ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

Rauschenberg's Fulton Street studio, NY, ca. 1953

Rauschenberg in his Pearl Street studio, NY, ca. 1960

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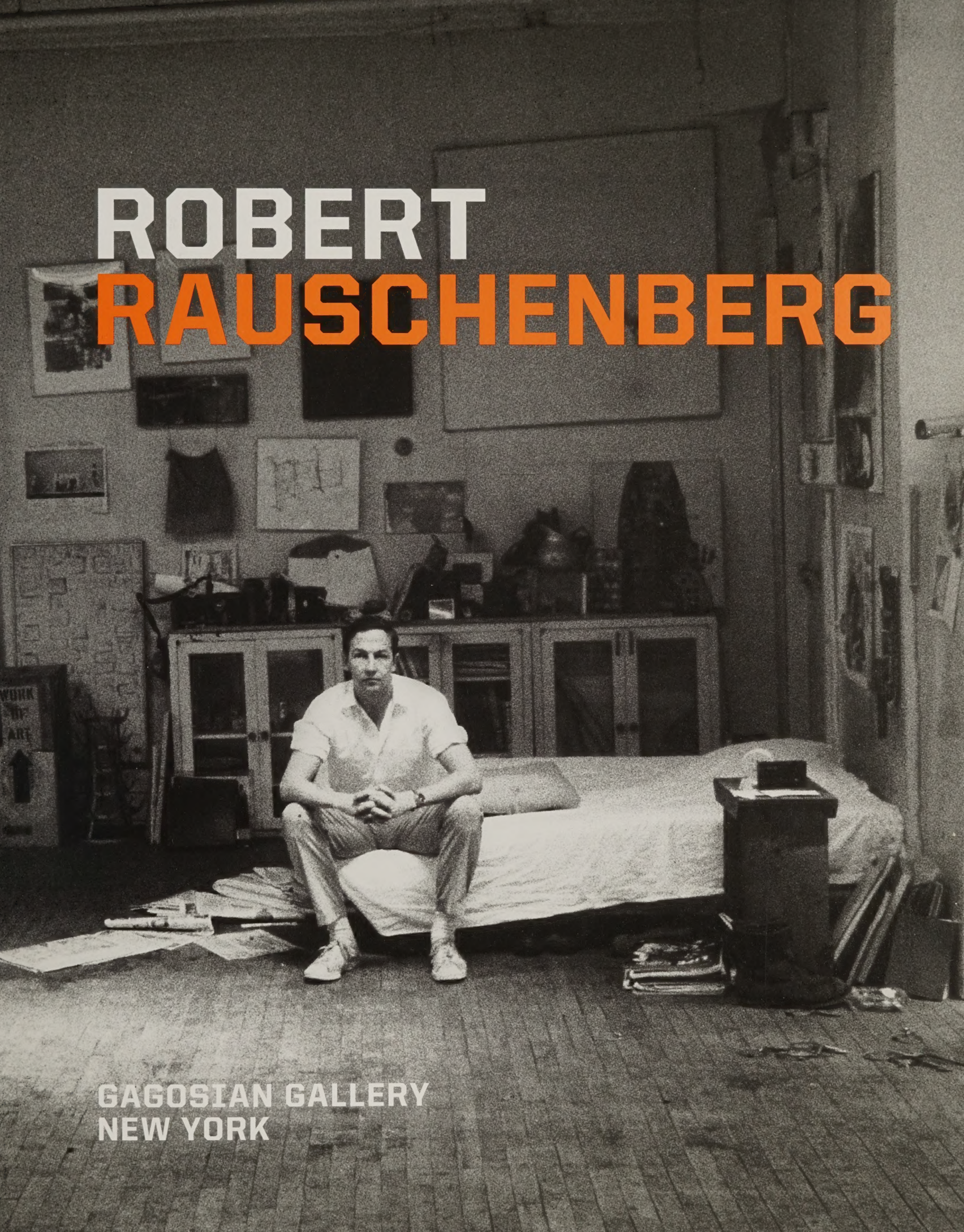


GAGOSIAN GALLERY
NEW YORK

Rauschenberg at Black Mountain College, Asheville, NC, ca. 1951

Rauschenberg in his Pearl Street studio, NY, ca. 1956

Robert Rauschenberg was once described by Jasper Johns as the most inventive artist since Picasso. The same young iconoclast who famously erased a de Kooning drawing as a creative act was also credited for reinventing image-making with his "flatbed picture plane."

During his long and prodigious career, Rauschenberg's approach to making art gutted all traditional boundaries between medium and genre and forever changed the relationship between artist, image, and viewer. He quickly identified as his driving energies and inspirations the incidental, the immediate, and the perception of a presence greater than his own artistic virtuosity. By working in what he called "the gap between art and life," Rauschenberg developed an altogether new visual language that, based on collage as a microcosm of the larger, messy world, rejected the conventions of unitary meaning advanced by high art.

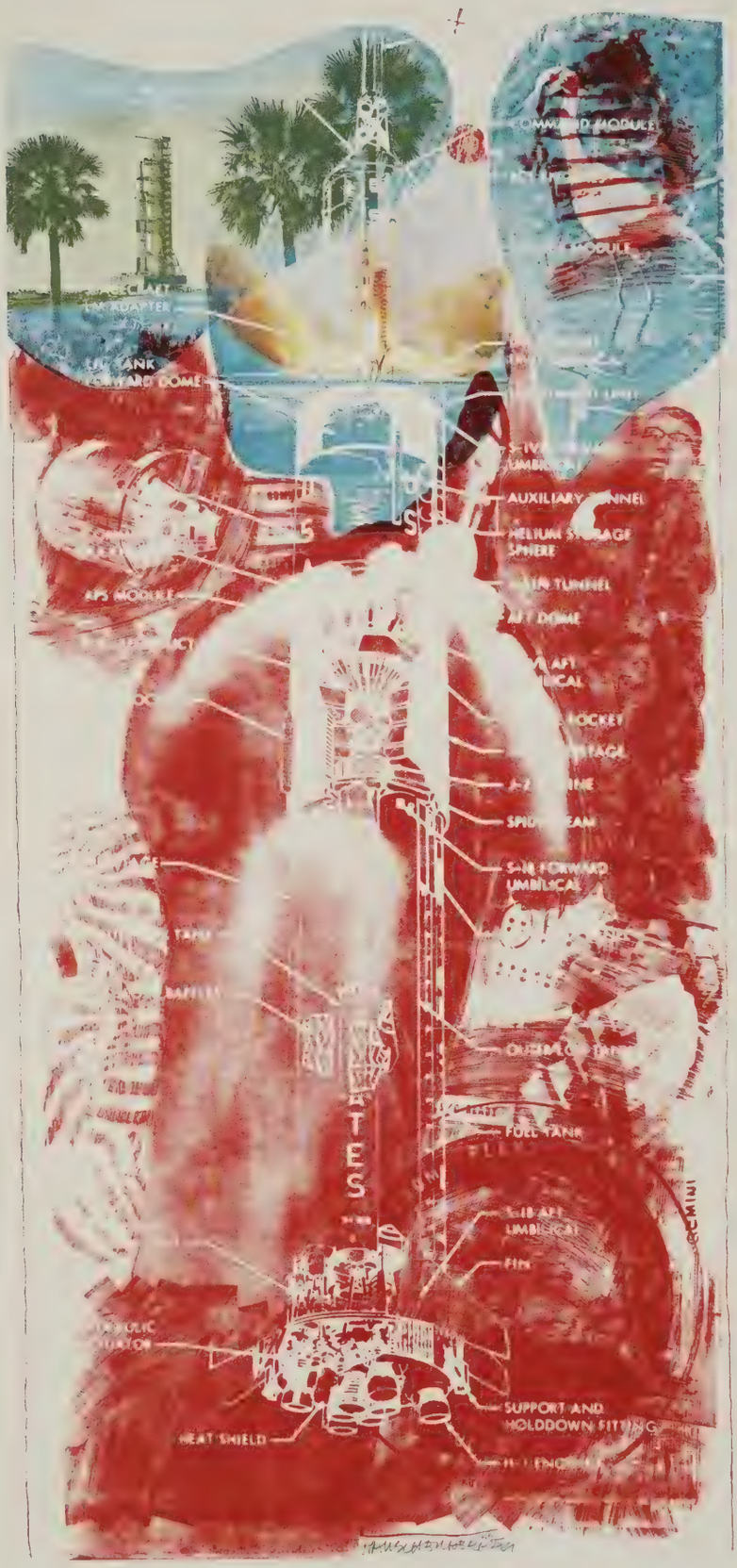
Walking the streets of New York, he picked up trash and discarded objects that interested him, integrating them into bold paintings or slathering them with paint and assembling them into freestanding sculptures. These he called, simply yet paradigmatically, "combines." In the works on canvas that followed the Combines, he used silkscreen to introduce photographs and magazine illustrations into his compositions, presaging the advent of Pop Art with the "flattening" of experience that the process implies. Throughout his life, he continued to experiment with ever new ways and technological means to construct a pictorial surface, producing accumulations of images drawn from everywhere.

From the quietly existential *White Paintings* and *Elemental Sculptures* of the early 1950s to his vibrant utopian project ROCI, the Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange, represented here by works that are monumental in concept as well as scale, Rauschenberg's wide-ranging endeavors have inspired generations of artists, and their influence is more evident today than ever before. The most recent works in this exhibition have an originality and immediacy that will come as a revelation even to those who think they know Rauschenberg's work by heart.

It is my honor to present our first major exhibition of the late, great artist's work, which also marks a new collaboration with the Estate of Robert Rauschenberg. In a life that constantly looked forward, Rauschenberg once said that a retrospective should encourage people to see old work in the light of the new, rather than the new in the light of the old. We begin our collaboration with a glimpse of the breadth and range of this transformative artist's vision, in anticipation of future exhibitions that will examine more closely and specifically the consistently revolutionary nature of his art.

LARRY GAGOSIAN

Rauschenberg working on *A Modern Inferno for Life*, in his Broadway studio, NY, 1985



1. *Sky Garden (Stoned Moon Series)*, 1969, planographic, stencil lithograph, and screen print on Arjomari paper, 89 × 42 inches (225.9 × 106.4 cm)

FULL CIRCLE

JAMES LAWRENCE

"I'm old enough that I probably won't run out of land," Robert Rauschenberg said in an interview in 1990, "but I would like to go to the moon."[1]

Although Rauschenberg never got his wish, he was nearby when others left on their journey. In July 1969, the NASA Art Program invited Rauschenberg and other prominent American artists to witness the launch of *Apollo 11*. In the months that followed, he explored the event in a series of thirty-three lithographs. The dominant figure in *Sky Garden (Stoned Moon Series)* (1969; fig. 1) is a cutaway diagram of a launch vehicle—not the Saturn V rocket used in the *Apollo 11* mission, but an earlier Saturn 1B—superimposed over images from the Apollo program. Two photographs of *Apollo 10* on the launchpad at Cape Canaveral and one of a wading heron constitute the "sky garden" of the title, into which the human component of the rocket, the command module, ascends.

Rauschenberg admired the space program as "one of the only things at that time that was not concerned with war and destruction."[2] In *Sky Garden*, technology does not merely coexist with nature. The word "Gemini" ("twins" in Latin) near the right-hand edge is a homonym: it is the name of both the project that preceded Apollo and the studio where Rauschenberg made the *Stoned Moon* prints. But the word has an additional layer of connotation, which points to the pairing of technological accomplishment and natural history. In *Sky Garden*, that pairing is an apotheosis. It propels humanity toward a state of grace in which the man-made and the natural world are reciprocal and harmonious.

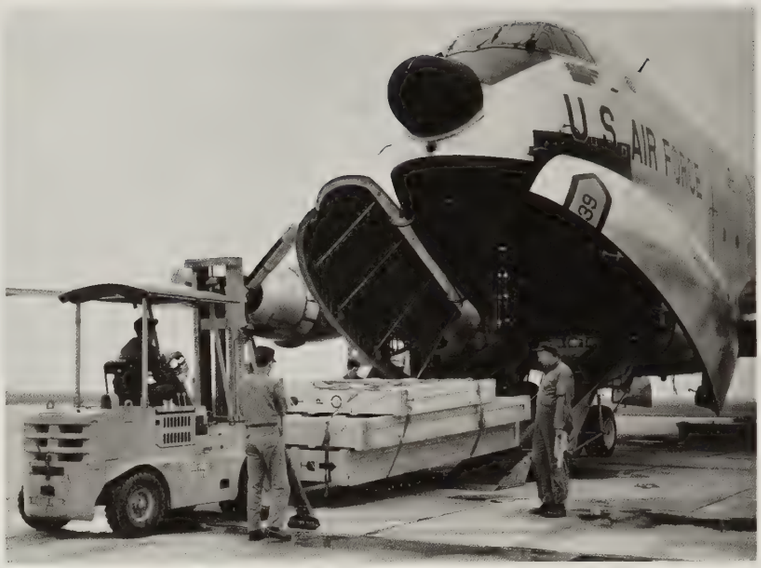
Nature and culture frequently meet in Rauschenberg's work, and he responded deeply to both. As a child in the petrochemical town of Port Arthur, Texas, he kept a motley menagerie of toads, dogs, poultry, and a goat. He briefly studied pharmacology, until he refused to dissect a frog. Images and preserved examples of plants and animals began to appear in his works from the start. In 1950, the year he married Susan Weil, Rauschenberg made *Greenhouse* (pp. 42–45). Horizontal and vertical partitions create compartments within the wire-mesh structure. In the upper section, Rauschenberg planted dried twigs into the mesh. Interspersed among them are bunches of wire strands, echoing the plant life they resemble. Larger branches occupy the narrow compartments in the bottom section, except for one, which contains a hand-assembled, wire-bound bunch of manufactured wooden sticks from which wire ascends like a vine. The distinction between organic and artisanal forms remains intact, but only careful scrutiny reveals it.

During the mid-1960s, Rauschenberg occasionally used live animals in performances, including a stubborn Swedish cow in *Elgin Tie* (1964) and about thirty turtles in *Spring Training* (1965). The turtles roamed the stage with flashlights attached to their shells (fig. 2). Rauschenberg subsequently adopted one of them and called her Rocky. Years later, an acronym derived from her name served as the title of a six-year, self-funded, globe-trotting exhibition devoted to artistic understanding: the Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange, or ROCI.

Rauschenberg's attitude to the omnipresence of material culture was equally affectionate. From the most quotidian manufactured products to the most rarefied advances in aerospace technology, few artifacts of modern society were outside the orbit of Rauschenberg's creative attention. He rehabilitated discarded objects by incorporating them into his Combines. To Rauschenberg, they were "things," rather than "junk."[3] They possessed their own histories, which extended beyond the moments of failure or depletion that had marked them for disposal. The elements that congregate in a work by Rauschenberg remain individual and distinctive. They keep their dignity. "I like the history of objects," Rauschenberg said. "I like humanitarian reportage."[4] Rather than bending things to his will, he presented what they were and had become.

This affection for the ingredients of his art did not exist in a vacuum. He did not simply accumulate and place things he liked into arrangements. The relationships he revealed, and the forces he harnessed, are not static. They flow and

2. Rauschenberg and turtle in his Broadway studio practicing for *Spring Training*, 1965



3. Rauschenberg's artworks for the XXXII Venice Biennale being unloaded from a United States Air Force plane, 1964

change, often in response to their immediate environment. Just as often, the flux is innate. Throughout his career, Rauschenberg employed or implied the processes that constitute organic relationships. This might be at the microcosmic level—as in the mold that grew in *Dirt Painting (for John Cage)* (ca. 1953; fig. 4)—or at the macrocosmic level of mass communications and geopolitics. *Broadcast* (1959; fig. 5) includes three hidden radios; the resulting interplay of "content" roams between clarity and babble. The traveling exhibition at the heart of ROCI kept changing as Rauschenberg made new pieces, using local techniques and materials. After a visit to a Chilean mine, for example, he began to use copper and brass as a support for printing and tarnishing. In 1990, the year after ROCI visited Moscow during an especially receptive period of perestroika, the centerpiece of the Soviet Pavilion at the Venice Biennale was Rauschenberg's *Orrery (Borealis)* (1990; fig. 6), in which he employed the technique originating in Chile.[5]

In 1985, during the early stages of ROCI, a private museum in Caracas engaged the Venezuelan Air Force to transport the exhibition from Santiago, Chile. Rauschenberg found this entirely appropriate. "Since this is an odyssey to encourage peace, the most direct way is to engage all the armies to haul art around."[6] It was a comment rooted in experience. In 1964, the year Rauschenberg won the Grand Prize in Painting at the Venice Biennale, the United States Air Force delivered works for the exhibition in a C-124 cargo plane (fig. 3). Six years later, in protest against the war in Vietnam and social malaise domestically, Rauschenberg withdrew permission for his prints to appear in Venice.[7]

As much as the significance of an object depends on its location (Freud noted that "dirt is matter in the wrong place"[8]), the nature of a process depends on which paths it takes. This is particularly true in the dynamic relationship between society and technology. Douglas Aircraft manufactured the stage of the rocket that took *Apollo 11* out of the Earth's orbit and toward the Moon; the same company made the C-124 cargo plane that took American art to the Venice Biennale in 1964 and the A-4 Skyhawks that bombed North Vietnam. The government and, by extension, the taxpayers of the United States paid for all of these things. For Rauschenberg, the distinction between the creative, life-affirming space program and the devastation in Southeast Asia could not be eroded, whether through blinkered jingoism or through opposition to the military-industrial complex. If anything, distinctions of this kind reinforced his sensitivity to variations in what things can be and do. In a statement announcing ROCI in 1984, he wrote, "It was not until I realized that it is the celebration of the differences between things that I became an artist who could see."[9]

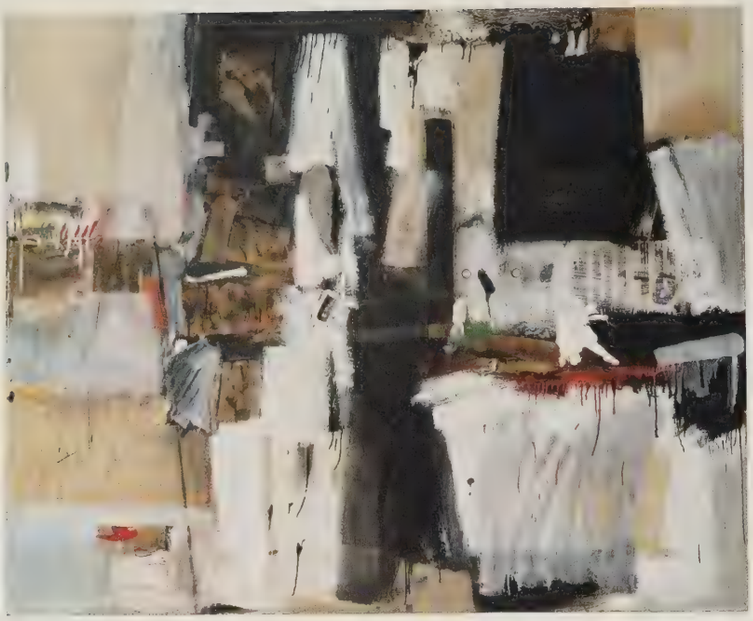
Rather than offering visual propositions that advance an argument or assert a position, Rauschenberg's works have a performative quality. Their internal relationships make sense, but not in a way that we can positively affirm or deny. This lack of clear direction makes them prohibitively difficult to fix in place. They resist the stasis of interpretation, refusing to keep still under the gaze of analysis. Rauschenberg saw this elusiveness as a guarantor of artistic longevity: "Once anything is understood, it is surrounded by generalities and it has no life. I am the first one to see them and I think I only make them because I do not understand them."[10] This does not mean that we should forswear understanding. It means that we find ourselves to be part of the ecological system that Rauschenberg built in the gap between art and life.

