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Reviews (1977 Retrospective)

"... the exhibition proves that R.'s work, in all its formal, technical, metaphorical and iconographical variety, encompasses a range of human experience that no other artist of our time has dared to take on."

– Benjamin Forgey, Art News, Jan. 77

"That so many major pieces can be absent from so strong a show is a staggering testament to R, whose talents and output could have likely supplied material for another entire retrospective almost as large and as good."

– Charles F. Stuckey, Art in America, Mar-Apr. 1977

NYT, Mar. 25 '77 (John Russell) – "Some of the finest art that has been made in our lifetime..."

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Only three pieces in the show from Bob's art-tech period: Revolvers, the little helicopter piece, and Shades.

Lots of problems with MOMA, which hadn't planned to do the show at all (MOMA was too haughty to take shows that originated elsewhere then; now that costs are so high, it's changed its attitude). Hopps had agreed with Geldzahler that it would go to the Met. But then someone on the MOMA board got wind of it, and there was a terrific flap, and Hopps had to take it away from the Met. Kynaston was in a very difficult position throughout -- since Bill Seitz left, nobody there really appreciated Bob. He did his best. But MOMA stingily decided against an opening night dinner, and Bob, jealously aware that they usually gavethem, decided they'd have to do their own, much

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Spreads and Scales

Rodeo Palace was the first. "I was invited to contribute to a rodeo show in Texas. I thought about it, but I was doing Jammers then, and Jammers in no way fit into the concept of a Texas rodeo. I came out here on the beach to write a letter trying to explain why I couldn't do it. And in my confusion I thought of the title Rodeo Palace. Now where else could I ever get to use a title like that? So I broke past Jammers into something else, and then went back and did more Jammers. When you're thinking of Texas the title "Spreads" comes easily. Beyond that, some of the pieces became three-dimensional, so another title had to be thought of. "Scales" implies weighing."

get back to the present ... The best thing about the show was was good for my head to equalize it. being able to arrange to have former friends, friends, and new friends now get exposed to the pieces get to see them."

The Trap of Art

Do you still feel you've escaped it? (after long silence) "I don't think so. I think the shadow of the escape has cut me off at the pass."

Does this bother you? "It does, but I can't think of an alternative. It's not only in art, it's in the life of the people around you. I really didn't want to have so many memories -- and they seem to be accumulating."

The idea in starting with most recent work and leading back was that this is how Rauschenberg is. He operates completely in the present, wide open, working with what's around and with the people he's with; doesn't want to be influenced by what he's done before. There's a straight line back from that to his earliest things, but it makes sense to start with the present because that's where he is.

Bob was definitely interested in the show, partly because he knew Jasper's was coming up. His competitiveness is strong. Jasper didn't come to the opening. But he let it be known very early that he was willing to lend anything he owned of Bob's, even those things that shouldn't really travel. When Bob heard that he said, "Oh, he wants to be sure I'll lend my things to his show." But it was more complicated than that. Jasper came down the first Sunday after the opening, with Mark and Janie Lee; took the early shuttle and arrived as the doors opened, stayed the whole day (see Victor Ganz invu for that story).

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Smithsonian Retrospective

"The first I heard about it was on the plane to Stockholm, going over for the opening of the New York-Stockholm collection. Walter Hopps was on the plane, and at one point he said 'Bob, I've been thinking about something. The Bicentennial is coming up, and you'll be fifty. It might be interesting for you to have a show because you'll be a quarter as old as the country.'

"I'd had fifteen or more major and semi-major retrospectives all over Europe but none here since the Jewish Museum show in 1963."

Did it make him feel more American? "I don't know what that means, do you?"

"I had a survival reaction to it. Every time I saw the show again, the installation of works some of which had been done 35 years ago, I would get back to the present and try to equalize it by doing new work. It was good for my head to equalize it. The best thing about the show was being able to arrange to have former friends, friends, and new friends now yet exposed to the pieces get to see them."

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Walter Hopps - lunch 4/10/79

Walter had wanted for some years to do a big Rauschenberg show, ever since Pasadena days. Loved his work. When Bicentennial came up, it seemed to him the perfect choice. Nobody was doing anything to celebrate a particular living artist. And here was Bob, in the heart of mid-career, the great exemplar of the "Citizen Artist," in the 18th century sense that the founding fathers revered. An artist who felt a great responsibility to the life of his time, who was deeply involved in the life around him in all its aspects. Not the greatest American artist, any more than one of the seven or eight men who founded the nation was the greatest -- but certainly one of them.

He'd had idea for about a month when he proposed it to Bob, on board the plane to Stockholm. Walter had decided to go on that trip primarily for that reason, knowing it would be a good time to talk to Bob. Bob's reaction was obviously pleasure, and a request to think it over -- which he did for about twenty minutes.

There was some minor opposition on Walter's board, but not serious - why devote it to one artist, etc. In the end all came around solidly.

Bob was nervous before the opening, but not because he lacked confidence in himself. How would anyone feel, having all his old work dragged out? Five or six years before, it was true that people were saying he was through, his best work behind him, but that had changed. Beyeler, the Swiss dealer who wields great influence (like Gene Thaw here) had announced that Rauschenberg was comparable to one of the great post-Impressionists, whose work was of lasting importance -- this had had a great effect on Bob's market, and dealers were bidding it up. The Scull auction a case in point. His reputation was definitely rising.

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	TOMKINS	IV.C.47

better one. The ferry boat party was literally organized at the last minute, with no help from MOMA. Then, later, MOMA had a party for the trustees and guests in connection with the show. Rauschenberg didn't show up for it. What had happened was that Babe Paley, who liked his work very much, had learned that he was upset over his treatment by MOMA, and had planned a little surprise of her own. Too ill to go to the trustees party, she had quietly invited Bob and his entourage for tea at her apartment that same evening. When Paley got home, irate over the non-appearance of the guest of honor, he found him sitting with his wife.

Bob a very different kind of artist from Marcel, although there are many affinities. He's painterly and retinal. Besides which, he really wants his art to be out there, in full view of as wide an audience aspossible. Marcel always thought his work was too intimate to interest more than a few. If he'd seen a bunch of children enjoying it, he would have been bemused (where Bob would have been delighted?). Their freedom was of two different kinds: Bob's comes out of the world as it is; Marcel's out of a very careful, rather cruel ordering of a particular world.

Bicentennial Show again - only real problems were with museum officials, who couldn't understand why the artist had to be there, with all those people, smoking and drinking etc. Hopps had no real answer, except that they wanted to be. But he had no difficulties with Bob.

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Kynaston MacShine - lunch 6/7/78

Kynaston grew up in Trinidad. He graduated from Dartmouth where he majored in lit, then did three years at Ohio State (?) in philosophy grad work. Came to work at MOMA in 1959, stayed two years, then went to Jewish Museum where he did the extremely influential Primary Structures show. Moved back to MOMA in 19??.

Bob's Smithsonian Show

The tradition is that if someone has had a big museum show in New York, MOMA will not do one. This was the real reason they didn't give retrospectives to Bob and Jap - they'd already been done at the Jewish. But in this case, since Walter Hopps was organizing the show, Rubin decided more or less at the last minute to make room for it in the schedule. (MOMA didn't use to take shows organized by others, either, but in these days of tight funds that's changing).

But it's true that the museum (i.e. Barr) never really "saw" Rauschenberg, and it's embarrassing for Kynaston that they have only one work, and that one not terribly important (First Landing Jump). They did buy two from the Smithsonian, mainly to show a commitment to the new work. Now Kynaston is agitating to get an early black painting to go with Jap's Green Painting.

He suggests that the museum should probably have bought Barge, but they've always had a problem about buying very large works. It's at Minneapolis and will probably go there eventually.

Kynaston entertains high hopes for Bed eventually (check with Leo)

Bob was terribly nervous before the MOMA opening - his lip was bleeding from being bitten. Why more so than in Washington? "Nothing's like opening on Broadway."

Kynaston didn't let Bob and his entourage do the hanging - did it all himself, but gave enough time for Bob to come in and see if there was anything that bothered him.

Dealing with Hopps - "That's the question of the 20th century, isn't it? Did you know that in Washington somebody made up buttons reading 'Walter Hopps will be here in five minutes.'"

Jasper didn't come to Bob's opening at MOMA - Bob came to his. Shows the difference in their natures. Bob so much more open and generous. But it was Kynaston who invited all the artists to Bob's opening. The museum didn't do a dinner for that reason -- didn't want to leave anyone out. (Had a dinner for collectors and friends afterwards, two weeks later). Jasper's opening was quite stuffy by contrast, because the Whitney didn't invite the artists.

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Greetings

Bayard Ewing, Chairman, Board of Trustees

To Honor Excellence

Lee Hall, President

President's Fellows Awards

William Rayner, Trustee

Tatyana Grosman

Presented by Cleve Gray, Trustee

Les Line

Presented by Paul Harper, Trustee

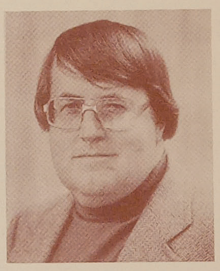
Robert Rauschenberg

Presented by Lloyd Goodrich, Former Director, Whitney Museum

Cocktail Music by Catherine Rowe



Tatyana Grosman, founder of Universal Limited Art Editions, for enlarging the world of those world-enlargers called artists. By introducing many of our foremost painters to printmaking and book making, she has made great art available to more people through the media of paper and stone, wood, and copper.



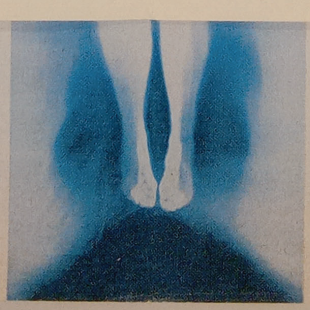
Les Line, editor of the National Audubon Society's *Audubon* magazine since 1966, for his dedication to the aesthetic communication of national wildlife and conservation needs. A photographer and writer, he is a member of the Environmental Advisory Committee of the Federal Energy Administration and the author of numerous books on nature.



Robert Rauschenberg, consummate artist embracing and enlarging the fields of painting, printmaking, sculpting and theatrical design, and concerned and innovative activist for artists' rights. By advancing the dialogue of art with the materials and culture of our times, he has translated the collage of our experience into a body of works provocative and engaged.

down by the Smithsonian's curator of 20th century painting, Walter Hopps, from Rauschenberg's enormous and dispersed output of combines, paintings, silk screens, sculptures and prints, it becomes plain that there has not been much antiformalist American art that Rauschenberg's prancing, careless and fecund talent did not either hint at or directly provoke. It is to him that is owed much of the basic cultural assumption that a work of art can exist for any length of

54



doctor from Berlin who had drifted to southern Texas and married a Cherokee. Port Arthur was no cultural center. Its symphony orchestra was the jukebox, the comics its museum. The nearest thing to art one could see was the cheap chromo-litho holy cards pinned up in the Rauschenberg living room (the whole family was devoutly active in the local Church of Christ). Decades later Rauschenberg would allude to the gaudy iconic nostalgia of those cards in early combines like *Collection,* 1953-54,

TIME, NOVEMBER 29, 1976

...arge (1962), a three-panel from newspapers

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COVER STORY

The Most Living Artist

In art, as in most other matters, the '70s have not yet been named. Historians looking back on American art in the '60s see movements and orthodoxies—Pop art, minimal art, conceptual art, Op art, color-field painting, doctrines about flatness and framing edge, proscriptions, mandates. The categories rattle briskly like punch cards in their slots. Art in the '70s is more polymorphous, less ambitious, harder to sort out. The present creed proclaims belief in the Either, the Or and the Holy Both.

During the 1960s, formalism conferred an almost messianic exclusiveness on taste. If one was "for" one kind of art, one was expected to be "against" others. Besides, a new class of collectors, anxious to commit their money only to sure bets—to what would be Historically Inevitable, to the mainstream of culture—wanted authorities. Not today. The American mainstream has fanned out into a delta, in which the traditional idea of an avant-garde has drowned. Thus, in defiance of the dogma that realist painting was killed by abstract art and photography, realism has come back in as many forms as there are painters.

From the cool, detailed gaze of photorealism on its plastic environment to romantic landscapists in Maine to the obsessive stare of the California painter who took seven years to finish a small picture of a few inches of sand, grain by grain, the variety is infinite. Photography has acquired a status unimaginable a decade ago. Meanwhile, abstract painters, released from the severity of their mission, are no longer embarrassed by pattern and decoration. As the desire to paint one's way into history recedes, a new subjectivity has replaced it, a free permit to import life whole into art through video, performance and participation. A broad and knowing eclecticism prevails.

Inside it, a symbolically charged event is the retrospective of some 160 works by Robert Rauschenberg, which opened last month at the National Collection of Fine Arts at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. (and will travel throughout 1977 to New York's Museum of Modern Art and to museums in San Francisco, Buffalo and Chicago). With his anarchic sweetness and prodigal talent, Rauschenberg, now 51, has for the best part of 25 years been the *enfant terrible* of American modernism: a permanent scalawag, handing out indulgences to all comers. He is a model of the joy of art.

Rauschenberg is best known for having opened up the tracts of imagery that were occupied in the '60s by Pop art. But as one goes through the show, skillfully boiled down by the Smithsonian's curator of 20th century painting, Walter Hopps, from Rauschenberg's enormous and dispersed output of combines, paintings, silk screens, sculptures and prints, it becomes plain that there has not been much antiformalist American art that Rauschenberg's prancing, careless and fecund talent did not either hint at or directly provoke. It is to him that is owed much of the basic cultural assumption that a work of art can exist for any length of time, in any material (from a stuffed goat to a live human body), anywhere (on a stage, in front of a television camera, underwater, on the surface of the moon or in a sealed envelope), for any purpose (turn-on, contemplation, amusement, invocation, threat), and any destination it chooses, from the museum to the trash can. "A protean genius," Art Historian Robert Rosenblum calls him. "Every artist after 1960 who challenged the restrictions of painting and sculpture and believed that all of life was open to art is indebted to Rauschenberg—forever."

There are, of course, dissenting views. In the '60s, Rauschenberg was loathed in formalist quarters and suspected in others. His taste was always facile and omnivorous, a fact somewhat masked by Hopps' careful choice of works in the show. But mainly, it was the man's variety and good humor that jarred. He did not give a fig for the lines of high seriousness imposed by the hardcore New York art world. His reputation would look after itself; he would not tend it. Besides, Rauschenberg was a natural dissipater. The sight of him in his porcupine-quill leather jacket, erect but reeling slightly, marinated with Jack Daniel's, cackling like a Texan loon and trying to get his arm around everyone at once, was too familiar.

FEMALE FIGURE (BLUEPRINT), 1949



Thus Rauschenberg did not always get the credit he deserved—not even for his altruism, which was without recent parallel in New York art circles. It was Rauschenberg who threw his reputation, and much of his time, behind the Artists' Rights movement and its steadily strengthening lobby for artists' royalties on the resale of paintings. It was Rauschenberg who, knowing the ponderousness with which foundations disgorge grants, set up and largely endowed Change, Inc.—a fund from which artists with urgent cash trouble could get small sustaining grants within a matter of days. He could afford to help: his recent *Hoarfrost* multiples sell for up to $4,000 each; the 1962 silk-screen *Barge* could well command $500,000 on the market today. "Bob has put more of his money and time back into the art world than any artist alive," says one of his acquaintances. "He needs to believe in an art community. It's straight out of St. Paul—'We must love one another or die.' "

Milton Rauschenberg (he changed his name to Robert as a young man) was born on Oct. 22, 1925, in Port Arthur, Texas, a shabby, humid oil-refinery town on the Gulf of Mexico. His father, Ernest Rauschenberg, was the son of an immigrant doctor from Berlin who had drifted to southern Texas and married a Cherokee. Port Arthur was no cultural center. Its symphony orchestra was the jukebox, the comics its museum. The nearest thing to art one could see was the cheap chromo-litho holy cards pinned up in the Rauschenberg living room (the whole family was devoutly active in the local Church of Christ). Decades later Rauschenberg would allude to the gaudy iconic nostalgia of those cards in early combines like *Collection*, 1953-54,

The third panel of Robert Rauschenberg's Barge *(1962), a three-panel painting incorporating silk-screened images from newspapers*

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WADSWORTH ATHENEUM, HARTFORD



Robert Rauschenberg's Retroactive I, 1964

The third panel of Robert Rauschenberg's Barge *(1962), a three-panel painting incorporating silk-screened images from newspapers and magazines*

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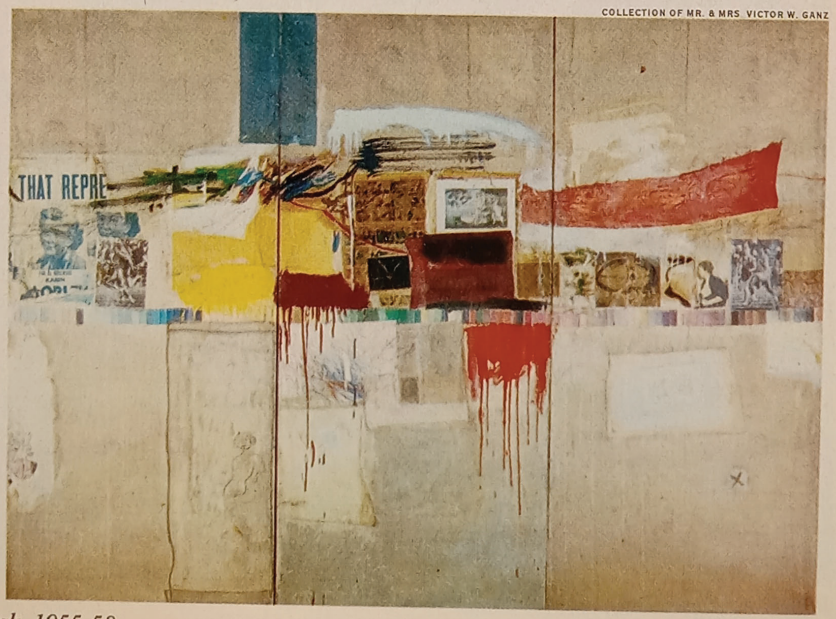
SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Collection, 1953-54



MUSEUM LUDWIG, COLOGNE

Odalisk, 1955-58



COLLECTION OF MR. & MRS. VICTOR W. GANZ

Rebus, 1955

The third panel of Robert Rauschenberg's Barge *(1962), a three-panel painting incorporating silk-screened images from newspapers and magazines*

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Levee, 1955

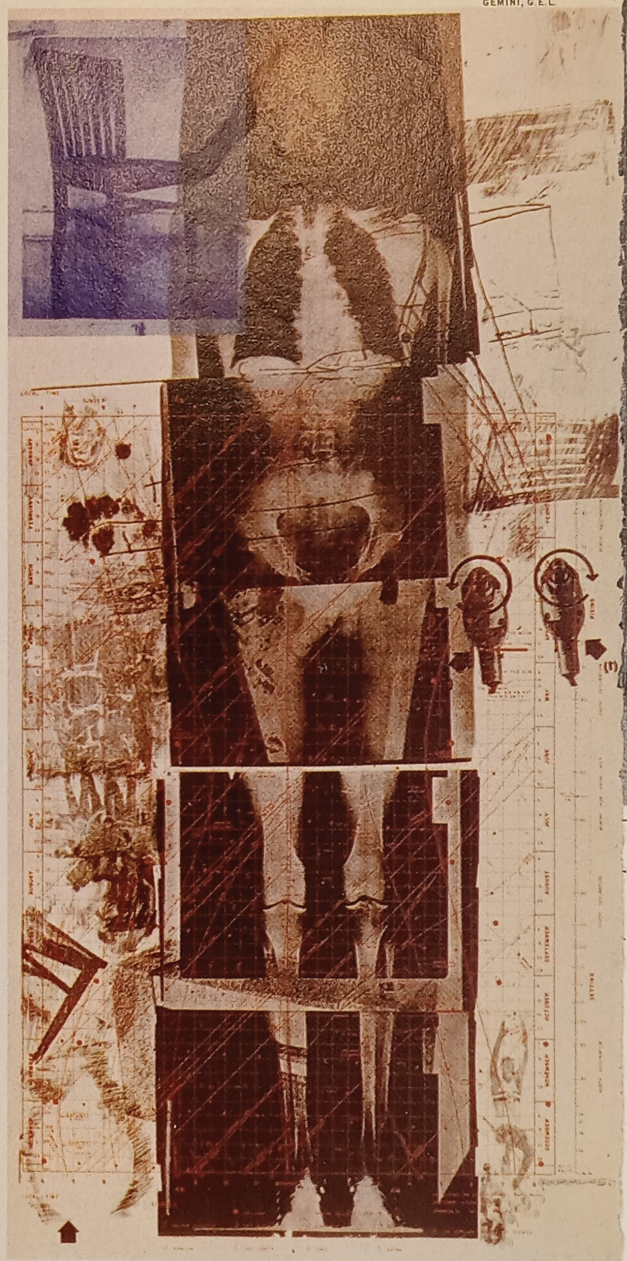
The third panel of Robert Rauschenberg's Barge (1962), *a three-panel painting incorporating silk-screened images from newspapers and magazines*

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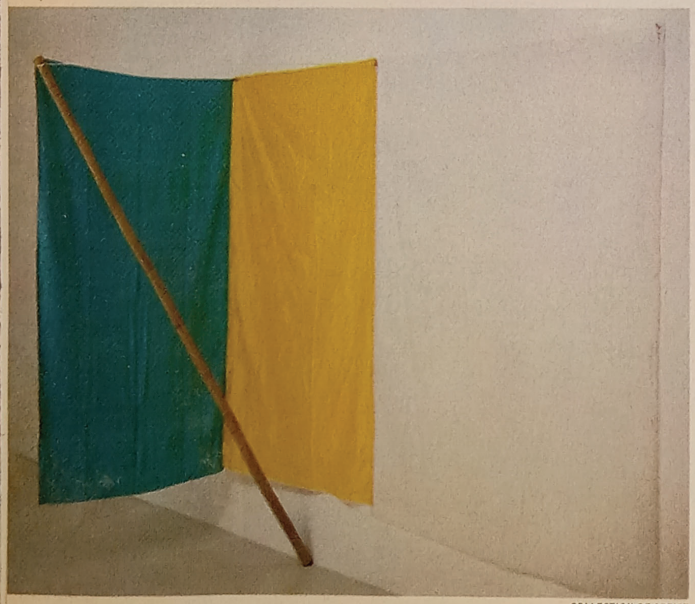
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Pull



Booster, 1967



COLLECTION OF ARTIST

Pilot (Jammer), 1975

The third panel of Robert Rauschenberg's Barge *(1962), a three-panel painting incorporating silk-screened images from newspapers*

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	TOMKINS	IV.C.47

and *Charlene,* 1954. His education was spotty. He went to public schools in Port Arthur and graduated from high school there in 1942. "I excelled in poor grades," Rauschenberg remembers. He is still an execrable speller. In the fall of 1942 he enrolled in a pharmacy course at the University of Texas in Austin, but Rauschenberg's fondness for animals spoiled that vocation. "I was expelled within six months for refusing to dissect a live frog in anatomy class." By then, however, America was at war and Rauschenberg entered the U.S. Navy. He was shunted off to the Navy hospital-corps school in San Diego as a mental-hospital nurse. Rauschenberg spent 2½ years, the rest of the war, working in various hospitals in California. "This is where I learned how little difference there is between sanity and madness—and realized that a combination of both is what everyone needs."

