, 1951," held October 12–27 at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York.

Exhibition, "Soundings," held October 22, 1968–January 26, 1969, at The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

1969

First showing in America of *Solstice* in one-man exhibition held January 5–February 2 at Fort Worth Art Center, Texas.

Exhibition, "Carnal Clocks," held April 26–May 17 at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York; and April 25–May 17 at Ace Gallery, Los Angeles.

"Stoned Moon" edition of lithographs exhibited on November 13 at Castelli Graphics, New York. Lithographs were inspired by visit that Rauschenberg had made previous summer, at invitation of NASA, to Kennedy Space Center in Florida, where he viewed launching of *Apollo 11*. They were made at Gemini G.E.L.

Exhibition "Rauschenberg in Black and White: Paintings 1962 – 63, Lithographs 1962 – 67" organized by Newport Harbor Art Museum, Balboa, California; shown there December 10, 1969 –January 18, 1970. Circulated February 3–March 15 to Phoenix Art Museum; April 6–May 3 to University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; and May 22–June 21 to Seattle Art Museum.

1970

Founded Change, Inc., foundation to aid artists in coping with financial emergencies.

Lectured at Detroit Institute of Arts on October 18.

Designed cover for *Arts* magazine, vol. 45, issue for November 1970.

Important one-man exhibitions during 1970 included:

"Rauschenberg: Graphic Art" organized by Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and shown there April 1 – May. Circulated July 1 – August 14 to Art Gallery, State University of New York, Albany; August 30–October 4 to Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute, San Antonio; October 31 – December 31 to Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

"Currents" series of silkscreen prints published by Dayton's Gallery 12, Minneapolis, and Castelli Graphics, New York. Exhibited April 4–May 2 at Dayton's Gallery 12. Circulated June 5–June 27 to Castelli Graphics; June 4–28 to Automation House, New York; July 7–September 6 to Pasadena Art Museum, California.

"Currents" and selection of graphics shown during summer at The New York Cultural Center.

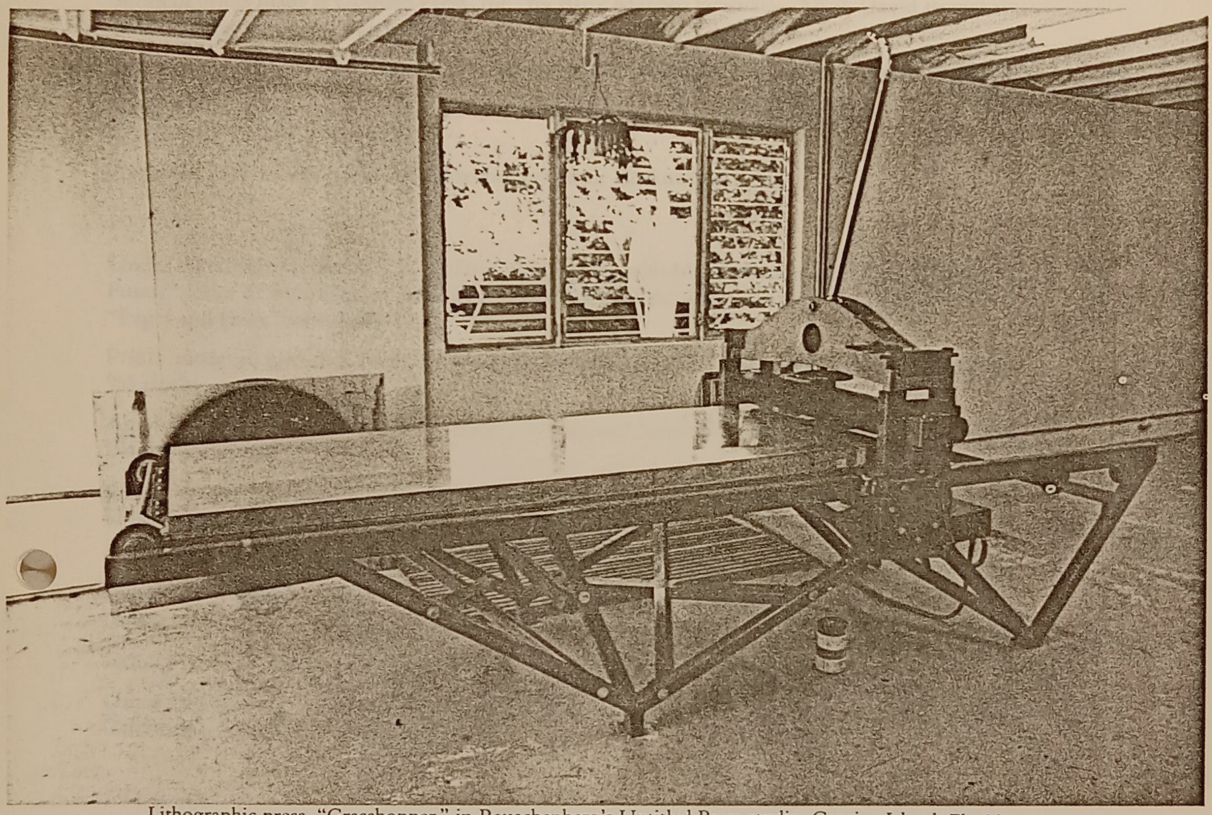
Exhibition, "Robert Rauschenberg: Prints 1948/1970," held August 6 – September 27 at Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

Selections of graphics shown August 29 – September 27 at Kunstverein, Hannover, West Germany; September 29–October 25 at Fort Worth Art Center; October 30–December 6 at Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland.

Exhibition of drawings held November 17–December 16 at Visual Arts Gallery, School of Visual Arts, New York. Circulated January 4–29, 1971, to The Art Institute of Chicago; and May 1971 to Dayton's Gallery 12, Minneapolis.

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Lithographic press, "Grasshopper," in Rauschenberg's Untitled Press studio, Captiva Island, Florida.

1971

Exhibition of "Currents" series of silkscreen prints held in January at Galerie Sonnabend, Paris.

Began spending much time on Captiva Island, Florida, where he built a studio. Established Untitled Press, Inc., there with Robert Petersen. First series of prints at Untitled Press made by Cy Twombly in April.

Exhibition of "Cardboard" series of assemblages held in June at Dayton's Galley 12, Minneapolis; and October 16–November 6 at Castelli Graphics and Castelli Gallery, New York.

1972

Began close working relationship with Graphicstudio, directed by Donald Saff, at University of South Florida, Tampa.

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Series of prints made at Untitled Press, Inc., by Brice Marden February–April; David Bradshaw worked there January–March.

Exhibition of "Cardboard" series of assemblages held in May at Galerie Sonnabend, Paris.

"Made in Tampa" prints and clay pieces published by Graphicstudio; exhibited December 2–24 at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York.

Appeared in film *Painters Painting,* directed by Emile de Antonio.

1973

Under auspices of Gemini G.E.L. and in collaboration with Marius Peraudeau, made "Pages and Fuses," series of multiples, at Moulin à Papier Richard de Bas in Ambert, France. Edition of "Pages and Fuses" issued 1974.

Prints made at Untitled Press, Inc., by Robert Petersen, Robert Whitman, and Hisachika Takahashi.

Appeared in film *American Art in the Sixties,* written and narrated by Barbara Rose, produced by Blackwood Productions, Inc.

Comprehensive exhibition of prints, "Robert Rauschenberg: Prints," held January 7 – 26 at University Galleries, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

"Venetian Series" of assemblages exhibited March 31–April 21 at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York.

Exhibition, "White Paintings, 1951," held in April at Ace Gallery, Los Angeles; and in June at Ace Gallery, Vancouver.

Exhibition of drawings held April 18–May 12 at The Mayor Gallery, London.

Other one-man exhibitions were held at Jack Glenn Gallery, San Diego, during summer; and at Galerie Sonnabend, Paris, in September.

1974

Under sponsorship of U.L.A.E., began collaboration with Alain Robbe-Grillet to publish book, *Traces Suspectes en Surface.* Book completed in 1976.

Appeared in film *America's Pop Collector: Robert C. Scull–Contemporary Art at Auction,* codirected by John Schott and E. J. Vaughn.

Series of prints made at Untitled Press, Inc., in February by Susan Weil.

Exhibition, "Rauschenberg in Israel," held in May at Israel Museum in Jerusalem. Rauschenberg spent a month of preparation in Israel before exhibition. He was assisted by Robert Petersen, Mayo Thompson, Hisachika Takahashi, and Christine Kozlov.

Other important museum exhibitions during 1974 included:

"Rauschenberg at Graphicstudio," held January 11–February 15 at University of South Florida, Tampa.

"Pages and Fuses," series of multiples, held October 22, 1974–January 26, 1975, at Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

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"Robert Rauschenberg," held December 1, 1974–January 19, 1975, at Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, West Germany.

Other gallery exhibitions included: Galerie Sonnabend, Geneva, April; Jared Sable Gallery, Toronto; Lucio Amelio Modern Art Agency, Naples, November; Galerie Mikro, West Berlin; and Ace Gallery, Venice, California, September.

Exhibition of "Hoarfrost" series held December 7–28 at Leo Castelli and Sonnabend galleries, New York.

1975

Traveled in June to Ahmedabad, India, under sponsorship of Gemini G.E.L.; worked at Gandhi Ashram on constructions and series of multiples, "Bones and Unions." Edition of "Bones and Unions" issued in 1975.

Exhibition of "Bones and Unions" multiples held in August at Gemini G.E.L.; and November 1–15 at Castelli Graphics.

Important museum exhibitions held during 1975 included:

"Robert Rauschenberg: Drawings," held February 24–April 2 at Visual Arts Gallery, School of Visual Arts, New York.

"Robert Rauschenberg," held September 6–October 6 at Museo d'Arte Moderna Ca' Pesaro, Venice.

"Robert Rauschenberg: Twenty-Six Years of Printmaking," held October 6–31 at Visual Arts Museum, School of Visual Arts, New York.

Other one-man exhibitions held during 1975 included:

Exhibitions of "Hoarfrosts" held at Allesandra Castelli, Milan, in October; at Galerie Sonnabend, Paris, in May; Dayton's Gallery 12, Minneapolis, February 15–March 27.

Exhibition of prints, "Hoarfrost Editions," shown at Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles, in January; and at Galerie Tavit, Munich, October 3–31.

1976

Series of prints made at Untitled Press, Inc., in January by Peter Wirth.

Exhibitions of selections from "Jammers" series held at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, February 21–March 13; and at Ace galleries in Los Angeles and Venice, California; Vancouver, September.

On June 13 received Honorary Degree of Fine Arts at University of South Florida, Tampa, together with physicist Willard F. Libby, who received a degree in science.

Lobbied on June 22 on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., with James Rosenquist and Ruben Gorewitz, for bill to reinstate law regarding tax-exempt status of works donated by artists to nonprofit, educational, and other institutions.

Worked during September on series of prints, "Romances," at Gemini G.E.L. in Los Angeles.

One-man exhibition of "Hoarfrosts" and "Jammers" opened September 11 in Forte Belvedere, Florence, Italy.

Worked with Pyramid Arts, Ltd. in Florida on "Tracks" multiples.

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KR-Statements

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Rauschenberg: Statements

Any incentive to paint is as good as any other. There is no poor subject.

Painting is always strongest when in spite of composition, color, etc., it appears as a fact of an inevitability as opposed to a souvenir or arrangement.

Painting relates to both art and life. Neither can be made. (I try to act in that gap between the two). -see comment over →

A pair of socks is no less suitable to make a painting with than wood, nails, turpentine, oil and fabric.

A canvas is never empty.

(all above from catalog to 16 Americans, 1959)

If you do not change your mind about something when you confront a picture you have not seen before, you are either a stubborn fool or the painting is not very good.

I try to check my habits of seeing, to counter them for the sake of greater freshness. I am trying to be unfamiliar with what I'm doing. (see also Duchamp)

I have a special kind of focus. I tend to see everything in sight. (To Dore Ashton)

Paint itself is an object, and canvas also. In my opinion, the void which must be filled does not exist. (To Paris interviewer who asked why he put objects in paintings).