Rauschenberg's body of work is saturated with proliferating connections and fecund relationships that test our interpretive habits to destruction. Attempts to decode individual works iconographically tend to be overwrought or circumstantial. The

difficulty of "reading" Rauschenberg's works has, in turn, prompted magisterial accounts of the conditions of reading. Part of the difficulty is self-imposed. Interpretation usually rests on a particular approach to codes and legible processes, as though all things can be read, or else treated as evidence that they cannot. Rather than reading Rauschenberg's practice as a structurally complex set of elusive codes, it helps to see it as a perpetually changing environment in which the inhabitants, and the elements, act and interact.

A perpetually changing environment, and also an expanding one. At a press conference in Japan during the 1980s, a member of the audience asked Rauschenberg to name his greatest fear. "That I might run out of world," he replied.[11] He firmly believed that there was always more to see, always somewhere else to go. Visual and physical restlessness are, of course, related. At one point during his student days at Black Mountain College, he intended "to walk across the United States and photograph it foot by foot in actual size."[12] Aside from the impracticality of traversing the country and recording it, Rauschenberg's fanciful project also raises the question of how he might have organized the results. Neither taxonomic order nor *verité* conventions would have sufficed. Rauschenberg's proposal was more closely aligned with photography that arose alongside Abstract Expressionism, including work by Harry Callahan and Aaron Siskind, both of whom taught at Black Mountain when Rauschenberg was there.[13] It suggests a longing for scope and detail, for both macrocosm and microcosm, that only exhaustion should limit. The purposeful editing that characterizes most photographic inventories is incompatible with the elasticity and spontaneity of Rauschenberg's works. Had his faithful flattening of America been possible, perhaps the result would have been a visual census. His mature work, however, suggests that such bureaucratic discipline would have held little appeal.

4. *Dirt Painting (for John Cage)*, ca. 1953, dirt and mold in wood box, 15 ½ × 16 × 2 inches (39.4 × 40.6 × 6.4 cm)



5. *Broadcast (Combine Painting)*, 1959, oil, pencil, paper, fabric, newspaper, printed paper, printed reproductions, and plastic comb on canvas with three concealed radios, 61 × 75 × 5 inches (154.9 × 190.5 × 12.7 cm)

Photography was crucial to the ecology of Rauschenberg's practice. Even after he had turned toward painting, he employed and reassigned photographic characteristics so that they drew attention to natural processes. The *White Paintings* (1951; see pp. 51–52), for example, do not use paint as an inchoate material to be converted into meaning through gesture or syntax. Rauschenberg made them by applying a standard and ubiquitous house paint to the canvas with a roller. Barnett Newman, whose own paintings were initially dismissed as desiccated and vacuous despite their variegated surfaces, found the *White Paintings* wanting: too easy, too glib.[14] Rauschenberg, however, did not intend for the surfaces to be expressive; rather, he wanted them to be receptive—"hypersensitive," as he put it—to the prevailing conditions of duration, movement, light, and activated space.[15] Every shadow that falls on the surface of a *White Painting* leaves an evanescent trace of passing time. As with *Dirt Painting*, in which mold grew according to a process that Rauschenberg could present but not control, the *White Paintings* are environmental conditions that offer indeterminate possibilities rather than conclusions.

This temporal aspect was even more significant in *Growing Painting* (1953), Rauschenberg's contribution to the third annual exhibition at the Stable Gallery in New York. It began life as a *Dirt Painting* until Rauschenberg accidentally spilled grass seed onto it. He exhibited it nonetheless, and visited the gallery every day to water the painting. The grass grew and eventually died, at which point the painting died too. As the title suggests, "growing" and "painting" were coextensive and symbiotic terms. The

6. *Orrery (Borealis)*, 1990, acrylic, acids, and brass instruments on five brass panels, 97 × 181 × 23 inches (246 × 460 × 58.5 cm)

7. Detail: *Short Circuit (Combine Painting)*, 1955, oil, fabric, and paper on wood supports and cabinet with two hinged doors containing a painting by Susan Weil and a reproduction of a Jasper Johns *Flag* painting by Elaine Sturtevant, 40 ¾ × 37 ½ × 4 ¼ inches (103.5 × 95.3 × 10.8 cm)

process of growth kept painting in the realm of the continuous present, as an indeterminate participle rather than a closed noun. Far from being an iconoclastic prank, *Growing Painting* deepened and lengthened the commitment that art implicitly requires. *Growing Painting*, like the *White Paintings*, had a photographic dimension as well: the grass needed not just Rauschenberg's watering can, but also light. To the extent that Rauschenberg "developed" *Growing Painting* as it hung in the gallery, he eroded the distinction between the artistic cloisters of the studio or darkroom on the one hand, and public display on the other. His subsequent work would retain this open, continuous aspect.

It is hardly surprising that such traits were regularly, and erroneously, treated as iconoclasm, anti-art nihilism, or tomfoolery. Commentators invoked Dada (and the woolly "Neo-Dada") to explain apparent echoes of the classic avant-garde. Others detected a mischievous fad that would run its course. Leo Steinberg referred to a folkloric German trickster: "Eulenspiegel is abroad again, and one must be patient."[16] (Steinberg, diligently skeptical rather than dismissive, soon altered his stance.) In order to understand the meaning behind the behavior, one had to reach beyond artistic conventions into realms that artists had hitherto visited as acts of transgression or political outrage. Rauschenberg's early success ran concurrently with a general reassessment of the way art models the world.

The thirst for ephemera and detritus that meandered through the 1950s and early 1960s reflected the economic and intellectual currents of the period. Cities such as New York, London, and Paris became environments where remarkable species of "stuff" could be found in the urban wild, and into which exotic varieties could be imported. The Independent Group in Britain drew inspiration from non-Aristotelian aesthetics and structural approaches to evolutionary biology.[17] They rejected teleological notions of artistic progress toward a rarefied ideal, and instead embraced symptoms of life's protean complexity. The group emerged in the waning years of postwar austerity and set itself against a stagnant, academic modernism. Rauschenberg and his peers, on the other hand, could gather the windfalls of an affluent society and pursue creative paths that ten years of creative turbulence had exposed. While many young artists in New York struggled

8. Alex Hay and Robert Rauschenberg performing *Pelican* (1963) at the First New York Theater Rally, 1965

with the depleted reserves of gestural painting, Rauschenberg—stymied by his respect for the established masters—looked elsewhere.

His time at Black Mountain, and subsequent professional and personal relationships, encouraged his sensitivity to traits that emerge, rather than obedience to rules set by others. He was also attuned to systems of relations that formed a murmuring tangle of causes and effects. *Short Circuit* (1955; pp. 39–41) is one of the more pithy examples. By tradition, participants in the Stable Gallery's annual shows could propose new artists for the following annual. The rule changed in 1955. In protest, Rauschenberg asked friends to provide small pieces that he could incorporate into *Short Circuit*. A painting by Susan Weil is behind one of the hinged doors; a flag painting by Jasper Johns was behind the other. (The latter was stolen ten years after the piece was made, and a facsimile by Elaine Sturtevant replaced it.) A Judy Garland autograph and a program from a John Cage performance add to the multiple voices.

Two aspects of the work give the game away: the title itself, with its suggestion of circumvention and disruption; and a newspaper photograph attached to the front of the left-hand door (fig. 7). Someone, presumably Rauschenberg, obliterated part of the caption. The remaining words, "Hacking their way," reveal the true nature of the work in terms that are, if anything, more resonant now than they were in 1955. Subterfuge trumps violence when the obstacle is a complex system rather than a physical barrier. *Short Circuit* blends indignation and generosity, sacrificing unitary autonomy for a symbiosis that suits the changing conditions of display in a given environment. *Short Circuit* is art adapting to life.

Rauschenberg continued to open his work to the fluidity of behavior, a general theme that gained considerable momentum during the late 1950s. Among the objects attached to *Black Market* (1961; fig. 9) are an Ohio license plate; a photograph of the Capitol in Washington, D.C.; several cardboard index-card dividers with fragments of names and Social Security numbers on them; and a street sign. These things are evidence of bureaucratic systems that monitor identity and location, and that more broadly seek to impose order on constant change. They point to the precarious nature of coherence. *Black Market* also served as

9. *Black Market (Combine Painting)*, 1961, oil, watercolor, pencil, paper, fabric, newspaper, printed paper, printed reproductions, wood, metal, tine, and four metal clipboards on canvas with rope, rubber stamp, ink pad, and various objects in a wood valise randomly given and taken by viewers; canvas: 50 × 59 ½ × 4 inches (127 × 151.1 × 10.2 cm), valise: 6 ½ × 24 ¼ × 16 ½ inches (16.5 × 61.6 × 41.9 cm)

a trading post that appealed to the best in human nature. The attached valise contained objects that viewers—as participants in the "black market"—could take, provided that they left a replacement object, drew a picture of it on one of the numbered clipboards, and stamped the new object with the corresponding number. In the museum, this honor system rapidly collapsed as hasty or unscrupulous visitors took without giving back, and Rauschenberg rescinded the invitation to participate. While it lasted, however, this rudimentary system of transaction reduced the languages of exchange, property, and administration to the natural processes residing deep within commerce and bureaucracy.

The barter system of *Black Market* reflected not only the erosion of the curatorial boundaries that separate objects and audiences, but also the pressure against demarcation in Rauschenberg's practice. He thrived on the energy and cross-pollination of common purpose, especially when the protagonists came from disciplines that seldom meet. He turned cloistered specialization into creative ferment. His enthusiasm for performances and for the alliance of art and technology occupied him for most of the 1960s. These activities gave Rauschenberg many opportunities to test his notions of creative elision in new arenas, within which themes and motifs ranged widely. As these traveled from one environment to another, they behaved differently.

In *Pelican* (1963), Rauschenberg wore what appeared to be an umbrella/parachute hybrid on his back. Flight, a recurring motif for Rauschenberg, had two faces in *Pelican*: natural and technological. The title suggested the former, as did the organic flow of the dance itself; the latter was suggested by the two male dancers who knelt and appeared to wheel themselves across the floor (fig. 8). Human flight shows technology bringing us closer to nature by granting us an animal motion beyond our natural capabilities. The extreme form of this is space flight, which Rauschenberg began to show in his silkscreen paintings. The figure of an astronaut in *Retroactive I* (*Silkscreen Painting*) (1964; fig. 11) came from a photograph in *Life*. It illustrated an article on new equipment for the Gemini program, which included the "ballute"—a combination balloon and parachute—for use in emergency ejections.[18] The ballute and the hybrid in *Pelican* are closely related, but they are also connected to the umbrellas in *Tantric Riddle (Spread)* (1981; p. 141) and *Untitled (Spread)* (1983; pp. 143–45). Common sense tells us what Rauschenberg knew: that an umbrella is many things at once. It is shelter; it catches the air and can blow away or

10. Detail: *Aen Floga (Combine Painting)*, 1961, oil on canvas with wood, metal, and wire, 73 × 50 × 13 ¾ inches (185.4 × 127 × 34.9 cm)

11. *Retroactive I (Silkscreen Painting)*, 1964, oil and silkscreen ink on canvas, 84 × 60 inches (213.4 × 152.3 cm)

float to the ground; it rotates like a wheel, or like a windmill. It can be presented as a pattern, as in *Tantric Riddle*, or as a projection with an almost organic structure, as in *Untitled (Spread)*. Rauschenberg's motifs do not come as components or modules of meaning, but as sets of characteristics that adapt to different settings.

The theme of intrepid aviation is also present in *Aen Floga* (1961; pp. 61–63). According to Rauschenberg, he came up with the title after a visit to Sweden. Drawing upon his limited knowledge of Swedish, he chose a phrase that suggested flight.[19] In fact, the title is more specific than that. "Aen floga" comes from the Old English *án floga*, "lone flier." By the standards of the Combines, *Aen Floga* is unusually direct, and deceptively effortless. One detail wavers between gravitas and bathos: a metal ruler attached to the bottom of the construction advertises "Marotta's Real Italian Hero Sandwiches" (fig. 10). Occasionally, Rauschenberg chose to let directness make its presence felt; sometimes he would tell as well as show. More frequently, things echo other things indirectly, just as the parachutes and umbrellas do, even though they are never quite the same from one work to another. Rauschenberg's understanding of the way we experience the world was a great deal more intuitive than didactic. He conceived of it as an elusive, almost atmospheric sensitivity to a living environment.

Early in 1963, Rauschenberg assembled "Random Order," a portfolio for the remarkable, short-lived magazine *Location*. He attached eleven photographs to a backing sheet with masking tape, and wrote in the spaces among them (figs. 14–15). In this blend of text and image, Rauschenberg described the sensory accidents that confer structure upon otherwise unrelated processes and events. He made several observations about the nature of observation, written with the irregular spelling and syntax that became familiar aspects of his statements. Three examples:

> *With sound scale and insistency trucks mobilize words, and broadside our culture by a combination of law and local motivation which produces an extremely complex random order that cannot be described as accidental.*

> *A light bulb in the dark cannot show its self without showing you something else too.*

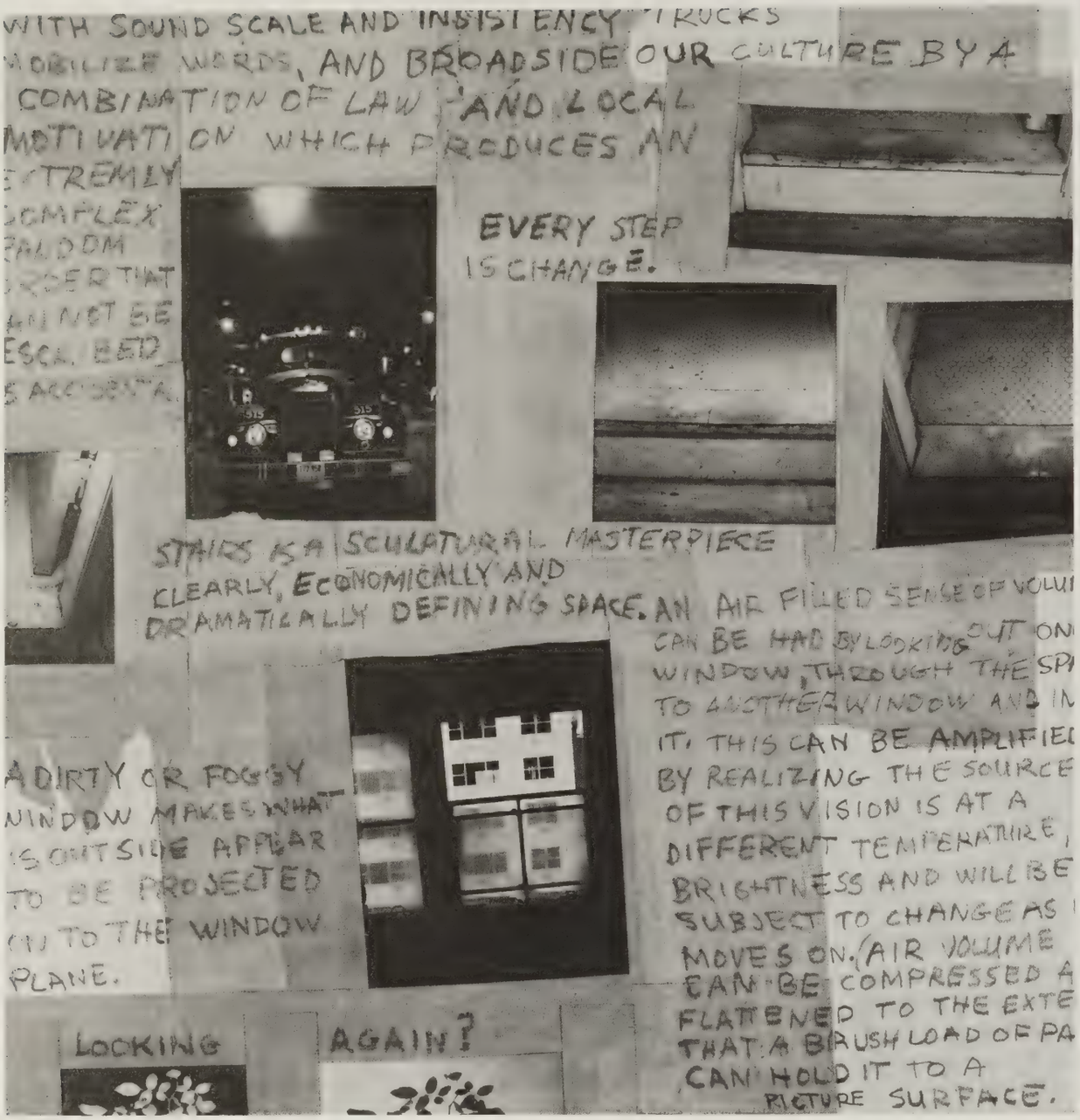
12. *Features from Currents*, 1970, silkscreen on paper, in twenty-five parts, each: 40 × 40 inches (101.6 × 101.6 cm), numbered 55–79 (clockwise from top left: 58, 55, 75, and 62)

13. A reproduction of *Sun Dog* (1962) in "Random Order", a five-page portfolio for the magazine *Location*, 1963

Every night, from minute to minute the skyline, that in day remains more or less as we know it, changes and redefines the space distorting our common sense view. This is accomplished by the combined involuntary actions necessary in doing something else.[20]

"Random Order" points out the indirect, relational complexity that arises when the things that connect us by experience do not connect us intentionally. A delivery truck rushing through the city conveys advertising that flashes past thousands of people. Office workers who need light alter the skyline window by window. Common experience emerges not from sustained communication, but from fleeting glimpses of information that others also glimpse moment by moment. As Willem de Kooning told David Sylvester, in an interview published as an abridged monologue in the same issue of *Location*, "Content is a glimpse of something, an encounter like a flash."[21] For de Kooning, this glimpse was rooted in something concrete: an intuition from the world of identifiable, named things. It implied not a contemplative visual mode, but a profoundly rapid and transitory one.