Whenever he got a pass that gave him a few days off from the cuckoo's nest, Rauschenberg would simply head for the nearest highway and start thumbing rides to anywhere. On one of these time-killing trips, Rauschenberg heard about the cactus garden at the Huntington Library in San Marino. He went there —and found that the library had paintings in it, the first "real" paintings he had ever seen: Sir Joshua Reynolds' *Portrait of Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse* and Thomas Gainsborough's *The Blue Boy.* These suave, bright ghosts of Georgian culture stupefied Rauschenberg. He had never in his life looked at a work of art as art, and the first thing that struck him was "that someone had thought these things out and made them. Behind each of them was a man whose profession it was to make them. That just never occurred to me before."

So Rauschenberg decided he would paint. He found some pigments and brushes. There was no privacy in the barracks, and to be seen painting would have provoked endless ridicule. One night Rauschenberg locked himself in the latrine with a scrap of cardboard on his knee and secretly made his first daub, a portrait of a Navy buddy. Thirty years later, he still thinks of that illicit first night as exemplary. "There always ought to be an element of secrecy, of criminality, about making art," he says. "But if you're successful, it's hard to maintain. We all get comfortable in the end. That's what happens to rascals."

Discharged from the Navy in 1945, Rauschenberg decided to study art. He signed up as a student at the Kansas City Art Institute under the G.I. Bill of Rights. Every spare dime was set aside for a trip to Europe, the statutory voyage to Mecca, which he made in 1948. "I was certain that one had to study in Paris if one was an artist. I think I was at least 15 years late." He did study, briefly, at the Académie Julian; but since he spoke not a word of French, the instruction had little effect. He felt unfocused, self-indulgent and queasy, surrounded by an already academized modern tradition that he could not grasp.

But in the school he met his future wife, an American student named Susan Weil. They went back together to the U.S. in the fall of 1948. Rauschenberg had read a TIME article about the pioneer abstractionist Josef Albers, the veteran of the Bauhaus who was teaching at Black Mountain College in North Carolina. Albers was held in awe as a theorist and a disciplinarian: an inspired *Junker.* Discipline was what Rauschenberg felt he needed.

Rauschenberg turned out to be one of the most successful artists Albers ever taught, but Albers loathed his work. "I don't want to know who did that," he would say as he entered the classroom, pointing at Rauschenberg's latest effort. Years later, when questioned about Rauschenberg, the old maestro snapped: "To date I have had something like 600,000 students; I can't be expected to remember all of them." Rauschenberg, in turn, was alarmed by his teacher. His unsystematic, jackdaw mind could not come to grips with Albers' imposing and rigorous thought. "Albers had a marvelous system," he recalls. "Facts plus intimidation. I felt crushed. I would have done anything to please him; that was where the pain lay. Albers disliked my work exceedingly. I felt I could never do anything worthwhile. I had no background and no damn foreground either."

Yet one of the Bauhaus-type exercises Albers assigned to his students was the root of Rauschenberg's later practice: they had to find "interesting" discarded objects—anything from old tin cans to bicycle wheels to stones—and bring them into class as examples of accidental aesthetic form. Moreover, the stringent color exercises that Albers set would ultimately have a lot to do with the severe paintings Rauschenberg made between 1951 and '53: all-white and then all-black panels, the latter painted over a wrinkled mulch of newspaper, with no relationships of color. Twenty-five years ago, these pictures looked absurd; today they seem prescient. Art history has caught up with them, and the work of some of the most admired younger American painters—Robert Ryman's all-white paintings, Brice Marden's monochrome slabs of encaustic—can be traced back to them. "Albers," says Rauschenberg, "did give me a sense of discipline that I couldn't have worked without."

But there was a more general sense of ferment at Black Mountain, because the composer John Cage and his friend Merce Cunningham, the dancer-choreographer, were among the innovators living there. If it can be said that advanced art in America through the '50s and early '60s had one single native guru, that man was Cage: at once the most avant-garde and the most trans-

GORGONI—CONTACT



RAUSCHENBERG WORKS ON MOLD FOR PAPER PRINT, 1973
Veils, lighter fluid, mud, albino skin and collaboration.

parent of composers, the Marcel Duchamp of music, the man who erected combinations of silence and random sound into an aesthetic strategy in order to give art the inclusive density of life. It was Cage's example that prompted Rauschenberg to formulate his much-quoted remark that "painting relates to both art and life. . . I try to act in the gap between the two."

A painter could not compete with the saintly and difficult presences of Cage and Cunningham, but one could collaborate, and Rauschenberg did. Through the '50s and early '60s he designed sets and costumes for Cunningham's dance troupe. To a remarkable degree, Rauschenberg eventually made himself the conduit through which some of the big money made in the '60s by new art, including his own, was siphoned to the "profitless" avant-garde, that of dance and music. In doing so, he felt he was only paying his dues, for when Rauschenberg moved to New York in the fall of 1949 he joined the group of dancers and musicians gathered around Cage, Cunningham and Morton Feldman; they, more than the New York painters, gave him his first



The third panel of Robert Rauschenberg's Barge *(1962), a three-panel painting incorporating silk-screened images from newspapers and magazines.*

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	TOMKINS	IV.C.47

sense of a real community of artists. "All we had in common was our excitement and poverty. I didn't feel at home with the motivations of the painters who were around—though I liked the work well enough. There was a lot of self-pity in the air, a sense of being mistreated by the world. I never felt that. I had the feeling from my early church background that, well, it's you who decided to live this life, and that's the moral choice. Cage and I used to sell our books to eat. There were times when I felt miserable. But having to decide, 'Is this what you want to do?' each day—that put a lot of joy into the work too."

There was seldom enough money to buy proper materials, so Rauschenberg used improper ones. Blueprint paper in wide sheets cost $1.75 a roll; he and Susan Weil (they were married in 1950, and their son Christopher was born the following year) spread the stuff out on the floor of their apartment, strewed it with pattern-objects like fishnets and doilies, and one lay down naked on it while the other went over the paper with a portable sun lamp, making giant prints. Only one of the works survives: the blue roentgen ghost of a nude, eerily transparent. Later, Rauschenberg put a similar motif—a sectional X ray of his own body—in the largest and most spectacular of his lithographs, *Booster,* 1967.

PETER MOORE



RAUSCHENBERG AS ROLLER-SKATE DANCER IN *PELICAN,* 1965
Mixing the media on the banks of the mainstream.

In these blueprints, two themes of his mature art appeared. The first was collaboration: he worked with his wife on them, as he would work with others in theater, dance and printing. "Ideas aren't real estate; they grow collectively, and that knocks out the egotistical loneliness that generally infects art."

The second, equally important, was the idea that a painting's surface was an impartial collector of images. Anything could be dropped on the blueprints and leave its mark. Soon afterward, Rauschenberg made grass paintings—bundles of soil and plant matter held together with chicken wire, from which seedlings sprouted. (The last of these modest forerunners of earth art perished of cold and thirst in his loft down by the Fulton Street docks in 1954.) The results of this clownish exercise, as it looked then, would be of capital importance to modern art.

By now Rauschenberg was living in the middle of a junk-crammed environment—Manhattan—a place that every week threw away more artifacts than were made in a year in 18th century Paris. An afternoon's stroll could furnish him with a complete "palette" of things to make art with: cardboard cartons, striped police barriers, sea tar, a stuffed bird, a broken umbrella, a shaving mirror, grimy postcards. These relics were sorted out in his studio, glued to surfaces, punctuated with slathers of paint. They emerged as large-scale collages, to which Rauschenberg gave the name combines. At first they were relatively flat. *Collection* was almost an orthodox collage: layers of souvenir-like junk half-effaced by swaths and spatters of bright red paint. (Rauschenberg liked color to have the same "given" quality as a found object; discovering some unlabeled cans of house paint on sale for 5¢ each, he opened them and painted with whatever color he found inside.)

Of course, the roots of Rauschenberg's combines are fixed in the history of collage and particularly in the work of the German Dadaist Kurt Schwitters. Rauschenberg remembers being "amazed" by the Schwitters collages he saw at the Museum of Modern Art, and he was particularly influenced by the way they were composed on a horizontal-vertical grid. "He wasn't using diagonals. I hate diagonals!" The effect shows in works like *Rebus,* 1955—a curiously fugitive image despite its size, full of airy space and images of flight: the winds from Botticelli's *Birth of Venus,* photographs of a bee, a dragonfly, a mosquito and a fly's eye. Gradually the objects became more dominant. Rauschenberg stretched his bed quilt over an improvised frame, added a pillow, and covered both with streaks and drips of paint. The result, *Bed,* 1955, was to become one of the *objets de scandale* of American art.

Because of the aggressive distinctness of some of the things in Rauschenberg's work, it was assumed by his best interpreters that the combines could carry no symbolic, still less narrative meaning. "There are no secret messages in Rauschenberg," wrote the late art historian Alan Solomon in 1963, "no program of social or political dissent transmitted in code. . ."

Certainly, Rauschenberg's combines have no political content worth looking for. Virtually no "major" American art of the '50s did—the mood was one of apolitical quietism, and it was assumed that art had no chance of reforming the world. Yet a number of the combines do seem, at this distance, to be "coded." The title of *Odalisk,* 1955-58, directs us to a favorite image of those two sultans of French art, Ingres and Matisse—the harem nude. Rauschenberg parodies that: the box on its post alludes to a human figure; a torso, teetering on its absurd harem cushion. The sides of the box are plastered with pinups and reproductions of classical nudes. Finally, the stuffed chicken on top of the box reminds us that one of the many French terms for an expensive courtesan is a *poule de luxe.*

Rauschenberg's combines, like the work of his friend and mentor Marcel Duchamp, are seeded with such puns, parallels and quirks of meaning. Like Duchamp, he was given to embedding a kind of ironic lechery in his images—the supreme example being *Monogram,* 1959. *Monogram* remains the most notorious of Rauschenberg's combines: a stuffed Angora goat, girdled with a tire. The title is self-fulfilling—it is Rauschenberg's monogram, the sign by which he is best known—but why did it become so famous? Partly because of its unacknowledged life as a powerful sexual fetish. The lust of the goat, as William Blake remarked in a somewhat different context, is the bounty of God, and *Monogram* is an image of copulation.

In the collective memory of the New York art world, the decade 1955-64 has an almost magical air: a bath of transformations. Rauschenberg entered it as a frog and emerged a certified prince holding the first prize of the 1964 Venice Biennale. By 1955 the achievement of the abstract expressionists—Pollock, Gorky, de Kooning, Still, Rothko, Kline, Motherwell—was recognized across the Atlantic, and the aesthetic colonization of Europe by New York art began in earnest. In this momentous shift of taste, energy and locus, a younger generation of American artists would be the legatees. Its symbolic twins, its Castor and Pollux, were Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns.

They met around the end of 1954. Both felt like hicks. Johns came from South Carolina and was painfully shy; Rauschenberg, especially when flown with bourbon, was wont to describe



The third panel of Robert Rauschenberg's Barge *(1962), a three-panel painting incorporating silk-screened images from newspapers and magazines*

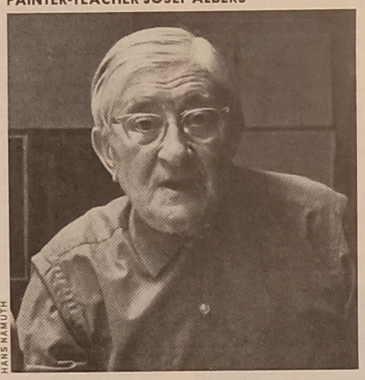
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	TOMKINS	IV.C.47

himself as "white Taixas trash." By this time, Rauschenberg's marriage had mutated into friendship, and there had been a divorce in 1953. In 1955 Rauschenberg moved into a loft in the building in lower Manhattan where Johns had his studio. They supported themselves by doing window displays for Tiffany and Bonwit Teller.

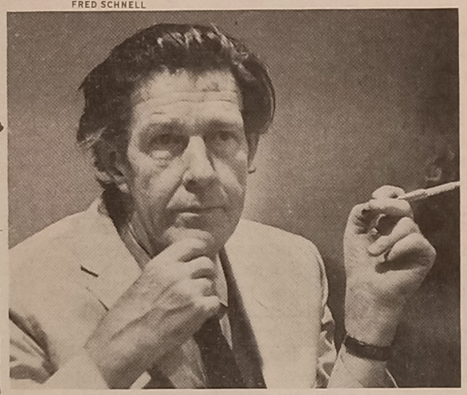
Yet they had surprisingly little in common as artists. Johns' work was oblique, carefully thought out, exquisitely modulated (the encaustic surfaces of his flags and targets and maps are among the loveliest pieces of pure painting done in the 20th century); the product of a high and guarded intelligence, it bristled with irony and paradox. It was all about indirection: the difficulty of seeing anything clearly, of naming anything right. The formal enigmas of Johns' art were wholly unlike the sunny, ebullient appetites of Rauschenberg. Johns made one look and think; Rauschenberg made one look and look. Rauschenberg breathed out, Johns in. This came to work against Rauschenberg, for what the higher '60s criticism most liked in art was to discern internal systems in a work. As Art Critic Brian O'Doherty remarked, "Johns provided everything the New York critical intelligence requires to requite its own narcissism."

PAINTER-TEACHER JOSEF ALBERS



HANS NAMUTH

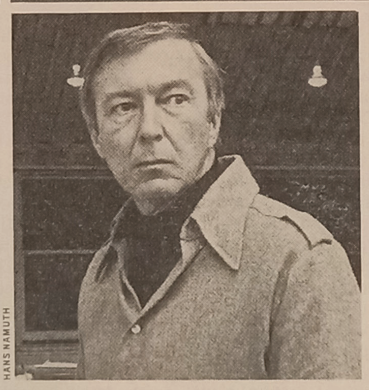
FRED SCHNELL



AVANT-GARDE COMPOSER JOHN CAGE

The main audience Rauschenberg found in the '50s lay among his fellow artists, the younger ones who would diversely shape the "look" of the '60s: James Rosenquist, Claes Oldenburg, Robert Morris, Jean Tinguely—the happening makers, the creators of Pop art. Says Rauschenberg: "We were relieved of the responsibility the abstract expressionists had. They had fought the battle of showing there was such a thing as American art; we didn't have that problem. We were undistracted by things we couldn't imagine, like art collectors and taxes. There was a very strong sense of just getting up and doing something."

Nothing could be farther from the truth than the often-raised notion that Rauschenberg was engaged in some Oedipal battle against abstract expressionism. This idea was fostered by one of his best-known gestures, that of erasing a de Kooning pencil drawing. Actually, de Kooning gave Rauschenberg the drawing for that purpose; as far as the younger artist was concerned, it was an act of homage to de Kooning. Indeed, the painted areas of Rauschenberg's combines, with their spattering bravado of touch, are a meditation on the abstract expressionist legacy; they extend rather than reject it.



HANS NAMUTH

PAINTER-PRINTMAKER JASPER JOHNS

The surfaces of Rauschenberg's combines were meant to seem unselective: each was a rendezvous where the common images of the day could display themselves without having to listen to judgments from an artist on their relative "importance." In that sense, they contained no junk: all the stuffed birds and tires were, so to speak, in Paradise. But could the same hospitable casualness of images be rendered without those objects? In 1959-60 Rauschenberg made a set of illustrations to Dante's *Inferno*. He found that newsprint, wetted with lighter fluid and then rubbed, will transfer a grey ghost of itself to paper. This opened his work to a stream of image-quotation, cold from the press. In the "Dante drawings," Virgil, the Guide, appears alternately as Adlai Stevenson and a baseball umpire; Dante is a nondescript figure in a towel, which Rauschenberg found in a SPORTS ILLUSTRATED ad; centaurs turn into racing cars, and demons into gas-masked soldiers.

RICHARD RUTLEDGE

DANCER-CHOREOGRAPHER MERCE CUNNINGHAM

The next step was to print large images on canvas with silk screens. The silk-screen paintings that Rauschenberg made between 1962 and '65 had a brilliantly heightened documentary flavor. The canvas trapped images, accumulating them. One was reminded of the shuttle and flicker of a TV set as the dial is clicked: rocket, eagle, Kennedy, dancer, oranges, box, all registered with the peacock-hued, aniline-sharp intensity of electronic color. The subject was glut.

The best of the color silk-screen paintings, like *Retroactive I*,



The third panel of Robert Rauschenberg's Barge (1962), *a three-panel painting incorporating silk-screened images from newspapers and magazines.*

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	TOMKINS	IV.C.47

1964, are such soaring bel canto that one is apt to skip over the odd resonance of their images. Consider the red patch in the lower right corner: a silk-screen enlargement of a stroboscopic photo by Gjon Mili of a walking nude, done in imitation of Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase,* which was itself based on an earlier sequential photo by Marey. The image stutters backward through technological time. But then it also looks like the grief-stricken Adam and Eve in Masaccio's *Expulsion from Eden,* and that turns the enormous grainy effigy of John Kennedy (then dead), with its repeated pointing hand, into a type of vengeful deity. Rauschenberg has had great moments of social irony. "The day will come," Edmond de Goncourt wrote in his journal in 1861, "when all the modern nations will adore a sort of American god, about whom much will have been written in the popular press; and images of this god will be set up in the churches, not as the imagination of each individual painter may fancy him, but established, fixed once and for all by photography. On that day civilization will have reached its peak, and there will be steam-propelled gondolas in Venice."

In 1964 Rauschenberg was riding in one of these gondolas, through the mighty hoo-ha raised by his winning the first prize at the Venice Biennale. Few now doubted that art's center had migrated to New York, and this ignited an orgy of chauvinism on both sides of the Atlantic. Some forms of success, Degas once said, are indistinguishable from panic. This was one. Rauschenberg was now a celebrity, almost the Most Famous Artist in the World. His critics were quick to blame him for every crassness that attended the promotion of Pop art.

GORGONI—CONTACT



RAUSCHENBERG AFLOAT BETWEEN WORK SESSIONS IN INDIA, 1975
It travels from the nostrils to the head to the stone.

As somnambulists mysteriously avoid bumping into the coffee table, Rauschenberg dealt with fame. His instinctive response to being promoted as a culture hero was to stop making one-man art. He went back into the group, and through the rest of the '60s he worked on all manner of collaborative projects: multimedia events, dance, liaisons between art and science. Of course, the group had expanded greatly by now. It contained artists who wanted to work collectively, but there were also dozens of people who simply wanted a piece of Rauschenberg, from saber-toothed politicians' wives and Park Avenue art groupies to eager, ineffectual students. It was not as freaky or snobbish a mix as the circus that Andy Warhol accumulated, but it had its distractions. "Dozens of people ripped Bob off for money and time," a friend from the '60s recalls, "and he knew it, but he never said a word against them."

His most absorbed collaboration was with Billy Klüver, a Swedish laser-research scientist from Bell Telephone Laboratories. In 1966 they started a nonprofit foundation named E.A.T., or Experiments in Art and Technology. Its announced purpose was "to catalyze the inevitable active involvement of industry, technology and the arts." E.A.T. grew out of "Nine Evenings," a series of multimedia happenings held in New York in 1966. Its biggest project was the Pepsi-Cola Pavilion at Expo '70 in Osaka, Japan, which drew on the talents of Film Maker Robert Breer, Sculptor Forrest Myers, Artist Robert Whitman and a dozen others.