I don't feel any direct relationship between what I do and existing art. Though there is an unavoidable progression: the things all paintings have in common are paint, and color, and some means of application...Outside the big idea that there is art I don't think of others' paintings. But I defend the idea of art and know that it is made up of all these paintings.

(from 1958 interview in Art News, one of series 'Artists with or against the past')

Excerpts from Andre Parinaud invu in ARTS

The painters who have influenced me don't make landscapes. Leonardo da Vinci, for instance. His painting was life. One of the pictures that hit me hardest was The Annunciation, in Florence. In that canvas, the trees, the rocks, the Virgin are all equally important, at the same time. No heirarchy. That's what interests me.

A painter must be a looker, a perpetual inventor, because the understanding of his paintings means the end of his active life. If people understand him perfectly, he's dead.

I don't want to reform the world. I just want to live here!

P.: 'Do you like your time?' R.: 'I have no choice!'

With Dada, it was a question of exclusion, it was a judgement against the past...Today, for us, it is a question of including, of introducing the past into the present, the totality in the moment.

I prefer to go toward the unknown.

Reviews

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*Art and Life and The Gap:

Art here refers to the big Idea of art, which everybody agrees is not the same thing as life. "It's never bothered me a bit when people say what I'm doing is not art. I don't think of myself as making things that will turn into art. I do what I do because I want to, because painting is the best way I've found to get along with myself. And it's the moment of doing it that counts. When a painting is finished, it's already something I've done, no longer something I'm doing..."

"I think art is more like the real world when it's made out of it."

"I don't want a painting to look like something it isn't; I want it to look like something it is."

Painting as adventure:

"I paint in order to learn something new about painting."

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R. Statements (cont).

I would like to make a picture that creates a situation in which there is as much room for the viewer as for the artist.
(from Parinaud invu in ARTS)

To CT:

"I feel so lucky that I can do what I want, and that if somebody has to call it something they call it art, that I wouldn't exchange it for anything going. Of all the painters I know, I'm the only one I can think of who's really escaped the trap of art. That sounds egotistical -- no, I won't qualify it, that's what I feel. I can keep on playing this game indefinitely, I think, and it is a game -- everything I do seems to have some of that element... And everything I do always just resolves itself into two or three paintings..."

On Chance: "I don't believe in it any more than I believe in anything else. Using chance involves a very complicated system, and I'm not interested in systems." R.'s method is more an acceptance of all factors. "I feel that by using all these things from the outside, I'll be able to do something more interesting than if I just made something according to my own personal taste." Also more fun: Painting, for R., really is an adventure.

On Cage: R. delighted to find someone he could really talk to. "The kind of talk you heard then in the art world was so hard to take. It was all about suffering, and self-expression, and the State of Things." Could be himself with Cage. R. feels that he and John start out from diametrically opposite positions -- John is an intellectual, a scholar -- but often arrive at the same point; would agree with Cage's idea that there is an affinity between their reactions to experience. Although Cage's Oriental philosophy never interested R., "I don't believe that man is the center of the universe, and I don't believe in progress. I [redacted] certainly have no interest in trying to improve the world through painting, or anything like that."

On Duchamp: "I find his life and his work a constant inspiration." Says Duchamp's having done certain things certainly made it easier for him to do things, although he wasn't aware of D. until quite late. Feels a strong affinity in their mutual attitude, though. Duchamp, he feels, did not really share the social protest idea of Dada; [redacted] even his most shocking readymades were not intended as protest, as "this'll get 'em," but rather selected for their sensuous, poetic qualities -- same with R., whose work has often been accused of being mere gesture (the erased deKooning, for example).

On older painters: "I certainly know how enormous his talent was, and it sounds awfully egotistical of me to say so, but what appeals to me about Leonardo was his attitude. Being interested in all those other things, doing those theater pieces, when everybody kept telling him he should stick to painting...I like the formal rigidity of Durer, which isn't very popular now because people think it seems dead..." What R. specifically rejects is the expressionism of El Greco, Soutine, Van Gogh, and even Giotto -- the mouth drawn down to show sorrow, the tear trembling in the eye, "That's what I call Mickey Mousing." (Note: Odd contrast here between R's aesthetic and his personal reaction -- in life, he is an expressionist, one who reacts directly and emotionally to experience.)

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R. to Kluver, on Record made for Wash.DC Pop Art Festival:

"The white paintings and the black paintings were the results of a lot of indoctrination about the function of color and form -- scientific indoctrination, like knowing that red makes a green look greener. I was so involved with the materials separately that I didn't want painting to be simply an act of employing one color to do something to another color, when my response to it was much more direct than that. The reds I liked just looked red, and it was the same with blues, or greens, or any other color. I was very hesitant just arbitrarily to design forms and select colors that would achieve some predetermined result, because I didn't have any ideas to support that...I was more interested in working with them than I was interested in having them work for me.

"With materials, I've always felt as though, whatever I've used and whatever I've done with it, the method was closer to a collaboration than these materials being in the service of art. From the very beginning, I've indulged in the ordinary fact that whatever you choose to do is what people have to deal with. So that whatever I made as a painting would either have to be accepted as a painting or rejected as a painting...

"In the white paintings I always thought of them as being, not passive, but very, like hypersensitive, so that any situation they were in, one could almost look at them and see how many people were in the room, by the shadows cast, or what time of day it was... And with the black ones, I was interested in the complexity without their revealing much. The fact that there was much to see, but not much showing. They didn't have the familiar aggressiveness of art, that says, 'Well, here it is whether you like it or not.'"

"...People thought that the black was about old, and burned, and tarred, and they thought the white was about negation, and nothing -- some philosophy of nothing. And so they misrepresented themselves, and I had already had the experience, and so the next move was obviously to try some other color, and I picked the hardest color I found to work with, which was red.

"Then I became conscious of the gaudiness of red -- gaudiness is not a particular viewpoint -- and so later I tried to find a color that wouldn't have any of these local interpretations. And I began to notice that the experience of walking down the street, or being in a theater, or in any group of people, that the mass, no matter how colorful it was, never looked tonal. Somebody might be wearing a bright tie, or green shoes, but somehow these things were absorbed... independent but neutral. So I tried to get some of this quality of pedestrian color into the paintings. And then after a while I began to relax in that. I'd lost the habit I'd been educated to, and then it was other materials that began to interest me..."

Speaks of using light bulbs to give painting its own source of light, prevent "lying" by hanging so there is no glare on enamel paint, and also as a means of getting the room into the painting.

"After the paint has stopped running, and the canvas is dry, the only changes are really very slight, not perceptible unless you've known the picture before. And so the use of mirrors, and putting open areas in the painting for the wall -- which would be different in different situations -- to come through and be part of it, would be a way to counteract that stillness..."

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Rauschenberg's Humor

"There is humor in this work, but a much more tragic humor than that of Duchamp in his 'readymades,' a strained and violent humor in which the mordly indifference of objects to men acquires an unequalled power to shock." (Alain Jouffroy in Aujourd'hui, Sept. 1962)

"It is a complex kind of humor, verging on the grotesque and cut by the sharp edge of irony." (Alan Solomon, in catalog to Jewish Museum).

Solomon says that this kind of humor is an essential mode in the work of Rauschenberg and Cage -- the Freudian idea, humor as a means of relieving tension without resolving it. Humor implies the presence of tension. A delicate balance between tension and resolution, a precarious balance between ugliness and beauty... Solomon feels that many people are unable to respond to the work on this level, and so don't "get" R. at all. The esthetic tightrope.

Jack Tworkov speaks of R's "high comic spirit that allows him to go into everything he does with such gaity." Adds that R. was always as deeply involved in painting as anyone, wanted to be taken seriously. "The fact that it was often comic didn't mean that it wasn't serious too. The comic spirit is very rare in art, but I think it's particularly good that it should happen here in America, where people either tend to ignore something or take it much too seriously. Bob was always putting booby traps into his pictures, but only for boobs." Tworkov likes this comedy very much because he is rather opposed to the "high seriousness" of his fellow abstract expressionists. "Art," he says, "can be pretty stuffy at times."

Tom Hess goes further, sees R's work as having strong element of parody -- see invu. Uses this as a means to deny his seriousness.

Ileana and other close friends feel that R. is quieter now, a little less gay. "He could be so excessively gay over anything at all -- over it's being a nice day, over seeing a particular shade of red somewhere, over his observation that flowers in Europe looked entirely different from flowers at home. And at the same time he could be excessively sad. To me, he seems a little sad now."

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K. - Notes

On transfer drawings: "I liked getting as much in as I can. I liked the idea that you could read a picture, as well as see it."

On interpretations of his work: "I feel responsible for the interpretation of my work. If something of mine can be grossly misinterpreted, then that's a flaw in the work."

On titles: "They should function as another element in the work, a separate element that adds something. The work shouldn't be at all dependent on the title, and the title shouldn't emphasize any particular element in the work. My titles come mostly after the fact." i.e., 'Monogram': The goat functions as a sort of signature, and so does the tire. Black & white connotations.

R. enjoys titling his work, says it gives him "the opportunity of adding something to a picture without painting."

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RR - Statements (misc)

Time (April 18, 1960) - RR says his earlier work (Bed etc) had "a souvenir quality, which I am now trying to kill. Nostalgia tends to eliminate some of the directness. Immediacy is the only thing you can trust."

Print (Jan-Feb. 1959): "I began using newsprint in my work to activate a ground so that even the first strokes in a painting had its (sic) unique position in a gray map of words. As the paintings changed the printed material became as much of a subject as the paint, causing changes of focus and providing multiplicity and duplication of images. A third palette with infinite possibilities of color, shape, content and scale was then added to the palettes of objects and paint."

"There is no reason not to consider the world one gigantic painting."

RR once defined his overall themes as "multiplicity, variation and inclusion."

"I don't like to take advantage of an object that can't defend itself."

"I want to escape categories."

"I believe that if you're an artist it's very important to be willing and able to make a fool of yourself at any moment."

"The role of the artist is to see what is in the world today...An artist can't afford to be a sentimental commentator. All those barriers have been destroyed. One doesn't know what painting should be any longer. Because of this, it's a most exciting time for all artists." (quoted in NYT Magazine, 5/21/67, from NBC new special the following Friday).

"I'm a great disbeliever in special talent. It's all a matter of concentration." (to Suzi Gablik, Art News, Nov. 1968)

"I told a newspaperman the other day that I thought we were moving into an area now which had as its uniqueness that what a man thinks is less important than his way of moving from thought to thought. So that I think we'll eventually give up thoughts, and there will be a constant flow of concern...By thoughts I mean particular ideas." (ibid).

"I would like for my work to be an invitation for anyone to try anything."
(Floridian, March 11, 1973)

"I'm only cheating on myself if I do something I know. Because it's so easy to be good. It really is." (ibid)

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REVIEWS

Betty Parsons show, May 1951:

"Varied and curious work."

"There is nothing niggardly in Bob Rauschenberg's power to invent. His works at the Betty Parsons Gallery introduce bits of looking glass, stylish doodles in black and white, and liberal helpings of silver paint. The fact that his pictures seem to be spawning ground for ideas rather than finished conceptions gives them a restless look..." (Stuart Preston, NYT, 5/18/51).

"...large-scale, usually white-grounded canvases naively inscribed with a wavering and whimsical geometry..." (ART NEWS)

"Experimenting with rhythm and balance in his first one-man show, Bob Rauschenberg gives most of his 13 oils a symbolic subject matter." (ARTS) -- e.g., leaf from fortune teller'd handbook, black arrow with outline of hand, numbers, etc.

Egan show, Dec.1954-Jan. 1955

"A far outpost of this extremism is to be found at the Egan Gallery in work by Robert Rauschenberg. He makes his collages on a gigantic scale, fixing to picture surfaces awash with scarlet paint such diverse objects as mirrors, revolving parasols, layers of comic strips, stained glass windows that swing free on their hinges, and colored electric lights that blink on and off...This exhibition is fun in its own way and there would be no point in taking it too seriously were it not absurdly symptomatic of the demon of novelty." (Stuart Preston, NYT, 12/19/54).

(Art News, cont.) geometry. On vast and often heavily painted expanses, a wispy calligraphy is sometimes added to thin abstract patterns and in other instances collage is introduced, either to provide textural effects -- as in the picture whose background is made entirely of road maps -- or to suggest a very tenuous associational content. Prices unquoted."