"Random Order" also presents the glimpse as something atmospheric and environmental. Next to a photograph of his

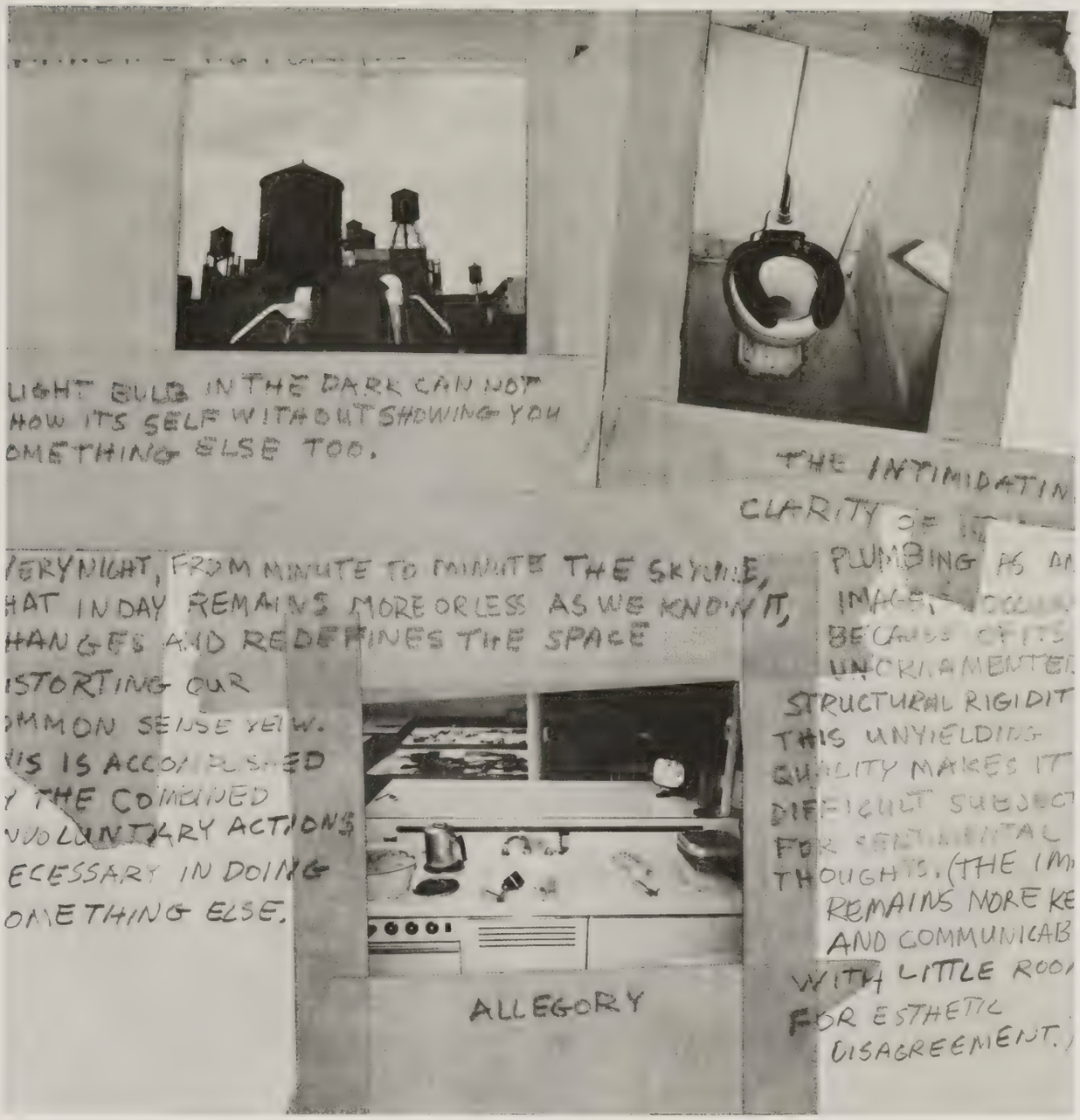


14. "Random Order" a photographic portfolio of five pages for *Location* magazine, 1963

studio window and the view beyond, Rauschenberg described the effect of looking through a dirty or foggy window, and how the exterior scene would appear to be projected onto it. Like the ground-glass screen in a camera, the translucent glass would turn a view into an image. *Sun Dog* (1962), his silkscreen painting reproduced on the title page of "Random Order"(fig. 13), also invokes a projection, but of a different kind. "Sun dog" is a colloquial term for a parhelion, an atmospheric phenomenon in which ice crystals in clouds refract the light of the sun and seem to reproduce it. The effect is as fleeting as a rainbow, and much rarer.

The idea of a window as a receptive screen is consistent with the principle of the *White Paintings*: the photographic interplay of light, presence, and time. In "Random Order," Rauschenberg stressed the grime through which he saw the world from his Manhattan studio. A similar effect is produced by a material more closely related to the atmospheric, elemental parhelion: the frost that accumulates on a cold window. Frost turns the view into an unresolved, short-lived projection that changes with the atmosphere. This effect provided the title of the *Hoarfrost* series (1974–76; fig. 17)

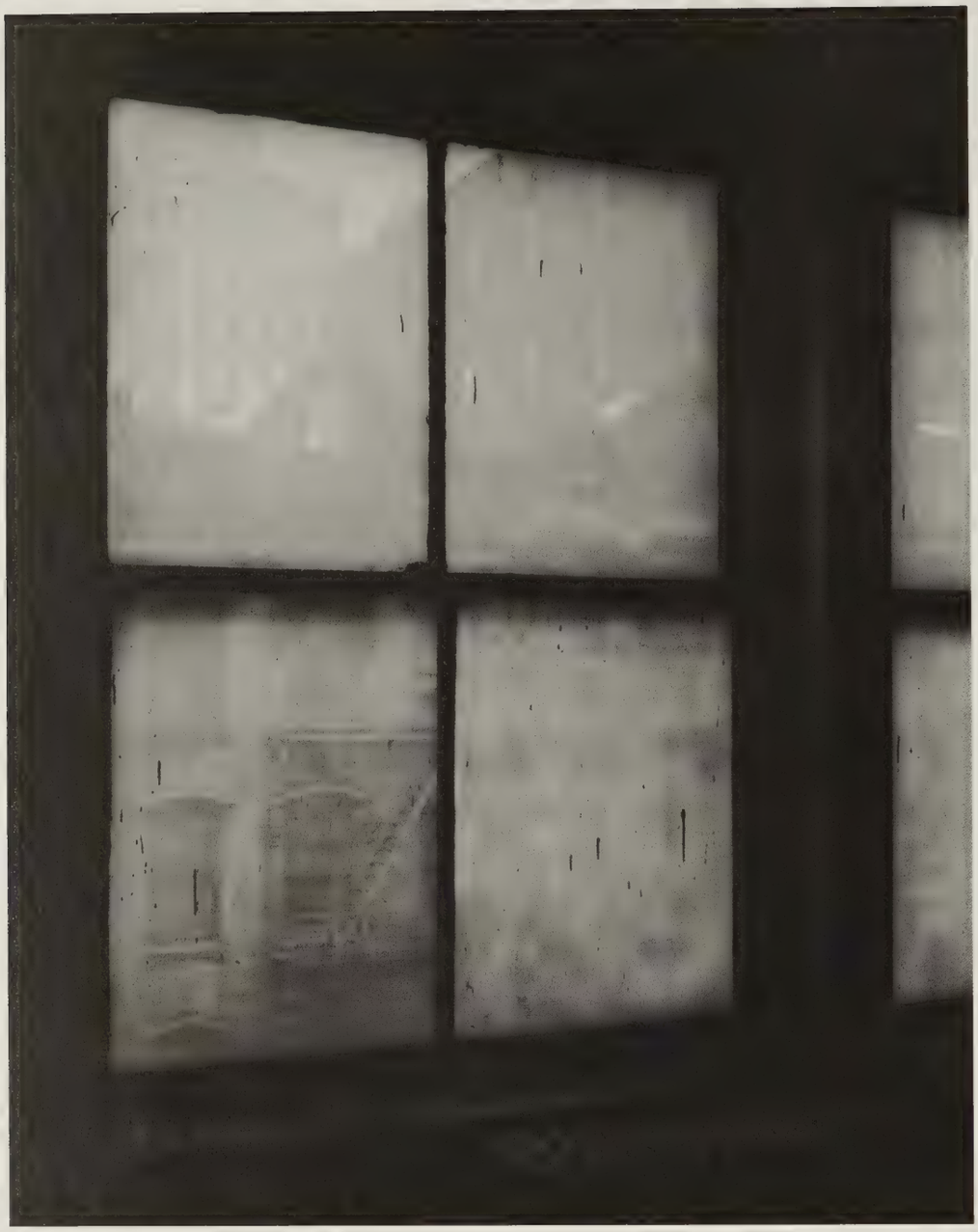
The *Hoarfrosts* use unstretched sheets of light fabrics, such as silk and chiffon, as layered supports for transferred



15. "Random Order" a photographic portfolio of five pages for *Location* magazine, 1963

images. The base sheet hangs from the wall by its top corners, and sometimes at one or more additional points along the top edge. Gauzy sheets of material hang loosely from the base sheet. Slight movements in the air, even the breeze of someone walking past, can make a *Hoarfrost* shimmer. The fabrics drape with subtle ripples and folds, which reveal, obscure, or distort the images. As with the effect that Rauschenberg described in "Random Order," the results are elusive. The fabric sheets decline to settle into stable roles: they are support, screen, veil, filter, and hypersensitive response to specific conditions, all at once. The see-through effect of diaphanous fabrics is both sensuous and familiar, erotic and domestic in equal measure. Beyond this appeal to common experience, however, the *Hoarfrosts* prompt heightened sensitivity to the act of seeing. We notice rainbows and parhelia because they are rare. We notice frost on a window because it interferes with our visual habits. These instances, and the *Hoarfrosts*, draw our attention to the delicacy of the material world as we truly see it: not as a static field of legibility, but as an environment of subtle atmospheric variations in which focus is a matter of chance and choice.

In making the *Hoarfrosts*, Rauschenberg reintroduced the solvent-transfer technique that he had developed in the late



16. "Random Order" a photographic portfolio of five pages for *Location* magazine, 1963

1950s. Several *Hoarfrosts*, such as *Jetty* (1975; p. 105), also include flattened cardboard boxes or paper bags. Such humble containers were critical for Rauschenberg as he approached the middle of his career, and the *Hoarfrosts* played a vital role in reconciling his early activities with the direction he took after 1970. They brought established techniques into harmony with more recent preferences for impoverished but self-assertive materials. The *Hoarfrosts* also heralded the reintroduction of imagery, which Rauschenberg had temporarily expelled as his life and work changed location and direction.

Whereas the escalating stimuli of daily life had been the underlying theme through the first period of Rauschenberg's career, the next stage began with a decisive shift toward calmer glimpses. He grew less concerned with the immediate historical moment and more attentive to universals. Several factors contributed to this shift, including his move to Captiva Island, Florida; his increasing involvement with politics, social causes, and direct philanthropy; and his particular responses to the general atmosphere of stock-taking as the 1960s drew to a close. In 1969, while he was at work on the *Stoned Moon* prints at Gemini G.E.L. in Los Angeles, a severe fire damaged his studio in New York.[22] He remained in Los Angeles to work on the *Currents* project (1969–70; fig. 12).

Currents is a gargantuan silkscreened print containing newspaper clippings presented without additional visual comment. It is news as surfeit, the world disgorged in print and offered as a stark array of the momentous and the inconsequential. *Currents* has the quality of words that are final not because they make the point, but because they leave nothing more to say. Along with the *Stoned Moon* prints, which stand as Rauschenberg's tribute to the finest aspects of technological progress, the *Currents* project was pivotal in Rauschenberg's shift from the local and immediate to the global and elemental. He turned to materials from near-universal families. Cardboard boxes could be splayed and arrayed in the formally lucid *Cardboards* (1970–71 see pp. 83–91) or coated with sand and Day-Glo paint and imbued with antiquarian mystery in the *Early Egyptians* (1973–74; see pp. 99–103). He made the *Jammers* (1975–76; see pp. 117–23) after he saw colorful fabrics amid grinding poverty in India. In his travels before and during ROCI, he saw that each place has its own necessities and its own inventions. He became, as he later recognized, "a universal,"[23] sensitive to aesthetic experience as the irreducible, and irreducibly varied, common ground of life.

The *Hoarfrosts* reflected this serene, benevolent embrace of prevailing conditions. Their atmospheric effects calmed the transferred images, kept them from becoming overheated. The *Hoarfrosts* are much less urgent and assertive than the silkscreen paintings of the early 1960s, and even more resistant to interpretive constraints. This is partly due to their veiling effect, but mostly the result of a persistent fact about Rauschenberg's works: they cannot be conclusively deciphered because their elements cannot truly be read.

This is not a problem of illegibility. The items that Rauschenberg chose routinely prompt swift jolts of recognition, even when the sources are a mystery. Glimpses of these things are already precise; no amount of additional looking is likely to make them more familiar than they were at first sight. Most of their visual force precedes the cognitive process of interpretation—the attempt to "read" what we see—that is an ever-present temptation.

If anything, the clarity of the parts frustrates attempts to herd them into any tidy interpretive pattern. Consider, for example, the image of a helicopter that recurs in a number of the silkscreen paintings from 1963 and 1964, including *Archive* (1963; fig. 19). In these paintings, the helicopter is always present as one of several reproductions screened onto the canvas and punctuated or elided by swiftly applied paint. Rauschenberg denied that his proximate images convey intended meanings, and excised any that he found: "If I see any superficial subconscious relationships that I'm familiar with, clichés of association, I change the picture. I always have a good reason for taking something out but I never have one for putting something in."[24] It is hard to take this at face value with *Archive*, where the helicopter—with its military markings plainly legible—abuts a photograph of parading servicemen. This, however, is not a cliché of association so much as a straightforward, tautological pairing. It addresses us loudly, but suggests little beyond itself. Rauschenberg would permit relationships to build within the pictorial field as long as they were exhaustively obvious, merely "facts."[25]

The photograph of the helicopter, like many of the images in Rauschenberg's silkscreen paintings, came from a mass-circulation magazine. In 1962, *Life* commissioned photographer Larry Burrows to cover the war in Vietnam.[26] His striking color photographs of the war first appeared in January 1963 as part of a twelve-page article that sounded a note of heavily qualified optimism.[27] One of the photographs showed an H-21 helicopter (fig. 18), one of three dozen that had constituted the "first direct military support by the United States" for South Vietnam a year earlier.[28] In *Life*, the photograph shows a platoon of South Vietnamese troops in the foreground. Rauschenberg cropped out that section when he had his screen made.

Rauschenberg habitually gleaned images from various magazines at this time, looking and clipping without necessarily reading.[29] The extent to which the helicopter image held particular connotations for him is unknowable now, as it was then. The image appears as a clearly stated fact, impossible to mistake for anything other than an army helicopter. Beyond that, it is hard to pin down. Without the rest of the original photograph, only the foliage hints at the

17. Detail: *Untitled (Hoarfrost)*, 1974, solvent transfer on fabric and collage with graphite, 77 ½ × 35 ½ inches (196.9 × 90.2 cm)

location. The two disorienting images of the helicopter in *Archive* might be unsettling, but not necessarily more so than the reiterated and ghostly views of beach umbrellas that appear nearby. Insofar as the image suggests the war in Vietnam, its meaning has never been fixed, because no consensus on the war has ever been reached. Contemporary viewers might have recognized the photograph from *Life*, but it did not bind them together. The picture offers a glimpse, a flash of recognition, that does not quite cohere as more than an impression. Rauschenberg emphasized this aspect of his chosen images in several ways: superimposition, degraded reiteration, disordered orientation, and painterly elision, to name but a few. The end results never put forth a pattern, not even a pattern of chance. He did not plan ways to make his paintings turn out as they did. He made heuristic decisions as he worked.

This raises the question of how we might understand the nature of such images as Rauschenberg used them. Iconographic conventions require a degree of stability and common agreement, which is absent both within his individual pieces and across his groups of works. This is not to say that iconographers cannot gain a foothold in his work, only that they either walk in circles or climb scaffolds of their own making. The helicopter as Rauschenberg used it neither quotes the original nor quotes itself with any kind of consistent intent or particular relevance. The source image appeared in print just as Rauschenberg was building a collection of screens. The image vanished from his work after he ordered this collection to be destroyed.[30] The photograph reached Rauschenberg as a depiction of distant events, entered his work as an aspect of his working process, and disappeared in a deliberate act of creative retrenchment. Rauschenberg's helicopter is not "about" Vietnam, mass publication, the fabrication process, the historical moment, or the trajectory of his career, even though it lived and died because of those things.

If the meaning of the helicopter evades us, the reason has something to do with the way we usually approach the creation of meaning. In most cases, where the intention is to deliver meaning clearly, it makes sense to treat signs as inert. We decode them, usually without much ado, and accept the result. Very complex constructions test our expectations as well as our capacity to do this. They might even cast doubt on the processes of reading and inscription themselves. Such doubt acknowledges the futility of trying to convey or receive something that makes complete, immutable sense. The alternative is a state of induced coherence in which everything fits—or rather, is made to fit—thereby providing an explanation. Either way, the assumptions rest on a straightforward belief: signs are made in order to mean something.

Rauschenberg, however, seldom intended to convey specific meanings. "I avoid images that are fixed," he said. "You get that and it is just illustration."[31] As a result, his works rest not on what signs mean, but on how they behave. This might begin with a comparatively straightforward change from one situation to another, a version of "matter in the wrong place" that art routinely exploits. In *Dry Cell (Silkscreen)* (1963; pp. 77–79), the frame of a folding camp stool migrates from floor to wall with a sheet of Plexiglas replacing the seat. The image of the helicopter shares the Plexiglas with part of a drawn cuboid. (Rauschenberg occasionally used the cuboid as a perspectival device to suggest spatial depth, which the screenprinting technique otherwise tended to suppress.) The Plexiglas allows the perspectival drawing, the undercarriage of the helicopter, and the frame of the stool to merge into a spatial hybrid.

Dry Cell is also a kinetic piece. It contains a sound sensor and a motor powered by a battery, the "dry cell" of the title. When the sensor detects ambient noise, a fragment of metal spins with an unnerving sound. The helicopter, which was merely unsettling in *Archive*, now seems actively threatening. It becomes part of the way *Dry Cell* behaves in response to stimuli. In turn, we respond to that behavior. The image of the helicopter does not do what it does elsewhere, because we see it differently.

18. An American H-21 helicopter hovering above soldiers in a combat zone during the Vietnam War, January, 1963

19. *Archive (Silkscreen Painting)*, 1963, oil and silkscreen ink on canvas, 84 x 60 inches (213.4 × 152.4 cm)

20. *Stop Side Early Winter Glut*, 1987, assembled metal, 43 ¼ × 46 × 34 inches (109.9 × 116.8 × 86.4 cm)

Our ability to see things differently allows inanimate objects to gain properties that we usually associate with living things. This is closely related to the process that breaks down the distinction between "objects" and "material." Our natural disposition toward objects, as toward images, is to consider them as whole entities complete in themselves and isolated in time. We take things as we find them, connected to us in the here and now. Although we know that matter changes as it passes through the digestive tract of industry and consumption, we seldom recognize that knowledge without cause to do so. Rauschenberg's handling of objects as material is one such cause.

Manufacturing converts energy and matter into coherent forms that enter the world, deteriorate, and become disordered residue. Several of Rauschenberg's series exploit this systemic disarray. His *Gluts* (1986–89, 1991–95; fig. 20) suspend the deterioration of rude clutter through a process of selection, isolation, and modification. In the aftermath of the mid-1980s Texas oil bust, Rauschenberg saw how economic blight translated into a landscape filled with junk. He rescued crumpled metal from its usual fate in the economic order, which is to be scrapped and recycled. An object near the end of its life usually returns to a state of material potential by losing its identity. In Rauschenberg's hands, objects became material but remained themselves.

