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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	IV.C.43

43 Documents - Postwar on-going - Chris Burden

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	Tomkins	IV.C.43

See also
Togo, p. 18 (Kaika); p. 19 and 22 (Bodi Booth); 22 (Sachiko)

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	IV.C.43

Currents (RR)

"It was a reaction. I decided I just wanted to go away, so I went to Malibu. Laika was pregnant again. I wanted to go away and do the largest and most beautiful drawing in the world. I started collecting materials. And the immediacy of disaster in the information I was collecting was such that, even though I wanted to do the largest and most beautiful drawing in the world, the information of my sources wouldn't allow it. They imposed a restriction that dictated what I had to do. One of the oddities about doing Currents was that in spite of the new pups I developed a depression about how easily people ignored the troubles of their own world. My sources were mostly newspapers. I thought it was a weakness that people paid for the newspaper, and not very much. Then they used it to wrap the kittie litter in, or to line the garbage pail, or to start fires. If I could turn it into art, the focus would be more insistent. Actually I did two tapes of the news on TV while I was doing them, with the idea of putting them together with the visual sources, but I lost one.

"I did a Newsweek cover that was rejected. The story I heard was that it was too abstract. I used the same drawing and turned it into a silkscreen.

"I'd been living in Malibu while I was doing the Stoned Moon series. I got about half a ton of information dealing with the disasters of the last decade. It was just one catastrophe or sadness after another. The format of a single piece meant it had to be concentrated, It was a reaction and did come from a futile desire to escape the responsibility of feeling depressed by the things going on around me. Luckily for the piece I didn't succumb...But you know, I'd still like to do the biggest and most beautiful drawing in the world."

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Rauschenberg – Graphics

"In 1970, R. created the world's largest screen print. Entitled Currents, the six-foot-high, 54-foot wide Currents unrolls like a scroll to reveal a frightening array of events – 36 separate images, made up of newspaper headlines and newsprint scraps. To create Currents, R. read as many newspapers as he could each day. Claiming this media immersion made him sick, but fascinated by the idea of a newspaper as an object – that for a dime you bought the 'news' and it was yours – R. clipped, pasted, and rubbed out images of newsprint to create collages that the final print was based on."

Judith Goldman, Print Review
No. 1, 1972

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	Tomkins	IV.C.43

Later work

"Carnal Cl

Two cardboa
Christmas i

Hoarfrosts

Bob has sup
of earlier

Douglas

l sales

(54' long – largest silkscreen print ever made)
6' high

Currents (1970)

"A previously unscheduled exhibition, an active protest attempting to share and communicate my response to and concern with our grave times and place. Art can encourage individual conscience. Everyone's independent devotion is the only vehicle that can nourish the seed of sanity that is essential in the construction and change that makes only all the difference in the world.

R.R./70 "

(at Castelli Graphics & 2 Automation House, June 4–28. Silkscreen prints from ~~NY Times~~ * stories and photos, plus collage studies for them. Same year as Earth Day poster (April 22)

(over)

* Daily News + LA Times

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Later work

"Carnal Cl

Two cardbo
Christmas

Hoarfrosts

Bob has su
of earlier

Douglas

l sales

" Signs

Concerned to remind us of love, terror, violence of the last 10 years. Danger lies in forgetting.
RR/70 "

Also at Castelli Graphics & Automation House, June 4-28.

Images of Kennedys, Martin Luther King, Janis Joplin, space center, Vietnam, civil rights action etc

Review of Current:

"... Rauschenberg's piece is too wordy for gut appeal and too scattergun to change one's reasoning; it is in-between the impact of real newspapers and a fully transformed statement like a Crozy drawing."

- Peter Plagens, Artforum, Oct. 1970

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Late 60's

Woodstock - Altamont
pot, LSD & drug culture

Feminist movement

Paris students' revolt (68)

Art overwhelmed by reality (moon shot, assassinations, war, domestic turmoil etc)

Race riots

March on Pentagon (1967) - "out demons out"

Tet (1968)

Martin Luther King shot (68)

RFK shot (68)

Days of rage

Mylai

Apollo 11 (69)

Chappaquiddick (69)

Tate murders (69)

Saturation bombings in SE Asia

Earth Day

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"Currents" (cont.)

"'Currents began as a drawing. But then Cambodia happened, Earth Day, the protest movement among artists. I decided to communicate only through the newspapers, the hot news, the kind we forget as soon as we hear it. I wanted to make that my material and not obscure its potency with any artistic facility. So I didn't draw over or around the elements included."

(Douglas Davis, Newsweek, 7/27/70

Two months of the news...

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Later work (Castelli)

"Carnal Clocks"the nadir. Not a single one sold.

Two cardboards sold so far -- one to Ludwig, another to a client of Douglas Christmas in Canada.

Hoarfrosts sold very gradually. Jammers were more difficult.

Bob has supported himself for years mainly on prints, and occasional sales of earlier work. But he has very little early stuff left now.