Rauschenberg's re-entry into continuous production as an artist, after the confusions of the '60s, came through prints. From the moment in 1962 when Rauschenberg made his first lithograph at Tanya Grosman's studio on Long Island, he was infatuated with the medium. The limestone was erotic to him: "It's got all the hardness of rock, but all the frailty and sensitivity of albino skin," he said. By the late '60s he was working with America's two best printers: Tanya Grosman on the East Coast and Kenneth Tyler, head of Gemini, the graphics studio, in Los Angeles. Tyler, who split from Gemini in 1974, is unequivocal in his opinion that "Rauschenberg is absolutely a master. I've talked with printers who've worked with Picasso, Miró, you name them—but their collaboration was very simple compared with Rauschenberg's. Work with him and you get his life, spirit, energy: he's the only two-way street in the art world."

Moreover, Tyler believes that Rauschenberg set out to give lithography the status of a major form. "He was prepared to commit any large-scale idea unselfishly to the print medium." A prime example was *Booster,* at the time the largest hand-pulled lithograph ever made: 6 ft. long, printed from two stones. "In the technical sense," says Sidney Felsen, the present co-director of Gemini, "Bob's single biggest gift to lithography was the combining of photo images and hand drawing. But it goes beyond that. Bob's unique. He shies off predetermined ideas so he can react to his surroundings at any given moment. He goes into meditation—vacancy—so that whatever travels through his nostrils and head is exactly what he *wants* to put on that stone."

Printmaking has given Rauschenberg a luxuriant range of materials and surfaces. He went to France in 1973 to make a suite called *Pages and Fuses* at an old paper mill in Ambert; it consisted of molded and tinted paper with faint images embedded in its surface. In 1975 Rauschenberg and his group—printers, assistants, friends—traveled to India to make multiples of molded paper, bamboo, printed sari cloths and mud. But the delicacy of his touch produced its masterpiece in the *Hoarfrost* series he did with Gemini in 1974. The *Hoarfrosts* (TIME, Jan. 27, 1975) are sheets of silk, chiffon, taffeta, one hung over another. Each sheet is imprinted with images from Rauschenberg's bank. In *Pull,* 1974, the dominant one is of a diver vanishing into a pool, seen from above, swallowed in blue immensity like a man on a space walk. No reproduction can attest to the subtlety of its play between the documentary "reality" of collage and the vague beauties of atmosphere.

Rauschenberg still keeps a base in New York, a rambling 19th century five-story building complete with chapel, on downtown Lafayette Street, converted from its former life as an orphanage and now filled with mementos, drawings, plants, peripatetic assistants and an aged incontinent turtle, which he regards as his caretaker. But in recent years he has spent most of his time in a wooden frame house, built between 15 acres of palm jungle and the coarse shell beach on the island of Captiva, in the Gulf waters that lie south of Tampa, Fla. There, equipped with two lithographic presses, he presides over a working commune of printers and friends, whose timetable has become adjusted to his: breakfast at noon, swim, work all afternoon and evening, dinner never earlier than midnight. "You can't imagine," he cackles, "how many disturbances I miss out on down here." This landscape offers the clue to his recent work, beginning with the *Hoarfrosts* and continuing through *Jammers,* a series of delicate sewn constructions of silk, twine and rattan cane. They are without pretension, and hardly displace air at all. They read as a shimmer of color, sails in the light. Off the beach, past the rattling leaves of the sea grapes, two ambiguous planes meet: the shallow coastal water, slicked with weed, taking the light like satin; and the pale sky, colored the rinsed blue of a Tiepolo ceiling. A pelican lumbers by, just airborne, printing its ragged prehistoric silhouette on the fabric of the scene. Once again, as for the past two decades, Rauschenberg's art drains back into its source, the world.

The third panel of Robert Rauschenberg's Barge *(1962), a three-panel painting incorporating silk-screened images from newspapers*

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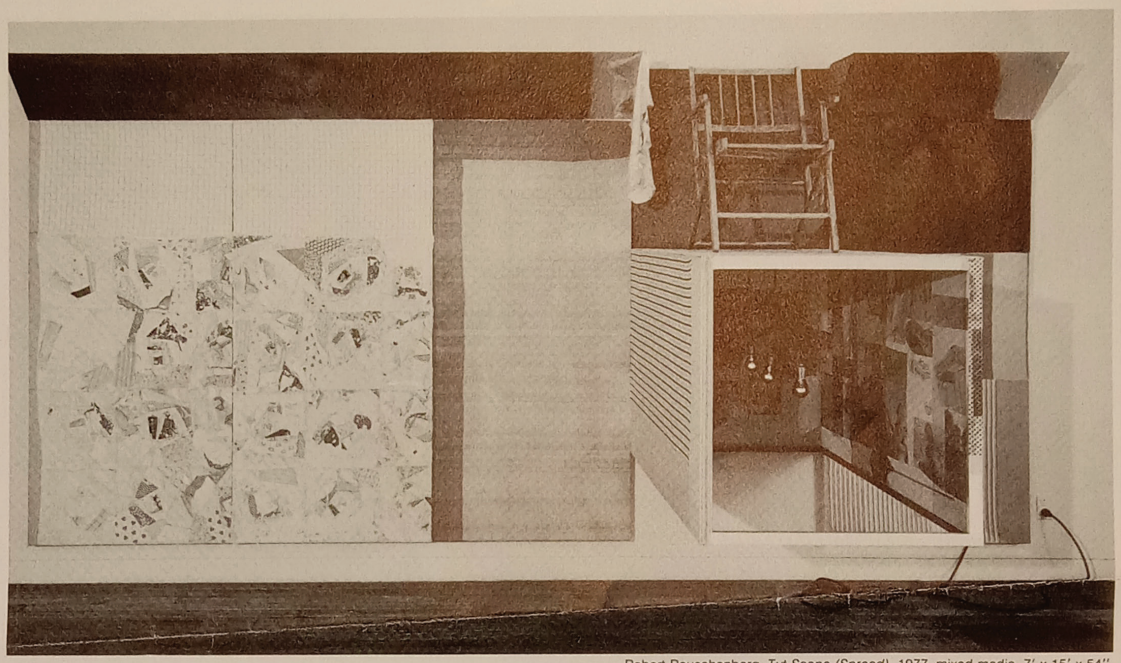
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	TOMKINS	IV.C.47

tem (thus leading to what Ireland describes as the "empirical anxiety" of any viewer seeking visual regularity). Rather, perceptual flutter and the hint of an image appear within the dotted fields, the result of Ireland's holding to relatively open designs. The elimination of psychic distance between eye and hand in Ireland's quasi-mantric process is conveyed obliquely to the viewer by an apparent shift in scale: from afar the dots are invisible, while up close they are bright and myriad, almost galactic.

The overall designs—intersecting lines, borders of squares, concentric bands of color, or even more provocative forms—determine the otherwise random location of each dot: pattern-as-shape offsets pattern-as-field through containment. But, then, these images are rather slight—pale in their pointillism, they do not really stand on their own as geometric presences. Rather they are vehicles for the implementation of the dotting process.

Here, then, is the real paradox: while Ireland's method is more visually oriented than those of his colleagues, the result is less visually striking. Ireland's drawings on paper do not exploit the dynamic scale or right-on-the-wall presence of LeWitt's or Bochner's newer, more deliberately handsome work. More expansive, dramatic illustrations of his reasoning are left to his room-size installations of colored rope. In his drawings Ireland retreats into a quietude that intimates the privacy of his semi-solipsistic activity.

—PETER FRANK



Robert Rauschenberg, *Tut-Scape (Spread)*, 1977, mixed media, 7′ x 15′ x 54″.

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG, Leo Castelli and Sonnabend Galleries; MIA WESTERLUND, Leo Castelli Gallery; RICHARD VAN BUREN, Paula Cooper Gallery:

Coinciding with his Museum of Modern Art retrospective, ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG's downtown show of new work was retrospective as well. Rauschenberg's recent *Scales* and *Spreads* are large assemblages that incorporate virtually all the categories of images and objects we know from his pictures of the early and middle '60s. A necessarily abbreviated list would include anatomical diagrams, athletes, birds and birds' wings, celebrities, chairs, electronic circuitry, ladders, light bulbs, oars, boats and sails, tires and exotic animals. That Rauschenberg should return to these items is significant, since they had grown faint and intangible as of his *Hoarfrost* series, and had virtually disappeared (though they were remotely alluded to)in his *Jammers* group.

This is not to say that Rauschenberg has backtracked; in fact, a good deal of what characterized the *Hoarfrosts* and *Jammers* has been synthesized with his primary imagery in the *Spreads* and *Scales;* the general style of *Jammers* has been used to frame and contextualize the famous birds, light bulbs, athletes, etc. Thus broad, vacant sheets of linen and satin are the surfaces on which a page from the *Times* is silkscreened, or to which a country mailbox is affixed. These luxurious fabrics stand for the present in Rauschenberg's work, which has gradually given over its earlier melancholy to a kind of purity paradoxically achieved through affluence; the opulent present dominates the past. In the *Spreads* and *Scales* Rauschenberg's thickly layered collages are confined as vignettes to parts of the larger constructions—sectioned off by swaths of fabric so that, like objects of memory, we may leave and return to them freely.

Memory is represented here in another way as well. Rauschenberg has set mirrors at angles to a number of the *Spreads* and *Scales* so that a reflection of a piece becomes a part of that piece. He uses polished metal rather than glass, so that the image is not sharply literal, but vague and insubstantial in degrees that vary with different points of view. Rauschenberg treats other objects in a comparable manner. His light bulbs, for instance, are brand new, are not frosted but transparent, and hang in pristine brass fixtures from freshly made cords. The pathetic, forlorn, encrusted bulbs of his work of 15 years ago have thus been redressed in the richness of the present. Unmarred by use, they are foreign objects that would have to be battered in order to be owned. Memory, which improves the past while holding it in storage, nevertheless fails to deter us from retrospective longing and from the sense that the present is too strange to live in.

In the *Spreads* and *Scales* Rauschenberg not only reminisces about his personal history but about the history of his period. The works are filled with his contemporaries' stylistic idiosyncrasies, suffused and re-presented in the silken sheen which is Rauschenberg's own. Lichtenstein's dots appear a number of times, as do graphs, and amiably satirical versions of Stella's stripes. In *Narcissus Convoy,* a row of mirror-backed silk pillows gestures obliquely at Johns' *Target with Four Faces.* All these references are swept in together, along with Rauschenberg's old imagery. Because of their magnificent size and craftsmanship, the *Spreads* and *Scales* seem to signify the end, and the capping, of an era. The *Jammers* marked Rauschenberg's achievement of recognition and affluence and his overcoming of melancholy; competition, antagonism and uncertainty are now forsworn as well. The current show is a summation, a finale at which everyone is present.

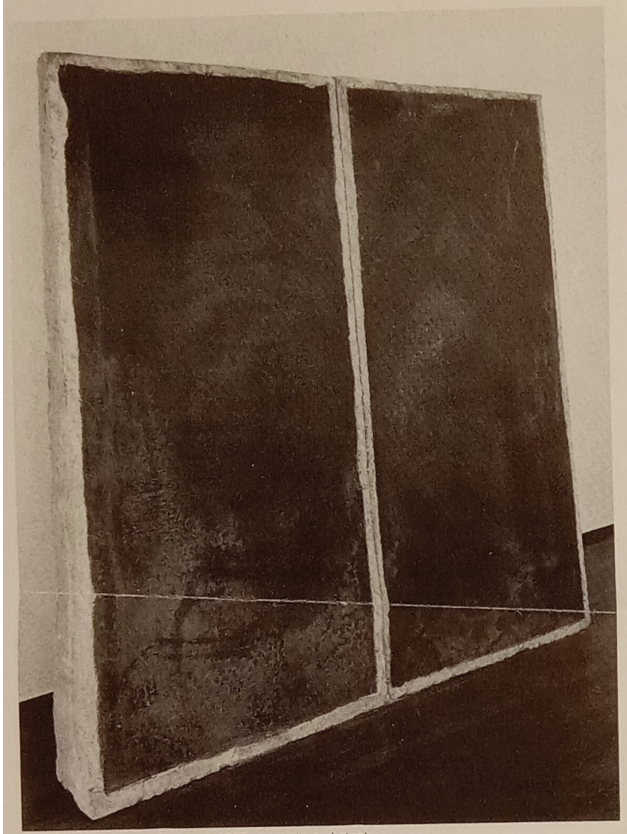
I suspect that, consciously or unconsciously, Rauschenberg has deliberately produced a retrospective of his own to stand beside MOMA's retrospection on him. The *Spreads* and *Scales* are a recapturing, a re-presentation of the past. They constitute a man's own retelling of his story, as opposed to the public's historicizing of it.

MIA WESTERLUND's June show consisted of two large sculptures, each made up of massive concrete wedges. In one piece, four horizontal wedges composed an oblong diamond capped with sheets of roofing copper; the vertical slabs of the other piece bore heavy plates of brownish steel which had been set in flush with the surface. Despite these sculptures' apparent simplicity, every part of them participates in playing out a series of rich antiphonies—between mass and detail, fixity and mobility, structure and embellishment, newness and decay, monumentality and transparency.

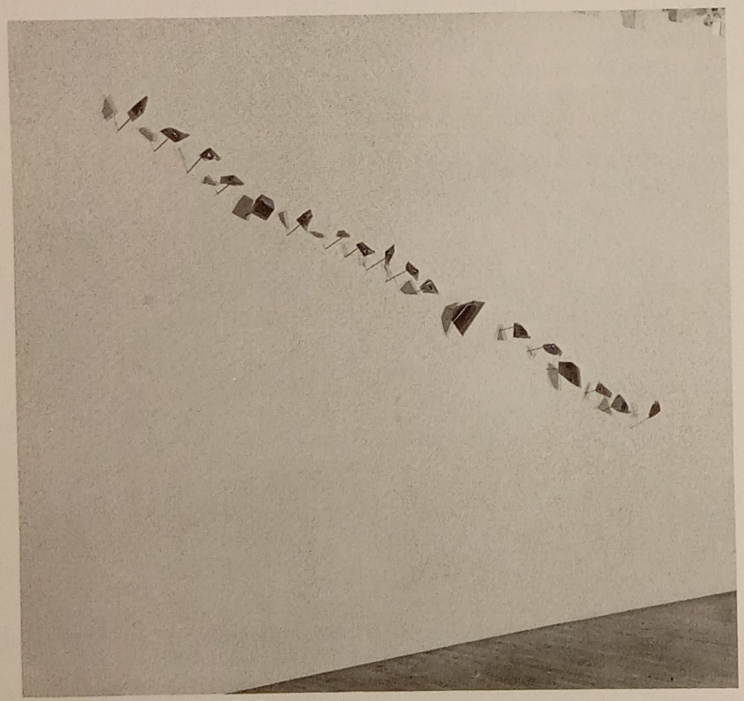
These antithetical qualities never correlate strictly with the works' physical aspects. At one moment, the concrete may represent solidity and the metal

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Mia Westerlund, *Muro Series III*, 1977, concrete and steel.



Richard Van Buren, *Strata II-IV*, 1976-77, mixed media.

ornamentation, but they change roles abruptly, as the viewer moves around the work. Seductive embellishment is present both in the concrete—which bears a pattern of trowel marks not unlike the burnishing on David Smith's *Cubi*—and the metal, whose nebulous, merging colors (the result of oxidation) suggest Rothko and Newman.

Westerlund's sculptures refer to the past, yet belong entirely to the present. Their rust patterns recall the art of the 50's; their clean, painstakingly clear shapes (i.e., the margins around the steel plates in *Muro Series III*) gesture toward Stella. Meanwhile, their utilitarian materials invite architectural associations. These references conjure an idea of coexistent rootedness and flexibility.

The massiveness of the concrete makes her wedges far too heavy to lift, move or arrange; yet at the same time, they stand separated by the narrowest air spaces, delicate hiatuses suggesting that the wedges have indeed been moved and arranged with extraordinary, impossible precision. Their surface embellishment emphasizes the illusion that the sculptures must be lighter than they actually are.

This appearance of being at once flexible and stationary, playful and serene, suggests a mingling of intellect and sensuality. Westerlund's works' balance and precision are the result of calculation, but her concrete masses are so thoroughly swathed in detail that one wonders whether structure or adornment came first. Indeed, her sculptures have the sense of having sprouted full-grown, possibly because of their very massiveness, from which surface detailing cannot really be dissociated. In this way, Westerlund's work comes close to that of Dorothea Rockburne. But where Rockburne's golden sections allude to art's past, they are esoteric, and to a degree, reticent and forbidding. Westerlund's work is extraordinarily candid about its connection with the past, and can thus afford to be comfortable with the present.

Though it may be unfair to class RICHARD VAN BUREN as a provincial artist (he has spent equal amounts of time working in California and New York) his sculpture's uniqueness rests in the novelty of its materials, in a way that much work from the Mid-, South-, and Far West tends to do. Perhaps provincial fascination with unusual tools results from an absence of that competition with history, that overburdening of culture monumentalized that New York artists are forced to suffer and that makes thoroughbreds of them.

An artist who feels history's test acutely understands that there is no exit to be found in a catchy device, and that his response to the weight of the past must be conceived on ground that may already be well tilled. This point is relevant in Van Buren's case, since his work is conspicuous for lacking clear reference to or place in the general sweep of contemporary art. Yet if Van Buren's work is anomalous and disconnected from most trends (this is not necessarily bad) neither does it oppose or repudiate the art of its milieu. Van Buren's work does resemble certain artifacts, however; surfboards and the tailfins of '62 Cadillacs come most immediately to mind.

Van Buren's sculptures are formed from the same fiberglass resin as a surfboard, and are carved into jagged, eccentric, often triangular blocks. The resin is translucent (though generally murky) so that one can see beyond the surface of a piece to a wild, fantastic, rather intestinal confusion in its interior. These gruesome cores (they look something like half-dissected organs) he achieves by dropping bits of crumpled paper, and occasional nails and wood slivers, into the resin while it is still liquid. One is conscious of the awful density and airlessness of these interior landscapes, sealed as they are beneath an impervious plastic skin.

One concern which is clearly central to Van Buren is the opposition he establishes between glossy, geometrical surface and chaotic core—a relationship which is made almost impossible to grasp by the basic formal structure of his works. His detail is too small and submerged to be seen except when examined minutely, and if we move close enough in for this we lose our sense of the piece's overall shape. This incongruity is particularly frustrating in what is actually the best work in Van Buren's current show, a string of variously sized blocks mounted in a diminuendo along the wall. The piece's strength is in the nuanced irregularity of its downward progress, a movement one can only encompass at some distance. From that remote position, Van Buren may as well not have bothered with his cores. If shape and scale were discrete attractions in Van Buren's sculpture, it would not matter that we are forced to view each separately. But it is their association that carries his

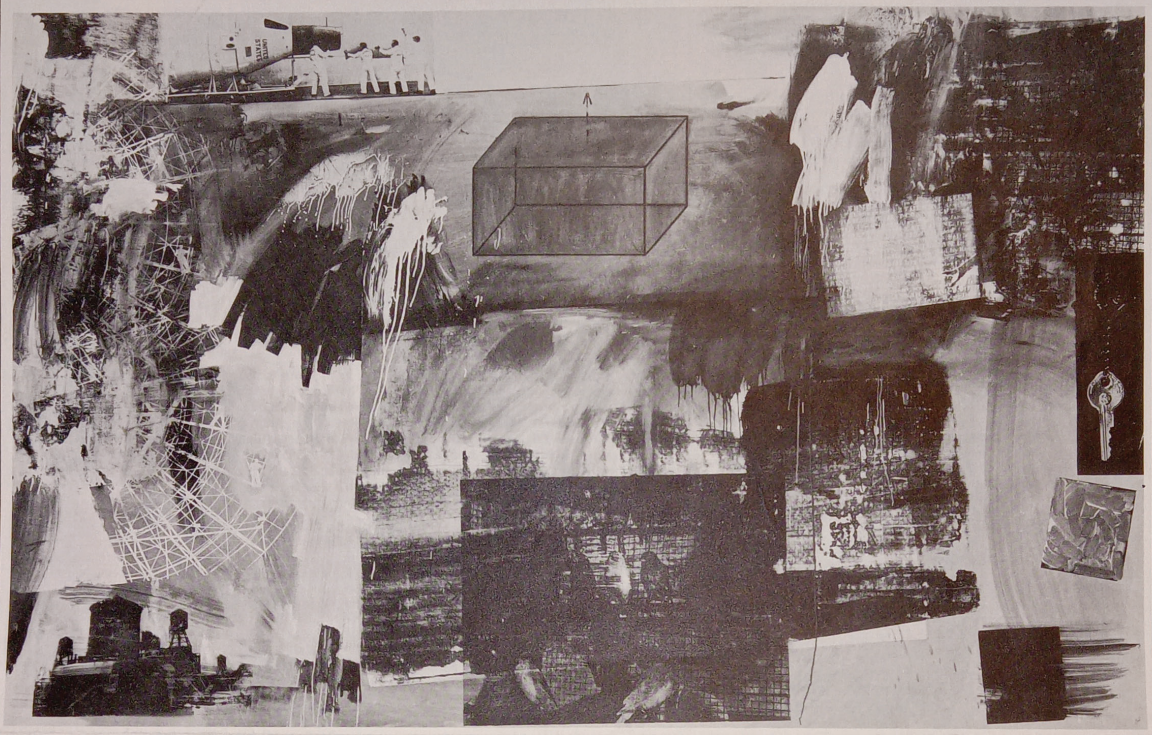
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No. 2, Spring 1977
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MoMA



The third panel of Robert Rauschenberg's Barge (1962), *a three-panel painting incorporating silk-screened images from newspapers and magazines.*

Robert Rauschenberg: Between Art and Life

**"Painting relates to both art and life.
Neither can be made.
I try to act in the gap between the two."**

Through May 17
d'Harnoncourt Galleries, 1st Floor

The speaker is Robert Rauschenberg. Ever since the day in 1953 when he took an eraser to a drawing by Willem de Kooning and exhibited the result as *Erased de Kooning Drawing,* Rauschenberg has been the irrepressible, prodigiously energetic and inventive *enfant terrible* of the art world. But as so often happens, yesterday's *enfant terrible* has become, almost imperceptibly, today's culture hero.