This is also true of the cardboard boxes that Rauschenberg used extensively throughout the early 1970s. Their unity of surface and structure allowed him to draw on a range of formal behaviors in different works, from the most diagrammatic *Cardboards* to the classically sculptural *Early Egyptians*. Cardboard boxes are nearly universal, not simply because they are everywhere, but also because they form part of our common tactile and spatial experience. They eventually become detritus, the commercial counterpart to shed skin. "Detritus" is usually applied to mineral or organic debris, although the term "urban detritus" is familiar within and beyond discussions of Rauschenberg's practice.[32] The *Cardboards*, in particular, speak plainly about the boxes'

21. *Untitled (Cardboard)*, 1971, cardboard, 51 ¼ × 81 ½ × 6 ¾ inches (130 × 207 × 17.1 cm)

journey from purposeful containment to environmental litter. As with Rauschenberg's other favored materials, cardboard boxes retain their histories as objects in various physical states, even as they change from one state to another.

Changes of state are a prominent feature of Rauschenberg's work. Consider how he used fragments of rubber tires. They, too, are detritus from a coherent entity that has moved on or failed. Tires occasionally delaminate and leave strips of tread behind. Rauschenberg occasionally used full lengths of tread, as in *Untitled (Venetian)* (1973; fig. 22) and *The Interloper Tries His Disguises* (1982), from the *Kabal American Zephyr* series. Smaller chunks appear on the verso of *Sunflower Eclipse* (1981; pp. 178–81), while the recto contains transferred images of tire imprints. The formal versatility of the material stems from its inherent properties: heft, malleability, and distinctive molded patterns, all of which testify to the specialized role of the original object.

Pieces of tire tread are more than just the displaced residue of manufactured components. As we have seen, related objects, images, and processes appear under different conditions in Rauschenberg's work. We find tire tracks on the cardboard in *Untitled (Cardboard)* (1971; fig. 21), and also on twenty sheets of paper over which John Cage drove a Model A Ford (1953). The materials and arrangements betray the differences between these episodes of imprinting, suggesting casual disregard in one case and creative deliberation in the other. The tire in *Monogram* (1955–59; fig. 23) is in a state of arrested dissonance; the tires in the performance *Map Room II* (1965; fig. 24) are not. Similar things, in a similar configuration, perform differently in different contexts. In *Untitled (Late Kabal American Zephyr)* (1985; p. 177), Rauschenberg fixed three bicycle wheels in a vertical construction. A handle attached to the central wheel invites activation of the totemic arrangement. The wheel of the earth-moving equipment in *Untitled (Faux-Tapis)* (1995; fig. 25) acts as an industrial counterpoint to flowers, and as a visual clarification of their organic shapes. The forms of the

tree and the yellow vehicle seem poised to merge. One family of objects yields an inexhaustible supply of material and visual results.

This kind of proliferation binds distinct series and episodes together as an artistic career. In the *Spreads* (1975–83; see pp. 125–45), Rauschenberg wove together several strands from his own creative history. The *Spreads* possess the fullness, ad hoc physicality, and spatial projection of the Combine Paintings, but use stretched fabric as supports. They contain transferred images that refuse to propose a sustainable meaning. In *Coral Roe (Spread)* (1977; pp. 125–27), transfers from crumpled pages of newspaper appear with varying density on the panels and on the loop of fabric that stands perpendicular to them. The scraps of news are as legible as those in *Currents*, but are much less relentless. The mirrors and lights of *Tribal Quarterly (Spread)* (1977) recall the Combines, as well as Rauschenberg's sleek technological works of the late 1960s. Although they revisit aspects of earlier works, the *Spreads*, and the related *Scales* (1977–81), do not repeat the past. They present new circumstances in which things of the past behave differently.

The ecological fluidity of Rauschenberg's work has continually kept it fresh. In this environment of varied recapitulation, images, objects, materials, and motifs exhibit interrelated traits that attend those things but do not completely define them. Thinking of art as a living system calls for a willingness to suspend our literary habits of interpretation. Explanations of artistic change have often appealed to organic metaphors of ancestry and the life cycle to account for the development of careers, movements, and period styles. But these metaphors break down because of their limits: they tend toward closure, and they follow single paths. Artistic change is not finite. Nor is it linear, as with an organism or a genetic inheritance that thrives, then dies. Art is an open system, paradoxically incomplete and yet potentially as full as the world it addresses.

In 2003, an interviewer described Rauschenberg's work as "a mirror that reflects reality rather than a narcissistic mirror."[33] Straightforward reflection was too static and

22. *Untitled (Venetian)*, 1973, tire tread and wood, 27 ½ × 90 × 16 ½ inches (69.9 × 228.6 × 41.9 cm)

23. *Monogram (Combine)*, 1955–59, oil, paper, fabric, printed paper, printed reproductions, metal, wood, rubber shoe heel, and tennis ball on canvas with oil on an Angora goat and rubber tire on a wood platform mounted on casters, 42 × 63 ¼ × 64 ½ inches (106.7 × 160.7 × 163.8 cm)

24. Alex Hay (in tires) with Steve Paxton and Deborah Hay performing *Map Room II*, 1965

limiting for Rauschenberg. He fostered the indeterminate reciprocity of life, the tangle of energetic relationships in which marks, actions, and states of matter find an ever-changing equilibrium. He introduced strains from the outside world into his preferred fields of creative practice, let them take root, and let them live.

Rauschenberg made more than six thousand works of art during his lifetime. It is a generous legacy, made all the more altruistic by its refusal to pass into history as something understood literally, as something drained of life. As we look, talk, act, and think in relation to the work, we assert our own places within a world that our explanations cannot exhaust or saturate. It is a profoundly egalitarian world. "I'm for 'yes,'" Rauschenberg told readers of *People Weekly*. "'No' excludes. I'm for inclusion."[34] There is always room in that full circle.

25. *Untitled (Faux Tapis)*, 1995, fabric on two bonded-aluminum panels, 128 ½ × 121 inches (326.4 × 307.3 cm)

NOTES

1. Robert Rauschenberg and Donald Saff, "A Conversation about Art and ROCI," in *ROCI: Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1991), p. 179.

2. Rauschenberg, quoted in Calvin Tomkins, *Off the Wall: Robert Rauschenberg and the Art of Our Time* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), p. 288.

3. Barbara Rose, *Rauschenberg: An Interview with Robert Rauschenberg* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), p. 96.

4. Ibid.

5. Aidan Salakhova recounts the events that led to Rauschenberg's inclusion in the Soviet Pavilion following *From Rauschenberg to Us, From Us to Rauschenberg*, a group exhibition at the First Gallery, Moscow, in 1989; "Aidan Salakhova in Conversation with Julia Maniskalko," in *Aidan Salakhova*, exh. cat. (Baku: Foundation Art ex East, 2009), p. 21. For an account of ROCI/USSR and an assessment of official Soviet attitudes toward Rauschenberg, see Pamela Kachurin, "The ROCI Road to Peace: Robert Rauschenberg, Perestroika, and the End of the Cold War," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4, no. 1 (Winter 2002), pp. 27–43.

6. Rauschenberg, quoted in Barbara Gamarekian, "Rauschenberg Carrying His Art to Many Lands," *New York Times*, August 3, 1985, p. 9.

7. Paul Richard, "Apollo 11 as an Art Form," *Washington Post*, October 30, 1970, p. B1.

8. Sigmund Freud, "Character and Anal Erotism" (1908), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey, vol. 9, *Jensen's "Gradiva" and Other Works* (London: Hogarth Press, 1959), p. 173. The idea was not new. In July 1851, the British foreign secretary (and later prime minister) Lord Palmerston said during a speech, "I have heard it said that dirt is nothing but a thing in the wrong place." John Charles Bucknill referred to Palmerston's comment in an address to psychologists in 1877. See Tom Crook, "Putting Matter in Its Right Place: Dirt, Time and Regeneration in Mid-Victorian Britain," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 13, no. 2 (Autumn 2008), p. 202; and John Charles Bucknill, "An Address Delivered at the Opening of the Section of Psychology, at the Annual Meeting of the British Medical Association," *British Medical Journal*, August 11, 1877, p. 187.

9. Rauschenberg, "Tobago Statement," in *ROCI: Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange*, p. 154. The same line is in the text of his speech announcing ROCI at the United Nations; "Robert Rauschenberg Speech at the United Nations, December 13, 1984," p. 3, Robert Rauschenberg archives, New York. Soon after he began to speak, he deviated from this text and extemporized.

10. Mario Codognato and Mirta d'Argenzio, "Interview with Robert Rauschenberg," in Julia Blaut and Susan Davidson, *Rauschenberg*, exh. cat. (Ferrara: Palazzo dei Diamanti, 2004), p. 95.

11. Rauschenberg and Saff, "A Conversation," p. 179.

12. Rose, *Rauschenberg*, p. 75.

13. See Branden W. Joseph, "The Gap and the Frame," *October* 117 (Summer 2006), pp. 58, 62–63. On the relationship between Abstract Expressionism and photography, see also David Anfam, *Abstract Expressionism—A World Elsewhere*, exh. cat. (New York: Haunch of Venison, 2008), pp. 11–12.

14. Harold Rosenberg, "Icon Maker: Barnett Newman," in *The De-definition of Art* (New York: Collier Books, 1973), p. 91. See also James Lawrence, "New Information on Barnett Newman's Exhibition History, 1948–52," *Burlington Magazine* 150, no. 1264 (July 2008), pp. 473–77.

15. Rauschenberg, interview by Billy Klüver, in Billy Klüver, ed., *On Record: 11 Artists 1963* (New York: Experiments in Art and Technology, 1981), p. 42.

16. Leo Steinberg, "Month in Review," *Arts* 30, no. 4 (January 1956), p. 47.

17. Anne Massey, "The Independent Group: Towards a Redefinition," *Burlington Magazine* 129, no. 1009 (April 1987), pp. 232–42.

18. The photograph was by Ralph Morse. It appeared in "Head Over Heels for What's Out There," *Life*, September 27, 1963, p. 38. I thank Colin Fries of NASA for his assistance in identifying the photographer.

19. Carol Vogel, "The Robert Rauschenberg Reunion Tour," *New York Times*, December 18, 2005, p. A38.

20. Rauschenberg, "Random Order," *Location 1*, no. 1 (Spring 1963), pp. 28–29. Original punctuation and spelling have been retained.

21. Willem de Kooning, "Content Is a Glimpse . . . " *Location 1*, no. 1 (Spring 1963), p. 47. The text as published in *Location* is reprinted in *Willem de Kooning: A Centennial Exhibition*, exh. cat. (New York: Gagosian Gallery, 2004), pp. 49–52. For the full interview, see David Sylvester, *Interviews with American Artists* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 43–57.

22. Maurice Carroll, "Fire Damages Rauschenberg Art Here," *New York Times*, October 26, 1969, p. 79.

23. Rose, *Rauschenberg*, p. 124.

24. Dorothy Gees Seckler, oral history interview with Robert Rauschenberg, December 21, 1965, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. The main exceptions to this principle were the prints that Rauschenberg produced for advocacy groups and social awareness programs. In such cases, the imagery bolstered the intended message.

25. Rose, *Rauschenberg*, p. 114.

26. George P. Hunt, "Editor's Note: He Went Off to War with Film in His Socks," *Life*, January 25, 1963, p. 5. Hunt noted that no previous war had been "thoroughly and satisfactorily photographed in color."

27. "Vietnam War—In Color," *Life*, January 25, 1963, pp. 22–33. Most of the photographs appeared in the main section of the article, under the heading "We Wade Deeper into Jungle War."

28. Jacques Nevard, "U.S. 'Copter Units Arrive in Saigon," *New York Times*, December 12, 1961, p. 21.

29. See Rose, *Rauschenberg*, p. 78.

30. To ensure that he would avoid repeating himself, Rauschenberg ordered the destruction of the screens in his studio after he won the Biennale prize in 1964; Tomkins, *Off the Wall*, p. 235.

31. Rose, *Rauschenberg*, p. 114.

32. Rosalind Krauss, "Perpetual Inventory," in Walter Hopps and Susan Davidson, eds., *Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective*, exh. cat. (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1997), p. 207.

33. Mirta d'Argenzio, in Codognato and d'Argenzio, "Interview with Robert Rauschenberg," p. 98.

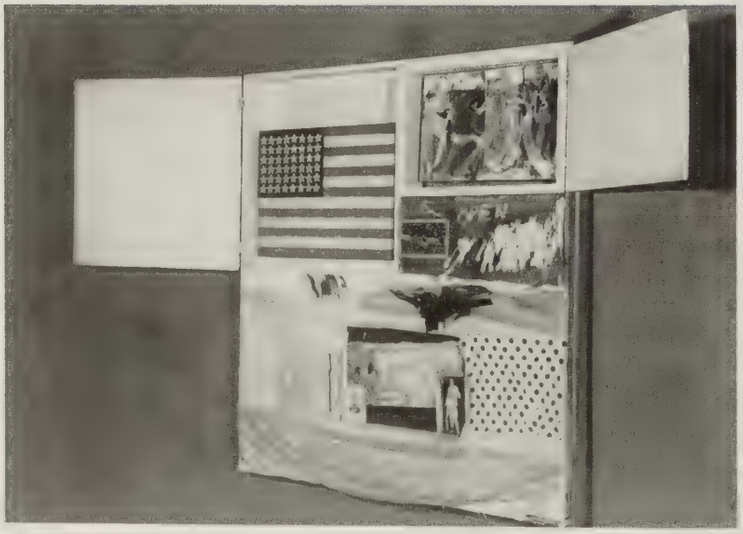
34. Patricia Burstein, "In His Art and Life, Robert Rauschenberg Is a Man Who Steers His Own Daring Course," *People Weekly*, May 19, 1980, p. 100.

Rauschenberg in his Pearl Street studio, New York, 1958

PLATES

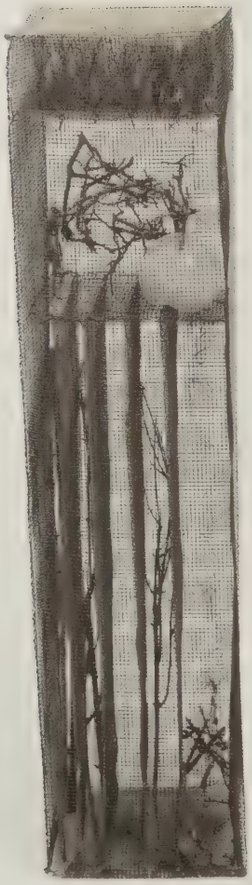
SHORT CIRCUIT (COMBINE PAINTING), 1955
Oil, fabric, and paper on wood supports and cabinet with two hinged doors containing a painting by Susan Weil and a reproduction of a Jasper Johns *Flag* painting by Elaine Sturtevant, 40 ¾ × 37 ½ × 4 ¼ inches (103.5 × 95.3 × 10.8 cm)


OPEN

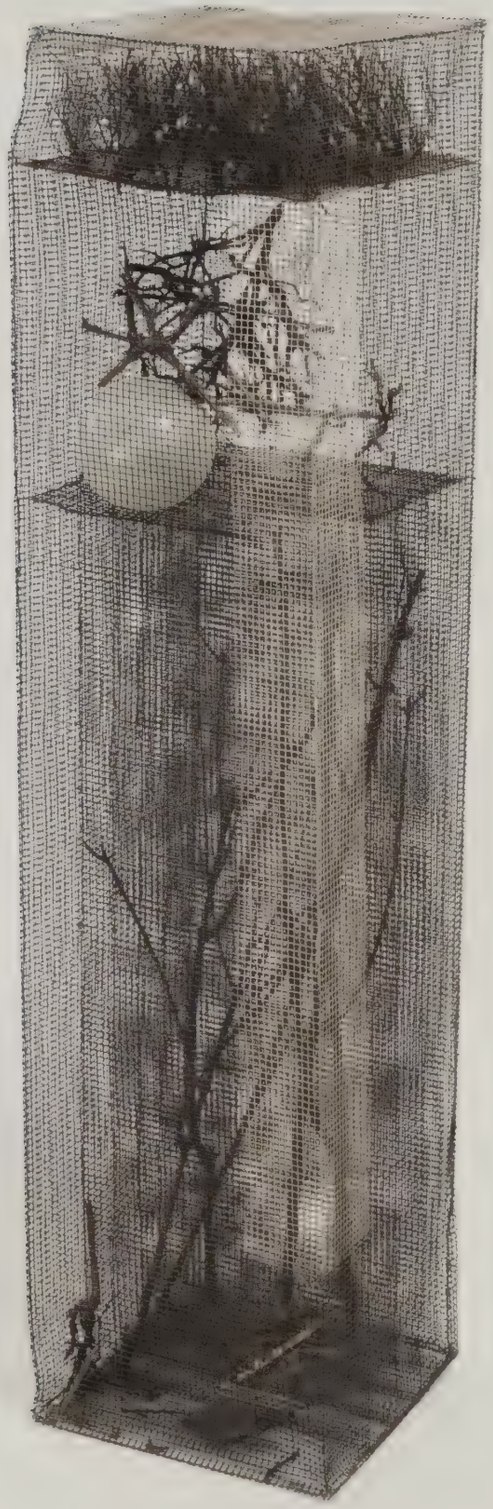


Short Circuit including the original Jasper John's *Flag* painting

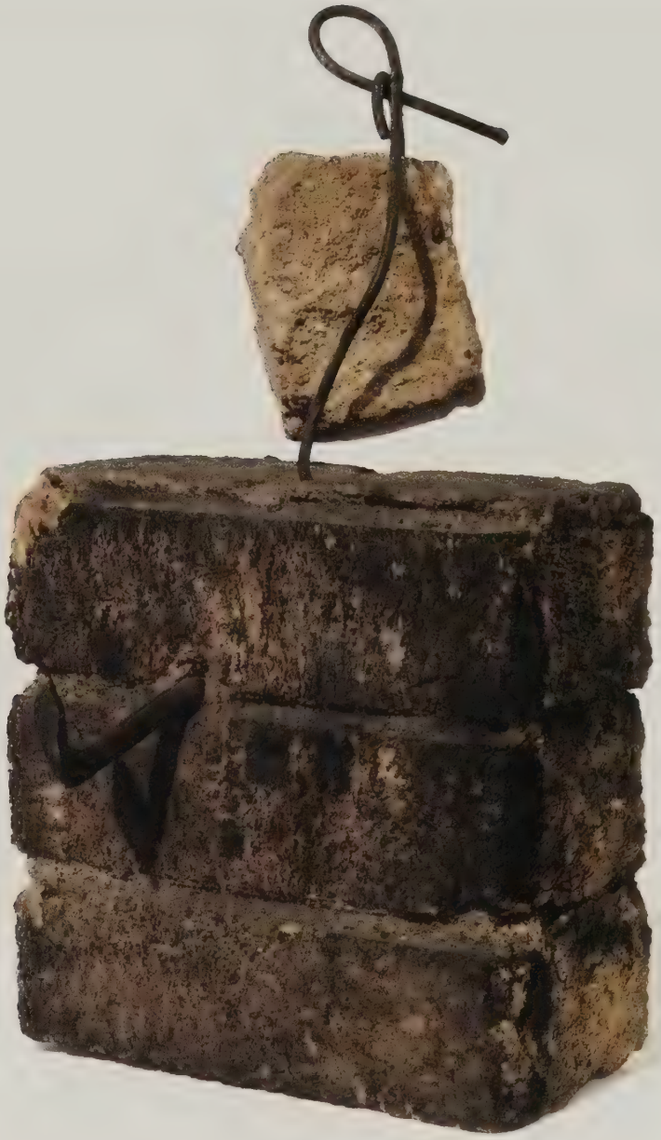

OPEN



GREENHOUSE (COMBINE), 1950
Wire mesh, twigs, wire, paint, glass globe, and glass shards, 54 × 12 × 12 inches (137.2 × 30.5 × 30.5 cm)