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REVIEWS

Red Show (Egan), Jan. 1955
"...enfant terrible of the New York School, is back again to even more brilliant effect -- what he did to all-white and all-black in his last show and to nature painting with his controversial moss-~~xxx~~-dirt-and-ivy picture in the last Stable Annual, (inc. 1954) he tops in this show of blistering and at the same time poignant collages... bulbs flicker on and off, lights cast shadows, and lifting up a bit of pink gauze you can stare out of the picture into your own magnified eye...Doors open to reveal clearer images, or you can turn a huge wheel to change the effect at will...other pieces, including two sex organs (male and female) made from old red silk umbrellas, have a gentle and just passion for moving people...ecstatic works... brio...baroque exuberance...serious lyrical talent."
(Frank O'Hara in ART NEWS)

April 1955: "...Robert Rauschenberg is referring to more recent standards with his gorgeous, theatrical objects -- paintings and collages -- the whole intention of which is to be gorgeous, made in a wild conglomeration of styles from Dadaism through Abstract-Expressionism." (Elaine de Kooning in ART NEWS).

January 1956, Stable Annual: "Eulenspiegel is abroad again, and one must be patient." (ART NEWS)

April 1959 ("Three" at Castelli - R., Norman Bluhm, Dubuffet):
(R. showed Monogram) "...next to the most sinuous plastic poetry, the most overt drek...Surely Rauschenberg's major work to date." (ART NEWS).

Castelli show March 1960 (incl. Gift for Apollo (door on wheels with chained bucket), Canyon (eagle), Broadcast (radios))
"...Mr. Rauschenberg's constructions really boil down to an innocuous praise of life...has the air of art because Mr. Rauschenberg never forgets his facility with paint." (Dore Ashton in NYT).

"...I have the feeling, rather, that he's like a child screaming for attention. There's nothing, really, that he needs. He's just afraid that he won't be listened to unless he screams. (Genauer)

Castelli Dec. 1960 - Dante drawings
"They can be criticized for being too literary and for containing too many superficial and ephemeral conceits that do not pass successfully as images. But his attempt is a brave one, and, in its odd way, moving."
(Stuart Preston in NYT)

December 1961 - Whitney Annual
"...our most solidly established sticker on of broken bottles, old shirts, defunct clocks, rusty metal and other oddments." (Canaday)

"He expresses a morality of poverty, inducing a monastic respect for things that no one values. He protests the waste in this society..."
(Nation)

April 1963 - Jewish Museum
"Rauschenberg is an interesting painter -- rather, he has recently become one.,.Actually, several recent enormous black and white compositions...are extremely impressive." Goes on to criticize Solomon for putting on "vulgarly bandwagon alongside the stately ceremonial silver and other ancient ritual objects in the Jewish Museum."
(Emily Genauer).

See Brian O'Doherty, attached (over)

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ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

NYT - 4/26/63

By BRIAN O'DOHERTY

THE most obstreperous creation in Robert Rauschenberg's large retrospective exhibition at the Jewish Museum is something called "Broadcast" (1959), which accompanies the spectator everywhere with cacophonous sounds. The noise is transmitted from behind the picture surface by three radios tuned to a single control. Twist the control knob and you come up with three new stations, randomly selecting odd combinations of pop music, newscasts and static. The auditory image is of overcrowded wave lengths choking in their hurry to feed the masses.

The scrambled sound blares from behind a typical Rauschenberg collage, combining slashes of paint, a piece of comb, the word HELP, and newsphotos of such mass diversions as a horse race, the city, a police beating. From close up the photos demand individual attention. As you move out they blur into a visual delirium that matches the sound, and as you withdraw further, they sink into a strong abstraction that swings in its own way.

New Freedoms

Obviously a new era is at hand. If you can't lick the environment, join it. For many years Mr. Rauschenberg has been pointing steadily towards an annihilation of conventions in a new freedom. His main characteristic is a conquest of common, everyday reality from a bridgehead of abstract expressionism. He is trying to materialize an ambiguous limbo between high art and low life. His "combines," as he calls them, are on the crest of a new popular wave they helped to start. At 38, Mr. Rauschenberg is both contemporary and historical, and his creations tend to force a redefinition of what art is all about.

As in much modern art, his work makes the common distinction between painting and sculpture outdated. Combining sound, flashing lights (and occasionally movement) with hand painting, his pieces aspire to the dimension of time, and thus performance. The collage materials are lovingly gathered from the encounters of real life—he has a fondness for such rejects as old tires, old newsprint, old clothes. As if in tribute to the Unknown Bum, this flotsam is battered by time and the anonymous hands that have touched it, used it, thrown it away. When everything is put together, the main adhesive force is the anti-logic of the subconscious.

Indeed it is this that enables him to blaze a road from abstract expressionism to "pop." Each of these in its own way draws on surrealism. Abstract expressionism found some authority in surrealist automatism. "Pop" at its infrequent best depends in part on the shocks produced by free association.

Obviously, if he wanted to, Mr. Rauschenberg could be a fine abstract expressionist or a fine Neo-Dadaist. But the fascinating thing about him is that he seems to feel the need of a new method, a process that swallows life whole, and presents it with enough transformation to aspire incidentally to art. In his useful catalogue, Alan R. Solomon draws attention to a crucial quote from Mr. Rauschenberg that can be paraphrased "I try to act in that gap between . . . art and life." Since Mr. Rauschenberg's esthetic digestion is occasionally not strong enough to take care of stuffed fowl and zip-fasteners, his work is sometimes defeated by life and rejected by art.

But the general success of his work, invaded by life and aspiring toward art, is most impressive. It is far from being just Dadaism or surrealism once more with feeling. It negates nihilism to lay claim to life and its confusions. It implies a respect for an audience and an attempt to meet it—a new development in modern art, also seen in the "Happening," a semi-theatrical extension of Mr. Rauschenberg's performance between life and art.

As distinct from the blank anonymous face of the "pop" artist Mr. Rauschenberg decisively retains for himself the personal role of creator. All his work is steeped (sometimes literally) in abstract expressionism. Most of his appendages —Coca-Cola bottles, a clock, stuffed birds (some of whom had to have hernias repaired by a taxidermist before the show) — are related to, or incorporated into, canvases by a sensibility that of its nature abhors disorder. In everything he does, he feels the lyric pull — and maybe he is too lyric an artist for the rough, tough role of pioneer. Such constructs as "Rhyme," "Wager" and "Hymenal" are exquisite in a way that completely transforms their collage elements. Life is overcome by art. Mr. Rauschenberg is a great civilizer of objects, from the torn telephone book in a tabernacle-like inset to Coca-Cola bottles transformed into slim, elegant presences. His sensibility and his sense of revolution are at odds in the failures and pull together in the total successes. In his most individual and interesting work they fight, occupying his chosen gap between life and art.

Double Vision

His use of collage elements, especially newsphotos, can be confusing. From a distance they are drowned in total abstraction. Up close, they often refuse to settle in, selfishly declaring their individuality. Although chosen by Mr. Rauschenberg during meaningful encounters, their obvious meaning (or lack of it in their present situation) can be disturbing. Perhaps, as the general trend of his work indicates, they are part of an attempt to come in contact with indubitable bits of reality, which are lost in the flux of abstraction as one retreats from the work.

Thus, perhaps, Mr. Rauschenberg marries two realities — abstract energy with its connotations of the unseen, as in physics, and the fragment that has an obvious relevance to everyday life. This is an ambiguity shared by us as we live, as well as by Mr. Rauschenberg's constructions. Such an explanation gives authority to his work, if it does not justify it on current esthetic grounds. But it is a measure of his performance that it brings up the question of the redefinition of these grounds.

Mr. Rauschenberg is one of the most fascinating artists around. Poised between painting and the object, between art and life, his work is part of a new question thrown at the confused nature of reality, and thus of art.

NO COMPLAINTS WHATSOEVER

THE exhibition of Cézanne watercolors that closed last week at Knoedler's could have been extended for twice its term by public demand, a reception as gratifying as any art event in years. The show had a strong sponsor, the Department of Art History and Archeology of Columbia University, was held in a distinguished gallery, and received a good press, but Cézanne water-colors are rather specialized fare and the show opened simultaneously with the more spectacular Armory Show, which took first place in the limelight. But as the three week showing ran its course, attendance increased daily, stimulated by word of mouth reports that this was the most beautiful exhibition in town. Between 15,000 and 17,000 people came to see it, thus assuring a good profit for the university's scholarship fund, but this pleasurable figure is less impressive than the response of the individual visitors in the galleries. Whether they were students, cognoscenti, or the relatively casual public that drops into exhibitions, they stayed so long, studying and enjoying the pictures so much, that on the final day people had to line up to wait their turns. Whatever question there may be about New York's rather unselective curiosity about art, the Cézanne show proved that while publicity may attract, truer values hold.

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Reviews (cont)m

April 23, 1960 (Castelli)

"Rauschenberg's work completely counters so many preconceptions that in order to see what it is one must be open to new form beyond old formalities. He expresses a morality of poverty, inducing a monastic respect for things that no one values...Rauschenberg's work has more personality than anything like it. Its weakness is that it tends to approach the chic."

-Fairfield Porter in The Nation

Dec. 7 1963

"I am convinced that his is the most significant art now being produced in the United States by anyone of the younger generation."

-Max Kozloff, The Nation

Feb. 21, 1964 (Whitechapel Show, London)

"I can think of no other artist of his age and stature who is so free of aggressive hunger or stridency...Rauschenberg approaches his material with unparallelled clarity of feeling, and his imaginative range is colossal."

- Andrew Forge, New Statesman

Feb. 23; 1964 (Whitechapel)

"...a sensation in the art world...Every now and then a figure emerges from the bewildering currents of modern art who visibly marks a stage, a kind of distance post. Rauschenberg is one of these...

"With the uncanny intuition that is Rauschenberg's trump card, he seems to have hit exactly the right note which the art world -- anyway the young art world -- was waiting for."

- The Observer.

Feb. 8, 1964

"...the most conservative spectator can hardly fail to find it impressive, amusing, diverting and as tonic as a novel holiday."

m The Times (London)

(and see over →)

Feb. 9, 1964

"If, as I believe, the function of art is to put forward a coherent moral order which has not been formulated before, then the most important show of the week is the Rauschenberg retrospective at the Whitechapel. Rauschenberg has precisely the qualities which make for new art: jumping nervous energy, the ability to dominate and organise a great variety of material, a command of new visual techniques and (as important as any) a constructive sense of history."

- John Russell, The Sunday Times

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ART NOTES: GOING, GOING, UP

NYT - Sun. Feb 6, 1964

By GRACE GLUECK

THE Guggenheim Museum's recent announcement that 50 of its Kandinsky paintings would be sold off by the London firm of Sotheby's, the world's largest auction house, brought some wounded cries from New York dealers. Chief among them was Parke-Bernet, the world's *second* largest auction house, and Sotheby's principal competitor. "We were very disappointed that we weren't asked to submit *our* proposal," said a Parke-Bernet spokesman the other day.

The Kandinsky scoop is the latest installment in Sotheby's U. S. success story. Since 1954, when the British Government ended currency restrictions on art sales, Sotheby's American turnover has risen to one-fifth of the firm's total sales ($30,639,837 at the close of last season). Last May, for example (while U. S. dealers prophesied that most of the items would soon come right back home), Sotheby's put on its London block a collection of 19th-century manuscripts owned by the American Academy of Arts and Letters; that season it also shipped from Manhattan to London the René Fribourg collection of 18-century French treasures, which brought a record price of nearly 3.5 million dollars.

Why do American sellers flock to Sotheby's? Some possible reasons: the firm's 220 years of auction experience (it was founded in 1744); its proximity to rich Continental markets; its low 10-15 per cent commission rate (made possible by lower British operating costs); the absence of sales and auction taxes in England.

But Parke-Bernet claims that, despite the difference in U.S. and British economies, in top-bracket sales it can equally match Sotheby's low fees. It pooh-poohs the "advantage" of Sotheby's European location: "With jet transportation today, nobody's far from the world's best markets," says a Parke-Bernet executive. Anyway, there's no lack of business to keep Parke-Bernet's gavels flying. At last season's close, sales stood at $11,848,966.