The Museum of Modern Art is currently celebrating the brash, joyful, and the very grand art of Robert Rauschenberg with a comprehensive showing of his work from the late 1940s to the present—paintings, prints, "combines," multiples, collages, photographs. The exhibition, which originated under the direction of Walter Hopps at the National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, has been installed at the Museum by Kynaston McShine, Curator of Painting and Sculpture. It will later travel to San Francisco, Chicago, and Buffalo.

The Rauschenberg exhibition has already been the focus of national attention. In a cover story, *Time* called Rauschenberg our "most living artist." He is, the magazine added, "a model of the joy of art." *Newsweek* wrote: "For sheer energy—artistic and social—he is probably without peer in the art world. Indeed, Rauschenberg's only serious flaw may be that his is an act impos-

(continued on page 2, col. 1)



Pablo Picasso's Faun Unveiling Woman *(1936) from his famous* Vollard Suite *is one of the numerous prints that, along with illustrated books and bronzes, will be exhibited in* **Impresario—Ambroise Vollard.**

Impresario—Ambroise Vollard

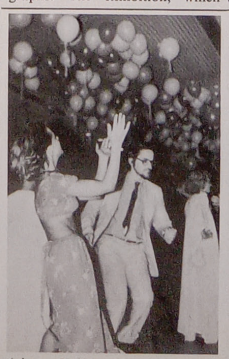
June 9-September 6
Garden Wing and Sachs Galleries

Picasso once said: "The most beautiful woman who ever lived never had her portrait painted, drawn, or engraved more often than Vollard—by Cézanne, Renoir, Roussel, Bonnard, Forain, almost everybody, in fact. I think they all did him through a sense of competition, each one wanting to do him better than the others."

And for good reason. As the foremost art dealer of the early 20th century, Ambroise Vollard's life was one of the most productive and eventful in the annals of the Paris art world. "Impresario—Ambroise Vollard," our major summer exhibition, is built around the extraordinary career of this man who, with a seldom-challenged authority and a gruff dignity, occupied an exceptional position as an art dealer, a publisher, and an all-round entrepreneur. Included in the exhibition will be all the important lithographs, etchings, illustrated books, and bronzes that Vollard encouraged such artists as Picasso, Renoir, Maillol, Cézanne, Redon, Rouault, Denis, and Chagall, among others, to produce. Also on view will be Picasso's 1917 pencil portrait of Vollard and Renoir's painting *Ambroise Vollard Dressed as a Toreador,* along with Vollard memorabilia.

In his tiny shop on Paris's rue Laffitte, known locally as the "rue des tableaux," the enterprising and uncommonly shrewd young Vollard mounted, in 1895, the first one-man show of Cézanne's work. In 1901 he gave Picasso his first one-man show, and a year later held the first Maillol exhibit. Vollard even managed to persuade the arthritic 73-year-old Renoir to take up sculpture. But for Vollard such early successes were only the means to still another goal: publishing fine prints, albums, and illustrated books. And it was on his publishing ven-

(continued on page 2, col. 2)



(photo: Helaine Messer)

Spring Benefit: 'the best, the best, the best'

They'll be dancing the night away again at the Museum's annual Spring Benefit party, to be held this year on Monday June 6, from 9 o'clock until half past twelve. The evening will also mark the opening of our major summer exhibition, "Impresario—Ambroise Vollard."

As always, the Spring Benefit promises to be the loveliest and liveliest, the most gala evening on the Museum calendar. "That was some scene," exclaimed society columnist Suzy after last year's bash. And one pleased guest raved to *Womens Wear Daily:* "The best, the best, the best."

(continued on page 2, col. 4)

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Bed (1955) *by Robert Rauschenberg. "...One of the friendliest pictures I've ever painted. My fear has always been that someone would want to crawl into it."*

Rauschenberg

(continued from page 1, col. 5)

sible to follow." The critic for the *Washington Post* found the exhibition "the most exhilarating one-man show seen in Washington in years," while the *Baltimore Sun* said simply, "a great show by a great artist . . . anyone even remotely interested in the art of his time ought to see it."

Painter, sculptor, printmaker, set designer, and dancer, Robert Rauschenberg has been one of those artists that the world has needed time to catch up with. He first emerged in the early Fifties, those heady days of triumph for the New York School of Pollock, de Kooning, Rothko, and their colleagues. Rauschenberg took up where he thought the Abstract Expressionists were leaving off. Such early works as the glistening all-white paintings of 1951, the all-blacks of 1951-52, or the "pictures" made out of dirt, however notorious at the time, can now be seen as anticipating the efforts of today's younger artists. With his inventiveness, curiosity, and bold experimental approach to methods, ideas, and materials, Rauschenberg has spent a quarter of a century challenging the conventions and limits of art. Abstract Expressionism, Pop, Minimal, Funk, Performance, and Conceptual Art all come together in his work.

Rauschenberg is perhaps best known for his nervy scavenging of everyday objects and images—from Coke bottles, chairs, rubber tires, and a man's necktie to magazine photos of JFK, Janis Joplin, astronauts, and track stars. For *Bed* (1955), Rauschenberg stretched his favorite bed quilt over a frame and covered it with drips and smears of paint. Then he added his pillow: "a nice white area to paint on," he recalls. Public reaction came fast and furious. The artist claims to be perplexed by those who find *Bed* ugly and even deeply upsetting. "I think of *Bed* as one of the friendliest pictures I've ever painted. My fear has always been that someone would want to crawl into it." Equally controversial was *Monogram* (1956-59). While walking on Seventh Avenue one day, Rauschenberg saw a large stuffed angora goat in the window of an office supply store. Buying it straight away from a rather incredulous owner, he took the goat home, shampooed its thick, dirty fleece, and covered the damaged muzzle with a thick impasto of paint. But it was still three years before Rauschenberg could figure out just how to use such an improbable object. Finally, he encircled the goat with an old automobile tire and mounted it on a painted platform collaged with a tennis ball, a rubber heel, and photos from magazines and newspapers. Was it a painting? A sculpture? Rauschenberg decided to engage the ambiguity head on and called it a "combine." *Monogram,* which has become one of Rauschenberg's most famous works, was acquired for Stockholm's Moderna Museet by its then-director Pontus Hultén (now Visual Arts Director at Paris's Beaubourg Center).

In the early Sixties, Rauschenberg began to silk-screen large found images on canvas. Paintings such as *Axle, Estate,* and the 32-foot *Barge* fix images taken from the daily papers—a rocket, Kennedy, a cloverleaf intersection, a clock, downtown Manhattan rooftops, a football game—in complex and resonant compositions. Looking at these works is rather like viewing a film, with its closeups, cuts, and dissolves, or even like rapidly flipping the dial of a TV.

Rauschenberg has always worked closely with other artists, including Jasper Johns, John Cage (an important influence), and Merce Cunningham, for whose dance company he designed costumes and sets. But in the middle and late Sixties, Rauschenberg immersed himself even more in various collaborative projects: dance, multimedia, and the attempt to harness art to new developments in technology. Perhaps the best-known of these group efforts was Experiments in Art and Technology—E.A.T.—which Rauschenberg launched in 1966 with Billy Kluver of Bell Telephone Laboratories. E.A.T.'s most noted and ambitious project was the Pepsi-Cola Pavilion at Expo '70 in Osaka, Japan.

During the Sixties Rauschenberg also began to focus more of his energies on prints, working with publisher Tatyana Grosman of Universal Limited Art Editions, as well as with Los Angeles's Gemini studio. By 1963 he created a print, *Accident,* that was to win First Prize at the Fifth International Biennial of Graphics at Ljubljana; a year before he was recognized as being worthy of the Grand Prize at the Venice Biennale. In 1967 Rauschenberg pulled *Booster,* at six feet the largest hand-pulled lithograph up until then. He continues to find in printmaking the opportunity to use ever richer materials. The recent *Hoarfrost* series (1974) consists of sheerly elegant veils of silk, chiffon, and taffeta, each layer bearing characteristic found images.

Rauschenberg has remained true to his artistic self and 1977 still finds him being as inventive as ever. He was one of five American artists commissioned to do a print on the occasion of the inauguration of President Jimmy Carter.

Where is the continuity in Rauschenberg's twisting and turning career, his provocative, protean art? Perhaps it is in the very imperative of change itself. He risks all so as not to repeat himself. "I have a need to live with the fear that comes with doing unfamiliar work," he said recently. "The only way to do it is to never stop." □

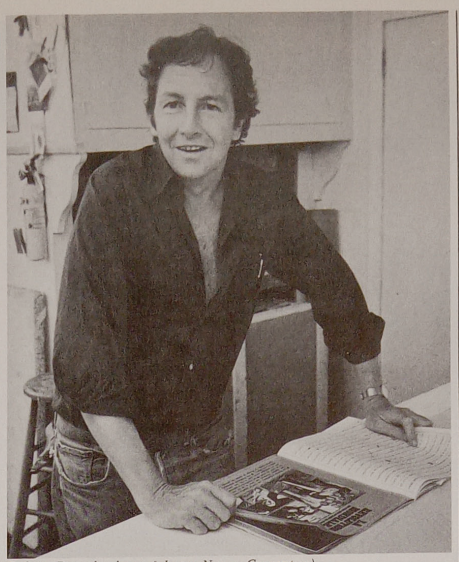


Ambroise Vollard (1868-1939). *(photo: H. Roger Viollet)*

Vollard

(continued from page 1, col. 3)

tures that, for 45 years, he was to spend much of his time, energy, thoughts—and his money.



Robert Rauschenberg. (photo: Nancy Crampton)

"These are the feelings Rauschenberg gives us: love, wonder, laughter, heroism (I accept), fear, sorrow, anger, disgust, tranquility."

"There is in Rauschenberg, between him and what he picks up to use, the quality of encounter. For the first time. If, as happens, there is a series of paintings containing such and such a material, it is as though the encounter was extended into a visit on the part of the stranger (who is divine). (In this way societies uninformed by artists coagulate their experience into modes of communication in order to make mistakes.) Shortly the stranger leaves, leaving the door open."

—© John Cage, 1961 "On Robert Rauschenberg, Artist, and His Work"

Everybody knew Vollard, and he knew everybody.

And he wrote about them all. Vollard's memoirs, *Recollections of a Picture-Dealer* (published in this country by Little, Brown in 1936) brims with impressions and anecdotes of the art scene of turn-of-the-century Paris. An excerpt from the book offers a glimpse of this inspired man who left such a distinguished and unique legacy. Here Vollard recalls the original inspiration and initial venture that led to his career as a publisher.

"Strolling along the quays, I dipped one day into the books in a second-hand dealer's box. On the title-page of a fine octavo I read: *Ambroise Firmin-Didot, éditeur.*

"'*Ambroise Vollard, éditeur*... that wouldn't look bad either,' I thought.

"Little by little the idea of becoming a publisher, a great publisher of books, took root in my mind. I could not see a fine sheet of paper without thinking: 'How well type would look on it!' Soon my only remaining hesitation was whether to publish prose or verse.

"I decided on verse, after a visit to the Imprimerie Nationale, which was still housed in the magnificent *hôtel* of the rue Vieille-du-Temple. I was with a friend who wanted to see the famous "Salle des Singes." While he was studying every detail of that celebrated decoration, I had opened a book published by the Institution, and was admiring a page printed in Garamond, that magnificent type engraved by order of Francis I, the italics of which seemed to me expressly designed to print the work of a poet.

"But what poet should I choose? Chance helped me to a decision.

"One day, on the top of an omnibus, I was sitting near a poorly-dressed man. A scarf barely concealed the absence of a collar. He was holding a large picture in both hands—his own portrait, I fancied. This painting got in the way of the conductor as he went to and fro to collect his fares.

"'Look here, you,' he broke out at last, 'why not bring your wardrobe next time?'

"'I haven't one,' said the other simply.

"'That's Verlaine,' whispered somebody beside me.

"It was Verlaine. He got down at one of the omnibus stops, and I saw him going towards a picture-dealer's shop. Hearing the name of Verlaine, a passenger turned round:

"'Who's Verlaine?'

"'A poet, the greatest next to Stéphane Mallarmé.'

"This reply was made by a passenger carrying an impressive portfolio. A young man sitting near him addressed him as 'My dear Master!' I had thus a warrant that Mallarmé and Verlaine were the two greatest contemporary poets. The next day, outside Flammarion's, I opened a book by Mallarmé and read his admirable *Don du Poème.* I confess that for the moment I remained insensible to the charm of that subtle music. Next I began turning the pages of Verlaine's *Parallèlement,* which corresponded better to my notions of poetry. It seemed to me exactly what I wanted.

"But whom should I get to illustrate a book at once so tender and so voluptuous? I decided to ask Bonnard for some lithographs.

"For the printing, I thought at once of the Imprimerie Nationale. They told me there that I must first obtain the authorisation of the Minister of Justice. I did not know that certain parts of *Parallèlement* had drawn down the thunderbolts of the law, and therefore took it quite as a matter of course that I obtained the required permission. What did astonish me was the remark of the business manager of the Imprimerie: 'That's a queer idea, to put a book on Geometry into verse!'

"One of the foremen thought differently—a man with the head of an old faun, who would certainly have pleased Verlaine, and whom I found reading aloud to two young work-girls, winking slyly at them the while:

L'une était brune, l'autre blonde,
Toutes deux s'aimaient d'amour tendre. . . .

"When the printing of *Parallèlement* was finished, a copy was sent as usual to the Keeper of the Seals. The next day I received a visit from a high official of the Ministry of Justice.

"'The Ministry begs to inform you,' he said, 'that you must return all the copies of *Parallèlement* to the Imprimerie Nationale. It is considered inadmissible that a book banned on moral grounds should be republished in a cover ornamented with the effigy of the Republic, and that the title-page should bear the inscription: *By special permission,* etc.'

"I had distributed a certain number of copies of the book. For those that remained Bonnard designed a cover more in keeping with the spirit of the work.

"The incident, reported in the Press, had its echo in the Chamber. But parliamentary controversy did not help to sell a single copy more.

"This work, and *Daphnis et Chloë,* which I published two years later, also illustrated by Bonnard, were in fact a complete failure at the time, one reproach against them being that they were illustrated by lithography, the only method of illustration admired by the bibliophiles of that day being wood-engraving.

"'Well, if they want woodcuts,' thought I, 'why shouldn't I give them woodcuts?' And I published the *Imitation of Christ* with a fine series of cuts by Maurice Denis, and later *Sagesse,* illustrated in colours by the same artist. But I was told: 'Painters are not illustrators. The liberties they permit themselves are incompatible with the "finish" which is the whole merit of an illustrated book.'

"I once heard a bibliophile voicing his admiration of an

Spring Benefit

(continued from page 1, col. 5)

The Co-chairwomen of this year's Benefit are Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd, Mrs. Douglas Auchincloss, Mrs. Walter N. Thayer, and Mrs. David Granger. While the party will benefit the Museum's program and its Junior Council, it also makes a significant and needed contribution to the Annual Fund.

The Sculpture Garden will be open and lit for strolling beneath the beech trees and for meeting old and new Museum friends. There will be music, dancing, and refreshments in the Garden and in the Penthouse, where Slim Hyatt will again be jockeying tapes of the latest Disco sounds. Of course, the exhibition "Impresario—Ambroise Vollard"—dedicated to the art dealer who championed Cézanne, Maillol, Picasso, and Matisse—will be open for viewing. Dress festively!

Anyone who's ever been to past Benefits knows what wonderful evenings they are. Tickets for this year's party are $40 per person. Or you may wish to become a Patron of the Benefit, which includes the privilege of a private viewing of a future exhibition at the Museum. Patron tickets are $65 per person.

Just fill in the coupon below, enclose your check, and send it to the **Special Events Office, The Museum of Modern Art,** 11 West 53rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10019.

Party in the Garden
and Preview of the Exhibition, **Impresario—Ambroise Vollard**
for the Benefit of The Museum of Modern Art
Monday, June 6 from 9:00 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

☐ Please send me ___ Patron tickets at $65 each or $130 per couple.
☐ Please send me ___ tickets at $40 each.
☐ I cannot attend but enclose a donation of $_____.

Name _____

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Please make checks payable to The Museum of Modern Art. Tickets include a contribution to the Museum that is tax-deductible.

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THE ART WORLD

Souvenirs of an Avant-Garde

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG is undoubtedly America's No. 1 artist of the 1976-77 season. His current retrospective of more than a hundred and fifty creations in various mediums was a Bicentennial feature last fall at the National Collection of Fine Arts, in Washington, D.C., and was hailed by record crowds and with appropriate enthusiasm in the press. *Time* awarded him a cover story entitled "The Most Living Artist," and this was matched by the *Times*' "Art That Sings," illustrated with a half-page montage announcement by Rauschenberg himself, when the show opened in New York, at the Museum of Modern Art. John Russell found in the retrospective "some of the finest art that has been made in our lifetime," and he opined that "Mr. Rauschenberg's 'combine paintings' of the mid-1950's were the epitome of all that is best in the traditions of this country." Mr. Russell's feelings ran so high that, although he is customarily the booster of everybody, he was carried into an attack on members of the art public who had failed to appreciate early enough "that these works represented a critique of pure painting as radical as anything in Immanuel Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason,' " and he abused the late Hans Hofmann for having "beaten into his students" the use of blocks of color whose "crashing obviousness" in Hofmann's hands was the extreme opposite of their "singing" in a canvas by Rauschenberg.

It is a stereotype of the nineteen-seventies that the original Abstract Expressionists (Pollock, de Kooning, Hofmann, Kline) went around bowed to the earth by inner anxieties and profound metaphysical ponderings. The image of their black sufferings, to which Rauschenberg himself has been an important contributor, provides the intellectual background for the current homage to Rauschenberg. The theme of his celebration is "Joy." "He is," wrote *Time's* art critic, "a model of the joy of art." "Brash and joyful work" was the lead of the Museum of Modern Art's press release announcing the show; it went on to describe Rauschenberg as "perhaps the most innovative, prolific, and audacious artist since Picasso." Dr. Joshua Taylor, director of the National Collection of Fine Arts, found that Rauschenberg had achieved a state of "continuous freshness" by lifting himself above a consciousness of art history: "His career has been characterized not by a set of styles but by a persistent creative exuberance that has the happy effect of belittling categories, invalidating definitions, and freeing the viewer to discover beauty and meaning where he might least expect it." Joy and exuberance provide an alternative to ideas; in literary circles this set of values is known as anti-intellectualism. One is urged to believe that the art world has been overburdened with thought, and that Rauschenberg has come as an embodiment of inarticulate energy—a kind of Mynheer Peeperkorn or Harpo Marx—to liberate art and the art public from excessively precise thinking.

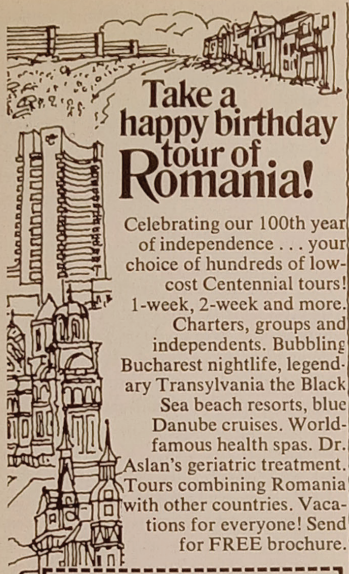
Rauschenberg has claimed again and again, to rounds of applause, that he never starts with an "idea" but that his works evolve through "collaborating" with materials. In the interest of clarity, one feels obliged to point out that an artist needn't start with an idea when the ideas he employs have been at work long before he began. Finding in the street or in shops things that art can be made of has an extensive and complicated history in the twentieth century. From Josef Albers, under whom he studied at Black Mountain College, Rauschenberg learned about Bauhaus students' combing city streets after the First World War for debris to make up for the scarcity of art materials. His buying a stuffed goat from a store window in order to incorporate it into a sculpture was a reënactment of the Surrealists' street-foraging expeditions of fifty years ago. It is true that Rauschenberg has never been respectful of the thinking or the history behind the works on which his creations have been based. He has maintained that he owes little to art, and that for anyone to call attention to influences upon him is an affront. "Influences in my case," he recently told an interviewer, "are rarely art works." In his view, the origins of his paintings, collages, and assemblages (for some reason, the art world has accepted his term "combines," as if he had conceived a previously nameless form) lie in the actual objects that are incorporated or reproduced in his compositions. The notion that the artist's materials—canvas, paint, ready-made images, found objects—can be made to "work with" the artist in determining his creations is a traditional element of twentieth-century avant-garde magic. Miró, for example, believed his canvases to be alive with energies that could be induced to generate significant signs. Anything added to a surface is sufficient to animate its space and set the image-forming activity in motion; Hofmann's



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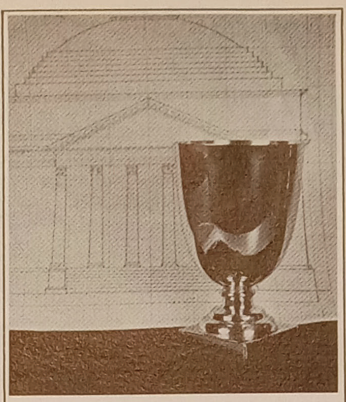
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"push and pull" and Pollock's "contact" with the canvas are variations of the same approach. The painting surface becomes the equivalent of the artist's unconscious, and he could say with Rauschenberg that his "method was always closer to a collaboration with materials than to any kind of conscious manipulation and control." Instead of moving toward resolution in a structure, the spontaneously conceived composition remains open, to attract an indefinite quantity of visual data (images, brush marks, accidental stains, objects) that seemingly place themselves at random. In employing this method, Rauschenberg has added data provided by photographs and by silk-screened or otherwise transferred images. The powers attributed to the artist's materials are insufficient, however, to qualify these accretions as works of art. That involves the evolution of modern ideas and modern taste, in which the pioneering of earlier artists is indispensable.