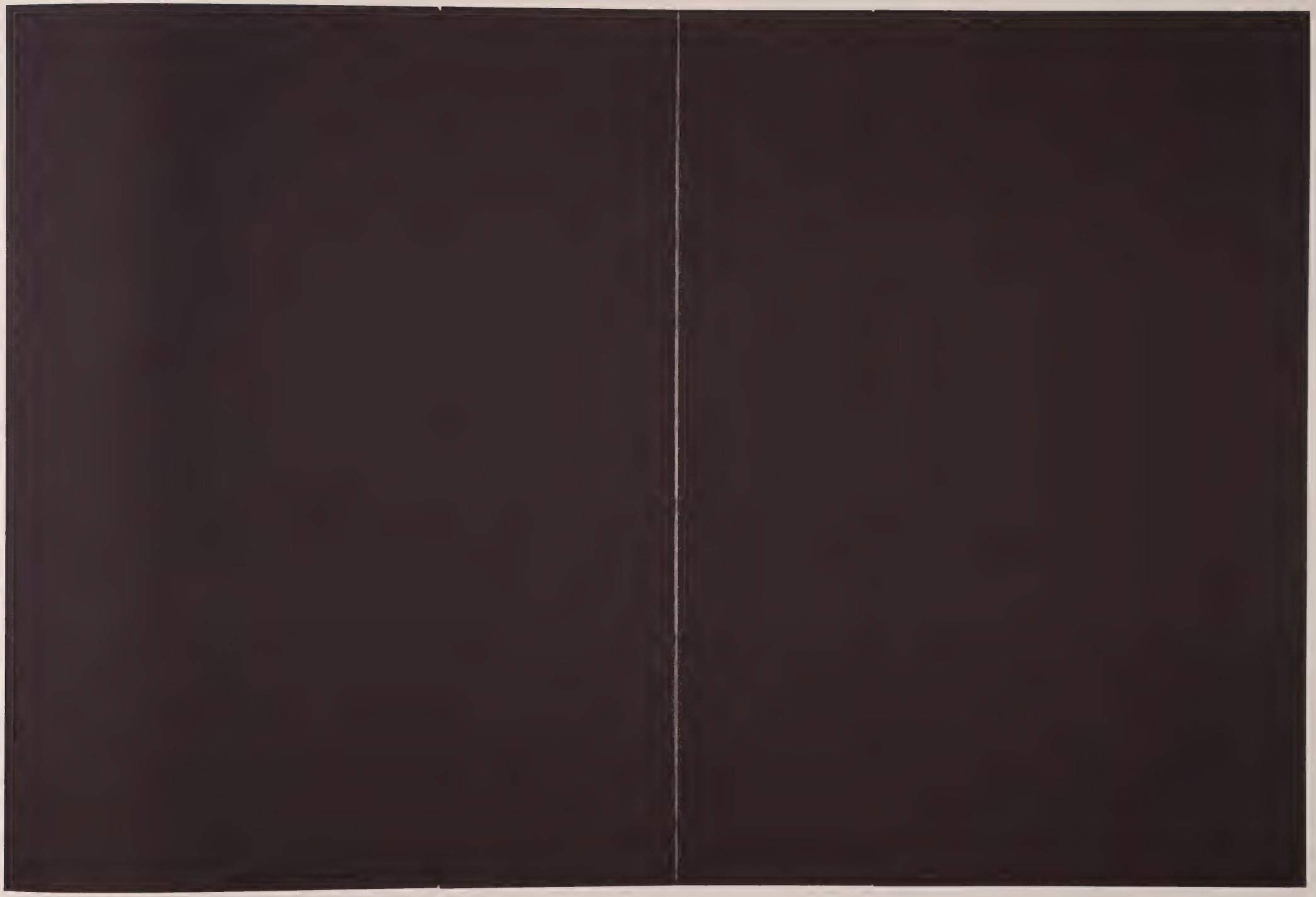
UNTITLED (ELEMENTAL SCULPTURE), ca. 1953
Bricks, mortar, metal rods, and concrete. 14 ¼ × 8 × 7 ¾ inches (36.2 × 20.3 × 19.7 cm)



UNTITLED (ELEMENTAL SCULPTURE), ca. 1953
Wood block and iron spike, 10 7/8 × 3 1/8 × 2 7/8 inches (27.6 × 7.9 × 7.3 cm)

Rauschenberg in his exhibition at Stable Gallery, NY, 1953

WHITE PAINTING, 1951
Oil on canvas, in two parts, 72 × 96 inches (182.9 × 243.8 cm)



UNTITLED (MATTE BLACK TRIPTYCH), ca. 1961

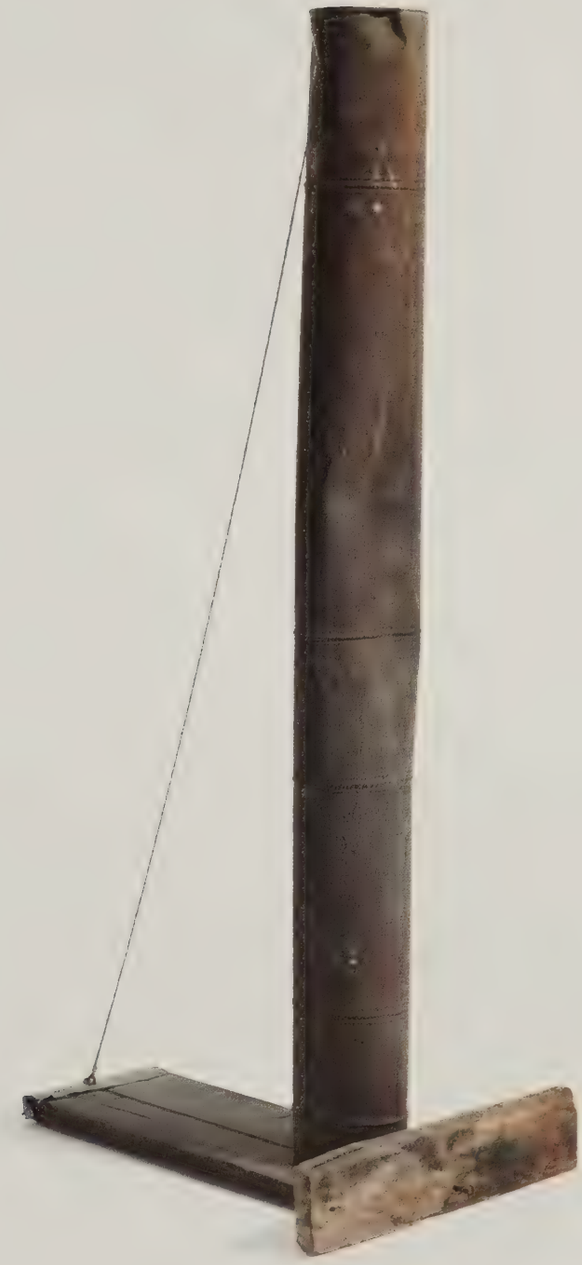
THREE TRAPS FOR MEDEA (COMBINE), 1959
Oil, paper, fabric, metal, and glass bottle on wood with fabric, metal, string, hair, and plumb bob on wire, 24 × 26 × 15 inches (61 × 66 × 38.1 cm)

Exhibition including *Trophy IV (for John Cage) (Combine)* (left), *Aen Floga (Combine Painting)* (center), and *Blue Eagle (Combine Painting)* (right) (all 1961) at Leo Castelli, NY, 1961

AEN FLOGA (COMBINE PAINTING), 1961
Oil on canvas with wood, metal, and wire, 73 × 50 × 13 ¾ inches (185.4 × 127 × 34.9 cm)

MAROTT

THE BELL (COMBINE), 1961
Wood, metal, rock, and string, 43 × 20 ½ × 14 inches (109.2 × 52.1 × 35.6 cm)



DYLABY (COMBINE PAINTING), 1962
Oil, metal objects, metal spring, metal Coca-Cola sign, ironing board, and twine on unstretched canvas tarp on wood support,
109 ½ × 87 × 15 inches (278.1 × 221 × 38.1 cm)


NK
Coca-Cola
OVERA ALT ID

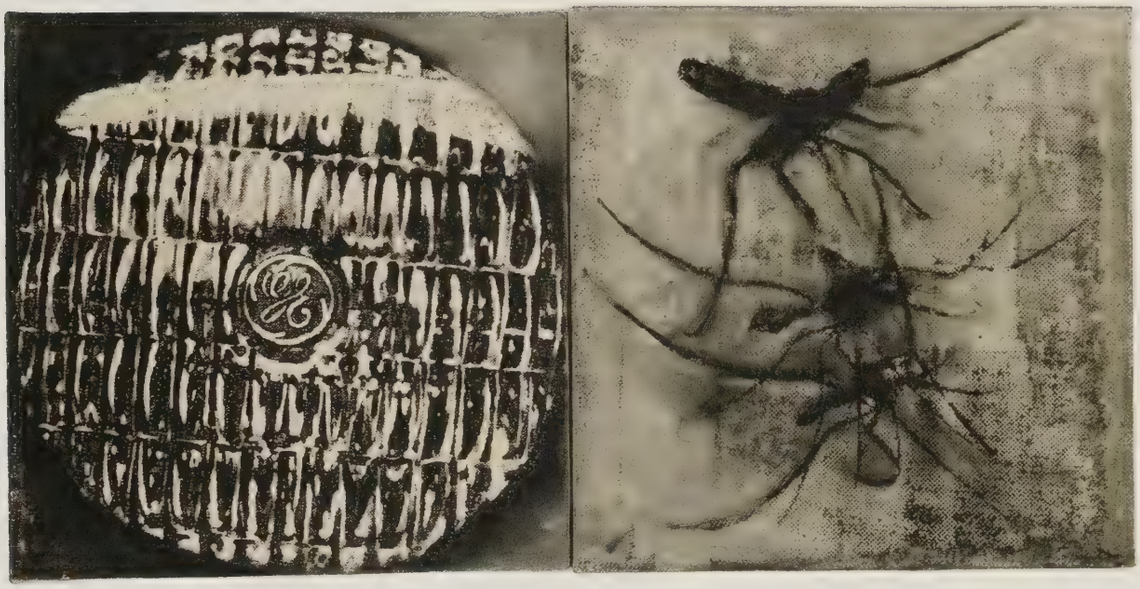

NK

Rauschenberg's room for *Dylaby (Dynamisch Labyrinth)*, a group exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, including an earlier version of *Dylaby (Combine Painting)*, 1962

ART BOX (COMBINE PAINTING), 1963
Oil on wood crate and paper with enameled telephone sign, Plexiglas, and wing nuts, 31 × 16 ½ × 12 ¾ inches (78.7 × 41.9 × 32.4 cm)


PUBLIC
BELL SYSTEM
TELEPHONE

UNTITLED (SILKSCREEN PAINTING), 1962
Oil and silkscreen ink on canvas, in two parts, 8 × 16 inches (20.3 × 40.6 cm)



DRY CELL (SILKSCREEN), 1963
Silkscreen ink and oil on Plexiglas, with metal coat hanger, wire, string, sound transmitter, circuit board, and battery-powered motor on metal folding camp stool, 15 × 12 × 15 inches, (38.1 × 30.5 × 38.1 cm)

ARMY

1.5 VOLTS
DURA

UNTITLED (SILKSCREEN PAINTING), 1964
Oil and silkscreen ink on canvas, 37 × 46 ⅛ inches (94 × 117.2 cm)

Rauschenberg in front of Nabisco Shredded Wheat (Cardboard), in his Captiva studio, FL, 1971

NABISCO SHREDDED WHEAT (CARDBOARD), 1971
Cardboard, 70 × 95 × 11 inches (177.8 × 241.3 × 27.9 cm)

ANCHOR/FEDERAL/TUMBLER (CARDBOARD), 1971
Cardboard, 92 ¾ × 78 ½ × 8 ½ inches (235.6 × 199.4 × 26.1 cm)

6 814-12 OZ.
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UNTITLED (VENETIAN), 1973
Cardboard, burlap, and resin, 44 × 130 × 15 inches (111.8 × 261.6 × 38.1 cm)

CAPTIVA
G. I. C.

UNTITLED (VENETIAN), 1973
Cardboard, burlap, and resin, 44 × 130 × 15 inches (111.8 × 261.6 × 38.1 cm)


CAPTIVA

UNTITLED (VENETIAN), 1973
Cardboard, wood branch, and lace curtain, 93 ×29 ×108 inches (236.2 × 73.7 × 274.3 cm)

Exhibition including *Untitled (Venetian)* at Leo Castelli, NY

[illegible] Photograph, 1971, in the National Collection of Fine Arts, [illegible] American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., 1976

Rauschenberg working on *Early Egyptians* in his Captiva studio, FL, 1979

UNTITLED (EARLY EGYPTIAN), 1973
Cardboard, sand, Day-Glo paint, bicycle, fabric, twine, and metal bucket on wood stand, 155 ½ × 203 × 47 inches (395 × 515.6 × 119.4 cm)

UNTITLED (EARLY EGYPTIAN), 1973
Cardboard, sand, Day-Glo paint, bicycle, fabric, twine, and metal bucket on wood stand, 155 ½ × 203 × 47 inches (395 × 515.6 × 119.4 cm)

UNTITLED (EARLY EGYPTIAN), 1974
Cardboard, sand, Day-Glo paint, spoked wheels, pillow, and hose, 80 ¼ × 78 × 36 inches (203.8 × 198.1 × 91.4 cm)

JETTY (HOARFROST), 1975
Solvent transfer on fabric, cardboard, and paper bag, 64 ½ × 40 ½ inches (163.8 × 102.9 cm)

SULPHUR BANK (HOARFROST), 1974
Solvent transfer on fabric, cardboard, and paper bag, 65 × 35 inches (165.1 × 88.9 cm)


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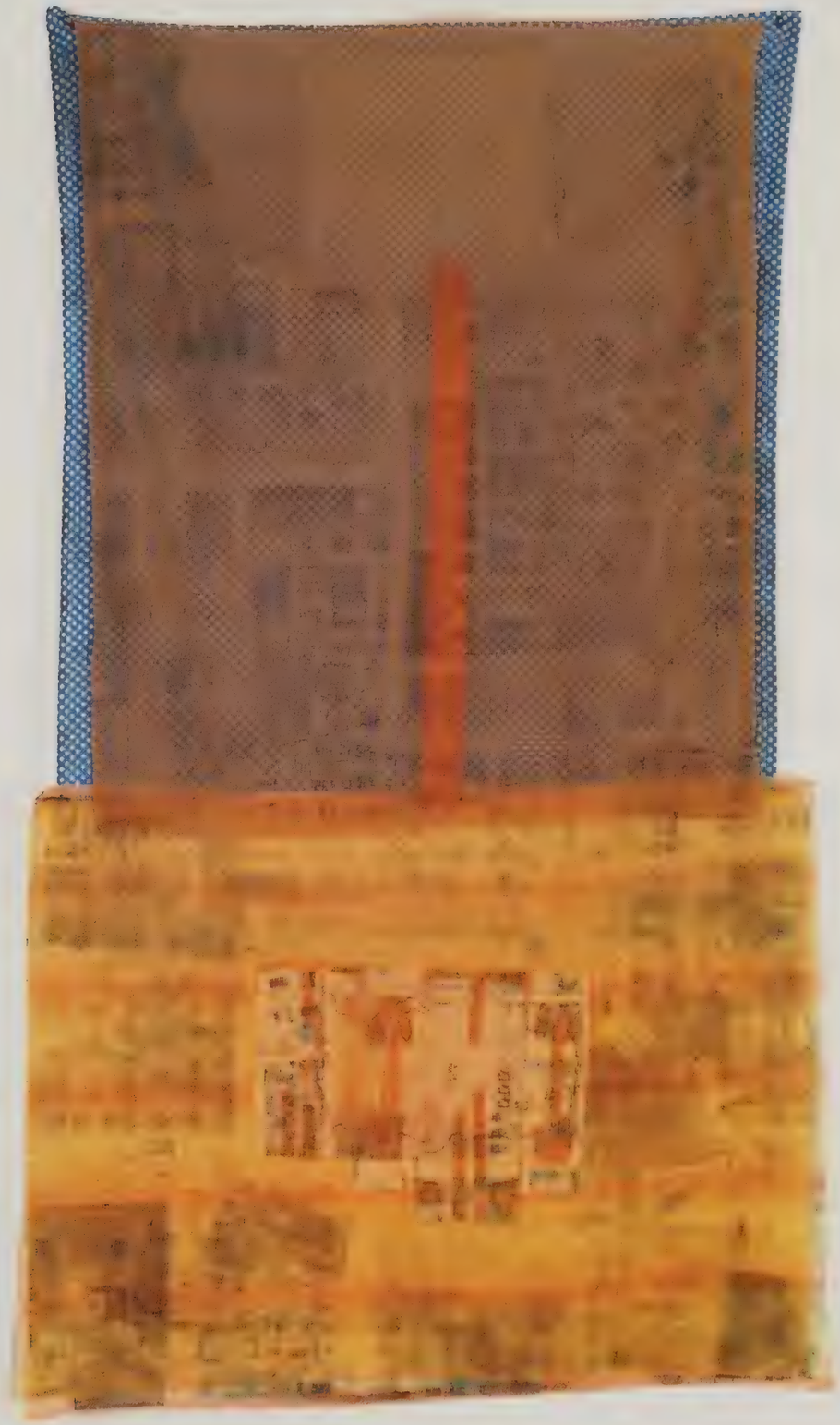
HONEYMOON (HOARFROST), 1974
Solvent transfer and collage on fabric with rope, 88 × 46 inches (223.5 × 116.8 cm)

Rauschenberg in front of a work from the *Hoarfrost* series, 1975

UNTITLED (HOARFROST), 1975
Solvent transfer on silk fabric, and collaged cardboard, 84 ½ × 49 ½ inches (214.6 × 125.7 cm)

UNTITLED (HOARFROST), 1974
Solvent transfer on fabric and collage with graphite, 77 ½ × 35 ½ inches (196.9 × 90.2 cm)



JACKPOT (JAMMER), 1975
Fabric collage and wood, 74 ½ × 60 ¼ inches (189.2 × 153 cm)

PILOT (JAMMER), 1976
Sewn fabric, rattan pole, and string, 81 × 85 × 39 inches (206 × 216 × 100 cm)

UNTITLED (JAMMER), 1976
Fabric-covered rattan pole with painted and collaged tin cans and string, 110 inches (279.4 cm) tall; width and depth variable

VOW (JAMMER), 1976
Sewn fabric and rattan pole, 84 ½ × 40 × 19 ½ inches (214.6 × 101.6 × 49.5 cm)

CORAL ROE (SPREAD), 1977
Solvent transfer, acrylic, fabric, and graphite on wood panels with fabric and dowels, 85 × 180 × 55 ¾ inches (215.9 × 457.2 × 141.6 cm)