KUDOS: "The most exhilarating art exhibition in London," said the London Times last week. "The most influential and enjoyable show of the year," announced the Sunday Observer. "The most important American artist since Jackson Pollock," proclaimed the Sunday Telegraph. The superlatives were for 37-year-old Robert Rauschenberg, whose first major European exhibition opened Feb. 4th at London's Whitechapel Gallery.



RAUSCHENBERG: Critics raved; the public flocked.

On display were 40 of Rauschenberg's major works, plus 34 drawings for Dante's "Inferno," lent by New York's Museum of Modern Art.

While critics and cognoscenti raved, the public flocked to the gallery, apparently sparked by Rauschenberg's appearance on a BBC television program shortly before the show opened. "We've had to hire extra guards," said Bryan Robertson, the gallery's director. "I don't remember crowds like this at the Whitechapel before."

Meanwhile, back at the easel in New York, Rauschenberg is hard at work again. A dance addict, he is also performing with a way-out troupe, known as Surplus Dance Theatre.

BIG SHOW: Japan's appetite for Western art gets bigger every year. With last autumn's huge, smash-hit Chagall retrospective barely dismantled in Kyoto, Japanese art patrons are busily assembling a major Picasso show, the third, last and most important of a series which has already presented his graphic work (1960) and sketches for "Guernica" (1962). The new show, slated for a splashy May 23 opening at Tokyo's National Museum of Modern Art (with Premier Ikeda officiating) will comprise about 100 big works from "first-class" public and private collections throughout the world.

The show is the first project of the newly-hatched Japan Art Society, whose cumbersome parent body, the Art Friends Association, has for years been pushing Western culture in Japan. The new, streamlined group will deal with art projects only, and is headed by the influential critic Shinichi Segui, widely recognized as one of the moving spirits behind Japan's increasing involvement with Occidental art.

Picasso himself has reportedly passed on the selection of works to be shown, and has requested the Soviet Ministry of Culture to lend a number now in Russian museums. For good measure, he plans to send along some Picasso's Picassos, selected from his own private stock. And, in accordance with a pleasant Japanese custom whereby newspapers foot bills for cultural events, exhibition costs will be underwritten by the Mainichi dailies of Tokyo and Osaka.

GETTY GETS: Back in 1938 at a London auction, oil millionaire Jean Paul Getty saw a picture he liked and put down £40 (then about $200) for it. A somewhat battered rendering of the Holy Family, the painting hung for years on various Getty walls, attracting little attention. Recently, Colin Agnew, dean of London dealers and Mr. Getty's art adviser, looked hard at the picture, and suggested it might be the long-lost original of a widely copied Raphael painting known as the "Madonna di Loreto," done about 1510. Dr. Alfred Scharf, an art historian, was brought in, and X-ray and infra-red photographs were taken.

Discussing his findings in this month's issue of the British art magazine Apollo, Dr. Scharf touches on the painting's many copies, and concludes that Mr. Getty's Madonna comes closer to the original "than any other version."

If the picture really is the missing Raphael, it's estimated that it would be worth about £500,000 ($1,400,000). In London, Mr. Getty was reported to be "thrilled" with his late-blooming Madonna, and keeping in close touch with further investigations of its authenticity.

COLLAGE: At the Royal Academy's big Goya show in London, crowds are clustering around the portrait of the architect Cuevo, who sports a Beatle haircut. . . . The New York Arts Calendar Annual, a paperback "complete record" of artists and art shown in New York during the 1963-64 season, is slated for fall publication. . . . All artists of North American Indian descent are eligible to enter the 19th Annual Exhibition for American Indian Artists at the Philbrook Art Center, Norman, Okla. Deadline for entries is April 4. . . . "Art Voices of the Air," a radio program sponsored by the magazine Art Voices, can be heard at 9 each Thursday evening on WABC-FM.

LOG - I + II

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Reviews - Max Kozloff in Artforum, Jan. 1964

"... I am convinced that his is the most significant art in the United States produced by anyone of the younger generation."

"... there are at least seven (and conceivably ten) stages between Rauschenberg's image, and the object 'out there.'"

"No other artist I know (even considering Jasper Johns) takes such a polyvalent and imaginative inventory of modern life, and can approach it from so many different angles, as Rauschenberg. It is this fullness of his response which gains respect, and better, is profoundly moving."

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Cage: On Rauschenberg, Artist, and his Work

Is when Rauschenberg looks an idea? Rather it is an entertainment in which to celebrate unfixity. (Note: like Tinguely)

Rauschenberg is continually being offered scraps of this and that, odds and ends his friends run across, since it strikes them: this is something he could use in a painting. Nine tines out of ten it turns out he has no use for it. Say it's something close to something he once found useful, and so could be recognized as his. Well, then, as a matter of course, his poetry has moved without one's knowing where it's gone to.

He is like that butcher whose knife never becomes dull simply because he cut with it in such a way that it never encountered an obstacle. Modern art has no need of technique. (We are in the glory of not knowing what we're doing). So technique, not having to do with painting, has to do with who's looking and who painted.

Over and over again I've found it impossible to memorize Rauschenberg's paintings. I keep asking, "Have you changed it?" And then noticing while I'm looking it changes.

There is in Rauschenberg, between him and what he picks up to use, the quality of encounter, For the first time.

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Rauschenberg - first invu, 5/22/63

The big loft stddio at 809 Broadway looked oddly pristine, in spite of the strange objects on all sides. Painted white, floor well swept. Some of the paintings and constructions from the Jewish Museum show were stacked against walls, including the angora goat, which had been removed from its pedestal. R. himself neatly dressed and looking younger than his years. He speaks slowly, choosing his words with care, hesitating until he finds the right expression; what he says is very cogent and clear, and usually serious (although there is always an undercurrent of laughter). He looks pleased when he finds the right expression. There is something very appealing, almost touching, about his humor.

R. said the goat had been travelling a great deal, along with much of his other work, and now he wanted to give it a rest. In Italy, a man sat down on the goat's back to have his picture taken, and damaged the animal; R. engaged the taxidermist from the Natural History Museum to restore it -- one leg collapsed, and wouldn't support the weight.

We talked about the Jewish Museum show, which closed recently. It was an important event for him, R. agreed, one reason being that it would now be somewhat more difficult for people to say that ~~his~~ his work was a joke. "A joke doesn't go on being funny for ten years, does it?" He told a story about xxxx the members' opening prior to the big opening, at which he was subjected to a lot of questions that he hadn't expected, questions he thought had been taken care of by articles in Life and Time and places like that. A Jewish lady came up and asked him, really wanting to know, why he was interested only in ugly things. "I had to find out first what she meant by ugly," R. said. "She seemed to feel it had to do with the way my things were put together. To her, all my decisions seemed absolutely arbitrary; she felt there was no meaning to it, that I might just as well have selected anything at all to put on the canvas. I told her that if I were to describe the way she were dressed, my description might sound just like what she had been saying. For example, she had feathers xxxxxxxx on her head. She had an enamel pin, with a picture of the Blue Boy, pinned to her breast. Around her nexk she had what she would call mink, but what could be described as the skin of a dead animal, although it was a hot day... Well, she was rather offended by this. She went away. But later on, she came back and said she'd been thinking about what I had said, and she was going to come back with her husband and her children and discuss the whole thing with them. She was serious about it, and intelligent. But she just hadn't been able to look until someone xxxxxxxxxx helped her."

R. said he was going to be working on the Dante book this summer, writing commentary to go with the illustrations and Dore Ashton's notes on them. Also planning to go out on tour with Merce Cunningham, whenever necessary -- R. handles the lighting. "I really like to tour," he said. "In fact, I like to do all sorts of things that are not painting. xx I'm never not working (said after a pause, and with emphasis). I'm very lucky that way, really. No matter what I do, I feel is part of what I'm doing. When I go out on ths street, I'm fascinated to see how much higher they've built a new building, how much deeper they've dug that hole; I notice that the construction

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workers' hats are silver instead of orange, and so on."

Tinguely

R. admires and (one feels) even envies the situation of the dancer, for whom there is no fixed, permanent work of art. "I feel very close to that situation in my own work. I want to put off the final fixing of a work as long as possible, but of course this isn't possible in a painting. Once it's done, it's fixed, and you can only maintain the illusion by a sort of ambiguity in the ~~pxixixing~~ composition, a refusal to let the viewer make fixed associations. If I use a toothbrush in a painting, for example, I would never put a gob of white paint near it; the association would be immediate, and fixed in the viewer's mind automatically."

R.'s point here is that by keeping the viewer from making automatic associations, the illusion of life in the painting is maintained. Much like Tinguely here -- once a thing is fixed, stopped, it is dead. Tinguely's solution is motion, literally. R.'s is ambiguity. Both seem to be more interested in life than in art, and want to get closer to life than other artists do.

R. says that the main thing he does in a painting is to avoid solutions that have been made before. Once a painting is finished, therefore, he can never do anything like that again. Hence, each of his works is completely new, unrepeatable.

Cocteau's insight applies beautifully to Rauschenberg: The definition of genius as "knowing how far to go too far."

R. says he thinks of painting as "a kind of reporting," a showing of what is going on in the world as the painter sees it.

R's Loft: At least ~~seventy~~ 100 feet long, thirty wide. Rent $350 month. On fifth floor of small building, over leather industries, etc. Painted white. Neither clean nor dirty, but jumbled. Easy to lose things.

R.'s Collection: Wesselman still life; three Fahlstroms; Aaron Siskind photo, abstract; two Jim Dine's; Schwitters (non-Cubistic); two De Koonings, one erased; study for Johns' first number painting -- math calculations only; Johns' flag over orange; Johns still life; Morton Feldman, page of 'Intersection'; Stella; Johns flag in sculpmetal; Magritte; Matisse drawing; Tinguely drawing for 'Homage'; Tinguely machine, very raw; Duchamp 'Bottle Rack'; Yves Klein Blue Painting; and these of Rauschenberg: A tracing of his two feet, submitted for a drawing show (R. can draw accurate reproductions, but couldn't get any content into drawing form -- hence footprints); R's first transfer drawing, done in Cuba, some collage too; Erased deKooning; R. small combine painting, with zipper, handkerchief hanging down.

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*More on Collage: R. has always used collage "to get beyond my own personal taste. Now, I know you can never eliminate that entirely. But if you throw enough obstacles in the way of it, then it may ~~just~~ become just another element along with the others... Besides, there was always the sport angle. It's more fun to go out and look for things, and always be surprised by what you find. And the objects not only suggest new possibilities, things I would never have thought of if I'd stayed in the studio -- they also set up resistances that I find very useful. Sometimes, you see a piece of metal, for example, of a certain color and shape, and you know just the place it's going to go in the picture, but then it doesn't go there, it's too big, or too heavy, or you don't have the tools to put it there, and so you put it where it will go and then everything else in the picture has to be adjusted to it. Sometimes the material just insists on being itself..."

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R. ~~AWO~~

What is R's subject, I asked. He thought about it, and finally said it was "the what, how, and why" of a picture. What refers to the painter, how to the technique, why to both(?). "I don't want a picture to look like something it isn't, I want it to look like something it is."

The artist, according to R., is another kind of material in a picture. He opposes the idea of conscious manipulation and control, although realizing that the artist is a more significant entity who can't help exercising control to a degree. The important thing is to let the other materials retain their own dignity and excitement, not to subordinate them. Particularly as regards color. R. says he will not use green to intensify red, for example, because that implies a subordination of green. Manipulation. "I want to do something with color that will be just as exciting as the color all by itself in the jar." This reverence for the innate properties of his materials has required, it occurs to me, a complete re-education of the senses on R.'s part; he now feels that he knows enough to use colors without subordinating one to another, can let them be themselves. Which must have taken some doing, because, as he says, "I'm a pushover for color."

Important to stress that this respect for materials implies no romanticism about their associative value. "I've never thought of myself as using 'junk,' I've never used anything because it was discarded, I've just used it becausd it was available. In fact, one weakness in my paintings may be that by the time something I've decided to use gets assimilated, it looks second hand. I've opened a tin can, abd scrubbed off the label, because that was the form I needed, but by the time it got into the picture it looked old."