Rauschenberg's claim to aesthetic autonomy in the face of his obvious debts—to Schwitters' buildups of random scraps on painted areas, to Abstract Expressionist untidy surfaces, to Dada dissociation, to commercial photomontage, to bizarre combinations of objects in Surrealist window dressings—implies a state that is hardly joyous. Reviewing Rauschenberg's first exhibition, in 1951, Stuart Preston, of the *Times*, described it as "stylish," which is more to the point than the current critics' formula of unpremeditated discharges of delight. From the start of his career, Rauschenberg has been in and of the art world; he is an art-world wit, attuned and responding to prevailing opinions and phases of taste. He is frequently quoted as saying that he wishes to function in the gap between art and life; but for him there is no gap—art *is* life. There is nothing discreditable in his role of Mannerist of postwar American vanguardism. But his performance has been anything but playful, particularly in his disengaging himself from artists to whom his work is indebted. Mr. Russell may have instinctively reflected the spirit of his subject when he accompanied praise of Rauschenberg with an attack on an ancestor.

Rauschenberg's relation to art is stated with maximum succinctness in his explanation of "Erased de Kooning Drawing" (1953), his first major coup in calling attention to himself: "I was trying both . . . to purge myself of my teaching and at the same time exercise the possibilities." He wanted, in sum, to discard the philosophical and emotional motivations of the Abstract



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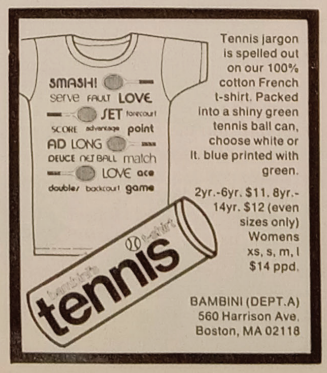
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Expressionist mode while elaborating on its visual traits. One wonders whether he was aware that he was embracing a formula for parody—for it is parody adjusted to changing art-world fashions which best characterizes his accomplishment. When Rauschenberg effectuated his erasure of the de Kooning (it took, he has said, a month of labor, and traces of the original are still apparent), Abstract Expressionism was the reigning advanced mode in painting, and hence the gateway to recognition as a member of the vanguard. One of the aspects of the Abstract Expressionist style which are responsible for its effect of freedom is the accessibility of the artist's forms to his whims and afterthoughts. The triumph of this style over the fear of overt disorder makes it receptive to non-art images and objects, thus harmonizing it with aspects of Dada. Pollock and John Little glued driftwood into paintings; de Kooning pasted into his paintings fragments of advertisements and segments of discarded canvases, and he retained fingermarks and used offprints left by newspaper columns and pictures on wet paint.

With the deletion of the subjective content on which the tension of its compositions depends, Abstract Expressionism could appear a program of wantonness. But along with the Action painters—Pollock, de Kooning, and so on—the Abstract Expressionist movement included painters of expressive colored rectangles: Newman, Rothko, Reinhardt. Like hundreds of other artists of the nineteen-fifties, Rauschenberg reflected the Abstract Expressionist mode in coagulations and drippings of pigment on geometrically organized grounds. The "Black Painting" (1951-52) in which he divides the canvas equally into an all-black area and one activated by strokes of color is a compositional duplicate of a Newman that combines the two poles of the Abstract Expressionist manner. Rauschenberg, however, was among the first consciously to discard the "expressive" program of the Abstract Expressionist leaders, and this left him free to "exercise the possibilities" of the apparent randomness of the style by building his compositions out of an unlimited range of materials: rags, photos, soft-drink bottles, earth, painted-over reproductions of masterpieces, bits of wood and metal. (He seems especially attracted to neckties.) A major work in the retrospective is the significantly titled "Collection" (1953-54), which consists of three vertical wooden panels on which vertical bands of red, yellow, and blue



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of different widths, like boards in a patched-up fence, are overlaid with scribbles and runnels of paint and a collage of items that include rectangular cuts of cloth, torn newspapers, and a picture of a man on horseback. A good part of the Museum of Modern Art exhibition consists of variations on Abstract Expressionist clutter—at first actual substances but later largely ones simulated through montages of images silk-screened or transferred from photographs and reproductions.

Rauschenberg's reputation has grown through a series of *succès de scandale*. The earliest of these, and the most effective after "Erased de Kooning," were "Bed" and "Monogram;" more recent efforts, including staging himself as a dancer, collaborating with engineers, and, in the "Carnal Clocks" show, exhibiting photos of sex organs, never quite came off. "Bed," done in 1955, is, I think, the artist's most original creation and, almost accidentally, the most comprehensive and symbolically intelligible of his works. It transcends his often expressed ideal of impersonality—his desire to be, or present himself as, a "material," like the materials he uses. "Bed" affirms the autobiographical essence of Abstract Expressionist painting by constituting itself out of one of the most intimate of objects at the same time that it underlines, by acts of mutilation, the formal structure of that object as a rectangle fastened to a frame. "Bed" consists of a patchwork quilt under which Rauschenberg slept for several years and to which he has added his pillow and a sheet. This assemblage is daubed with paint and hung vertically, like a canvas. Nostalgia is recurrent in Rauschenberg's early collages—later his associations became more public. The quilt of "Bed" evokes rural domesticity, while the serial pattern of squares associates it with advanced abstract art. At the meeting of the quilt with the pillow and bed sheet there is an effect of something cut open; stained with red paint, the gash suggests violence and, in the context, nightmares. According to the exhibition catalogue, "Bed" has, since its first appearance, "stirred heated controversy"—in 1958 it was banned from the international exhibition at Spoleto—but we are not told why or about what. In any event, it is, in my opinion, the apex of Rauschenberg's inventions: an authentic Abstract Expressionist vision brought to fulfillment by utterly original means.

In contrast, "Monogram" (1955-59) seems to me to be a disagreeable and pointless work. That it is Rausch-

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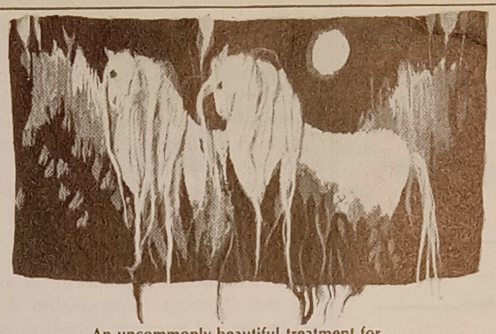
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enberg's best-known and most extensively reproduced piece is a comment on the kind of admiration that accounts for his current preëminence. In its final form (despite his belief in things as they are, Rauschenberg strained over it for five years), "Monogram" is an assemblage of a stuffed Angora goat with an automobile tire around its belly mounted on a wooden platform on wheels, to which a variety of objects—a tennis ball, a rubber heel—have been affixed. Rauschenberg bought the goat on impulse, and his problem over the years was how to transform the goat, with its heavy fleece, which descends almost to the floor, into art by fitting it into a setting, or "frame." One may see this as essentially a decorator's problem. On another plane, however, it is an extension of Duchamp's aesthetics, in which a ready-made object is "aided" to become art by means of changes that leave its identity intact—as with his urinal and bicycle wheel—while situating it in the orbit of art through mounting, signing, and display in an art gallery. Rauschenberg solved the problem of his goat by applying the Surrealist principle of incongruity: he ringed its body with a tire whose tread he painted white. He also slopped paint on the face of the goat. "Monogram" has always struck me as offensive—particularly the disfiguration by paint of the noble face of the goat, like a pie landing on the face of an old lady in a slapstick comedy. There is an element of slapstick or college humor (collage humor?) in Rauschenberg's approach to art which is often gratifying—including the deadpan nonsense by which he explains what he has done: the tire around the goat was "something as familiar and unavoidable as the goat." But recently I have learned, with surprise, that many spectators have objected to the goat's paint-sullied face, and that Rauschenberg has offered a practical excuse for the paint: the goat's muzzle was damaged when he bought it, and he applied the paint to hide the defect. If this is a fact, it is inconsistent with Rauschenberg's philosophy of "with me, it's a matter of just accepting whatever happens."

The major strength of the retrospective is to be found in its takeoffs of Abstract Expressionism, and in its resort to Dada in sculpture: "Empire II," "Oracle," "Sor Aqua." "Factum" (1957), a two-part painting, is a model of intra-art-world satire. A composition executed with apparent spontaneity is duplicated almost exactly, down to the last drip, smudge, and collaged photos, on a second canvas. See-





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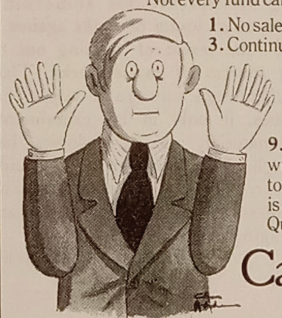
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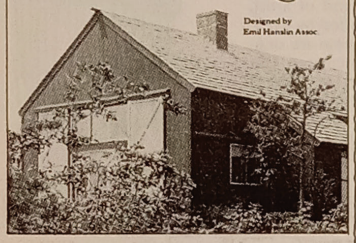
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ing the pair together demolishes instantly the spectator's belief in the spontaneous improvisations of the Abstract Expressionists—and also in Rauschenberg's own spontaneity. (Oddly, the paintings have been separated, one having gone to Milan, the other to Chicago, and this dissipates the interest of both.) Rauschenberg's art depends for its substance on the art that it negates—his richest period was the nineteen-fifties. Later vanguard modes have failed to arouse his reactions to the extent that Abstract Expressionism did, and he has had to repeat himself in experiments with different techniques. His stream of compositions assembled from silk-screened and transferred images in paintings, prints, and posters seems endless. All his novelties have acquired a fully developed familiarity. The 1975-76 "Jammer" series—beautifully designed assemblages notable for their spareness and air-lofted fabrics—suggests an attempt to take a new direction. But, without an art-historical analogue to flesh them out with references, these works are a reversion to decoration, and could serve as nautical displays in the windows of Abercrombie & Fitch.

Whatever the condition of art itself may be, a vanguard art public still exists, its energies concentrated in its professionals: museum directors, art journalists, history-conscious collectors. This public needs avant-garde artists, and if no genuine ones present themselves it will take what it can get. The slogan of contemporary art showmanship can only be "Great Events As Usual." The fervor over the Rauschenberg retrospective has something about it of a closing of ranks against a threat—the threat of running out of living sources of masterworks. That Rauschenberg's energetic search for novelties, if only in his experiments with materials and technologies, has not declined qualifies him as the standard-bearer of the partisans of the new, regardless of whether his discoveries are new, aging, or old.

—Harold Rosenberg

•

Correction

In a picture caption yesterday, it was incorrectly stated that the Junior Womens Club would be sponsoring the kissing booth at the Promenades Shopping Center on Monday, Feb. 14. The Junior Womens Club decided not to sponsor the booth and has been replaced by a group from the Senior Lounge at the Port Charlotte Cultural Center.—*Punta Gorda (Fla.) Daily Herald-News.*

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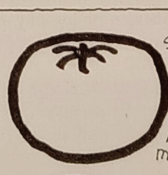
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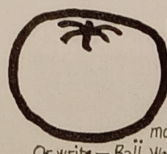
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Mary and Julian Ard – Fort Worth
– 500 people – two bands – food +
drink around pool – Van Cleburn finalists
etc. – ~~Ben~~ mayor am. by helicopter
to present key, or red white blue
ribbon, which RR wore.
Museum commissioned a piece – first
Texas commission – while working on
it got idea of ded to father – no
symbolism in images – going to live
perm. in Texas.

THE FORT WORTH ART MU

Mr. Belloli considers the work to be the Museum's most important acquisition since the purchase of Pablo Picasso's Femme Couchée Lisante and Suite Vollard in 1965. The artist and his immediate family flew to Fort Worth for the dedication of the piece, which took place Saturday, September 10. Whistle Stop is now on view for the public for the first time since it was received by the Museum.

Robert Rauschenberg, who was born in Port Arthur, Texas, is considered a pivotal figure in the development of contemporary art. In the 1950's his combines, which united collaged objects with abstract painting, served as the first alternative to Abstract

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THE FORT WORTH ART MUSEUM PRESS RELEASE

8 August 1977 No. 32

FOR RELEASE SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1977

THE FORT WORTH ART MUSEUM ANNOUNCES MAJOR COMMISSIONED WORK BY ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

Fort Worth Art Museum Director Jay Belloli has announced the commissioning of a major work of art for the Museum's permanent collection by Robert Rauschenberg, one of the greatest living artists. The monumental work, Whistle Stop, was commissioned for the wall of the Art Museum's Solarium and has been dedicated by the artist to his father.

Mr. Belloli considers the work to be the Museum's most important acquisition since the purchase of Pablo Picasso's Femme Couchée Lisante and Suite Vollard in 1965. The artist and his immediate family flew to Fort Worth for the dedication of the piece, which took place Saturday, September 10. Whistle Stop is now on view for the public for the first time since it was received by the Museum.

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Expressionism (the first internationally significant school of American painting), and opened the possibility for a new approach to representational art which culminated in the Pop art of such artists as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, and James Rosenquist in the 1960's.

Rauschenberg, one of the most prolific and versatile artists since Picasso, has encompassed in his career painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, choreography, set and costume design, art and technology projects, video and photography. He has had major exhibitions at such institutions as The Museum of Modern Art, New York (4 times); The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; the Moderna Musseet, Stockholm; and his work is included in the permanent collections of a large majority of the major 20th-century art museums. He received first prize at the Venice Biennale in 1964. An extensive retrospective of his work was organized earlier this year by the National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. and is currently circulating to major museums throughout the United States, and received an unprecedented cover story in Time magazine as well as a 4-page color article in Newsweek last fall. In addition he was asked by The New York Times to create an original work to be

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reproduced on the front page of the Art Section when the retrospective opened in New York.

Ironically, at the time of The Fort Worth Art Museum's commission, no Texas museum had a major piece in their permanent collections by this world-renowned Texas artist. Rauschenberg's work has been shown recently in such Fort Worth Art Museum projects as Brazos River, a unique one-hour color video collaboration created at and shown on KERA-TV, Channel 13, Dallas. He was responsible for the sets for Merce Cunningham's choreographic work for Broadway, Travelogue, performed in Fort Worth earlier this year. Also Rauschenberg created a special work for "The Great American Rodeo" exhibition, celebrating the Fort Worth rodeo, which was organized by the Art Museum last year. This piece, Rodeo Palace, combined 2-dimensional imagery and 3-dimensional objects in a manner similar to Rauschenberg's early combines and became the first work in an entirely new series entitled Spread. Rodeo Palace was unavailable for acquisition, although commissioned by the Museum, and the Acquisitions Committee of the Museum's Board of Directors approved the commissioning of another work in the series for inclusion in the permanent collection.

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Whistle Stop is an extremely large 7' x 15' work composed of five panels and including dye-transfer imagery, collage, silkscreen, and objects such as screen doors and a blinking red light. Much of the imagery as implied in the title refers to railroading in Texas. The dedication to the artists' father is a touching homage to his family and their association with the state.

# # #

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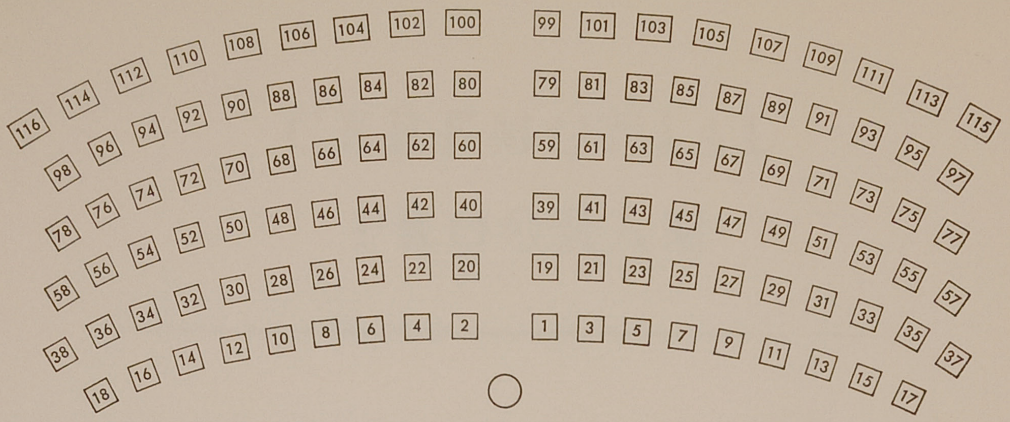
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SEATING PLAN ON STAGE

1 Jacques Barzun
2 Richard Wilbur
3 Ralph Ellison
4 Henry Steele Commager
5 The Honorable John Brademas
6 Barbara W. Tuchman
7 Elizabeth Hardwick
8 Jack Levine
9 Peter Taylor
10 Dwight Macdonald
11 Harrison E. Salisbury
12 Hugo Weisgall
13 Cesar Pelli
14 Donald Barthelme
15 Robert Rauschenberg
16 John Malcolm Brinnin
17 William Schuman
18 Jacob Druckman
19 George Rickey
20 Tony Smith
21 Richard McDermott Miller
22 William Dole
23 Sara Roszak
24 Daniel Maloney
25 Reuben Tam
26 Herman Maril
27 George Perle
28 Marisol
29 Peter Blume
30 Joyce Carol Oates
31 John Cheever
32 Clyfford Still
33 Marchette Chute
34 Edward Albee
35 Stephen Spender
36 Alice Neel
37 Leon Edel
38 Milton Babbitt
39 Terrence Des Pres
40 Ulfert Wilke
41 Leslie Epstein
42 Renata Adler
43 Joseph Mitchell
44 William Arrowsmith
45 Murray Kempton
46 Lerone Bennett, Jr.
47 Robert Penn Warren
48 John Barth
49 Malcolm Cowley
50 Romare Bearden
51 José de Creeft
52 Louise Nevelson
53 Lillian Hellman
54 Cleanth Brooks
55 Samuel Barber
56 Gordon Bunshaft
57 Raphael Soyer
58 Paul Cadmus
59 Kevin Roche
60 C. Curtis-Smith
61 Toni Morrison
62 Elie Siegmeister
63 Page Smith
64 Richard Swift
65 Wallace Berry
66 John Peck
67 Dorothea Greenbaum
68 Erskine Caldwell
69 Eudora Welty
70 Hortense Calisher
71 Glenway Wescott
72 John Ciardi
73 John Heliker
74 Eleanor Clark
75 Miriam Gideon
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103 Otto Luening
104 William Meredith
105 Lennart Anderson
106 Howard Moss
107 Costantino Nivola
108 Jack Beeson
109 Theodore Roszak
110 Muriel Rukeyser
111 Saul Steinberg
112 William Jay Smith
113 Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.
114 Louise Talma
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116 Paul Rudolph

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CEREMONIAL PROGRAM

Opening Remarks by the President — JACQUES BARZUN

Remarks by the Chancellor and Announcement of Newly Elected Honorary Members — RICHARD WILBUR

BALTHUS
NADINE GORDIMER
JEAN HÉLION
STORM JAMESON
MURIEL SPARK
SIR WILLIAM WALTON

Induction of Newly Elected Institute Members by the Secretary of the Institute — RALPH ELLISON

Department of Art

MARISOL
ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG
CLYFFORD STILL

Department of Literature

DONALD BARTHELME
JOHN MALCOLM BRINNIN
JOYCE CAROL OATES

Department of Music

JACOB DRUCKMAN
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Presentation of Special Awards by the President — JACQUES BARZUN

American Academy in Rome
Fellowship in Creative Writing
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Charles E. Ives Scholarships
DANIEL BREWBAKER
JUSTIN DELLO JOIO
LEE SCOTT GOLDSTEIN
ARTHUR W. GOTTSCHALK
THOMAS MOUNTAIN
DAVID OLAN

Charles E. Ives Award
THE CHARLES IVES SOCIETY

Richard and Hinda Rosenthal Foundation Awards
CLIFFORD ROSS
DOUGLAS DAY

Marjorie Peabody Waite Award
DANE RUDHYAR

Morton Dauwen Zabel Award
JOAN DIDION

Presentation of Academy-Institute Awards
by the Chairmen of the Award Committees:

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WILLIAM ARROWSMITH
LERONE BENNETT, JR.
TERRENCE DES PRES
LESLIE EPSTEIN
MICHAEL HERR
MURRAY KEMPTON
ALISON LURIE
TONI MORRISON
PAGE SMITH

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Presentation of Special Awards (*continued*)

Presentation by Elizabeth Hardwick of
The Gold Medal for The Short Story to — PETER TAYLOR

Presentation by Henry Steele Commager of
The Gold Medal for History to — BARBARA W. TUCHMAN

Presentation by Ada Louise Huxtable of the
Arnold W. Brunner Memorial Prize in
Architecture to — CESAR PELLI

Presentation by George Rickey of the
Award of Merit Medal for Sculpture to — TONY SMITH

Presentation by Harrison E. Salisbury of the
Award for Distinguished Service to the Arts to — THE HONORABLE JOHN BRADEMAS

Directions for Reaching the Terrace after the Ceremonial

Only guests holding reserved tickets may join the persons seated on the stage by using the exit near the stage on the left-hand side of the orchestra.