CORAL ROE (SPREAD), 1977
Solvent transfer, acrylic, fabric, and graphite on wood panels with fabric and dowels, 85 × 180 × 55 ¾ inches (215.9 × 457.2 × 141.6 cm)

PALLADIAN XMAS (SPREAD), 1980
Solvent transfer, acrylic, and collage on wood panel, 74 ¼ × 133 ¾ × 7 ½ inches (186.6 × 339.7 × 19.1 cm)

Exhibition including *Melic Meeting (Spread)*, (1979, left) and *Mongolian Cousin (Spread)*, (1980, right) at Leo Castelli, NY, 1980

MELIC MEETING (SPREAD), 1979
Mixed media, including solvent transfer on fabric collage, and mirror, 96 × 132 × 14 inches (243.8 × 335.3 × 35.6 cm)

Exhibition including *Melic Meeting (Spread)*, (1979, left) and *Mongolian Cousin (Spread)*, (1980, right) at Leo Castelli, NY, 1980

MELIC MEETING (SPREAD), 1979
Mixed media, including solvent transfer on fabric collage, and mirror, 96 × 132 × 14 inches (243.8 × 335.3 × 35.6 cm)

VILLA
MODE

BUNK (SPREAD), 1981
Solvent transfer, acrylic, and collage on wood panel, 96 ½ × 92 inches (245.1 × 233.7 cm)

TANTRIC RIDDLE (SPREAD), 1981
Solvent transfer, acrylic, and collage on wood panel, 96 × 92 × 5 inches (243.8 × 233.7 × 12.7 cm)

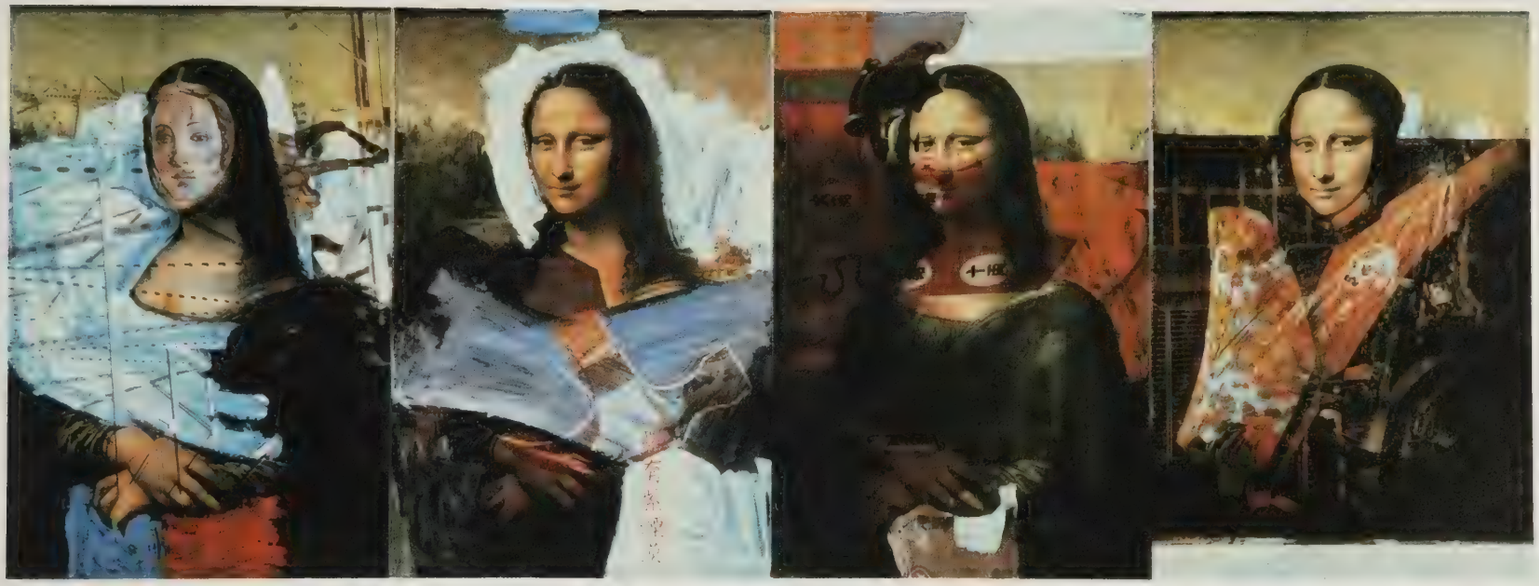
Rauschenberg working on *Untitled (Spread)*, 1983

UNTITLED (SPREAD), 1983
Solvent transfer, acrylic, and collage on wood panel with umbrellas, 74 ¼ × 96 ¾ × 35 inches (188.6 × 245.7 × 88.9 cm)

Rauschenberg working on *Untitled (Spread)*, 1983

UNTITLED (SPREAD), 1983
Solvent transfer, acrylic, and collage on wood panel with umbrellas, 74 ¼ × 96 ¾ × 35 inches (188.6 × 245.7 × 88.9 cm)

PNEUMONIA LISA (JAPANESE RECREATIONAL CLAYWORK), 1982
Transfer on high-fired Japanese art ceramic, 32 ¼ × 86 ½ inches (81.9 × 219.7 cm)



ALL ABORDELLO DOZE 2 (JAPANESE RECREATIONAL CLAYWORK), 1982
Transfer on high-fired Japanese art ceramic, 53 ⅛ × 52 ½ inches (134.9 × 133.4 cm)

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羅有紫煙

INDEX (JAPANESE CLAYWORK), 1985
Transfer on high-fired Japanese art ceramic, 89 1/4 × 63 5/8 inches (226.7 × 161.6 cm)

ROLLINGS (SALVAGE), 1984
Acrylic and collage on canvas, in two parts, 152 × 155 ½ inches (386.1 × 395 cm)

980
1600
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3660
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1475 MINI
1600 MAXI
RODÉO A.C.L.

ROLLINGS (SALVAGE), 1984
Acrylic and collage on canvas, in two parts, 152 × 155 ½ inches (386.1 × 395 cm)

Supériorité - Régularité
PARIS-BORDEAUX
VOITURETTES
4 Partants - 4 Arrivées
RENAULT Frères
RENAULT Frères
RODEO A.C.L.

Installation of *Robert Rauschenberg, Work from Four Series: A Sesquicentennial Exhibition*, Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, TX, 1985–86

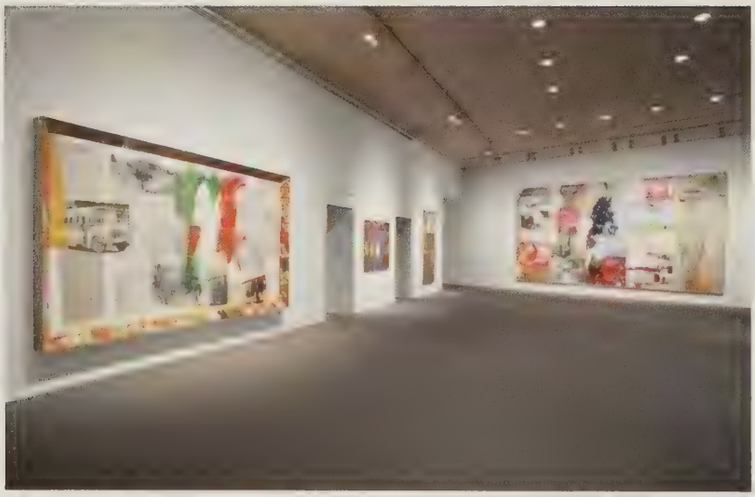
ANDY BOY POLKA (BIFOCAL), 1982
Solvent transfer, acrylic, and collage on cardboard, 77 ½ × 25 ¼ inches (196.9 × 64.1 cm)


ANDY BOY
WRAPPED LETTUCE
HEADS WRAPPED LETTUCE
18 24 30 36
ANDY BOY
WRAPPED LETTUCE
C583
COOLED
UNDER REFRIGERATION
ANDY BOY
WRAPPED LETTUCE
TEST CONTAINER
SP-79-29
WX-415
AGRI-PAK

UNTITLED (BIFOCAL), 1982
Collage on cardboard, 33 ¼ × 30 ¼ inches (84.5 × 76.8 cm)


24 6 PACK TRAYS
34000 ITEM 40204
Reese's
PEANUT BUTTER CUPS
COVERED WITH MILK CHOCOLATE
7K2A0
7KAC0
Ship to:

RAINBOW HARP (ROCI TIBET), 1984
Fabric, metal rings, and wire on aluminum stand with animal skull and turquoise, 119 ¾ × 102 × 8 inches (302.3 × 259.1 × 20.3 cm)



ROCI exhibition including *Mexican Canary (ROCI Mexico)* (left), *Copperhead Bite III (ROCI Chile)* (center left), *Copperhead Chica (ROCI Chile)* (center right), and *Caryatid Cavalcade I (ROCI Chile)* (right) (all 1985) at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1991

MEXICAN CANARY (ROCI MEXICO), 1985
Acrylic and collage on canvas with metal frame, 80 ⅜ × 150 ¾ inches (204.2 × 382.9 cm)


LOTERIA NACIONAL
LISTA OFICIAL DE PREMIOS
SORTEO MAYOR 2262
CON PREMIO PRINCIPAL DE: $ 5
CONSTANDO ESTE SORTEO DE 5 SERIES, EL POSEEDOR DEL BILLETE COMPLETO
NUMEROS - PREMIOS
CENTENAS
$ 150,000
$ 75,000
Asistencia Pública
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29 MIL
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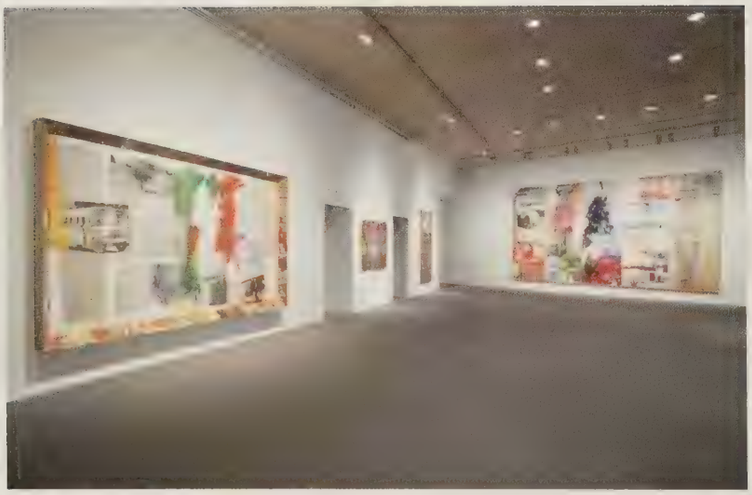

ROCI exhibition including *Mexican Canary (ROCI Mexico)* (left), *Copperhead Bite III (ROCI Chile)* (center left), *Copperhead Chica (ROCI Chile)* (center right), and *Caryatid Cavalcade I (ROCI Chile)* (right) (all 1985) at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1991

MEXICAN CANARY (ROCI MEXICO), 1985
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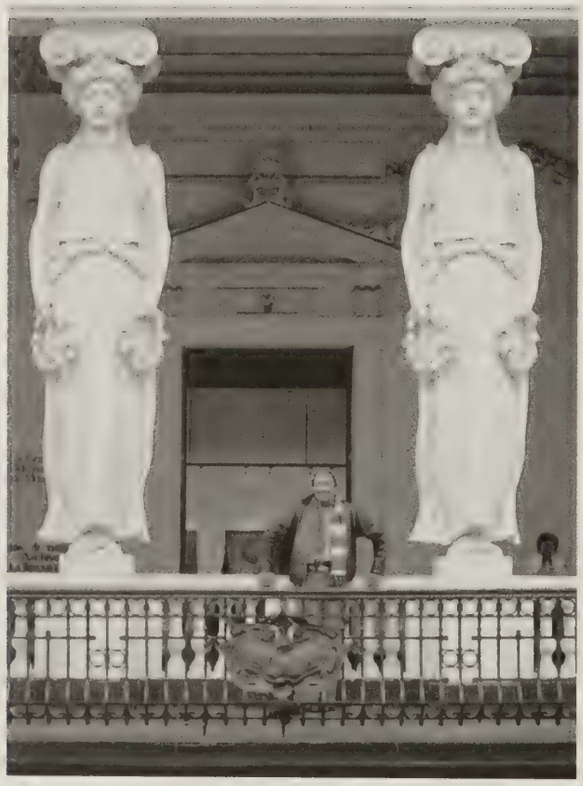

Rauschenberg traveling in Chile during ROCI, 1985

CARYATID CAVALCADE II (ROCI CHILE), 1985
Acrylic on canvas, 138 ½ × 260 ¾ inches (351.8 × 662.3 cm)


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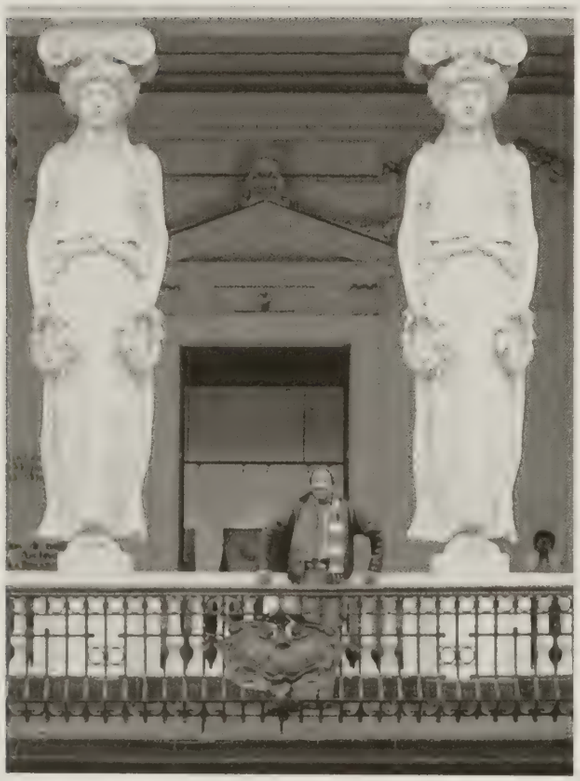

Rauschenberg traveling in Chile during ROCI, 1985

CARYATID CAVALCADE II (ROCI CHILE), 1985
Acrylic on canvas, 138 ½ × 260 ¾ inches (351.8 × 662.3 cm)

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CONSERJ
MAYORDOM

PETRIFIED RELIC FROM THE GYRO CLINIC (KABAL AMERICAN ZEPHYR), 1981
Metal table with metal wheel, rule, and duct, 42 × 19 ½ × 46 inches (106.7 × 49.5 × 116.8 cm)

UNTITLED (KABAL AMERICAN ZEPHYR), 1983
Metal chair with metal object and advertising thermometer, 73 × 20 × 24 inches (185.4 × 50.8 × 61 cm)


DRINK
ROYAL CROWN
COLA
BEST BY TASTE TEST

UNTITLED (LATE KABAL AMERICAN ZEPHYR), 1985
Rubber cycle wheels on metal structure with hand crank, 73.5 × 24 × 28 inches (186.7 × 61 × 71.1 cm)

SUNFLOWER ECLIPSE (KABAL AMERICAN ZEPHYR), 1981
Solvent transfer, acrylic, and collage on aluminum with wood. 72 ¾ × 78 × 18 ½ inches (184.8 × 198.1 × 47 cm)

UNTITLED, 1987
Shoeshine stand with mirror and mirrored Plexiglas, 24 ½ × 26 × 15 inches (62.2 × 66 × 38.1 cm)

Rauschenberg working on the *Bonesh* series, 1989

CROSSINGS (BOREALIS), 1990
Tarnishes on brass, 72 ¾ × 96 ¾ inches (184.8 × 245.7 cm)

BOWERY PARADE (BOREALIS), 1989
Acrylic and tarnishes on brass, 72 ¾ × 72 ¾ inches (184.8 × 184.8 cm)

UNTITLED (BOREALIS), 1991
Acrylic and tarnishes on brass, 120 ¾ × 48 ¾ inches (306.7 × 123.8 cm)


STOP
PRIVATE
PROPERTY
NO TRESPASSING

SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE (NIGHT SHADE), 1991
Tarnishes on brushed aluminum, 61 × 49 inches (154.9 × 124.5 cm)

SCORE XXII (OFF KILTER KEYS), 1993
Acrylic and enamel on aluminum, 96 ⅜ × 45 ⅛ × 21 ½ inches (244.8 × 114.6 × 54.6 cm)

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UNTITLED, 1995
Glass jar and lid with ivory-handled magnifying glass and silver chain, 9 × 5 × 5 inches (22.9 × 12.7 × 12.7 cm)

Rauschenberg working on *Arcadian Retreats* in his studio, Captiva, FL, 1996.

COURIER (ARCADIAN RETREAT), 1996
Fresco, 74 ½ × 38 ½ inches (189.2 × 97.7 cm)

CONTEST (ARCADIAN RETREAT), 1996
Fresco, 74 ½ × 38 ½ inches (189.2 × 97.7 cm)


MERDAL
İŞ MERKEZİ

OASIS (SCENARIOS), 2003
Pigment transfer on polylaminate, 85 ½ × 120 ½ inches (217.2 × 306.1 cm)

OASIS (SCENARIOS), 2003
Pigment transfer on polylaminate, 85 ½ × 120 ½ inches (217.2 × 306.1 cm)


WATER TRUCK

WATCHDOG, 2007
Rusted metal buckets on mirrored aluminum composite base, 13 × 96 × 14 inches (33 × 243.8 × 35.6 cm)


No. 36
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22.7 KG

WATCHDOG, 2007
Rusted metal buckets on mirrored aluminum composite base, 13 × 96 × 14 inches (33 × 243.8 × 35.6 cm)

UNTITLED (RUNTS), 2007
Pigment transfer on polylaminate, 61 × 73 ½ inches (154.9 × 186.7 cm)


A&W
TACO
BELL

Rauschenberg in a junkyard, Naples, Italy, 1986

Rauschenberg, 1997

RAUSCHENBERG'S EPIC VISION

JOHN RICHARDSON

This essay was originally written for the September issue of *Vanity Fair*, on the occasion of the celebrated exhibition *Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective* at the Guggenheim Museum in New York. It has been edited for this publication by John Richardson.

The word that best describes Robert Rauschenberg's achievements as a painter, printmaker, photographer, sculptor, theater designer, performance artist, and technologist is "epic." According to my dictionary, it means "heroic and impressive in quality" and surpassing the "usual or ordinary in scope or size." What better way to describe the only artist of our time who addressed major themes of worldwide concern without bombast or cant or an aesthetic or political agenda, and who did so by utilizing technology in ever more imaginative and inventive ways? Rauschenberg was a painter of history—the history of the present rather than the past—and it is in this light that we should approach any retrospective consideration of his collective oeuvre.

During the last four decades of his life, Rauschenberg lived on Captiva, off the coast of Fort Myers, Florida. Studios full of the latest technological equipment enabled him to work on projects that were monumental in concept as well as scale. One of his few unfulfilled dreams was to photograph the world in its entirety, big as life. His only fear was that he might "run out of world."