Now turning away from collage, in any case. Recently noticed that collage was everywhere, in all the galleries, and that most of it was being used for its own sake, as an end in itself -- i.e. the collage technique was the whole point. This was never what R. had in mind. Collage, for him, had always been a means.* Anyway, he started turning toward flat painting last year, with the big painting called ACE. 'Ace was very difficult. It was necessary to use a few objects, as it turned out, but very few"). Then came the silkscreen pictures, which he deliberately limited to black and white "because I'm such a pushover for color, and I didn't want that to interfere with what I was trying to work out." Now he's planning a new series of silkscreen pictures in color, during the month of June before going on tour with Merce Cunningham. This is how he works best, when he has a limited period between two obligations, a kind of deadline, a box. Has already started taking photographs from which to work.

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ARTISTS PRESSING PAVILION AT FAIR

Committee Urges Moses to Back Art Exhibition

By BRIAN O'DOHERTY

A committee representing 12 artists' societies is pressing for an exhibition of contemporary American art in a separate pavilion at the New York World's Fair. At the moment there are no official plans for such an exhibition.

The newly formed Committee of Artists' Societies has written to Governor Rockefeller, to Robert Moses, president of the World's Fair Corporation, and to influential persons in the art world for support.

Sponsors of the committee include Lloyd Goodrich, director of the Whitney Museum, Arthur Miller, the playwright, and, since his resignation as cultural adviser to the White House, August C. Heckscher.

Hugo Gellert and Isabel Bishop, representing a group of artists, approached Mr. Heckscher last year when funds for the Federal Pavilion were made available.

There were reports at that time that 20,000 square feet of exhibition space had been made available. The artists' committee hoped to double the space by inserting another floor.

Later the Federal Pavilion was redesigned and the assigned space was reduced to 10,000 square feet. The artists' committee felt it would be impossible to mount a representative exhibition in that space.

Early this year the group sought official representatives from artists' societies and formed itself into a committee with Mr. Gellert as chairman.

Twenty-four years ago, Mr. Gellert was one of those responsible for getting the 1939 World's Fair authorities to reverse a decision against an exhibition of American art.

A letter signed by five members of the committee — Miss Bishop, Chaim Gross, Jacob Lawrence, Henry V. Poor, and Mr. Gellert — was sent to Mr. Moses requesting an interview to discuss "the possibilities that will enable us to achieve our objectives."

Replying the next day, Mr. Moses saw "no useful purpose which can be served by a meeting of the kind you suggest, unless you know of some source of funds for a Fine Arts Pavilion of Contemporary American Art such as you suggest." "The time," he added, "is very late."

Mr. Moses suggested that the committee discuss the matter with Norman Winston, commissioner of the United States Pavilion and with Lieut. Gov. Malcolm Wilson, chairman of the New York State World's Fair Pavilion.

The committee has preferred to deal with Gen. William E. Potter, executive vice president of the Fair, whom they find "very sympathetic."

General Potter referred the group to Louis B. Ames, director of the fair's cultural program. Mr. Ames plans to request 60,000 square feet of land to build a simple construction covering 40,000 square feet, to house about 1,200 works of art. There is a proviso, however, that the artists' committee will have to raise the necessary funds for the building.

Mr. Ames had no comment yesterday on the proposal, which, he said, he was still working on. At a press conference yesterday, Mr. Moses showed little enthusiasm for the proposed exhibition. "I think it's much too late to do anything about it," he said.

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Rauschenberg — 6/17/63 (4)

Arrived abt 1 PM, found R. on phone to Andy Warhol about the Philip Johnson commission for NY World's Fair pavillion — outdoor paintings; Warhol used Rosenquist (the sign painter) to do his for him. R. pacing back and forth at the end of the telephone cord as he talked.

Spread out on floor were about 20 pictures that R. had culled from magazines — his 'palette' for the silk screens. He had been waiting for 2 weeks for bright sunlight to shoot his own color pix, never got any; this was less satisfactory, but he couldn't wait any longer. About 3 hours work, culling. Pix included those black + whites — the control panel of a Boeing 707 Jet (ad) and a shot of the windswept ocean (ad for Bendix) — "just when I decided not to do any more black and white I found two (aren't they marvellous?) that I ~~had to~~ ought to" — and a woodcarving from the Natl. Geographic; rest were color shots: a fabric ad from NYT mag (stripes); the Statue of Liberty, dramatic worms-eye view; a beach scene; a construction scene; a blanket ad showing folded blanket in bright colors; an Army helicopter in Vietnam; boy scouts marching with flags; a series of bird shots; Astronaut Cooper's capsule in ocean with flotation collar and frogman; a multi-hued shaft of light — actually a heated iron rod; the nebula of a star (abstract); the NY skyline in day + night; the Sestine Chapel (Life)

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On his work table were strewn a lot of other pix not being used, including a ~~strange and beautiful~~ scene of arctic ice floes that he decided was ~~too~~ so beautiful and strong that he couldn't use it. Also ~~dozens~~ lots of lettering experiments for the Dante.

R. came over to look at the layout on floor. What's missing, he said, are some random shots of things that just happened to be lying around — a ball of string, a glass of water, etc. "I'd feel more comfortable if I had some ~~of~~ things like that." Filling everything from mags tends to pull him too much in one direction, to be overly conceptual, to smack too much of taste "even if the taste is that of no-taste." What is needed is more of a sense of accident — as with the construction - combines, ~~of which~~ whose elements he collected on walks around the neighborhood, picking up <u>whatever was available and struck his eye.</u> [On some of his earlier paintings, R. would go to hardware stores and buy, at a discount, cans of paint that had lost their labels; that way he was assured of having around some colors that he couldn't possibly exercise control over, even unconsciously, because he wouldn't know what they were until he opened them.] He thinks he can remedy the lack of such random images later. Before lunch, he made up an order, with sizes, for silk screens of the pix, and sent it off to the man

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[Later on, the man called back twice in some dismay — wanted more information as to colors, etc. Most of the color sheets had already been silk screened for the magazine. R. didn't want to tell him that it didn't matter, that he could make something out of whatever the man sent back].

Lunch at Longchamps, talked about kinkajou "Scottie" and his predecessor, a lemur named "Yankee"; & ad more BIO. R. off to Fla. to buy a mate for Scottie.

Back to studio. Talked about dirt paintings. "Nothing of mine ever starts with an idea." — The painting with growing plants came from accident of birdseed falling on an earlier dirt painting, the mounting when water fell on it. [Dirt held in by waterglass coating].

(R. started using silk screens when he got back from the Bylaby show in Amsterdam. He'd been under great pressure there, working day and night to finish in time (five sculptures and three paintings in two weeks), and he had a great urge to paint flat).

R. doesn't like to have much old work around him when he paints. "Old work slows you down." He arranges to get it out of the studio -- no problem at all now, when the problem usually is in holding on to anything. He has an arrangement with Leo whereby he keeps one out of four of his own works, stores them in Santini Bros. warehouse -- so as to take advantage of the rise in price later on. "My taste is such that I always have enough for a pretty good show." R. says he is the best judge of his own work, and that he can tell which of his paintings or sculptures are going to be important in terms of future development, i.e. by having in them something which will become increasingly important in future work.

R. started working on four big canvases, applying the whole image from a particular screen to one and then parts of it to the others. Used the clock, the cockpit panel, a large aerial map, etc. Working fast, back and forth. Can vases flat on floor. Worked steadily until time to go to Hudson Dana Theatre

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Monday, June 24 (last week before going to West Coast)

R. just back from Florida, where he bought another kinkajou ("Guy") and looked at a house on Sanibel Island, just off ~~the Gulf~~ the Gulf Coast. The house is a large houseboat, which the owner floated in and landlocked there. Now being offered for $500,000, can be had for $250,000. R. thinking of it as a retreat, a place where the Cunningham company could go in off season (it has a twenty-foot deck for dancing).

Would R. like it there? Yes -- for short periods. "My idea of something to do is -- lie on a beach, hunt for shells, take a walk, things like that." But his real home, one feels, will always be New York.

"New York is so exciting because the edges haven't got knocked off it. In Europe, there's always a different feeling, smoother, with a kind of patina over everything. Here you never can predict what you're going to see when you go out on the street. I don't think New York is a melting pot at all. Nothing melts here, it all just stands out like a sore thumb."

R. starting a new series of silk screen paintings, in black and white again because the silk screen maker needed more time to make the color screens he had ordered. We went downtown in the jeep to pick up the screens. There were five in all -- windswept ocean, baroque fresco, airplane cockpit panel, clock diagram, and the bald eagle. He started in to work on them in the late afternoon, around 5:30, amidst interruptions, telephone calls, trips to the icebox for a new drink, etc. Kept talking as he worked.

On silk screen technique: "It's as much like Christmas for me as using objects I pick up on the street. There's that same quality of surprise and freshness I get with objects. When I get the screens back, the images look different from the way they did in the original magazine cutouts because of the change in scale, so that's a surprise. Then, they look different again when I transfer them to the canvas, so there's another surprise. And they suggest different things constantly when they're juxtaposed with other images, so there's another surprise."

(R. started using silk screens when he got back from the Dylaby show in Amsterdam. He'd been under great pressure there, working day and night to finish in time (five sculptures and three paintings in two weeks), and he had a great urge to paint flat).

R. doesn't like to have much old work around him when he paints. "Old work slows you down." He arranges to get it out of the studio -- no problem at all now, when the problem usually is in holding on to anything. He has an arrangement with Leo whereby he keeps one out of four of his own works, stores them in Santini Bros. warehouse -- so as to take advantage of the rise in price later on. "My taste is such that I always have enough for a pretty good show." R. says he is the best judge of his own work, and that he can tell which of his paintings or sculptures are going to be important in terms of future development, i.e. by having in them something which will become increasingly important in future work.

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Tuesday, June 25

R. started to work about noon. Said he had come in late the night before and looked at the new pictures, and decided they were getting "too surrealistic -- all those dials and facades." He felt the need to bring them back to earth. Leafing through his pile of old screens, he took out several with concrete, human images -- the Hudson river with ferry slips, children playing, firemen in a fire, the mountaineer dangling from a cliff.

"I never used to work on more than one thing at a time, but with silk screens you have to open so much paint that it doesn't make much sense to do that." R. moves from one to the other, working very fast, totally absorbed when working but easily interrupted. Stands all four up against wall after a while and looks at them for a while, before going in with paint, which he scrubs on straight from the can (white artist's pigment), rubs on with cloth (turpentine), or applies with his fingers. Rubbing, dripping, black and white paint. Applies masking tape to an area and paints around it, then pulls off tape -- straight edge verging into rough, loose black.

"I like working on several this way, because you're not so likely to get hung up, or to work schemingly. You keep moving. And when you come back to one, and it hasn't moved automatically while you were away, suggesting something new, you just go on to the next. Which isn't saying that you don't sometimes get hung up on all of them at once."

I asked whether any one interested him more than another at this point. He looked at them for a long time. They were up against the wall, and all very different. Some looked almost too cluttered, another too bare, another very loose and romantic. R. pointed to the one on which he had let turpentine spatter in a pattern of grey dots -- unusual for him, too Pollock. "I guess that one. But I'd have to think about it."

Later, stepping back: "I think they're about even now, as far as what state they're in."

Nicolas Calas, an art critic, came in. (R. explained later that Calas, a flamboyant Greek, has been in a kind of semi-retirement for years because he so disliked abstract expressionism). He is writing something on American art history, wanted to ask R. what other painters of the previous generation he admired. R. said he liked Edward Hopper. Said he hated Ben Shahn, who was ruined as a painter by his attempt to swallow newer techniques.

They talked about R.'s work in theatrical lighting. "I don't use light as color," said R. "You use it as movement," said Calas, and R., delighted, agreed. "Why didn't you tell me that before, instead of asking me?"

Late afternoon, R. looking at one of the bigger canvases: "It's so funny, I know just how to finish that one. It's almost like cheating. Just put the bird in there (pointing to empty space), and it's done." He went and got the eagle screen, unused so far, and put the image where he had said. "All right, have it your way." Also used eagle on another of the canvases. Extraordinarily powerful image -- the danger is that it will dominate too much.