Because of a Fire Department ruling we must ask everyone else to leave via the main entrance on 156th Street, walking east to Broadway and entering the Terrace on Broadway between 155th and 156th Streets, where refreshments will be served.

Please keep your ticket of admission for entrance to the Terrace. *No one will be admitted without a ticket.*

Exhibitions in the Art Galleries will open at four-thirty o'clock

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Vincent Persichetti
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Roger Sessions
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Ben Weber
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art aktuell

Vertrauliche Informationen
über die internationale Kunstszene

Herausgeber und für den
Inhalt verantwortlich: Dr. W. Bongard

Cologne, end-September 1977
7th Year, No. 18
- Kompass"-Edition -

" And now, in order to lead from the old artists to the new ones, I know two famous painters, Giotto from Florenz, whose reputation amongst his contemporaries is enormous, and Simone from Siena." Petrarca

Dear Subsriber,

The "Kunst-Kompass", which I have put together for the 8 th time, has been considerably enlarged and improved, nevertheless is still nothing else but an attempt

1. to present in compressed form information about the amount of importance accorded by professionals to artists of the Sixties and Seventies, and
2. to compare prices on this basis in order to find out the relative priceworthiness of single artists.

What you do with the "Kunst-Kompass", whether you make use of it when deciding what to buy, or look upon it as evidence for the "blindness" of professionals, is entirely up to you.

Personally, besides the fun I get out of it, the Kompass serves to satisfy my private curiosity and also verifies my prejudices as for instance in the cases of B e u y s and C h r i s t o, whose greatness was convincing me way before they reached the "Top Ten".

For technical reasons I am not able to fill you in on all of the 5oo parameters used to form the "Kunst-Kompass" in its present form. Amongst the additional criteria used this time (see "Danach richtet sich der Kunstkompass= criteria used for the Kunstkompass") are two new "Dream-Museums", which have been dreamt up, upon my request, by two experts in order to balance out a weakness, inherent in the Kompass, which is that many museums do not have the funds to acquire the kind of contemporary art they would like to. I am grateful to both, Jan H o e t, curator of the Museum for Contemporary Art in Gent/Belgium and Frank P o p p e r, author of countless art publications and professor for esthetics at Vincennes, for supplying me with those "Conceptual"-museums.

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Both were at liberty to choose the names up to 1oo artists from the Sixties and Seventies and to select up to 3 works for each artist according to the importance they give to each (only Popper however made use of this differentiation). Both authors named artists, who are not included in this "Kompass" such as for instance Pollock and Rothko, since they are stylistically artists of the Fifties. In this connection I am referring you to the list, compiled in 1972, published just once, of the

"5o Greats of the Fifties",

which started off with Dubuffet, followed by Pollock, Tapies, Rothko, Hartung, deKooning, Bacon, Moore, Tobey and Newman. (on request I am glad to send you a copy for 5 Dollars)

The fact, that Jan Hoet only named 83 artists, confirms once more my suspicion, that there aren't hundred "great" contemporary artists around, which is true, by the way, for any other period in art history. Presumably not even twenty will pass the test of time and will still be of importance in fifty years. But even if only ten of those had made their appearance in my "Kompass" it would have served its purpose.

The argument, I have to cope with most often, presuming the true greatness of to-day's artists can only be correctly determined by our grandchildren does not convince me. Each generation has a right to develop its own standards, to admire their "heroes" - and also to err occasionally. And almost all great artists h a v e been discovered by their contemporaries - from the Renaissance on to the present. Anyhow I never said that only the "big ones" count. Small masters are also masters.

In order to evaluate the prices the present market prices (in German Mark = 4o cents) for medium sized works (recent production!) have been put into relation to the reputation marks given to the artist, a method adopted from the stock-market ("price/earnings-ratio"). The application of this method rests on the idea, that the true "earnings" of an artist ly in the reputation he attains through acquisitions by museums, exhibitions in other respected institutions as well as coverage by renowned art publications and art magazines. On the average original (studio-)works by the "1oo Greats" are being traded about 3,7 times their repuation (expressed in points). The individual price evaluations (see column "Preisnote") have been worked out as follows: Price/Point-Ratioup to 3o% above or below the average="Preiswert"(reasonable), 31% to 8o% above average: "teuer"= expensive, 81% and more above average: "sehr teuer"= very expensive, 31% to 8o% below average: "billig"= cheap, more than 8o% below average: "sehr billig= very cheap. The price-"Noten"do n o t contain any criticism. "Very expensive" does not mean "too expensive"!

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"Traum-Museum" Jan Hoet, Gent

Alechinsky	Flanagan	Lohaus	Rothko
Andre	Flavin	Long	Richter
Appel	Fontana	Marden	Raynaud
Arman	Francis	Martin	Raysse
Bacon	Fulton	Louis	Raveel
Barry	Gentils	Morris	Reinhardt
Beuys	Girke	Nauman	Rułault
Bishop	Grosvenor	Nevelson	Serra
Broodthaers	Hockney	Newman	Shapiro
Buren	Hofman	Noland	Smithon
Bury	Huebler	Nordman	Stella
Byars	Johns	Oldenburg	Tapies
Christo	Jorn	Oppenheim	Toroni
Darboven	Kaprow	Paik	Tuttle
De Keyser	Kawara	Palermo	van Snick
De Maria	Kelly	Panamarenko	van Velde
Devade	Klein	Poliakoff	Viallat
Dezeuze	Kline	Pollock	Warhol
Dibbets	Kosuth	Rauschenberg	Weiner
Dine	Kounellis	Rückriem	Wols
Fautrier	LeWitt	Ryman	

"Traum-Museum" Frank Popper, Paris

Acconci	2	Gerz	2	Mass Moving	1	Riley	3
Agam	3	Gilbert&George		Mari	1	Rosenquist	2
Alviani	1	Goepfert	2	Martin,K.	2	Rothko	3
Andre	1	Graevenitz	1	Malina	1	St. Phalle	2
Arman	2	Haacke	3	Megert	1	Segal	3
Bell	2	Hains	1	Messager	2	Schoeffer	3
Benedit	1	Hanson	3	Morris	2	Soto	3
Beuys	3	Healy	1	Mouraud	1	Smithon	3
Boltanski	2	Heizer	2	Morellet	2	Sonfist	2
Bohnen	1	Kepes	1	Mühl	1	Stein	1
Boto	2	Kaprow	2	Munari	3	Stevens	2
Bury	3	Kienholz	3	Nauman	2	Tacha	1
Cane	1	Klein	3	Nusberg	2	Takis	3
Christo	2	Kosice	2	Nitsch	1	Tinguely	3
Close	2	Kosuth	3	Oldenburg	3	Tsai	3
Colombo	1	Kowalski	3	Oppenheim	3	Uecker	2
Cruz-Diez	2	Kramer	1	Paik	3	Uriburu	1
De Andrea	2	LeParc	3	Pane	2	Vautier	2
Denes	1	Levine	2	Pan	1	Vasarely	3
Demarco	2	Lichtenstein	3	Piene	2	Vostell	3
Dewasne	1	Feng-Lan	1	Pulsa Group	1	Warhol	3
Dibbets	1	Long	2	Rauschenberg	3	Welch	1
Flavin	3	Luther	2	Raysse	2	Wilfred	2
Franke	1	Lye	1	Reinhardt	2	Yvaral	1
Gerstner	2	Mack	3	Rickey	2		

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A comparison of the two "Dream-Museums" is of highest interest insofar as the results of a change of generation become quite apparant, a change which is taking place in key-positions of the professional art world -briging about a re-evaluation of contemporary art and that of the most recent past!

Strikingly there are only 22 agreements in these two "Dream-Museums". They are to my mind particularly interesting, because they are an indication for the probable esteem contemporary artists are held in the forseeable future! While Frank Popper's (born in 1918) American choices did'nt even amount to 1/3 rd they account for almost 5o% on Hoets list (born 1936). The importance placed by Popper on Kinetic-and Op-Art (of the early Sixties) meets with Zero-interest from Hoet! It is remarkable that neither chose a photographer! Jan Hoet's list does not even contain a photo-realist artist-whereas the main representatives of Conceptual Art as well as "New Painting", i.e. "Nouvelle Peinture" are almost completely represented. The selection of Hoet is of special importance insofar, as "his" Gent Museum is the only institute in Belgium which solely concerns itself with contemporary art (the next exhibition at the Gent-Museum, showing up-to-now unknown drawings, gouaches and collages by Joseph B e u y s is coming up on October 5th).

The "Kunst-Kompass" assumes still, that the reputation of today's artists is highly correlated to the quality of their work!

The socalled "Proxy-Method", which is being used in constructing this information system, does not call for justification as such, particularly since the very same method is being used for exacting statistical probes in economic-and social sciences. Nevertheless I never did claim that the "Kunst-Kompass" was a scientific undertaking, as much as I am happy to learn that in the meantime the "Kompass" is being paid attention to in scientific circles.

Otherwise the "Kunst-Kompass" is as bad or as good as the use you make of it. I never thought for a minute that I developed an absolutely dependable instrument, which is able to seperate the good from the bad. Just as any other compass, this one,too, can only show the direction, not the ultimate destination!

Yours,

166/5oo

Der Inhalt dieses Informationsdienstes ist nur zur persönlichen Unterrichtung des Empfängers bestimmt. Weitergabe und Vervielfältigung nicht gestattet. Alle Nachrichten werden nach bestem Wissen, jedoch ohne Gewähr gegeben. "art aktuell" erscheint zweimal monatlich und ist nur im Abonnement erhältlich. Bezugspreis: Halbjahresabonnement 150 DM, Jahresabonnement 250 DM einschließlich Porto und Mehrwertsteuer. Künstler erhalten einen Nachlaß von 50 Prozent. Für den Inhalt verantwortlich: Dr. Willi Bongard. Auflagenlimit: 500 Exemplare.
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art aktuell



100 Die Großen

Rangliste der Künstler (1–50)

Rang 1977	Rang 1976	Name	Nation	Richtung	Preis für mittelgroßes Original	Preis-Punkte-Verhältnis	Preisnote	Punkte
1	1	Rauschenberg, R.	USA	Prae-Pop	140000	6,14	teuer	22800
2	5	Beuys, J.	Deutschland	Aktionskunst	70000	3,23	preiswert	21670
3	3	Oldenburg, C.	USA	Pop Art	70000	3,35	preiswert	20870
4	2	Warhol, A.	USA	Pop Art	120000	5,76	teuer	20800
5	4	Johns, J.	USA	Prae-Pop	190000	9,45	sehr teuer	20105
6	10	Christo	USA	Neuer Realismus	45000	2,41	billig	18610
7	6	Tinguely, J.	Schweiz	Neuer Realismus	60000	3,48	preiswert	17235
8	7	Lichtenstein, R.	USA	Pop Art	100000	5,85	teuer	17075
9	8	Stella, F.	USA	Neue Abstraktion	60000	3,58	preiswert	16750
10	9	Klein, Y.	Frankreich	Neuer Realismus	100000	5,97	teuer	16745
11	12	LeWitt, S.	USA	Minimal Art	17000	1,10	billig	15405
12	11	Dine, J.	USA	Pop Art	40000	2,64	preiswert	15120
13	19	Morris, R.	USA	Anti-Form	30000	1,98	billig	15110
14	20	Andre, C.	USA	Minimal-Art	17000	1,17	billig	14420
15	15	Judd, D.	USA	Minimal-Art	35000	2,44	billig	14315
16	14	Kelly, E.	USA	Hard Edge	90000	6,29	teuer	14300
17	31	Nauman, B.	USA	Prozeßkunst	50000	3,58	preiswert	13950
18	16	Noland, K.	USA	Farbfeldmalerei	40000	2,87	preiswert	13910
19	13	Arman	Frankreich	Neuer Realismus	45000	3,25	preiswert	13825
20	17	Louis, M.	USA	Farbfeldmalerei	120000	8,83	sehr teuer	13580
21	22	Flavin, D.	USA	Minimal Art	25000	1,86	billig	13430
22	18	Rosenquist, J.	USA	Pop Art	45000	3,50	preiswert	12855
23	27	Hockney, D.	England	Pop Art	50000	3,94	preiswert	12690
24	32	Serra, R.	USA	Prozeßkunst	50000	4,07	preiswert	12285
25	24	Segal, G.	USA	Pop Art	40000	3,26	preiswert	12255
26	21	Soto, J.	Venezuela	Op Art	40000	3,29	preiswert	12125
27	23	Hamilton, R.	England	Pop Art	60000	4,95	teuer	12100
28	25	Paolozzi, E.	England	Pop Art	40000	3,40	preiswert	11760
29	26	Uecker, G.	Deutschland	Zero-Kunst	20000	1,72	billig	11585
30	30	Dibbets, J.	Niederlande	Konzeptkunst	14000	1,21	billig	11540
31	29	Mack, H.	Deutschland	Zero-Kunst	20000	1,76	billig	11300
32	28	César	Frankreich	Neuer Realismus	50000	4,44	preiswert	11245
33	45	Richter, G.	Deutschland	Neue Malerei	12000	1,15	billig	10410
34	34	Bury, P.	Belgien	Kinetik	50000	4,85	preiswert	10305
35	37	Kienholz, E.	USA	Environment Art	60000	5,98	teuer	10025
36	33	Manzoni, P.	Italien	Neuer Realismus	30000	2,99	preiswert	10025
37	41	Long, R.	England	Land Art	8000	0,80	billig	9940
38	50	Buren, D.	Frankreich	Konzeptkunst	7500	0,77	billig	9635
39	35	Rot, D.	Schweiz	Neue Sensibilität	30000	3,12	preiswert	9605
40	63	Gilbert & George	England	Performance	8000	0,87	billig	9135
41	36	Raysse, M.	Frankreich	Neuer Realismus	40000	4,41	preiswert	9060
42	46	Twombly, C.	USA	Malerei	100000	11,06	sehr teuer	9035
43	44	Caro, A.	England	Abstraktion	22000	2,45	billig	8970
44	59	Oppenheim, D.	USA	Video-Kunst	15000	1,69	billig	8840
45	47	Riley, B.	England	Op Art	30000	3,39	preiswert	8825
46	58	Weiner, L.	USA	Konzeptkunst	7000	0,80	billig	8680
47	52	Kitaj, R.	England	Pop Art	50000	5,76	teuer	8675
48	51	Spoerri, D.	Schweiz	Neuer Realismus	10000	1,15	billig	8650
49	40	Pistoletto, M.	Italien	Neuer Realismus	25000	2,92	preiswert	8560
50	42	Schöffer, N.	Frankreich	Lichtkunst	60000	7,07	sehr teuer	8485

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Danach richtet sich der Kunstkompaß.

Zusätzlich zu den bisher schon berücksichtigten zirka 450 Parametern wurden die folgenden Tatbestände bewertet: **Punkte**

Pariser Biennale 1977	50
Pariser Biennale-Retrospektive (mit Werken)	100
Pariser Biennale-Retrospektive (Dokumentation)	50
documenta 6 (je Abteilung)	100
Rosc 1977, Dublin	200
Museen	
National Gallery, Canberra	200
Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Gent	200
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston	200
Traummuseen	
Jan Hoet, Gent	200
Frank Popper, Paris	200
Gruppenausstellungen	
200 Years of American Sculpture, New York 1976	200
Paris–New York, Paris 1977	150
Arte in Italia, Turin 1977	150
Skulptur Münster 1977	150
A propos de Nice, Paris 1977	100
Räume, Mönchengladbach 1976	100
Prospect/Retrospect, Düsseldorf 1976	100
Pejling af Tysk Kunst, Humelbaek 1977	100
Postwar Painting in America, New York 1976	50
Europalia 75, Brüssel 1975	100
14 Canadians, Washington 1976	100
Neue Kunst aus Österreich, Wuppertal 1976	100
Painting and Sculpture in California, San Francisco 1976	100
Amerikanische Kunst von 1945 bis heute, Berlin 1976	100
Monumente durch Medien ersetzen, Wuppertal 1976	100
Concerning Painting, Utrecht 1976	100
Amerikanischer Fotorealismus, Stuttgart 1977	100
Aspekte konstruktiver Kunst, Zürich 1977	100
Kunst um 1970, Wien 1977	100
Literatur	
DuMont's Bild-Lexikon der Kunst, 1976	75
Spurensicherung, Günter Metken, 1977	50
Die Kinetische Kunst, Frank Popper, 1975	50
Der Neue Realismus in Amerika, Linda Chase, 1973	30
Individuals, Alan Sondheim, 1975	30
The Great Divide, John Russel, 1974	100
How good is modern art? John Russel, 1975	100
Österreichische Kunst von heute, Christian Sotriffer, 1971	50
Zeitschriften	
„Studio International" 76/77 Titel	250
„Studio International" 76/77 Rezension	100
„Artforum" 76/77 Titel	250
„Artforum" 76/77 Rezension	100
„Data" 76/77 Titel	250
„Data" 76/77 Rezension	100
„Avalanche" Titel	250
„Avalanche" Rezension	100
Museumshängung	
Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld	100*
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam	100
Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo	100
Centre Beaubourg, Paris	100
Kunsthaus, Zürich	100
Kunstmuseum, Basel	100
Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rom	100
The Museum of Modern Art, New York	100
Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts, Wien	100
Museum Folkwang, Essen	100
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston	100
Wallraf-Richartz-Museum und Museum Ludwig, Köln	100

* je Exponat

Rangliste der Künstler (51–100)

Rang 1977	Rang 1976	Name	Nation	Richtung	Preis für mittelgroßes Original	Preis-Punkte-Verhältnis	Preisnote	Punkte
51	48	Ryman, R.	USA	Neue Malerei	30000	3,54	preiswert	8470
52	53	Darboven, H.	Deutschland	Konzeptkunst	16000	1,89	billig	8445
53	43	Jones, A.	England	Pop Art	26000	3,08	preiswert	8420
54	55	Kosuth, J.	USA	Konzeptkunst	15000	1,79	billig	8340
55	49	Morellet, F.	Frankreich	Konkrete Kunst	20000	2,41	billig	8280
56	38	Wesselman, T.	USA	Pop Art	25000	3,04	preiswert	8210
57	39	Indiana, R.	USA	Pop Art	30000	3,67	preiswert	8160
58	56	Sonnier, K.	USA	Prozeßkunst	22000	2,70	preiswert	8125
59	71	Broodthaers, M.	Belgien	Neo-Surrealismus	15000	1,87	billig	7980
60	65	de Maria, W.	USA	Land Art	55000	6,93	sehr teuer	7930
61	62	Agam, Y.	Israel	Op Art	50000	6,36	teuer	7855
62	57	Piene, O.	Deutschland	Zero-Kunst	15000	1,92	billig	7780
63	72	Martin, A.	USA	Minimal Art	60000	7,73	sehr teuer	7755
64	67	Olitski, J.	USA	Farbfeldmalerei	18000	2,35	billig	7655
65	54	Poons, L.	USA	Farbfeldmalerei	17000	2,22	billig	7625
66	69	Klapheck, K.	Deutschland	Mag. Realismus	30000	3,93	preiswert	7615
67	93	Smithson, R.	USA	Land Art	20000	2,65	preiswert	7540
68	70	Chillida, E.	Spanien	Abstraktion	80000	10,72	sehr teuer	7460
69	61	Arakawa, S.	Japan	Konzeptkunst	35000	4,76	preiswert	7345
70	73	Huebler, D.	USA	Konzeptkunst	7000	0,95	billig	7320
71	91	King, P.	England	Abstraktion	30000	4,13	preiswert	7260
72	78	Schoonhoven, J.	Niederlande	Konkrete Kunst	18000	2,50	billig	7175
73	64	Le Parc, J.	Argentinien	Kinetik	15000	2,10	billig	7115
74	74	Tilson, J.	England	Pop Art	5000	0,70	sehr billig	7090
75	68	Ruscha, E.	USA	Pop Art	22000	3,10	preiswert	7085
76	66	Smith, R.	England	Malerei	12000	1,69	billig	7085
77	88	Rinke, K.	Deutschland	Körperkunst	6000	0,85	billig	7010
78	60	Bell, L.	USA	Minimal Art	25000	3,57	preiswert	6985
79	80	Rivers, L.	USA	Prae-Pop	25000	3,59	preiswert	6955
80	84	Panamarenko	Belgien	Indiv. Mythologie	20000	2,87	preiswert	6945
81	75	Antes, H.	Deutschland	Neue Figuration	35000	5,04	teuer	6940
82	81	St. Phalle, N.	Frankreich	Neuer Realismus	15000	2,17	billig	6905
83	76	di Suvero, M.	USA	Abstraktion	60000	8,72	sehr teuer	6875
84	—	Heizer, M.	USA	Land Art	25000	3,76	preiswert	6645
85	77	Chamberlain, J.	USA	Pop Art	29000	4,37	preiswert	6625
86	96	Rainer, A.	Österreich	Körperkunst	25000	3,83	preiswert	6520
87	82	Takis, O.	Griechenland	Kinetik	20000	3,06	preiswert	6520
88	90	Merz, M.	Italien	Prozeßkunst	15000	2,33	billig	6425
89	—	Frankenthaler, H.	USA	Farbfeldmalerei	36000	5,63	teuer	6390
90	92	Marden, B.	USA	Neue Malerei	25000	3,95	preiswert	6325
91	95	Boltanski, C.	Frankreich	Spurensicherung	6000	0,95	billig	6265
92	83	Gnoli, D.	Italien	Mag. Realismus	100000	16,18	sehr teuer	6180
93	94	Smith, T.	USA	Minimal Art	50000	8,15	sehr teuer	6130
94	98	Walther, F.-E.	Deutschland	Aktionskunst	12000	1,99	billig	6020
95	100	Becher, B. + H.	Deutschland	Fotografie	8000	1,34	billig	5970
96	89	Haacke, H.	Deutschland	Konzeptkunst	12000	2,04	billig	5880
97	99	Mangold, R.	USA	Neue Malerei	12000	2,06	billig	5815
98	79	Hesse, E.	USA	Exentr. Abstraktion	35000	6,06	teuer	5770
99	—	Fulton, H.	England	Konzeptkunst	5000	0,89	billig	5570
100	85	Luginbühl, B.	Schweiz	Neuer Realismus	40000	7,18	sehr teuer	5570

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Mayor to Give Arts Awards to 20

By RICHARD F. SHEPARD

A score of New York's finest, in arts and culture, will be anointed in an Egyptian temple in municipal ceremonies Monday evening, Nov. 27.