In 1997, not having seen Rauschenberg in well over a decade, I flew to Fort Myers. Thanks to a hurricane, I arrived at dawn instead of dusk—a blessing. Eddies of mist veiled the bridges leading to the island, and the shallow waters of the Gulf of Mexico were as still as a Venetian lagoon. To the right and left were distant smudges that might or might not have been islands, faint silhouettes of chugging boats, a beacon flashing on and off, seabirds circling in formation. When we reached the first island, Sanibel, the scene became even more like one of Rauschenberg's recent *Anagrams*. There was a blur of neon, rusty road signs, a construction site coming to life, a hoarding with the lights still on. The hoarding reminded me of this artist's down-to-earth device for brightening the light in a painting: plug an electric bulb into it and switch it on. Soon the lights went off, the sun came up, and I arrived at Rauschenberg's domain.

Given the extent to which his work exploits the messiness of everyday life, the pristine tidiness of his surroundings—spotless white surfaces in vast, sparsely filled spaces—came as a surprise. Likewise the large TV sets, which were permanently on in every room. Rauschenberg worked, ate, and, for all I knew, slept by their light. TV was like an additional window that provided him with an unending supply of imagery from the chaotic world outside. But then, as Rauschenberg said, "Everything I can organize I do, so I am free to work in chaos, spontaneity, and the not yet done." Orderliness even characterized the cooking that he did so well and so neatly. Over dinner, he discussed the upcoming retrospective that would fill the uptown and downtown sections of the Guggenheim Museum in New York: more than four hundred items, which made it one of the largest one-man shows ever held at the Guggenheim. "My only hesitation about the show," he said, "is that I don't want to betray my achievement by seeming to need the authority and prestige of the Guggenheim, without which these works would never have been seen together." A retrospective, he went on to say, should encourage people to see the old work in the light of the new rather than the new in the light of the old. The recent pieces that Rauschenberg showed me had an originality and immediacy, besides a wonderful freshness of technique, which would come as a revelation even to those who thought they knew his work by heart.

I asked Rauschenberg about the prodigious commissions he was rumored to be working on. There were at least three in preparation. For the new concert hall in Seattle, he planned to do a series of monumental decorations. For the revival of the Potsdamer Platz in Berlin—the hub of the city until it was bombed to bits in World War II and then cut in two by the evil Wall—he was doing a sculpture garden to go with the Daimler-Benz building in a complex designed by the innovative Italian architect Renzo Piano. Even more challenging was another collaboration with Renzo Piano: a

Rauschenberg working on *Untitled (Spread)* in his Captiva studio, FL, 1983

church in San Giovanni Rotondo, about one hundred miles east of Naples, to commemorate Padre Pio, the controversial Franciscan priest who died in 1968 and who is revered for having had stigmata and a saintly aura. His cult rivals that of Lourdes. To cater to the massive crowds of pilgrims, the church would have a glass wall about 40 by 150 feet so that people outside could follow the Mass. Rauschenberg said that he was basing his imagery on the Apocalypse and was experimenting with new technological effects. While he was a spiritual man, he was no believer, and he intended to steer clear of overt religious references. "I bet you'll be a Catholic before you finish the project," the Franciscan prior in charge told Rauschenberg. "And I suppose you'll be an artist," he replied.

Rauschenberg was too absorbed by the future to bother about the past. However, he owned to being a quarter Dutch, a quarter German, a quarter Swedish, and a quarter Cherokee. At the same time, he was, as a friend said, wholly Texan, with "that big-spirited, funny, crazy, fearless quality that Texans have." He was particularly proud of his Native American blood, and although he never actually knew his Cherokee grandmother, he felt that his closeness to nature and his passion for animals (especially Samoyed dogs) came from her. He was born on October 22, 1925, in Port Arthur, a damp patch of a place a foot or two below sea level on the Gulf of Mexico. He loathed the oil-refinery stink of his hometown. In 1958, when he began his celebrated drawings for Dante's

Inferno, it is surely no coincidence that he chose oil derricks to evoke Dis, the capital of Hell.

Rauschenberg grew up in a small shotgun house. His father, a hardworking lineman, was nice enough, but so obsessed with hunting (he raised the best bird dogs in the area) that he had little time for a son who hated guns. Likewise, his nice-enough mother was totally wrapped up in her husband and her household chores. Rauschenberg seemed to bear no grudges, but the shortage of affection in his childhood might explain why an atmosphere of communal warmth and the company of devoted assistants were so important to him.

Membership in a fundamentalist sect of the Church of Christ also left its mark. Anything remotely pleasurable, from drinking to card playing, was forbidden in his childhood home. Initially, Rauschenberg thought of being a preacher. However, he loved to dance, and dancing was also condemned by his church. This draconian attitude engendered a deep distrust of the whole fundamentalist ethic. Nevertheless, he continued to attend church well into his twenties. "Giving that up was a major change in my life," he later said.

A loner in adolescence, Rauschenberg was not much good at sports, not much good at school (except for theatricals), and hopeless at college, where his family sent him to train as a pharmacist. His problem was dyslexia—for a long time undiagnosed. Calvin Tomkins (a biographer to whom anyone writing about the artist is greatly indebted) described Rauschenberg's expulsion from the University of Texas: "He refused to dissect a live frog in anatomy class. ... Having had any number of frogs as pets, Rauschenberg was not about to cut one up himself. Just before going to see the dean about it, he released his frog in some bushes. The dean suspended him." Before Rauschenberg could tell his father what he had done, he got his draft notice and joined the Navy.

His prowess at drawing portraits endeared Rauschenberg to his fellow sailors. "Somewhere along in there I got hold of a set of oil paints," he told Tomkins. "I started a portrait of a guy, and because the john was the only place with lights on after taps, I sat in there to finish it. When I ran out of red, I pricked my finger and rubbed it into the skin tone."

By stating that he had no intention of using a gun, Rauschenberg got himself assigned to the hospital corps, where he worked as a nurse, first in a tuberculosis ward, and later at Camp Pendleton, near San Diego, helping to rehabilitate maimed servicemen and caring for men suffering from combat psychoses and brain damage. "I was in the repair business," Rauschenberg said. "Every day your heart was torn until you couldn't stand it."

On furlough, Rauschenberg would hitchhike up and down the California coast. Once, he ended up at the Huntington Library in San Marino, and there, in front of the three most hackneyed portraits of the British canon—Gainsborough's *Blue Boy,* Lawrence's *Pinkie*, and Reynolds's *Sarah Siddons as the Tragic Muse*—he had an epiphany. This was the first time that he realized what it was that a painter actually did. Maybe he too could become a painter. Had he been more sophisticated, he might have sneered at these corny icons. But Rauschenberg had always been blessed with the incomparable advantage of an innocent eye.

When he was mustered out, Rauschenberg returned to Port Arthur, but his home was not there anymore. Without telling him, his family had moved 120 miles away to Lafayette, Louisiana. Rauschenberg felt that there was no point in remaining with them, so in the spring of 1946 he returned to California, where he worked as a shipping clerk at the Ballerina Bathing Suit factory. Pat Pearman, a young woman who designed bathing suits, befriended him. She found him attractive; she also liked his drawings. "Do you know why you are so unhappy?" she asked him. "You're really an artist." Pearman encouraged Rauschenberg to attend art school on the GI Bill. At her suggestion, he applied to the Kansas City Art Institute and was accepted.

Around three o'clock one fall morning in 1946, Rauschenberg arrived in Kansas City. There and then, he decided to rid himself of the unpropitious name of Milton, which his family had wished on him. After renaming himself Bob, he felt more like a painter. At the Art Institute he worked hard; he also built film sets, made models, and designed window displays, because he wanted to earn enough money to get himself to Paris to study modern art.

The following October, Rauschenberg made the trip. But the teaching at the Académie Julian turned out to be so deadly that it hardly mattered that he spoke no French. A sympathetic fellow student from New York, Susan Weil, took him in hand. She knew a great deal more about the practice and history of art than Rauschenberg did. The two of them decided that they were better off working on their own. And so they hung out at the Louvre, wandered the streets, and fell in love.

At the end of the summer, Weil returned to the States to enroll at Black Mountain College in North Carolina. Rauschenberg had read about the courses that the legendary Bauhaus alumnus Josef Albers gave there, and decided to accompany her. All that Paris had done for him was to liberate him from using paintbrushes. "I was so incredibly excessive," he told Tomkins. "I loved the medium so much I was painting with my hands. ... What came out were mostly messes ... really lousy, the ugliest paintings you've ever seen."

In the twenty-three years of its existence (1933–56), Black Mountain College left its modernist stamp on students of all the arts, including Rauschenberg. Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Buckminster Fuller, Walter Gropius, and many more taught there at various times, but it was above all Albers—such a rigid purist that he gave classes wearing a white lab coat and gloves—who presided over the art teaching.

Rauschenberg's messiness was anathema to this fiendishly demanding teacher. "I don't think he ever realized it was his discipline I came for," he told Tomkins. "I was Albers's dunce. ... He'd pick up something of mine and say, 'This is the most stupid thing I have ever seen, I dun't even vant to know who did it!'" Painful as this intimidation was, it worked to Rauschenberg's advantage. Besides discipline and theory, Albers taught his students an old Bauhaus exercise: how to scavenge for *objets trouvés*—that is to say junk—and incorporate them into their work. Rauschenberg was fascinated by this procedure, and continued to use it for the junk-based sculptures he generically titled *Gluts*.

Unpublished tapes made by his friend Brigid Berlin reveal the lengths to which Rauschenberg carried his scavenging. Nobody, he said, wanted the garbageman's job at Black Mountain, so he took it. That way he got to drive the garbage truck. Before going to the dump, he would stop behind a clump of trees and remove anything of interest. The rubbish he did not need for his work helped "furnish" some empty studios where he and his friends hid from Albers's snooping. The teacher liked to check their rooms—"You can tell the vay an artist works by the vay he lives," he used to say. When he eventually discovered his pristine Bauhaus-style studios had been filled with junk from trash cans and bales of hay from the fields around the school, "Albers nearly had a heart attack."

In June 1950, after moving to New York to study at the Art Students League, Rauschenberg and Susan Weil got married. A year later, he had his first show, after which he and Susan, with their newborn son, Christopher, returned to Black Mountain. The show was a failure in that nothing sold, but a success in that the paintings were sufficiently innovative to shock some of his new friends, the Abstract Expressionists, into including one of them in their breakthrough *Ninth Street Show*. The painting, called *22 the Lily White* (ca. 1950), is incised with random numerals in a rough geometrical pattern and embellished with a little red star—"something that makes every painting look better," Rauschenberg said, as it implies a sale.

In the fall of 1951, he went even further and painted pictures seemingly of nothing: canvases to which flat white house paint was applied with a roller. He was attacked for negativism, but, as he later explained, these paintings were supposed to be "hypersensitive": shadows on them would indicate how many people were in the room or what time it was. In the summer of 1952, he followed these up with black paintings. This time there was a bit more *matière*—torn-up bits of newspaper dipped in black paint and glued onto canvas. He next confined himself to the color red, and produced his first masterpieces: works in which a rich impasto of collage is not just the medium but the actual subject. In late 1953, Rauschenberg abandoned paint for dirt: boxes filled with earth. After birdseed spilled into them and sprouted, he switched to "grass paintings," which required watering. As he famously said, he tried to act in the gap between art and life.

These gestures left the Abstract Expressionists, whom he had gotten to know at their hangout, the Cedar Tavern in Greenwich Village, feeling as ambivalent about Rauschenberg as he felt about them. But they accepted him for his irrepressible intelligence and humor. De Kooning was especially supportive, so much so that he eventually gave way, albeit grudgingly, to the younger man's request for a drawing which he could erase: an act that has been interpreted, with some justice, as "symbolic patricide." Rauschenberg proudly put the denuded sheet of paper in a gilt frame labeled "Erased de Kooning Drawing, Robert Rauschenberg, 1953."

At Black Mountain, Rauschenberg made friends with a stylish and original young artist from Virginia named Cy Twombly. This friendship left him all too little time for Susan and the baby, and she finally filed for divorce. As Rauschenberg put it, he had come to feel "too married." Also, his sexual orientation was changing. Off he went to Italy with Twombly, equipped only with a camera. When funds ran low, he flew to Morocco and got a well-paying job with a construction company. To amuse himself, Rauschenberg knocked together a number of subversively crude artifacts—collages and boxes—out of Moroccan trash. He took them back to Italy and exhibited them at galleries in Rome and Florence. A lot of them sold; those that didn't he threw into the river Arno.

Back in New York, Rauschenberg remained involved with Twombly until, a year or so later, he fell for a young man from South Carolina named Jasper Johns. Johns worked in a bookstore, but had aspired to be a painter since the age of five. "I have photos of him then that would break your heart," Rauschenberg told Tomkins many years later. "Jasper was soft, beautiful, lean, and poetic." Though still shy and unfocused, Johns was already formidably cool: taciturn, quick, very much his own man, and not without guile. Rauschenberg talked Johns into leaving his job and joining him in a commercial sideline: helping Tiffany's celebrated display man, Gene Moore, decorate the store's windows.

Apparently fearful of a commitment to Rauschenberg, Johns embarked on an affair with a young woman named Rachel Rosenthal. The two rented lofts, one above the other, in a condemned building on Pearl Street around the corner from Rauschenberg. When Rosenthal confessed to Johns that she was in love with him, he brought the relationship to an end. Rosenthal eventually followed her family to California, whereupon Rauschenberg took over her loft. His partnership with Johns lasted for the next six years or so. Meanwhile, another brilliant avant-garde couple, John Cage, the aleatoric composer, and Merce Cunningham, the no less aleatoric dancer and choreographer, had become their closest friends. There was a great deal of cross-fertilization. "We called Bob and Jasper 'the Southern Renaissance,'" Cage recalled. "Each seemed to pick up where the other left off. The four-way exchanges were quite marvelous. It was the *climate* of being together that would suggest work to be done." Hence the two painters' involvement in modern dance and performance art.

"He and I were each other's first serious critics," Rauschenberg told Tomkins. "But Jasper and I literally traded ideas. He would say, 'I've got a terrific idea for you,' and then I'd have to find one for him." At first Rauschenberg, who was older by five years and far more experienced in the strategies of the New York art world, was the mentor. Johns was quick to adapt his companion's inventions to his own purposes: painting over bits of torn-up newspaper or incorporating three-dimensional elements into two-dimensional works. However, he wanted to be sure that "I was I and not someone else." And so, in the fall of 1954, he destroyed all his previous work as being too derivative. As the result of a dream, Johns started afresh with subjects—targets and flags—so simplistic that no modern artist had addressed them. He came up with an ingenious new style, rendered in an ancient but seldom-used medium: wax encaustic. In representing nothing more or less than themselves, the *Targets* and *Flags* came as a revelation. The Museum of Modern Art would soon acquire three of them.

Rauschenberg had more of a *succès de scandale* when he exhibited his Combines: paintings that included extraneous objects, or freestanding sculptures assembled out of paint-slathered junk. The most notorious of these Combines is *Bed* (1955): a real quilt, pillow, and sheet sticky with random dribbles of paint. One critic thought it looked like the aftermath of a murder. However, Rauschenberg thought *Bed* one of the friendliest pictures he had ever painted. He said his only fear was that "someone would want to crawl into it," and thus crawl into his life. *Bed* is surely about the seminal role of paint in a painter's life—the glorious mess it makes of dreams, sex, love.

These Combines give a new dimension to the phrase "a loaded brush." It's as if Rauschenberg had a brush so vast that he could load it with whatever he wanted and slosh it all on in one great homogenizing avalanche of paint. Even the stuffed bald eagle in *Canyon* (1959) has an amazingly natural, preordained air. A bit predatory, perhaps, but that is because *Canyon* is about Zeus turning himself into an eagle so that he can carry off the beautiful boy Ganymede to be his cupbearer—hence the inclusion of a baby photograph of the artist's son, Christopher.

The most familiar of the Combines is *Monogram* (1955–59), which includes a stuffed Angora goat with a tire around its middle. "A stuffed goat is special in the way that a stuffed goat is special," Rauschenberg said. "I wanted to see if I could integrate an object as exotic as that." He shampooed it and daubed its damaged face with paint, but it did not work as sculpture, so he added the tire, making what Albers would have called a contrast in surfaces. It took him almost five years to come up with the "pasture" of collage on which it browses—an addition that makes the goat look surrealistically at home.

By 1961, Rauschenberg and Johns were drifting sourly apart. They were "exquisitely awful to each other," a friend reported. The bitterness can be detected in some of Johns's works but not in Rauschenberg's. That year, Johns bought a beach house on a remote island called Edisto, to the south of Charleston, South Carolina. Going there changed his life, he said. For a recluse, it was a perfect place: only four families for most of the year, and forty miles to the nearest movie house. A year or so later, Rauschenberg likewise found himself a remote island: the bean-shaped sandspit called Captiva. Before the causeway, there was only one telephone to the mainland and one policeman for about fifty families. Visitors came by ferry from Fort Myers. In 1968, he bought a house there.

"Words like 'tortured,' 'struggle,' and 'pain'—I could never see those qualities in paint," Rauschenberg said, but this did not stop him from being an activist. When, in 1965, *Life* magazine commissioned him to visualize a modern *Inferno*, he did not hesitate to vent his rage at the Vietnam War and a whole range of horrors, including racial violence, neo-Nazism, political assassinations, and ecological disaster. From being an activist, he became a philanthropist. Now that his work was fetching ever-higher prices, he started giving away large sums of money. (As of 1997, the record price for one of his paintings—*Rebus* [1955]—was $7.3 million; the going price for recent works on paper was anywhere from

Rauschenberg's studio, Captiva, FL, 1997

$100,000 to $250,000.) In 1970, he cofounded Change, Inc., a nonprofit organization that helped thousands of sick and indigent artists of all persuasions.

Another of Rauschenberg's pet causes in the late 1960s was an organization called E.A.T. (Experiments in Art and Technology). His partner in this venture was Billy Klüver, an imaginative engineer with a passion for the avant-garde. They shared a conviction that technological innovation would shape the art of the future. With backing from the likes of IBM, the movement grew out of a spectacular start, 9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering, held at the Sixty-ninth Regiment Armory in New York in October 1966, with some ten artists, thirty engineers, and five hundred volunteers taking part. In Rauschenberg's performance *Open Score*, Frank Stella played tennis using a racket equipped with a tiny transmitter that amplified the noises and turned floodlights off one by one. But after Rauschenberg's *Mud Muse* (1968–71)—a huge vat of industrial-drilling mud that bubbled and burped in response to auditory signals—set off a frenzy of mud throwing and smearing at the opening of an E.A.T. show in Los Angeles, support evaporated.

These activities coincided with what Rauschenberg called his "dude" period. He kept his shoulder-length hair

elaborately coiffed, wore jackets decorated with porcupine quills, and raised hell as only a Texas Cherokee knows how. The downtown New York premises he had recently acquired—a former Catholic orphanage complete with a functioning chapel (trust Rauschenberg to have the place deconsecrated by a priest rather than desecrated by hangers-on)—often served as an annex to Max's Kansas City. Rauschenberg's kitchen was the scene of a party that seemed to last for much of the 1960s. There were some memorably wild moments, but Jack Daniel's was the stimulant of choice, and there was little or none of the psychedelic inanity that made evenings at Warhol's Factory so demoralizing. In my experience, people seldom discussed art at the Factory, whereas in Rauschenberg's kitchen people seldom talked about anything else.