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Tuesday, June 25 (oont).

"Some images can be broken down into abstractions, and some absolutely insist on being themselves no matter what you do with them. I find that the screens I keep around are the ones that have the sort of flexibility that lets them be broken down." Nevertheless, the eagle is superb.

Even later, R. compensating for the eagle's power by putting in color in another part of the picture. Applying it straight from the tube, with his fingers, a series of splotches. Stepping back, he is startled to see an association cropping up. Being the only color in the painting, it associates with the eagle -- strongest element. The splotches thus might seem to suggest eggs. R. scrubs at them with his fingers until the possibility is no longer possible, and adds red and blue.

R. tries putting the two smaller canvases together. The Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts has asked him for another picture. He knows they need $2500, thinks a big picture might do it. The two go together surprisingly well. R. masks off a small section, rectangular but not precisely so, on the right hand canvas at the edge where it joins the left canvas. Paints it bright red, and removes tape. This does just what he wants. By seeming to push the pictures apart, it actually draws attention to their union and pulls them together. He is pleased: "Those two are lulus." They have surprised him.

Three of the four are finished, probably. R. has no particular way of knowing when a picture is finished, usually has to have it around for several days before he decides. He has sometimes thought a picture was finished, then changed his mind and worked on it for weeks more, repainting the whole surface. The indications, though, are that the two smaller ones and the big one with the eagle are finished. Not bad for two days work, which really comes down to about four hours. The big, loose, romantic one (my favorite) looks unfinished to me, but for the rest of the week, R. will do notning more on it.

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Friday, Aug. 23

R. back from New London Monday night, picked up new silk screens Tuesday, started painting new series in color Wednesday. Big investment in screens -- $4,000. Four color separation process presented technical problems, which he approached with caution at first. Everything felt completely different, unfamiliar. The gaudy silk screen colors didn't go on with anything like the same authority of black and white. By Wednesday evening, though, he had loosened up. Was no longer sticking pins through screens to get them exactly juxtaposed. "Everything went to pot," looked awful for a while. R. got four colors on some of his images, by putting them down while wet; hues like bad color photography resulted. At the end of the afternoon, he surveyed his four unfinished canvases and said, "Well, at least it doesn't remind me of the work of any other painter. So at least there's the chance of making an original statement!"

(Silkscreen images: NY signpost with street signs, Nassau and Pine; Statue of Liberty; Ecumenical Council in Sistine Chapel; Glass of water; vast construction project; oranges; bird in flight. Also using some old black and white screens - clock diagram)

On Friday, the four were going very well. Two of them had "broken loose," i.e. the elements come together; the other two still fairly stiff, with separated rectangles of silkscreen images. Note: There is always a point at which a R. painting "shakes loose," when he suddenly knows where it's going.

R. talked about this particular situation, which was just about ideal for his purposes. The strange, garish s.s. colors, which were so far from the colors he would choose, the uncertainty of effects -- never knowing what glamorous new color would suddenly appear when he went in with a brush, etc. "It's like an object. The color is so far from what I'd choose myself that it keeps putting me off, making it really impossible for me to manipulate or control." R. is happiest when his materials continually assert their own identity, making a true collaboration possible. "The material is never wrong. It's only me that can be wrong." Using only the silkscreen colors thus far, even when going in with a brush -- but he got a good R. gray while cleaning squeegees, used that on one picture). R. will use some artist's colors, but not in such a way as to change the quality of the silkscreen colors.

Some of the images coming up fairly close to true colors in photograph, others pretty wild. "This may set back serography twenty years!"

R. put the clock diagram in the exact center of the Sistine chapel, "making a modern painting out of the Last Judgement." He was delighted to discover that the gesture of a construction worker in the foreground of the construction scene -- pointing upward with one finger -- suggests that of Adam in the Michaelangelo fresco. Accordingly R. put him in double, pointing both ways, because "that's more my point of view." (Note: When R. was painting Barge, he was similarly delighted to find that the satellite package placed close to Velasquez' Venus was the "Venus probe" -- critics later made much of Freudian interpretation, saying the Mack truck was a male image etc. -- if they'd looked more closely they could have gotten the symbolism without going through Freud. This sort of thing is never intended by R., but if he discovers it after the fact, he may leave it in).

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Castelli ruminating on the new pi ctures/, which he considers to be full of symbolism of which R. is partially aware at some level of consciousness: The Vatican-Sistine chapel contains the idea of Michaelangelo, great art, and also Catholocism, the old Pope John and the new Pope Paul; the Statue of Liberty suggests whole idea of freedom, both political and artistic, and the image of her upside down with torch pointing down suggests thumbs down on freedom in USA, thus civil rights struggle, etc. etc. Castelli says when he talks this way to R., Bob nods his head and smiles, indicating that he more or less knew these ideas were there. Not so with Johns, who is inclined to say that all those things may be there in his painting, but he didn't know about them when it painted it.

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Friday Aug 23 (cont)

"I know how I'd describe this kind of color -- delicious! It's like movie candy. It's so glamorous -- every color is trying to be a star, ~~saying~~ saying look how much talent I have!"

We discussed briefly his fascination with time, clocks, etc. R. didn't mention the Cage incident. Says he's always intensely conscious of time, of time passing, things changing, etc. Doesn't want to create a fixed work of art, and would like his work to have that quality of change. Using a clock in a picture helps toward that end. "But I've never yet met a person, even those who profess it most, who didn't resist change. Everybody's really afraid of it."

Discussed Duchamp's idea that a painting has about a thirty year life, after which it dies. R. agrees. "After thirty years, nobody sees the real object, the picture, any more. They just see ~~xxxx~~ everybody's ideas about it. But I wonder if maybe a picture can't come back to life again after a much longer time..." R. said he was disappointed on first seeing Duchamp's Nude. "I thought it was an interesting picture and all that, but I didn't see what the fuss was about."

More on silkscreen colors: "I'd just love it if I could get away with that pink. It's not like a color at all, it's like fingernail polish. Helena Rubinstein could bring it out next season, Rauschenberg pink, created by Helena Rubinstein."

R. had placed two of his canvases side by side against the wall, to work at drawing them apart. So far, everything he had done to one he had also done to the other, and they looked too much alike. Suddenly, with one stroke, he finished the one on the left. He went and got an old black and white screen of the Washington ~~xxxxxxxx~~ statue in lower NY, and put in a segment of the fence around it -- right in the middle of the canvas, in a white-painted space. Miraculous pulling together of various elements. Just the right amount of black -- have to be very careful not to put in too much black and white, because there's a point at which, if you do, "the colors don't function any more, it becomes predominantly black and white." This was just right. ~~xxxxxxxx~~ "I think that one's finished." R. turned it face to the wall, to get it out of the way. Will let it cool off for a few days before deciding finally whether it's finished. (It wasn't).

On another, he scrubbed away at one of the four bird-in-flight images with a benzine-soaked rag, getting a partially erased image with a different tonality that made it less competetive with the color in the other side of the picture. This ~~xxxxxxxx~~ was the important stroke. As R. put it, more or less seriously: "The birds have freed the stop signs."

Work going much faster than he had expected. (But when he got into second color series, he admitted that he found himself terrifically frustrated. "It's such an indirect way of working. You do something, and then five hours later you find it was a mistake. I've thought of giving them up. I get so full of frustration and hostility -- and you know I'm not an abstract expressionist, I can't use all that!")

~~When I saw that Rose Back etc for example~~

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Rauschenberg Log - 10/27/77

Twelve-thirty at the Knickerbocker Club, about forty people invited to meet Princess Margaret, of whom Bob is one. He flew up from Captiva yesterday for the occasion, and is wearing a worn but serviceable grey tweed suit, white shirt, and nondescript black bow tie. Rosamund Russell (co-hostess, with Ashton Hawkins) tells me Bob's had a crush on Margaret for years, has met her before. When she arrives, in purple and having lost her voice, he makes a point of talking to her. Afterward, he's hugely disappointed. Feels she was wiped out, drunk, nothing there at all. Bob got pretty drunk himself at lunch, and when it was over I found him demonstrating to Jerry Robbins a dance step he'd learned in Texas, to great hilaripus effect.

I went down to his place with him afterward, at his near-insistence. He asked with something like glee if I'd read Bob Hughes' piece on Jasper, whicb "really raked him over." Bob said he'd gone to the show the morning before the opening to get the catalog, had seen David Whitney who said to come on upstairs, and he did and found Jasper washing his paintings with rags and soap and water. First time they'd spoken in a while. But it just gets more and more distant, Bob says. "Jasper gets to sound more andmore like John (Cage). It's another layer to hide behind. He's gone in for hiding, you see, and I've gone in for being more and more open." Hughes had called Jasper "the Picasso of entropy," and Bob said he'd spent three days trying to find out what entropy meant. The rivalry is stronger than ever.

At Lafayette Street, he showed me an early combine painting with a blue light bulb extending out from it on a cord - Leo has just re-evaluated it for something like $125,000.

Upstairs, to more Jack Daniels. Charlie Yoder, the tall young painter who works with him, said they hadn't been sure whether they were going to get Bob up for the lunch or not. Had tried to comb his hair while he was still in bed, but the cowlick stood straight up. Bob Peterson appeared and sat with us, around the kitchen table. Rocky, the desert tuttle, also made an appearance. He's lived on the floor for about eight years now, is referred to as the housekeeper -- a really lethal looking reptile. They took him to Captiva once, but he didn't like it at all, hated walking in sand.

Talked about the artist's rights bill a bit. Bob says the royalty arrangement would never deter a collector, since it comes out of profit only. He recalled his own publicity a couple of weeks ago, arguing for it against hostile audience in California, when he said there had been a time when he wasn't Rauschenberg.

Steve Paxton called - he's in New York to give a performance.

Bob is not going to his own opening at Janie C. Lee's -- they don't get along. He managed instead to have to go to a bar mitzvah in Tampa on same day, this Saturday.

We decided that Margaret was sad but not tragic. I said she was too short to be tragic, and they liked that.

Antonio came, to deliver three huge truffles from Italy.

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Sunday Jan. 22

Arrival 4 PM. Peterson waiting at airport. Flat landscape with palms, low white buildings, soft air. We get into the Jeep Waggoneer with the three dogs, Kid, Cloud, Star (Kid mated with Laika and produced Cloud, who mated with her in his turn; Star is a Siberian husky, in memory of Moon who died of distemper). On the way to Captiva Peterson stops by the road to pick up a strip of a truck tire that he thinks Bob might use. It's about an hour's drive, over the causeway to Sanibel Is. and then north to Captiva. Change of vegetation on Captiva -- more dense. Sea grape, cabbage palm, coconut palm, royal palm, several different species of pine, mangrove.

Bob at door: "The barking car." Looking tanned from a day in the sun, the first good day in a while here. Inside are Peter Wirth, his work assistant, Tim Pharr, his carpenter, and Vicci Dwyer. All clustered around kitchen space, with color TV on to golf tournament at Pebble Beach. Peter is from Ohio, a blond good-looking cleancut type with engaging smile; he was at the University of Fla in Tampa when Bob came here to work, worked with Bob on prints, came down here about five years ago. He paints, and helps Bob with his things.

Bob drinking Jack Daniels from oversize glass - drinks slowly, eating nothing. Also swallows large handful of vitamins, including B-15 which is supposed to stop you from drinking -- he says it stopped him for about three days, "and then I had a drink..." He talks to Jim Rosenquist on the 'phone -- close friendship.

Shortly after ten we head thru the woods in the Jeep to the studio, a house with a big garage and 220 current ("I couldn't believe my luck.") Two new pieces, unfinished, against the wall, one with central image of a big tiger. Bob chooses images from his bank of clippings -- Lite beer carton boxes marked "Motorized," Abstract, Nature, Animals, Objects, Landscape, Black and White, Sports, People. Cut from magazines to which he subscribes - dozens. He selects one, places it face down on cardboard panel on press bed; remembering each one as he adds others; placing them quite neatly and in straight lines. Peter sprays with solvent, and they put down paper, plastic sheet, and run back and forth through the specially made "Grasshopper" press.