The occasion will be the bestowal of the Mayor's Awards of Honor for Arts and Culture for this year and it will take place in the Temple of Dendur at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Mayor Koch, with the city's cultural commissioner, Henry Geldzahler, will present the awards, which are sponsored by the Commission for Cultural Affairs. The Mayor will also, as it is written in the invitation, "address the state of the arts in New York City."

Proceeds for the event, for which tickets cost $75 each (information: 874-2390) and includes a cocktail-buffet, will go to benefit the Community Arts Development Program of the city's Cultural Affairs Department. This program provides grants to neighborhood arts groups in the city.

The grants are designed not only to give financial support but also to place a sort of seal of approval on the organizations to help them raise money from the private sector. None of these grants, therefore, may exceed half the cost of the project. The program has contributed to the development of such institutions as the Bronx Dance Theater.

This will be the second time that the awards are being given by the city. The first presentations honored 20 persons in the spring of 1977. This year's 20, which also represent the diversity of talents in the city, embracing visual and performing arts, writing, administration, scholarship and even philanthropy, are:

Margareta Akermark, Edward Albee, Louis Auchincloss, Hazel Bryant, Cornell Capa, Lucia Chase, Miriam Colon, Betty Comden, Adolph Green, Jasper Johns, Raul Julia, David Levine, Porter McCray, Arthur Mitchell, Carlos Moseley, Isamu Noguchi, Meyer Schapiro, Stephen Sondheim, Charles Wadsworth and Lila Acheson Wallace.

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ART

Artist of Everything

Once the *enfant terrible* of contemporary art, Robert Rauschenberg now lives on an island off the coast of Florida. He makes his art these days in exotic places—on the beach in front of his house, in a medieval paper mill in southern France, at a distant pulp factory in India. When he does appear in New York or Washington to open an exhibition or lobby for artists' rights, he seems an entirely different person from the artist who attracted—and provoked—an enormous public throughout the '60s.

Rauschenberg's brash experiments in painting and collage, his outspoken personality, and the sort of razzle-dazzle theater pieces in which, for instance, he put on an open parachute and roller-skated across the floor, were once the talk of the art world. Today, 51 years old this week, tanned and relaxed, he seems above the battle. But his peace is about to be shattered. Next week in Washington, D.C., the Smithsonian's National Collection of Fine Arts will unveil the largest Rauschenberg retrospective ever. Coming at the end of a bland and celebratory Bicentennial year in art, dominated by landscape painting and heroic marble busts, the show will put Rauschenberg right back where he used to be—at the center of the art public's attention.

He has lost none of his youthful impishness. "I think I'm fortunate to be able to show my work so close to the center of government," he says, "where it may arouse some new sensibilities." He also knows that the show is likely to provoke controversy. It tries to encompass everything—from "Rebus," an early and vitally important combine painting, to "Rodeo Palace," the most ambitious of the recent work (opposite)—in a survey that includes more than 150 paintings, posters, prints, objects, multiples and photographs. Since Rauschenberg has always been vulnerable to the charge that he produces too much and sells too much (more than any living artist, according to some estimates), this show, which shows it all, is a sitting duck for the critical guns.



Peter Moore

Rauschenberg in 1963: Art's *enfant terrible* in a razzle-dazzle theater piece

The organizer of the exhibition (which will travel to New York, San Francisco, Buffalo and Chicago) is Walter Hopps, distinguished curator of twentieth-century art at the NCFA. He and his staff have spent two years fighting over choices, planning the installation and arranging loans from all over the world. "Rauschenberg is overwhelmingly the obvious choice for such a celebration," says Hopps. "Beyond the extraordinary range of art work, he embodies the notion of citizen and artist, involved in secular life, through politics and philanthropy, with an insatiable curiosity." But the choices made for the exhibition are not so obvious: major works like "Axle" and "Coca-Cola Plan" have been left out. The show relegates the photographic evidence of his spectacular performance work to the pages of the catalog. And the installation leads off not with the Rauschenberg masterpieces of the '50s and '60s but with new work—much of it slight and lyrical—done in the '70s.

The artist's friend Jasper Johns once said that Rauschenberg had invented more than anyone in this century since Picasso—and the comparison is apt. Like Picasso, Rauschenberg has always been an irrepressible experimenter in every known style and medium. Abstract expressionism, pop art, minimal art and conceptual art—it's all there in his work. He has carried collage to extremes unimaginable to the cubists, who invented the method. He has used tires, fans, clocks and doors in his paintings—even, in one of his more memorable images, "Monogram," a stuffed, paint-splashed goat. In his most outrageous act, he once glued a pillow, sheet and quilt onto a canvas, painted them and called the work "Bed." On another occasion he drove a car across a long stretch of paper and displayed the result as a work called "Tire Print."

Onslaught: In print making, his boldness is legendary: to his credit are "Sky Garden," the largest hand-rolled lithograph ever made, "Autobiography," a 17-foot-long print produced by an offset billboard press, and, more recently, a series of prints like "Link," in which the paper itself (made by his own hand in France and India) is the "image."

Faced with such an onslaught, the viewer is likely to agree with Rauschenberg's critics that he is more style and energy than substance. But in fact there is a remarkably consistent philosophy behind his freewheeling eclecticism. "Change is what interests me the most," he says. "I don't like a work that tries to be finished, that doesn't invite the viewer into it. Nothing is ever finished. Everybody sees what he wants to see." He said much the same thing in his famous 1959 manifesto: "Painting relates to both art and life. Neither can be made. I try to act in the gap between the two." A child of Duchamp and John Cage, Rauschenberg has always insisted on creating art that is heterodox, filled with varied and disjointed elements. The lovely, radiant "Axle," for example, is jammed with silk-screened images from newspapers, magazines and books. "Red Interior" is a collage of cloth—silk and other fabrics—covered with paint.

Like Duchamp, Rauschenberg is convinced that art is essentially an act of

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communication, requiring the onlooker's mind to complete its meaning. In "Black Market," an early work, he constructed a combine that contained a message box to which the viewer was invited to contribute. "Soundings," a large, electronically activated Plexiglas wall (1968), lights up in response to claps and shouts from the public, only then revealing the silk-screened images inside. His most concise and elegant statement of this driving idea is the little-known "white painting" series, executed in 1951, long before the advent of minimal art. Repainted in recent years, these canvases are glistening monochromatic mirrors to the light and shadows in the room. The viewer sees himself, in effect, in the painting.

Risk: The bewildering assault of contrasting images and styles in Washington also reveals that Rauschenberg has been systematic in his choices of medium and method: first, from the '50s came outrageous, often comic "combines" ("Bed," "Monogram," "Coca-Cola Plan"), which juxtapose fields of paint with real, "found" objects. From the early '60s came the smooth-surfaced silk-screen paintings like "Axle" and the massive, 30-foot-long "Barge." Toward the end of the decade, Rauschenberg turned to performances and print making, much of the latter executed on the presses at Gemini G.E.L. in Los Angeles and the Long Island studio of Tanya Grosman, who appears as a relief image in a recent print. Early in the '70s, he seized on cardboard and began to patch, mold and glue strips of this unlikely material into large combine paintings like "Rodeo Palace." In recent years he has turned to sheer, elegant materials like the sheets of filmy gauze in the "Hoarfrost" series of prints, and shimmering silk in the "Jammer" series of freestanding sails.

What the Washington extravaganza tells most about Rauschenberg is that he is still learning, still engaged. The recent "Hoarfrost" screens and silken "Jammer" may lack some of his old audacity, but they demonstrate that he is moving on, not hiding in tried, safe mediums and themes. This will be welcome news to a younger generation that has known him only as a textbook figure rooted in the esthetic issues of another decade. "I can't help it," he says. "I have a need to live with the fear that comes with doing unfamiliar work." This readiness to risk himself and his reputation is strikingly evident in his political activism. He has been in the forefront of attempts to pass legislation on behalf of artists' rights—to establish royalties for painters and sculptors, to give them tax, medical and legal relief. He is the principal donor to a nonprofit foundation, Change, that dispenses small emergency grants to needy artists. For sheer energy—artistic and social—he is probably without peer in the art world. Indeed, Rauschenberg's only serious flaw may be that his is an act impossible to follow.

—DOUGLAS DAVIS

THEATER

Heart of Darkness

Since Peter Brook is the most exciting director in the world, there won't be a more significant theater event this season than the two-month American tour of his International Centre of Theatre Research, sponsored by the French Government. It opened last week at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and will move on to six more campuses: the universities of Pennsylvania, Chicago, Minnesota, Houston, California at Berkeley and UCLA. The major event of the tour will be the performance of THE IK, an extraordinary theater piece created by the troupe from Colin Turnbull's hair-raising anthropological study, "The Mountain People." Anyone who has the insane idea that theater should deal with the most crucial human issues should make it his business to get to one of these campuses.



Photos by Marvin Ickow

Penned girl in 'The Ik,' Brook (inset): 'Our human values are luxuries'

"The Ik" is stunning, disturbing, moving—even, in some totally unexpected and disquieting way, entertaining, as all good theater is. Turnbull's book concerned his discovery of the Ik, a tribe of hunters in northern Uganda who had been displaced from their ancient hunting grounds by realignment of national borders and the government's decision to create a national park. The ultimate victims of unthinking bureaucracy, the Ik were deprived of most of their food supply and forced to farm a barren, stony soil. With incredible speed they fell into a state of communal starvation. The result was a total disintegration of their social structure, which shriveled down to only one impulse—pitiful search for scraps of food that turned every Ik, including members of the same family, into mortal enemies.

Working from the book, writers Denis Cannan and Colin Higgins helped Turnbull to fashion a script that stripped the Ik's story down to its incredible essentials. The half-dozen actors plus several children improvised a great many scenes from the book, and eighteen hours of material were boiled down to less than two hours of piercing theater.



Brook and his superbly trained actors portray possibly the most extreme social predicament on the face of the earth. Every event, every gesture, every word among the Ik radiates from a center of absolute hunger. Children are abandoned at age 3 to fend for themselves. An Ik who reaches 25 or 30 is ready to die of old age. Sex hardly occurs "because it is too tiring," and the Ik population has "stabilized" at 1,000. Even their architecture is based on the struggle for food. Ik huts are built with low doorways so that marauders in search of food can be speared in the back of the neck.

Absolute Pessimism: The action of "The Ik" consists only of elemental and extreme situations. A father and mother pen their daughter up to die. "She no longer can find food by herself," they explain to Turnbull. A little boy passes

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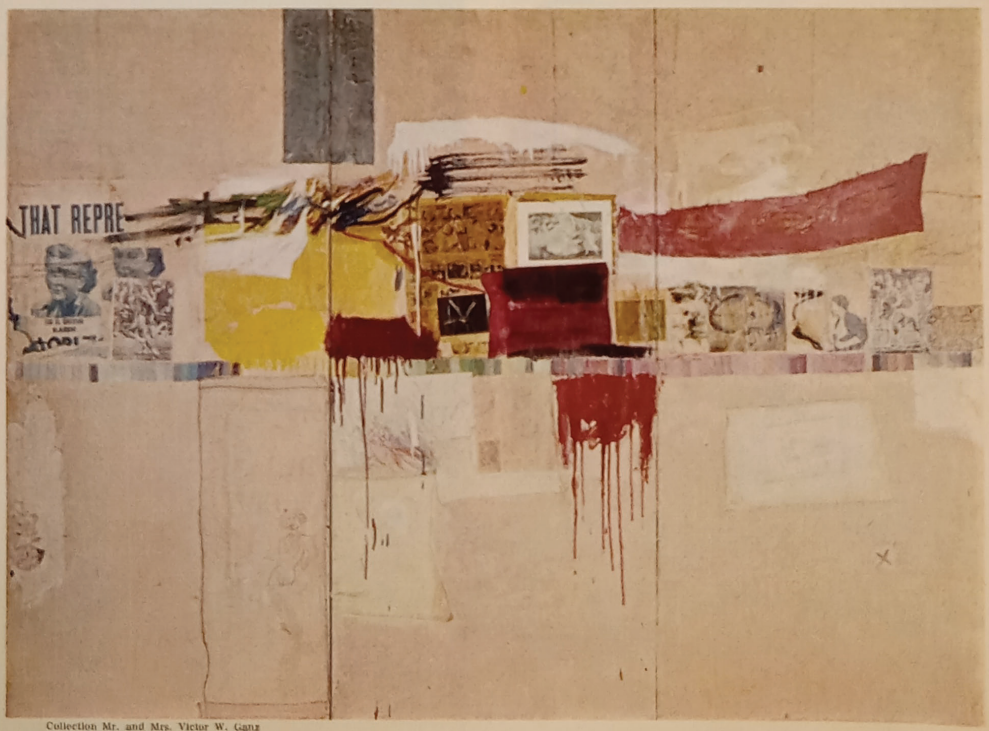
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Collection Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Singer



'Rebus' (1955)
combine painting

Rauschenberg: 'Rodeo Palace' (1976)
combine painting



Collection Mr. and Mrs. Victor W. Ganz

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Courtesy of Museum of Modern Art, New York



'Sky Garden' (1969)
color lithograph and silk screen

'Axle' (1964)
oil on canvas

Courtesy of Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne



Collection Mr. and Mrs. Victor W. Ganz



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'Red Interior' (1954)
combine painting



Courtesy of Moderna Museet, Stockholm

'Monogram' (1955-59)
free-standing combine

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Courtesy of National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington



'Tanya' (1974)
color lithograph and
inkless relief



Collection Dr. Giuseppe Panza

'Coca-Cola Plan' (1958)
free-standing combine

'Bed' (1955)
combine painting



Collection Mr. and Mrs. Leo Castelli

Rauschenberg with 'Link' (1974)



Gianfranco Gorgoni

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Feb. 1977

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

Jeff Perrone

Robert Rauschenberg is both a protean artist and cultural symbol. He is enormously prolific and talented. But the successes and failures of his career are bound up with his character, which scripted certain accomplishments and blocked many others. The diversity of materials, styles, and images in his career is surely one of the most prodigious in Western art since the Second World War. But dealing with that career, one sees how Rauschenberg was the captive of the appetite for artistic transformation he himself did so much to stimulate. Writers have turned his artistic success into the material of myth, extending past that of Oldenburg, and certainly equaling that of Warhol, though not on the level of stylish irony. Rauschenberg's paintings and sculptures—unique objects—as well as his innumerable multiples, posters, and mass-produced "signature" works have been blessed by this myth.

That "signature" immediately confers importance. Everything which passes through his hands becomes art by a special magic touch. Warhol signs a cup; Rauschenberg, more innocently, signs a piece of cardboard. The very fact of his *noticing* a material transforms it into an extension of his sensibility, which is assumed to be constant, priceless, and inviolable. This is, to say the least, a mystification. But it is based on the honorable idea that Rauschenberg is a *real artist* who yet reaches out beyond art and tells us something about seeing and discovering the world in new ways.

I was born the year Rauschenberg began the red paintings. For me, having grown up in the collage-oriented Bay Area, Rauschenberg's was the first living painting.

It was contemporary art, and I understand it as a sibling, not as a parental model. More than that, I accepted it *as art,* as what art naturally was, without hesitation. There was never any problem about whether it was Dada or anti-art; its status was never in question. I never thought of even the most extreme combines as ugly, and the original beauty has not worn thin.

I never had to be "won over" to Rauschenberg's program. His playful effortlessness and promiscuous materialism are understood psychologically in an instant. For the young, untrained eye, the red paintings and the combines are as easily read as a photograph: things are what they appear to be, neither abstraction nor art history intervenes. I think Rauschenberg's early involvement with photography (1949) shows his love of what happens on the *surface* and the primacy of the *thing* over formal considerations. Photography in the West has always been a concrete illustration of reality, and the satisfaction of almost all the population's visual "needs." (Both these things serve and are served by photography's essential use in commercial and promotional advertising.) It is the source of knowledge about what exists, and it holds out the possibility of gratification (consumerism). In Rauschenberg's work, it is the world made usable as material, as shared experience, and the possibility of access without possession.

Rauschenberg was born in 1925. That makes him a Great Depression baby. Although he was apparently a poor student, he was admitted to the University of Texas. The first "artworks" he saw were *reproductions* of paintings in libraries in California. He had bad experiences with rigid art training, as with Albers. He seems to have preferred photography, dance and music (or, at least, dancers and musicians). Education meant specialization and certain disciplines which seemed "imported" and unrelated to Rauschenberg's rootless life-style which was alienated from center of "culture"; the kind of "teaching" he preferred was that of John Cage: nonacademic, tinged with Asian philosophy, interdisciplinary, and permissive. Cage, more than ten years Rauschenberg's senior, was, at the time of Black Mountain, already over forty years old. His reputation was still in the wilderness. There was instilled there, I think, a dedication to a kind of poverty, and a resistance to authority.

Between the end of the war and 1960, roughly, Rauschenberg was poor. Photography is an inexpensive art hobby. The dirt paintings were made with free materials. The rope and box objects made in North Africa were expendable and cumbersome objects thrown in a river. (It is no coincidence that the Zen/Cage philosophy of personal "giving up" was very attractive to him and was a rationalized explanation of Rauschenberg's already formed ethic of nonpossession.) The white paintings are, on one level, about the possibilities of interest in minimal amounts of material. It is, then, of interest that Rauschenberg was to lose all his work in two fires (1951). His art was made from junk material, logically, if only to reflect its precariousness in the course of the world.

Rauschenberg's developed taste for discarded material and mass-produced items is reflected in his own prodigious production, his easy attitude toward subject matter, and his belief that the subject matter itself must reflect its origin and history. And the "work" of the artist becomes the *transference* of material from the world to painting (as Rosalind Krauss has written). The combine painting must be secure enough to handle the onslaught of real-world residues, while maintaining an ambivalent relation to their extra-art associations. Johns' *Flags* must be both flags and paintings; Rauschenberg's junk must be both junk and art.

Now there is some irony in the fact that paintings made from the waste of capitalism find their way into the great masterpieces of capitalism's art. Like Picasso's and Schwitters' collages, Rauschenberg's creations, made from the most banal materials, and without the prized craft of traditional realism, became priceless artworks. Working with a knowledge of Dada (as well as Cubist collage) he knew that it was impossible to portray his subjects, that there could be no "representation" of junk; there had to be actual junk. This attitude could be extended beyond the painting. So, later, he added large three-dimensional objects to a canvas. Rauschenberg literalized the space and dissociated its detritus from its possible political/economic meaning. This neutralization has been pointed out by Max Kozloff, who suggests that Rauschenberg's attitude toward something like the NASA space program carries with it unavoidable contradictions in terms of professed sympathies with technology and his erstwhile activism against agencies which derive their power from those industrial/military technologies.

There is no cynicism or distrust in Rauschenberg (if anything sets him apart from Johns, it's that). Rauschenberg takes the look of collage and the permissiveness of the readymade without using their respective conceptual underpinnings. There is no *idea* with Rauschenberg; there is little intellectualization. There is chosen and arranged material. The very variety of material makes it almost impossible to say anything "wrong" or irrelevant about his work.

In his opposition to the conceptual premises of the readymade (or his indifference to them), Rauschenberg has consistently refused to deal in *gestures*. The readymade gets its sustenance as a powerful criticism, as a (visually) acute representation of a highly defined position. A gesture is preceded by an analysis of basic assumptions about art. It involves an alienation of one aspect of a convention from the given set. Rauschenberg does not isolate things; he brings them together. He works at the point where collage and the readymade meet, but the radical aspects of both are cancelled out in his best works. Cubist collage is based on a space which is metaphorical and puts pressure on that space by the introduction of real objects. Readymades isolate objects and rely on that isolation (extended to the isolation of the museum context) for meaning.