Bob started working a week ago, and is going at a great clip. He has two shows coming up, one at James Mayor in London, the other at Ileana's in Paris, and because of tax accounts he has to have both finished by the end of March. He's turning out new work in great quantity as a means of keeping ahead of the old. Also planning a show of new work that will start in Vancouver, go to Peking, Sri Lanka, etc.

TV in studio is tuned to James Bond film, "The Man With the Golden Gun." Bob says it doesn't distract him -- "boring or exciting is all the same" -- tends to become like one long film. He is working on a new piece that will have louver-like panels, to be seen only in reflection in mirrored surfaces. Does about ten of them by midnight, working surely and without haste. Marsha Stice, Tim and Sheryl Pharr pay a late call, and Marsha comes back for dinner at the Beach House. Marsha and Peter have been living together, but no longer; I gather it's been a difficult time for all. Bob wasn't sure Peter was coming back after Christmas to help him with the two new shows. Dinner goes on until after two, and Bob drives Marsha home.

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Log

(14)

Monday Jan 23

Wake up to sounds of Mariner Corp construction equipment up the beach, adding new condominiums to South Seas Plantation. Sunshine and warmth, gentle lapping waves on the beach, quiet white house, dogs on their towels. Elderly shellers on the beach, some with camp stools, sifting through piles of shells.

Marsha drops by for coffee about noon. She comes from Chicago. Her parents built a retirement house here, and moved to Captiva in the late fifties. She hated it - no boys, nothing happening. But then she got married and had four kids and took a place here too, and for the last five years or so (divorced, I gather) she's been living here. Now thinking of leaving. Met Bob through Dodi Booth, the former postmistress, who heard Bob telephoning his house in New York in booth outside postoffice, and thought anybody who cared that much about animals must be OK. Marsha and Vicci worked on Jammers and Hoarfrosts, sewing material. She has been taking courses at Community College in Fort Myers, would like to study anthropology. Her clear skin and curly blond hair.

Bob up about 2 PM, in clean white shirt. A little flaky -- face sags in pouches, lines deepset, shoulders hunched, hands trembling. He has a glass of tea, then starts in on bullshots.

Bob takes me over to the studio, after explaining that he and Cy and Peterson all worked on the design, leaving it out on kitchen table and each making changes at will -- when nobody had made a change in a week they decided it was ready to build. A long, rectangular second floor room, facing east-west (because that meant the least sacrifice of trees, altho it turned out wonderfully well for light), and divided lengthwise with one 8-foot-wide section that was planned for storage but became a fine gallery instead. Bob's new work all around, large architectural freestanding pieces with mirrors, and some smaller wall pictures "because people always want those." In the narrow gallery is a big painting with a boat rudder at the top, which Bob is keeping. Ileana, "my most selective critic always," told him on one of her brief visits that she wanted to buy that one even if it meant selling her gallery to do so, and he was moved and gratified to hear her say so. But when Doug Christmas found it was not in group for his show he nearly wept, said he had already sold it, from a transparency, to one of his most important collectors, needed the money to make the down payment (Bob makes him put money up front), etc etc. Ileana then went into a rage, said she would never have more than a professional relationship to Bob again, he never fulfilled his promises. Finally Bob got sick of it and said fuck them all, I'm keeping it.

The work is beautiful, fresh, complex, and a little too slick maybe. He's using polished aluminum in colors to give mirror images, which often seem to extend below the floor and give illusion of great depth. Tim does all the carpentry. None of the grittiness of his early work.

Back to the kitchen, and a sort of lunch Peterson whips up of re-heated spinach with a poached egg on top. I start to ask questions, after Bob mentions the "performance quality" of his pictures, the provocative element that draws the spectator into it -- I bring up Harold Rosenberg's statement about the ab-ex painters making the onlooker a participant, and Bob says yes, in their feelings -- that prison. We have a discussion of ab-ex.

Bob says he did hang around the Cedar a lot, and when the tourists

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LOG

started to move in at ~~the~~ Dillon's down the street. Often he'd walk uptown to save money, and either nurse one beer all night or be treated. "I got to know Franz Kline very well. I spent enough time to know Bill de Kooning, Philip Guston, Jack Tworkov, Rothko, and several others. Occasionally I would even meet Pollock. Kline wasn't gloomy. He was a compulsive talker -- no story ever really ended or began with him. When he was inspired with his images you just couldn't believe that one sentence could follow another so brilliantly." But the whole general atmosphere was pretty heavy. "They assigned seriousness to certain colors and intensity of brushstrokes, so as to arouse this kind of sympathy in the artist's condition. It even got into the poetry -- I often used to think of that line from Howl, about 'the sad cup of coffee.' I've had cold coffee and hot coffee, good coffee and lousy coffee, but I've never had a sad cup of coffee. That sort of anthropomorphism just seemed absurd to me. I've always had a literal mind and a literal way of working. I never wanted to use materials to transcend. It's essential to all my work that things look the way they are -- if there's any fantasy it's in the contradictory way they relate to each other without being critical."

The Erased de Kooning

Came entirely from "my need to do a drawing made only of erasure. Nobody believes it yet. I knew I was on dangerous ground there, of course. But I knew what my motivation was, and it was reinforced by deKooning's agreement.

"I just told him I had been working for several weeks to see if erasure could be part of the structure of a drawing -- if a drawing could be all erasing. I'd been trying with my own ~~work~~ drawings and it didn't work, because that was only 50% of what I was trying to get. I had to start with something that was 100% art, and his work was definitely art. In those days he was the clearest figure as far as quality and appreciation and notoreity were concerned.

"Bill was uncomfortable with the idea at first. We talked about it for a while -- I'd gone to see him in his studio on 14th Street. He said he understood the idea but didn't like it much. But he agreed to cooperate. He had two or three portfolios of drawings, and he went to one, and said, 'No, I'd miss one of these too much.' He went to another, but that one had ~~some~~ drawings that were unfinished, that he wanted to work on some more. He went to the third, and said he was going to give me something really hard, and it was. It took me about forty erasers and two weeks to do it.

"Bill was always very good to young artists. Once Cy and I came up from Black Mountain and stayed in Jack Tworkov's studio, which was right next to Bill's -- a very thin wall between them. One night Bill knocked on the door, and asked if he could take us both to dinner, and that night I got another drawing -- I was fascinated by his doodling on the place mat, so he gave it to me. Another time I sneaked into his studio and took a lot of photographs -- it was just total idolizing -- and I stole a drawing out of the trash basket.

"Most of that time it was more likely that I was wrong, you see."

The ab-ex people "had something that we (Bob and Cy) didn't, a kind of security of their colleagues. Even though there wasn't a public yet, there was a very strong society of artists, something that would be

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L+G

impossible today. They were the entire American art world -- and the idea that we could go to one bar and see them all was pretty exciting. If you didn't talk too much you learned a lot.

"I don't know why Barney Newman was ever considered an abstract expressionist. But he had a humor and a sense of worldliness that Franz Kline did. Reinhardt might have had it, except that I found his 100% negative approach too difficult to understand. Nobody could work like that -- and his all black pictures were brilliant colors to me then, when I was painting all-black.

"It's probably no accident that my only supporters were in the theater or in music. It must have had something to do with my appetite or my work."

Discovering Schwitters? Not until after the Parsons show, and then it was a disappointment. "I wasn't really literate about art history. I started working before I found out anything. But being involved in collage, I kept hearing people compare my work to Schwitters. When I did see his work, it seemed like it couldn't have been more opposite to my work. I was working either with devices that would let the work compose itself, or stepping back enough to let the accidents take over. He was using the same kind of collage materials, but from the opposite ideology (i.e., Cubist order, imposed from without). The materials, it seemed to me, were totally incidental."

Performance quality again -- "to invite the spectator to pay more attention to his own life. In the sense of becoming more aware of the things around him. It should sponsor a real hatred of generalizations, and encourage a kind of self respect that anyone could afford and share. It's ironic that these works that I would like to achieve that end are now in my own way. In fact, the longer I work the more I realize that my biggest enemy is in knowing too much. In having too much experience. Like a whore practicing to become a virgin -- by a whore I mean just worldliness, collective experience that if you're not careful tends to make you believe in a certain way which would then be a static form. You can't be experienced and innocent at the same time.

"Jasper and I shared this more than any other artists I know -- the need for a work of art to be an object, rather than being valuable internally first."

Bob said he met Jasper through Suzi Gablik, whom he'd known at Black Mountain. Suzi thought they'd like each other. Jasper lived then on Pearl Street, around the corner from Bob. He was going with Rochelle Rosenthal. The story about Bob's going blind is that he was doing blueprints, and a sunlamp he was using exploded in his face; shortly both his eyes were swollen shut and he was in great pain. He rolled around on the floor for a couple of hours, and then Jasper, coming home from his job in a bookstore, called up to him (Bob had moved into Rochelle's apt when she went to California to start improvisational theater group), and took him to the hospital. Bob got Rochelle's apt and her gas heater in exchange for some work; the first day he was there the heater blew up.

(A girl grad student from Univ of Miami calls, wants Bob to lecture; Marsha handles it. Bob says he won't do anything like that down here, altho he does in connection with shows. Can't work in NY any more, "because it always seems like there are more important things to do -- after all, how many

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Peter Wirth's 35th birthday dinner – Manto's Oysters Rock, RR scallops, Sheryl's gypsy pie. "Harvey Home" on TV.

Rausc enbergs do we really need? I'm the one who needs them, to continue that dialogue withm myself").

Bob speaks of "all those years of trust -- in myself, alone in the studio. But I still often think maybe today's the day it all falls apart and I can't do it any more. The fifty-two-year-old mechanism may break down, and what do I know about fixing it?"

Tuesday

~~Tuesday~~ Jan. 24

Up about eleven. Early breakfast with Peterson, who tells me about himself.

Peterson was born in Iowa, where his parents had a farm outside Sioux City. Youngest of four brothers. Family moved to Whittier, Cal. when he was eight, because a brother got polio and the doctor said he'd be able to walk again if they got him to California. Their father didn't know anything but farming; he became an alcoholic and died in California, but the brother got well. Bob always liked to draw, knew he wanted to be an artist without knowing what an artist was -- sort of thought it was somebody who sat in shopping center drawing pastel portraits. He went to college to avoid the draft -- a junior college, then state college branch at Long Beach, where he took architectural drawing, carpentry courses at first then went into fine arts. Discovered printmaking. Went to work for Gemini after graduation, in Aug 1968, and met RR there (Stoned Moon series). Couldn't take Ken Tyler, quit after 8 months and went to live with Bob - house in Malibu because NY studio fire. RR starting "Currents." Captiva just a cabin then. First real work at Captiva was Cardboards -- altho RR made down payment on house by doing drawings at the kitchen table.

Afternoon invu with Bob -- see Bio.

Late PM at studio, where Tim is putting together a couple of new pieces. Peterson's black and white paintings on one wall. Quartz lights. Bob asks "Does the new work look strange to you?" I comment on it s being so well-made, and he says that's like what I was saying last night, about his precise way of working in print studio. "They do have a clean look," he says. "I think that came out of Jammers. " Not out of living here? No. Also, he says, out of his reaction to India, where you see a kind of luxuriousness in the midst of utter poverty, someone covered with filth and sores wearing a gorgeous rag. India got him over his hangup about beauty...

Tim starts glueing and we leave -- RR's collective epoxy poisoning, which first appeared after he did Barge. Bob still owns Barge. A couple of museums have wated to buy it, but museum people never move fast enough. The price keeps going up -- now over $1 million.

Bob has Peterson get out the book on "Rauschenberg In Israel." Sponsored by Sam and Adeline Dorsky Visual Art Development Program. The Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Yona Fischer, curator. May 14-June 3, 1974. RR, RP, Hisachika Takahashi, Christine Kozlov, Mayo Thompson. Photos of them gathering different colored sands from Dead Sea beach, Jericho-Jerusalem road, Tel Aviv. Stealing cardboard cartons. RR did six constructions of sand-and-cardboard. Bob says "they" liked everything about us, the way we worked, our energy, our attitude, but nobody liked the results much. A group of wall pieces and sculptures. Peterson had a show too, at a gallery. Bob's idea to work in public at museum, let people watch and ask questions. Bar set up in packing crate - visitors offered food and drink.

No work tonight. Bed at 1 AM.

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Wed. Jan 25

Bob gets a lot of sleep- up to 12 hours. But looks puffy in the morning. This morning he says he's feeling anxious - got up that way. "I don't really have an edge on working yet, I'm sort of distracted." Has to think up a new piece because Tim is nearly caught up making them. And he's running out of materials, found objects like oars. "This island is too clean."

Picking up things from TV -- the word "portents;" the mirror-glass mosaic surface of Liberace's piano.

We talk about Egypt - "my fantasy about size, and scale." Sand and boxes. But he wasn't at all prepared for the impact of Tut show -- "When I came out of that I passed some great paintings (Natl Gallery) that seemed a lot smaller."

Laika -- one of two puppies he saw while visiting David Tudor in Stony Point. One black, one white, mostly Samoyed. He wanted both but got only the black one. Tanya named it - said Russians so unimaginative they had only two names for dogs, Bobka and Laika ("bark"). He kept her seventeen years. She died last year, and his neighbors got together and had the street, which was one of three Coconut Lanes in Captiva, renamed Laika Lane.

Bob says he's now trying to buy the property next to him, which is up for sale. "We can always get the money." He's been all over the US, he says, and Captiva is all that's left. Peterson would like the desert but Bob needs to be near water. Years ago he turned east from Wilmington, went all the way down the east coast and then out west looking.

Today is windy, with a rougher sea and palms clashing restlessly. Hot sun in the morning, turning cloudy PM. The gulf a pearly grey color, green out further. Weather changing.

Charlie calls from NY with a problem --Ileana yelled at him. Another problem over the French documentary, "Mostly About RR". Bob moving very slowly. Breakfast ofs scrambled eggs, pork, creme fraiche. Takes vitamins slowly, with bullshot.

His drinking: "I really do like to drink." Drinking filters out most of the problems that distract him from work, also get rid of the self to a degree so he can work more freely.

Watching daytime serials on TV - man who doesn't know he's married to the woman; the rich people on "Young and Restless." He knows the stories because they move so slowly.

Interview on beach -- see Bio.

To the print studio about 8 PM, still full of anxiety. Bob is supposed to call Ileana, (but doesn't) -- gets started working on three small leftover pieces of doorskin (mahogany veneer used on doors, a material that Jim Rosenquist discovered; very thin, so it can be put thru the press; covered with white gesso. Bob sets up the three panels against the wall and looks at them for a while, his shoulders hunched in that way he has. John Wayne movie on TV. Pete trying to cut thru a piece of steel-belted truck tire in the other room.

Eventually Bob goes and gets an armful of colored silk from the bags

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in the hall -- he collects it when he travels, has a place in NYC he buys from too. It's very expensive material. He puts the long panel down on the press, and cuts a piece of yellow silk to go on half of it. Peter glues it down with sizing, brushing through the back. A green square goes down next -- "like the most beautiful wash."

Another panel, smaller, gets covered in red and white striped material, with different all-red around the outer part. "That's making me sick to look at," Bob says laughing. Third panel takes various colors. Bob, cuts the silk, turns the glueing over to Peter while he circles the press, makes another drink, chats, thinks. He's immersed in work now, enjoying himself, not anxious, not anywhere else.

He becomes increasingly jovial. Looks at samples of material that Sheryl has gotten from a New York place. It starts to rain a little. Marsha comes in from her ESP class (first one).

"I don't know why anybody goes on thinking this is art," Bob says. "It must be art because jokes don't shake like that."

Works until one a.m., covering two more long panels mostly in white silk with colored silks along one edge - for the truck tire to go on.

"That's going to be a keeper," he says happily.

Thurs. Jan 26

Colder and windy. Rough sea with real surf. TV news has blizzard hitting midwest. Few shellers on the beach.

More to do about calling Ileana, but he doesn't do it. Anxiety is dispelled by last night's accomplishment. Big breakfast which Bob cooks.

Dogs lie around most of the day. Cloud likes the corners - gets a piece of ice now and then. Peterson takes them for a walk in late PM. (Peterson used to be called Pete until Peter Wirth arrived; now he's called Peterson).

Peterson finishes his large black and white painting. Bob approves.

Bob goes to studio around seven, quits about eleven. Finishes three of the panels he collaged last night. Satisfactory night's work. Goes to bed early, twelve-thirty or so.

Thurs: Europe + N. Africa, Black mtn. etc.

Fri. Jan. 27

Colder but not so windy. Bright sun on beach, less surf. I go over to talk to Dodi Booth:

Dodi and her husband, Ray, used to live near Buffalo. They had a relative who lived in Fort Myers, and used to write every time there was a snowstorm up north, saying he was out on his beach soaking up sun. Finally they came down for a visit. He suggested they look into buying property on one of the island. They went over on the ferry, and went back home and sold everything they had to buy on Captiva. Dodi planned to paint, but soon after their arrival the postmaster was indicted for embezzlement, and she took the job for a week and stayed fifteen years. Ray is a contractor. Now he drinks. Recently she did a painting called "The Blob

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In the Green Chair" - ~~xxx~~ it's of Ray. Their two daughters hated growing up here but have since come back to live. One is mafried and on Sanibel, the other works for rehabilitation hospital and is living on Captiva.

Dodi says all the islanders fought the causeway, all the way to the Suppeme Court, and lost. It was ~~xx~~ finished 1963, and nothing is the same. When they first came there were about fifty families living here year round, one telephone on Sanibel and a ~~xxxxx~~ ship-to-shore on Captiva.

Bob bought his house the year after the causeway. He's much respected on the island for his efforts to save land and trees. And there are a lot of young artists who worship him, walk back and forth on beach in hope of just waving. People are proud of his fame, and like his unpretentious way of life. Dodi herself had fallen in love with "Ace" at the Albright Knox before she ever met him, then began seeing letters at PO to Robert Rauschenberg. One day he spent an hour in the phone booth outside the postoffice, explaining to people in New York what to do about his dogs and cats; she decided anybody who cared that much about animals must be pretty nice, so she got up nerve and introduced herself.

Dodi is not hopeful about Captiva's future. The Mariner Co. owns 111 acres and is obviously going to use them. They can always seem to get whatever they want in the way of permits. And now a lot of old residents are talking about selling out. Dodi and Ray are thinking about it too, altho they have no idea where they'd go.

Dodi has a couple of Bob's prints, and one of Sue Weil's done at Bob's. Her own visible painting is a large blue and white abstraction, which suggests seascape. She hasn't painted in three months.

Longer session with Bob, interrupted by phone calls from Yoder and others. Bob finally calls Ileana and is surprised to find her sweet as cream. Perfectly understanding about show at Mayor's -- "It's tax time." Coming down next week to pick first though. Douglas Christmas is coming too -- problem of getting him out before she arrives. Bob talks to Christmas. He's very cheery. Tim and Sheryl, Marsha and her son Bill in and out. Also Peter. Bob says Peter has fallen in love with Ellen Felson, daughter of Rosamond and Sid, in LA - she will probably come and live at Captiva. Meanwhile Marsha is planning to move to LA - not so good.

Bob goes to work about nine. Marsha and Tim and I go to Timmy's Nook, where two of her sons work -- also Vicci. Very slow night, but as we're leaving there's a performance by a puppeteer.

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Sat Jan 28
Bob is trying to quit smoking (again). Won't have one until he goes to work - so today he goes earlier. Before that he sits out on beach for a while, in nook protected by sea grapes. Doesn't want to talk.

A productive evening's work, does seven drawings - i.e. puts images down on seven papers previously collaged. One is two papers joined together (Japanese rice paper) with NYT double page spread of stock market quotations, and a sort of green tone -- in the center he prints a girl runner, and around her an oil drilling rig in the ocean, a waterfall with house in background, a couple herding sheep, a schematic drawing of a leaf with ants, etc.

Another has an old torn handkerchief as collage background, with polka dots that pressed out as small brown lumps, like raisins. Images are closely packed oranges, glass of water on windowsill, schematic drawing with a bullock (repeated at both upper corners), closeup of rose, bolts of material stacked up.

A third with two narrow polka-dot strips (red and white) has images of a giant pipeline, cross section of a huge log, engineer's drawings, and in the middle a still life with eggplant and banana.

Big drawing with many images, some on striped cloth, is dominated by closeup of Boomslang snake's head in profile (eye). Bob is afraid it's too dense...

Last one, which I couldn't get enough of looking at, is about 3' high by 2' wide, with twin grey rectangles on one side as collage, and a blue-green cloth on other quadrant. Images: Top left, a basketball player reaching high for basket - directly under it a football shot with end reaching high for a pass, same gesture reversed; top center is woman's cross country race; top right, closeup of green flower; under it is a power hand drill; under that two shots of a wall of Lincoln portraits, slightly different; lower center is race horse with fallen rider; center, two cross country ski racers rounding a sharp turn.

Sunday Jan. 29
We sit in the sun for a while. Beautiful day, warmer, but turning cold by 2 PM. Bob in white pyjama pants, white terrycloth sweater.

When Bob goes to the beach he starts to turn TV off, then decided to leave it on for the dogs. So much of his life...

Starts work about seven. We talk a bit while he cuts from mags. Says he has no favorite mag, but "they should have given me a moratorium when Life folded. It had the largest format, the freshest images, and the best photographers," Says Pete comes closest to clipping what he would have -- his eye.

Before going to studio he watched quite a bit of TV - Sunday sports, first basketball then golf. Said he liked football on TV. All those colors moving, those nice asses.

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Mon. Jan. 30

More planning with Sachika for lunch for Frippet of Xerox, which may be going to sponsor the Vancouver show of new work. Crab claws, the specialty. Bob tells me about Sachika:

He worked a number of years for Fontana, who discovered him as a young art student in Japan. Lived in Rome, learned Italian as well as English. (Although he speaks English fairly well, he thinks in non-English so it's difficult to follow him). When Fontana died he came to New York. John deMenil introduced him to Bob, to help find him a job. Bob sent him to Leo, but Leo could never understand anything he said. Then at Christmas, de Menil called to say their children were all coming home and there was no room for Sachika, could he stay there a few days? Bob said sure. He came to Lafayette street, and within a few days had made himself "essential."

We sit in the sun for a while, two separate sessions. I realize I'm going to have to come back, to go much deeper into certain areas. Also probably to see his mother and sister.

He starts work rather late, first going to his studio to look at Tim's construction of the louver piece. It's an interesting structure in itself, made of the same mahogany veneer. Bob ~~scratches~~ places the panels and numbers them. We also look at Peter Wirth's new red painting, with two folding panels.

Over to print studio about nine PM, and work until two AM. Seven more drawings, collaged last night, receive their images. Dodi, Marsha, Sheryl, Bill Stice and a friend, all drop in. The dogs mill about underfoot, Star trying to get Kid's entire head into his mouth.

Back home about 2, and dinner, and much laughter, abd bed about 4, quite drunk.

I leave at 12:30 the next day, before Bob gets up.

("I work with very little confidence in my work. Somehow, after a few drinks the veneer of self-consciousness dissipates and I will do things that I wouldn't do otherwise." ~~)~~ RR to Scavullo, in book of portraits of men).

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Bob at the National Academy Ceremonies - 5/17/78

Sitting in the front row on the platform, in a brown striped summer suit, brown shirt, bow tie, baby blue socks, and tan buck shoes both placed square on the floor, his legs rather wide apart, never crossed. He looked country, brown as a nut, the program spread out across his knees.

Richard Wilbur's little speech before he welcomed the new members might have been directed at Bob altho he probably didn't know it. Wilbur said the artist was one who channelled one's responses, that we'd all had enough of this nonsense of "open-ended" art whose practitioners expect the viewer to "free associate" around it. Gave example of a student in his class who turned in a poem that he said was good because it was "not manipulated." Wilbur asserted that the artist had to manipulate and direct the viewer's response. Emerson, our prince of spontaneity, "was not a blurter." etc etc.

Ralph Ellison welcomed the new members. The encomium for RR said he had changed the way we see, think, and life. Bob stood up awkwardly, leaning forward, to acknowledge the applause. On the other side of the platfirm, Clyfford Still looked equally awkward.