Rauschenberg does not work with metaphorical space, nor does he depict space. Utterly literal, the space of his work is also very traditionally constructed. The collages (especially the red paintings, but also the silk-screened ones) are more "classically" arranged than either a Cubist painting or a Schwitters collage. The paintings are composed in areas of tension/repose, with clusters of tightly constructed accumulations of detailed object/materials and large areas of untrammeled fabric (or some kind of area without incident.) *Collection* and *Rebus* have such deliberate balance of parts and stress points. *Small Rebus* has the most incredible diagonal com-

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Robert Rauschenberg, *Third Time Painting*, 1961, mixed media, 84 x 60".

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Robert Rauschenberg, *Factum I*, 1957, combine painting, 62 x 35½".

position, with paint smears, runners in a photograph, stamps and Europa being raped all tilting to the upper right hand corner with an offhand elegance.

What this amounts to is that Rauschenberg is interested in the formal only insofar as it is visually pleasing, and that makes his form basically *decorative*. In Picasso, letters function as "flat," and are readable (they spell something). Letters show up in Rauschenberg, but they either don't spell anything, or are only details on another, general surface (comics or newspaper or street sign). The reason why it would be ridiculous to give a formal description of a Rauschenberg is because he does not compose space even though he balances parts. Form becomes an occasion for the exercise of bald decorative devices (simple repetition, placing one thing next to another in rows, local consistency and density of material, overall balancing, flatness, etc.). The most basic quality of a decorative surface is that it is complete (in itself) but arbitrary (in that the edge could have been made anywhere). And this is just how Rauschenberg's paintings work.

The proof of this can be shown negatively, by the failure of Rauschenberg's three-dimensional, free-standing combines. Unlike the conventional, arbitrary space of a painting, the space of sculpture is unbounded. Rauschenberg tries to map two-dimensional collage into three dimensions, but he cannot find a way of locating our view, for the sculptural space is constantly being threatened with the real world at every turn. Since he composes parts without composing space as a whole, the paintings are defined locally; the sculptures exist without differentiation (usually because of the homogeneity of the material) and nonarbitrarily (they are meant to end where they end in space by their own physicality).

The great Rauschenberg paintings from 1953 to 1958 (the year he had his first show at Castelli's), have many interesting facets, but I am going to continue my line of thought about the relation of this work to decoration. I am thinking of the fabrics and pillow cases, the hats and ties, the pieces of carved wood, the linens and quilts, the rugs and the washing towels, the rags and embroidered doilies and lace. And these patterned objects, sewn and printed, besides functioning decoratively on the painting, are themselves designed with nonfunctional decorative elements.

The basic assumption that a painting is first of all an object is now a worn-out idea. As a working thesis and model explicated by Jasper Johns, it has provoked painting for the last 20 years. Now, although Rauschenberg's work was clearly established, widely admired and historically secure at the same moment as Johns', it has carried little weight and exercised limited influence for succeeding art (mainstream, New York art). The only exception to this is possibly James Rosenquist, and the Red Grooms/Ray Johnson circle.

As Rauschenberg's work subscribed neither to the strictures of modernism nor the imperatives of the readymade, it followed a course too diverse and irregular to function as a model; there was no logical "next step" out of his art. But moreover, I suggest that the decorative basis of Rauschenberg's work, both his general latent bias in favor of the decorative and

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Robert Rauschenberg, *Black Painting*, 1952, collage on canvas, 81 x 171" (4 panels).

the explicitly decorative units, put off both critics and artists from understanding what now may be interpreted as his adversary position. A decorative basis allowed Rauschenberg to show us what a painting could be *of,* not just what a painting could be. This point of view would obviously have nothing to offer art wrapped up in its own self-definition. Rauschenberg, I think, looked backward because he did not question the fact of painting, but rather, as I have said, he reinforced the very notion of painting as a decorative object hung on a wall. (The visual evidence strongly rejects Leo Steinberg's thesis of Rauschenberg's psychological tilt of the picture plane towards a "flatbed," oriented like a desk or other horizontal surface.)

Yet the decorative effects Rauschenberg created with collage differ from what we might expect from such a strategy because, instead of abstract or schematic decorative units, Rauschenberg introduces a "reformed" realism, by means of photographs. Here, his choice of photos involves three general kinds of images, or subject matter.

One is the action photo: runners, pole vaulters, dancers, mountain climbers, baseball pitchers, birds in flight, etc. These are representations of physical movement. A finite stable painting may allude to movement, but it cannot have actual motion in time (which Rauschenberg nevertheless made literal in the sprouting grass paintings). The subject of time was taken up in the Clock series in the late '60s, and clocks have been used in combine paintings—and they, of course, measure time by movement. The photograph, of course, "stops" the time and the action. Almost all writers have noticed how Rauschenberg holds action in "abeyance" (Alan Solomon), or "delay" (Rosalind Krauss), or more suggestively, Max Kozloff's "fascinated passivity," where the whole idea of freezing movement is extended to public voyeurism.

The second kind of photograph is the reproduced artwork: Titian, Leonardo, van Gogh, Renoir, Goya, etc. This use of cultural artifacts reminds us that anything is subject to mass media's unending attempt to expropriate everything possible from its original function and turn it into a commodity, and, more specifically, kitsch. As Rauschenberg is not, in this period, interested in using unique materials, this particular reference to past art is a mildly ironic lesson in art history, whose icons may be reduced and transferred to a dish towel, or postcard, or calendar. Anything becomes kitsch when it is better known through reproductions of itself than through the real thing (the Mona Lisa, Mount Rushmore, Beethoven's Fifth as rock music).

The last category of "photograph" is closely related to the second; it is the image of the famous person. Rauschenberg favors Kennedy, Gloria Vanderbilt, Abraham Lincoln, Merce Cunningham, Krushchev. We know famous people by their faces, reproduced photographically in mass media.

The same seems to have happened to the image of Rauschenberg's art, conditioned by its reproduction in the mass media, by photographs of his work unavailable to all those who cannot travel to European museums to see them first-hand, those of us who only know it from the Forge monograph and the art press. Despite the incredible number of graphics and posters, the works we know best are the ones we see again and again in photographs. That means we know them in the wrong size and the wrong scale, in the wrong colors and as illustrations to a text. So then, *Bed* becomes, like Rubens' *Venus,* mined as a piece of historical kitsch, collaged on the front of *Time.* In short, Rauschenberg has been misappropriated by the media, which he himself has scavenged.

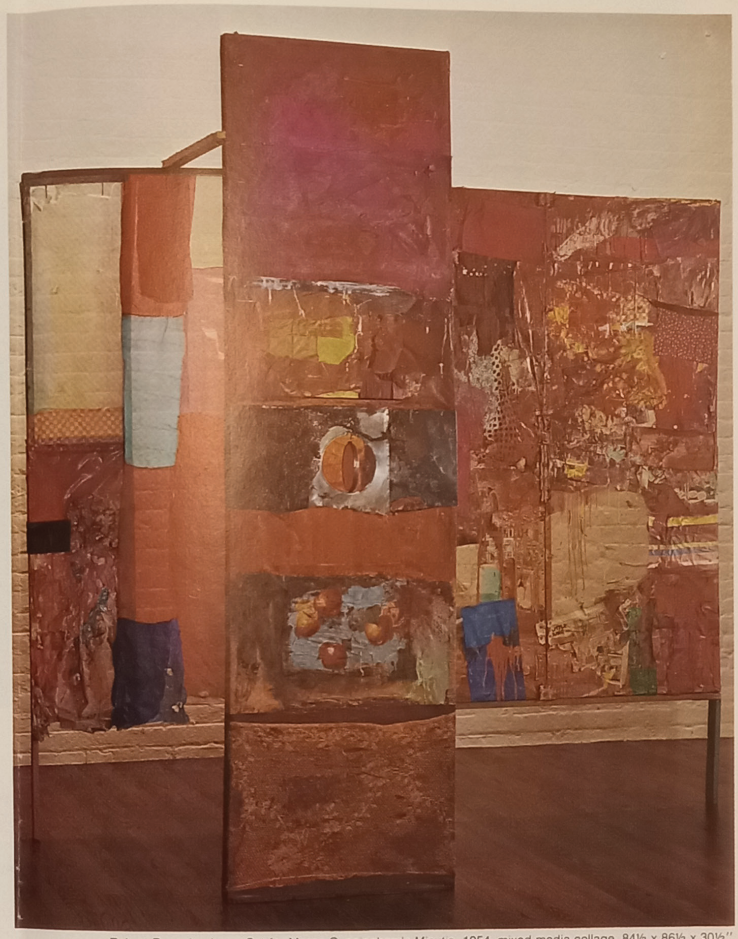
Rauschenberg's subject matter, then, is that of an industrialized urban environment; it is tied to the people who live there, who travel among the dumps and walk along the streets. It is the waste of overconsumption and obsolesence. The newspapers are the day-to-day garbage of mass communications. Larger sign letters are decorative—disintegrated leftovers from another social usage.

The color in Rauschenberg's early paintings is not just any color, and the paint is not just any kind of paint. It is commercial wall paint, commercial printer's ink and the colors available for our living spaces. Just as the objects penetrate the painting from the real world, keeping their self-color, so too does the paint. Paint is what covers a real wall as well as an oil painting. The white paintings show us that the simplest kind of nonfunctional, decorative addition to a wall/painting is a single monochrome coat of paint.

When Rauschenberg turned to the silkscreen for the transferring of images onto canvas, he was able to "go public" in reference and also extend the process of reproduction to his material (images). Before, the

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Robert Rauschenberg, Set for Merce Cunningham's *Minutia*, 1954, mixed media collage, 84½ x 86½ x 30½"

Robert Rauschenberg, *Estate*, 1963, o/c, 96 x 70" (Philadelphia Museum of Art)



materials in the collages and combines were things anyone could get or everyone has, but with the possible exception of the photographs, they did not lend themselves to repetition from one work to the next. In fact, the fabric and patterned designs were just part of a large whole of similar material, and so could not be discreetly repeated as a single thing. *Factum I* and *II* are about the inability to repeat a painting using the same materials.)

Suddenly, with the screens, the same image could be re-used and a new internal consistency was achieved, available before only through color. Far from being only items within his own biography, or objects he happened upon, or objects which we only use privately (clothing, towels, doilies or umbrellas), Rauschenberg shared these images with a large public: Kennedy, the Statue of Liberty, urban skylines, factories, military vehicles, helicopters, the bald eagle, traffic, space flight. Although actually more traditional in technique (there is no more there than paint on canvas) the paintings of 1962–64 are finally liberated from the decorative functions (the images

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themselves are not decorative and thus cannot be handled in that way), and the balancing and "placing" of the earlier work. They are no longer arranged locally, nor are they arranged as parts; they are paratactically unstructured. The images float without regard to each other, images slip off the canvas, overlap each other, and generally look confused.

Although the color screen paintings come dangerously close to being "expensive" (they are done in a very expensive technical process and were done when money for them became available), the subjects fight off facility which arrives with the luscious color and beautifully "badly" painted criss-crosses and color spectrums. They were to be the last paintings where material of definite reality and emotive power were to be used in his paintings.

Up to this point, Rauschenberg's career is similar to Picasso's in terms of their common itinerary of success and the progression from poverty to economic stability, "outsider" to "insider" status. Picasso reached this status before the First World War, and it hit Rauschenberg on the eve of Vietnam, race riots, student unrest and the peace movement. While Picasso was to enter a safe Neoclassic period after the war in reaction to the Dada reaction, Rauschenberg withdrew from painting altogether during the crisis period. By 1964, he was preparing his retrospectives at the Jewish Museum and at Whitechapel. He took a tour around the world with the Cunningham Dance Company and intensified his dedication to lithography.

In the next decade, a change occured. While his art suffered, he became involved with technology and identified himself more closely with the powers that created the waste he had once used without judgment—now, he positively affirmed science and the corporate presence as they were to lead out from the world dilemmas. Giving up residues littering the streets, he took up hardware handed him by agencies and foundations.

So then, this period is filled with combine drawings, multiples, performances and political work. Rauschenberg put his art to the service of a variety of causes: the re-election of Jacob Javits, money for CORE, Judson Church, *The Paris Review,* Earth Day, for the improvement of the laws that relate to artists' rights, and the Metropolitan's Centennial. These were (artistically) secondary to ephemeral Evenings of Art and Technology and the Experiments in Art and Technology.

During this time, Rauschenberg took the extreme position which his work always suggested, and the screen paintings and lithography made obvious—that the artist could produce in monumentally large quantities, especially if one had the optimistic thought that they might "improve the world," in Cage's own words. So in more than one way, Rauschenberg became involved with issues derived from Duchamp: he quit painting and he exposed himself through



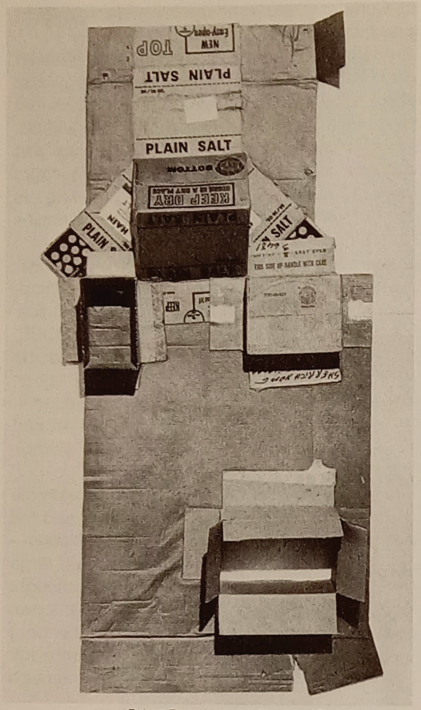
Robert Rauschenberg, Double Feature, 1959, combine painting, 90¾ x 52".

Robert Rauschenberg, *Red Interior,* 1954, combine painting, 56½ x 61½"



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	TOMKINS	IV.C.47



Robert Rauschenberg, *Cardbird (Plain Salt)*, 1971, cardboard and plywood, 80¼ x 37".



Robert Rauschenberg, *Sor Aqua*, 1973, mixed media, 120" long.

mass reproduction. And at this point, Picasso and Duchamp and Rauschenberg meet. For all became little more than what their media images allowed them to be. They internalized and acted upon the myth of the genius, the artist as genius.

As far as Rauschenberg is consumed with materials and not ideas, the tension between the commonness and availability of material and the specialness of the art object is gone, once it assumed that everything he does emanates, not from his sensuous materialism and eye for detail, but from "genius." With the coming of Pop art, the artist was elevated to media giant in new ways—it made him a star. He became a commodity and a ripe target for rip-offs while being "praised." Since Rauschenberg's work has always been strongly autobiographical, it is easy to be more interested in *who* he is than *what* he does, and the media try to separate those things to mystify both.

From the supply of magazine photos, and paper, and possibilities to work in France and India, Rauschenberg became undone, with "too much art." He tried to fight it with theater and scientific technology. As Harold Rosenberg has written (in *The Anxious Object*), "[Painting] retains its vigor only as long as it continues to sustain its dilemmas: if it slips over into action ("life") there is no painting." And so it was with Rauschenberg.

Although at the time it was not understood, Rauschenberg was making a "statement" when he reissued the white paintings in 1968. It was an admission that painting was hopeless. It had been attacked by sculpture and multimedia, and Pop art was dead, and Minimal painting—well, Minimal painting looked suspiciously like misread Rauschenbergs from 1951. It was also the first time he descended to "gesture" art, and it signalled something deeply troubling. He was becoming self-conscious about his position, the "problems" of art and started looking to art for subject matter instead of the world at large.

Rosalind Krauss has written that the specific issues which interested her in Rauschenberg's early work reappeared in his paper pieces in 1974, but that they did not represent a return to the quality of the earlier work. But she did not give any reason why this was the case. I agree with her judgment, but I would like to add why I have come to that position.

For Rauschenberg, the art he has been producing is so intimately connected with his life-style that it is once again impossible to separate biography from the art.

It was painful to read Rauschenberg speaking of being poor in New York when he first got there, and living hand to mouth for many years; it was upseting because I could only wish he could be poor again, for his art was the richer for it. He also said (in the same *Time* article) that "we all get comfortable in the end." Although he apparently lives simply at his retreat in Florida (Picasso supposedly lived simply in his country villas), it is a prerogative of the rich to choose where they shall live simply. "You don't know how many disturbances I miss out on down here," he says, but we *do* know, we can see it in his work. His work has become slack and undisturbed.

Too many combine drawings fill up the missing years 1965–1970 before he returned to unique-object production, and these are all dimmed-out versions of the screen paintings. The only work from 1971 is *Castelli Small Turtle Bowl,* which, despite its title, is a gigantic piece of cardboard, and it "relates" to the *Tampa* series and the *Cardbirds*. By virtue of its uniqueness and size, I take it as the "major" work of this period. It is, as far as I could ascertain, a large cardboard box opened up and attached to wood stretchers. No image, no painting, no attachments, no detail save some staples and writing in magic marker. It is just a single thing, what it is and nothing else. It is material as object as readymade, not as painting. Rauschenberg's entire sensibility is not compatible with single-image art. He must use details and surface variety. The individual constituents of his collages could never stand on their own; their meaning derives from collage where they are art/decoration and material/subjects.

This is where it hit me hardest: it is no longer necessary for Rauschenberg to do anything but choose and sign—everything he picks up automatically becomes art.

The *Pyramid* series, all white with embedded white cloths, is more uninflected surface material; the problem is that if we are not fascinated with the paper as material there is no reasonable interest here. As for his sculptures, they are throwbacks to the works he dumped in the river in Italy. Long limp ropes are attached to clay blocks; lumpy mud cakes and thin rusted metal tubes are connected to each other

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Robert Rauschenberg, Untitled ("Hoarfrost" series), 1974, mixed media, 76½ x 51".



Robert Rauschenberg, *Buffalo II*, 1964, silkscreen.

suggestively. For the first time in Rauschenberg's career we are reminded of younger artists' work, in particular, Eva Hesse and Bruce Nauman. The surrealism which hung over the older three-dimensional work is right out in the open. Mannerism sets in and he hangs works from the ceiling and plays with strained punning and enervated, twisting forms. This possessive, obsessive attachment to art materials engages us on the level of production only.

The *Hoarfrosts* are a return to transferred images, and they are, on the most basic level, really beautiful works. When there is a color, a pattern, an image to impress your eye's memory, then individual pieces come to life—it can be a swimmer diving into a blue pool, a swath of striped cloth, peach silk with a bucket.

The problem with the embedded collages from newspapers and magazines is that they are too light to read, too randomly placed to come forward as single pieces of material, and consequently serve as the background. The problem is that there is no "foreground." Materials are no longer on a separate but equal footing: they run into one another without definition. They can be seen whole as pleasant decoration, but with such a relaxation of intention and dehydrated image that they become "dematerialized." There is no way for the images to be framed or tautened, because the canvas stretcher has been forsaken for a spectator/material interaction. Left suspended, easily breezing back and forth as people walk by, they remind one of a belabored point made by the white paintings about the shadows of passing onlookers.

Rauschenberg can't seem to get the bleach out of his system. It's the parched look from the sand and sun and the sky and it is not shared experience—it reflects Rauschenberg's new retreat from his audience. When one approaches the *Jammers*, it is not so much that he has forsaken everything to develop something new; it is a comfortable skimming of the surface look of his older work. The waving silk sails of the *Jammers* are, again, gorgeous but empty. Whereas the combines exhibited the energy of the baseball players who graced them, the concentration of the dancers who moved in them, we now have to settle for the inferred pleasure cruise, the yacht on the sea and the leisure of sunbathing. The silks and cloths, luscious and deeply hued, are like the ones in the early *Minutia*—but they are no longer found, roughed up from being in the garbage, which gave them a curious life of their own. The spotless blues and yellows and whites, all in yards of shimmering satin, were manufactured to be art and that's all. They came into the world with that functionless function. They "progress" from material to art with no in between, no effort.

One thing these works make clear: art looks different when it's made away from New York City. Rauschenberg has been doing crypto-L.A. art now for five years—wooden poles leaned against the wall; "paintings" without stretchers; good-looking, precious materials, offhand but elegantly flowing. Florida and Southern California is where people 10 years past Rauschenberg's age go to *retire*. That is his experience right now—but as one member of his audience, I confess that in *my* experience, art made in a beautiful environment can never compete with the beauty of the environment, and when shown in a dirty urban space, it cannot help but look like postcards from a tropical vacation, unrelated to day-to-day life.

The retrospective at the National Collection was sneaky in one respect. The hanging was chronologically backward—from the *Jammers* to the white and black paintings. The two conspicuous *Jammers* chosen were an all-white, five-"panel" one and an all-black three-sectioned one. So, some kind of circular continuity was being established even though there is none. It unfortunately gave the impression of finality when Rauschenberg is, we hope, still in mid-career. On top of this, the first room is incredibly weak—it included, of all things, a composite transfer drawing/Christmas card, *Yule '75*, with a long list of prestigious lenders. (The catalogue's wonderful typo lists them as "leaders"). All one could say, if one knew the work, is that it had to get better because all those great works were back there, fulfilling enough for anyone. ■

The Rauschenberg retrospective was shown at the National Collection of Fine Arts from October 30 to January 2. It will be at the Museum of Modern Art, New York from March 25 to May 17. From there it will travel to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, June 24–August 21; the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, September 23–October 30; and the Art Institute of Chicago, December 3–January 15, 1978.