By 1970, the artist needed to go away and rest. After consulting a soothsayer, he decided to settle more or less permanently on Captiva—the perfect antidote to New York excess. There was nothing to do except fish or swim or go shelling on beaches that are a conchologist's dream. Rauschenberg could unwind and loaf and cook and curb his drinking. Not that he would ever really quit—that notion, he once said, would make him "so depressed, I'd have to go out and get drunk." Eventually, worried friends persuaded him to do a stint at the Betty Ford Clinic, and his health improved. However, he continued to always have a drink within reach. Liquor sometimes affected his behavior but never his work. A film made in 1962 by a CBS television crew records him painting *Barge* during one twenty-four hour stretch, running on nothing but vodka and adrenaline. This is all the more impressive in that *Barge* is a colossal painting (thirty-two feet long), as well as one of the artist's most profound and complex evocations of the modern world.

In 1971, Rauschenberg bought a second property on Captiva. This he turned into a print shop complete with a press, named Little Janis in memory of his friend Janis Joplin, who had suffered, like him, from growing up in Port Arthur. Two years later, he bought the house next door to his first and, with the help of friends, transformed it into a painting studio. Over the years, Rauschenberg continued to fight off developers by adding to his holdings, which eventually amounted to more than thirty-five acres, some of it left in its natural state, which he showed me with proprietary pride. "The whole island used to be like this: a jungle of palms and palmettos. This is almost all that's left."

At the time of my visit, the property comprised ten buildings: houses for guests and assistants as well as a handsome residence and a studio complex, with facilities for welding, framing, storage, and packing; laboratory-like areas for computers and photography; and a print studio the size of a theater. This massive building, constructed to withstand the fiercest hurricanes, gave onto a broad flight of steps banked with roses and datura. The steps lead down to a swimming pool, where the artist allowed a family of otters to frolic.

On stilts at the end of a pier was a small three-room cabin. This was the fish house, a sanctuary to which the artist retired, he said, "when I have to be absolutely alone, and surrounded by peaceful thoughts." Its emphatic verticals and horizontals, its amphibious character, and its backdrop of sea and sky and pelicans gave this structure the look of something out of one of Rauschenberg's later works. With the Fish House to meditate in, it is no wonder that Rauschenberg learned to harness his vision to the empyrean. "There is no reason," he said, "not to consider the world as one gigantic painting."

A measure of Rauschenberg's grasp of vastness is the multipanel, multimedia painting (including sound effects) he called his *¼ Mile or 2 Furlong Piece* (1981–98): an autobiographical panorama that illustrates the artist's life and times, and that Charles Stuckey (in his essay for the excellent catalogue accompanying the 1997 Guggenheim retrospective) sees as "an exhibition in itself." By 1997, it had reached a length of 790 feet. Only someone possessed of iron control and nerve and an army of assistants would have dared to undertake a work of this magnitude.

In 1984, Rauschenberg started on the most ambitious art project of his career, perhaps of the twentieth century. He called the project ROCI (pronounced "Rocky"), after his pet turtle. His goal was nothing less than "introducing the world to itself." Of the twenty-two countries invited to participate, eleven accepted: the United States, Malaysia, Germany, the USSR, Cuba, Japan, China, Tibet, Venezuela, Chile, and Mexico. Rauschenberg took a group of his assistants to each of these countries so that they could interact with local artists, artisans, poets, and people in the street in order to create a series of artworks. To raise money for ROCI, he sold some of the best things in his collection. In China he had to contend with a hostile bureaucracy before being permitted to work in Jingxian at the world's oldest paper mill. "We felt like Marco Polo," he said. Wherever they worked, Rauschenberg's charm and persistence overcame all obstacles. And when ROCI panels were finally shown at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., in 1991, they made the world seem smaller and friendlier, and very Rauschenbergian.

Until the 1990s, Rauschenberg relied on photosensitive silkscreens as a means of introducing photographs and magazine illustrations into large-scale works. However, as silkscreens are cumbersome and limited in their range of color, he then developed a much more sophisticated technique. This had its origins in the glorified decal process he devised when he wanted his Dante drawings to be "as complex as collages:" he would moisten an illustration torn from a magazine with a solvent such as lighter fluid, place it facedown on a sheet of paper, and rub the back with an empty ballpoint pen until the ghost of an image came through like a transfer. Rauschenberg's new transfer process, a technological marvel, was as versatile and mimetic and as much of a gift to an artist as its musical equivalent, the synthesizer, to a composer.

The artist liked to point out that his palette was not limited to paints; it consisted of an infinite repertory of photographs, most of them taken by him. He and an assistant would feed these photographs into a computer in order to calibrate (correct, intensify, or totally change) the colors. Printouts were then made, using water-based

Rauschenberg's desk in Captiva, FL, 1983

vegetable dyes, and these would be used to transfer the image to the support with an electric press. These photo-transfers enabled Rauschenberg to re-create an image with far more freedom and control than his unwieldy silkscreens did. Hence the flash and filigree, the vividness and immediacy of his later work. Used on plaster, this transfer technique allowed the artist to make frescoes without the technical difficulties that the traditional process entails.

The fact that Rauschenberg's 1997 retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum came on the heels of Jasper Johns's at the Museum of Modern Art of the previous year encouraged people to see the two artists as rivals for some sort of conceptual trophy. A waste of time: they were not running in the same race. After splitting up in 1961, they put as much distance as possible between them. Rauschenberg's work became ever more epic, Johns's ever more hermetic. Rauschenberg splashed himself across the skies; Johns painted himself into corners. True, the content of some of Rauschenberg's lesser works does not always measure up to their scale, and, for all their technical skill, Johns's puzzle-pictures sometimes smack of contrivance. But what great innovators Rauschenberg and Johns proved to be. Besides changing the rules of the game, they enabled us to take a part in it instead of being mere spectators. In so doing, they let us in on new strategies and ploys, new sensations and solutions. To that extent, *vive la différence*.

1. Rauschenberg, in his U.S. Navy uniform, 1944

CHRONOLOGY 1925–2008

SUSAN DAVIDSON AND JOAN YOUNG

This text is a modification of Joan Young and Susan Davidson, "Chronology," originally published in *Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1997). It has been updated and adapted by Susan Davidson and Kara Vander Weg.

1925–43

Milton Ernest Rauschenberg is born on October 22, 1925, in Port Arthur, Texas, an oil-refinery town on the Gulf of Mexico near the Louisiana border. The only son of Dora Carolina Matson and Ernest Rauschenberg, an employee of Gulf State Utilities, a local light and power company, he is of Dutch, Swedish, German, and Cherokee descent. As a child, he creates an elaborately decorated environment in his room, drawing images on the walls, painting red fleurs-de-lis all over the woodwork and furniture, and building a structure of crates filled with jars and boxes of found objects to divide the room that he shares with his only sibling, Janet, born in 1936. Raised by a deeply religious mother, the young Rauschenberg aspires to become a preacher at age thirteen but decides against it when he realizes that the fundamentalist Church of Christ to which his family belongs forbids dancing, one of his passions. He attends public schools in Port Arthur and graduates from Thomas Jefferson High School, where he is active in the school theater as a costume and set designer.

1943

FALL: Although he enters the University of Texas at Austin to study pharmacology, at his parents' recommendation, Rauschenberg later drops out due to the difficulty of the course work (not recognizing at this point that he has dyslexia) and to his refusal to dissect a live frog in biology class. He later laments these early years, saying, "I let my family decide what I was going to do. I didn't want to go to school. I had my most hideous days, hours, minutes and seconds of my life, let alone years, in school. I was really terrible in school. I was a good boy who was terrible."[1]

1944

SPRING 1944–SPRING 1945: Rauschenberg is drafted into the United States Navy. He enters boot camp at Farragut, Idaho, where he draws portraits for fellow GIs to send home. After proclaiming to the Navy that he does not want to kill anyone, he is assigned a post as a neuropsychiatric technician in the Navy Hospital Corps, San Diego, while stationed at Camp Pendleton. Although he initially considers making psychiatric work his career, he decides against it: "I decided that I got too involved. It's one thing to talk to a piece of tin and it's another thing to have your heart broken by every patient you talk to."[2]

While stationed in San Diego, he visits the Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens in San Marino—his first visit to an art museum—where he experiences original oil paintings, including Thomas Gainsborough's *The Blue Boy* (ca. 1770) and Thomas Lawrence's *Pinkie* (1795), which he has previously seen only as reproductions in books and on playing cards. The artist later says, "I didn't even know there was art until I left Texas when I was eighteen. The only painting I knew (and I didn't know that it was 'a painting' until much later) was Hope—the woman sitting on a globe with her head in one of those bandage-nooses and I think a lyre."[3] Even though he has enjoyed drawing all his life, Rauschenberg now realizes for the first time that he himself can become an artist. He buys art supplies and begins painting.

1945

SUMMER: Honorably discharged from the United States Navy, Rauschenberg hitchhikes from San Francisco to Port Arthur, Texas. He discovers that his family has moved to Lafayette, Louisiana, so he hitchhikes to visit them.

2 Rauschenberg with his cousin Betty Sue Cypert, Port Arthur, TX, summer 1935

1946

Rauschenberg settles in Los Angeles and works briefly as an illustrator for a Westwood newspaper and later as a packing clerk at the Ballerina Bathing Suit factory, where he meets Pat Pearman, an assistant designer, who convinces him that he has talent after seeing his drawings.

1947

LATE JANUARY: He follows Pat Pearman to Kansas City, Missouri. Upon his arrival there, he changes his name from Milton to Bob (subsequently Robert) after considering the most common names he could think of while sitting all night in a Savarin coffee shop.

FEBRUARY–DECEMBER: At Pearman's suggestion, Rauschenberg enrolls in the Kansas City Art Institute on the GI Bill. While attending classes at night, he works at many odd jobs, including preparing window displays, making models for an industrial designer, and fabricating movie sets and photographers' props. He saves money to study art in Paris, later noting, "I was certain that one had to study in Paris if one was an artist. I think I was at least 15 years late."[4]

1948

FEBRUARY: After three days in New York, Rauschenberg departs for Paris. He enrolls at the Académie Julian on the GI Bill.

SUMMER: The artist meets Susan Weil, who also attends the Académie Julian and lives in the same rooming house on Rue Stanislas. Dissatisfied with the instruction at the academy and the apathy of his fellow students, Rauschenberg spends most of his time with Weil visiting galleries, where he first sees works by such European modernists as Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso. He paints passionately, often dispensing with brushes and using his hands.

SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER: Rauschenberg returns to the United States in September. With Weil, he enrolls at Black Mountain College, near Asheville, North Carolina, after reading an article in the August issue of *Time* on the disciplined approach to art of Josef Albers, formerly an instructor at the Bauhaus and now at Black Mountain College. Rauschenberg will later regard Albers as his most important teacher. Albers's practice of "Werklehre," which he had developed at the Bauhaus, involves working with the inherent properties of materials and developing "combination" techniques of "structure, texture, and facture."[5] Of Albers, Rauschenberg says, "Albers had a marvelous system. 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."[6]

1949

Rauschenberg creates *This Is the First Half of a Print Designed to Exist in Passing Time*, a woodcut for which the block of wood is progressively cut with lines, the image emerging from black to white over fourteen stages. (It is one of the artist's few works, along with photographs, still extant from this period.)

LATE SPRING: He completes his first academic year at Black Mountain College.

SUMMER: He passes the summer at Susan Weil's family home on Outer Island, Connecticut, where Weil introduces Rauschenberg to the method of exposing blueprint paper.

LATE SUMMER–FALL: Rauschenberg moves to New York, renting a room on East Eighty-seventh Street, near the Weil family's apartment, and enrolling in the Art Students League,

again on the GI Bill. He receives very little positive feedback for his work, which differs markedly from that of his fellow students, but the League's education is less important to him than its offering of studio space and a milieu for artists. He creates one work (no longer extant) by collecting imprints of students' feet as they walk through a doorway of the school. Rauschenberg moves to a studio on Willett Street, near the Williamsburg Bridge in downtown Manhattan, with a group of fellow students. Rauschenberg and Weil frequent the vanguard galleries of Charles Egan, Samuel Kootz, and Betty Parsons, viewing the first generation of American postwar art and admiring in particular the freedom of expression of the Abstract Expressionists. He later remembers his early years in the city: "It used to be nourishment in the days of the Cedar Bar, when I first came to New York. And for the cost of a beer (and sometimes I didn't have to pay for it—it was only ten cents anyway) to be able to have a conversation with—or listen to—Rothko, Reinhardt, Kline, de Kooning, Tworkov. I mean, God, that's a real bargain."[7]

1950

JANUARY–MARCH: Rauschenberg continues to attend classes at the Art Students League.

JUNE 21: He marries Susan Weil and, after honeymooning in Bermuda, they spend the summer at the Weils' home on Outer Island, Connecticut.

FALL: Rauschenberg and Weil rent an apartment on West Ninety-sixth Street in New York, which also serves as their studio.

LATE FALL: The artist approaches gallery owner Betty Parsons for a critique of his work. Parsons, who represents such major artists as Barnett Newman, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and Clyfford Still, unexpectedly offers Rauschenberg a show in spring 1951. Accompanied by Still, Parsons visits Rauschenberg's apartment/studio to select works for the exhibition.

1951

Gene Moore, chief window designer for Bonwit Teller and later Tiffany & Co., includes blueprints by Rauschenberg and Susan Weil in one of his window displays at Bonwit Teller, New York. Work for Moore will provide Rauschenberg with critical financial support for several years.

FEBRUARY–MAY: Rauschenberg continues to attend the Art Students League, where he meets fellow student Cy Twombly.

APRIL 9: "Speaking of Pictures," a three-page article in *Life* magazine, features Rauschenberg and Weil making blueprints (the works reproduced in the article are no longer extant). The article remarks: "Although the Rauschenbergs make blueprints for fun, they hope to turn them into screen and wallpaper designs."[8]

3. Rauschenberg and Susan Weil at their wedding, Outer Island, CT, 1950

4. Rauschenberg and Weil developing blueprint paper in their bathroom, West 96th Street, NY (photographed for *Life*, April 9, 1951)

MAY 2–JULY 4: Rauschenberg and Weil's *Blueprint: Photogram for Mural Decoration* (now entitled *Female Figure*, ca. 1950) is exhibited in *Abstraction in Photography*, curated by Edward Steichen, director of the Department of Photography, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

MAY 14–JUNE 2: The artist has his first solo exhibition at Betty Parsons Gallery, New York. To Parsons's surprise, Rauschenberg has attempted to improve some of the works originally selected for the show by repainting them. The seventeen works are shown in the smaller gallery. None of the paintings are sold.[9]

Rauschenberg meets Leo Castelli and composer John Cage. With the latter, he discusses Black Mountain College, where Cage taught in summer 1948 (prior to Rauschenberg's arrival), and he gives Cage a painting, *Number 1* (1951). The friendship between them will solidify the following summer, which they will both spend at Black Mountain College. Years later, Rauschenberg will describe his friendship with Cage: "He would do something, and I would think, God, that's brilliant, and then I would do something and it wouldn't surprise him. We made each other feel comfortable in the world, and that's a big one."[10]

MAY 24–JUNE 10: Invited by Castelli and artist Jack Tworkov, Rauschenberg participates in *Today's Self-Styled School of New York*, also known as the *Ninth Street Show*, the first Artists' Annual exhibition at the Ninth Street Gallery, New York. He exhibits *22 the Lily White* (ca. 1950), which he removes from the exhibition at Parsons's gallery, and an unidentified painting. The exhibition, which is conceived by members of the Club—a loosely organized group of intellectuals, artists, dealers, writers, and musicians—presents vanguard works by sixty-one artists who have been overlooked by museums and marks the first time that the group exhibits together, consolidating a movement that comes to be known as the New York School.

JULY 16: The artist's son, Christopher, is born in New York. Aaron Siskind takes baby pictures.

SUMMER–FALL: He returns to Black Mountain College, where Weil and Christopher join him briefly until Rauschenberg and Weil decide to separate. Fellow students include Dorothea Rockburne and Twombly. Faculty members include Hazel Larsen Archer, with whom Rauschenberg first studies photography. Also in residence during the summer session are photographers Harry Callahan and Siskind and painters Ben Shahn and Robert Motherwell. Rauschenberg conceives a project in which he will photograph the United States "inch by inch."[11] He begins several groups of paintings, most of which he will complete by summer 1952. The *Night Blooming* series consists of approximately eighteen large, predominantly black canvases. The *White Painting* series consists of modular canvases on which white paint, applied with a roller, reflects changes in light and such chance effects as viewers' shadows. In a letter to Parsons, trying to convince her to exhibit the *White Paintings*, which he describes as "not art because they take you to a place in painting art has not been," he writes that he "will forfeit all right to ever show again for their being given a chance to be considered for this year's calendar."[12] He also begins making black paintings in which newspaper is frequently used as the ground. He will resume these again in the spring 1953.

LATE FALL: He returns to New York, working occasionally as a freelance window designer.

1952

JANUARY: Edward Steichen acquires for the Museum of Modern Art, New York, two photographs made by Rauschenberg at Black Mountain College, *Untitled (Interior of an Old Carriage)* (1949) and *Untitled (Cy on Bench)* (1951); these are the first works by Rauschenberg to be acquired by a museum.

SPRING–SUMMER: At Black Mountain College, Rauschenberg studies with visiting faculty and fellow painters Jack Tworkov and Franz Kline. He also studies with John Cage and Merce Cunningham, collaborators since 1942, who create work in which they allow movement and music to coexist without any predetermined relationship except a shared overall duration. Friendships with all four men solidify over the summer.

SPRING BREAK: The artist travels with Cy Twombly to Charleston, South Carolina, New Orleans, Key West, and Cuba. Rauschenberg takes a number of photographs in the first venues. While in Cuba, he experiments with transfer drawing, rubbing the back of a printed image as it lies facedown on a sheet of paper in order to transfer the image, a technique he will fully develop in 1958.

5. Rauschenberg, Weil, and their son, Christopher, 1951

6. *Bob & Cy, Venice*, 1952, gelatin silver print, 20 x 16 inches (50.8 x 40.6 cm)

SUMMER: He participates in an untitled event (later referred to as *Theater Piece #1*, now considered the first Happening) organized by Cage in the dining hall of Black Mountain College. Subsequent accounts of the unscripted event describe activities occurring simultaneously: Cunningham improvises a dance around and through the audience, Cage delivers a lecture, M. C. Richards recites poetry from a ladder, David Tudor plays piano, and Rauschenberg plays old records by Edith Piaf and others on a hand-wound Edison phonograph. Charles Olson also participates, most likely reading his own poetry, and slides and a flickering eight-millimeter film, possibly by Nick (Nicola) Cernovich, may be projected onto the walls and ceiling. Panels of Rauschenberg's *White Paintings* (1951) are hung from the rafters overhead.[13]

AUGUST: Cage creates his silent piece *4′33″*, a work in three movements in which Tudor, seated quietly at a piano, signals the beginning and end of each movement by opening and closing the keyboard cover. Cage acknowledges that Rauschenberg's *White Paintings* and a visit to Harvard University's anechoic chamber, a soundproof and reverberation-free environment, inspired the work.

AUGUST 10: *Robert Rauschenberg Paintings* opens at Black Mountain College.[14]

AUGUST 20: Rauschenberg departs by ship to Palermo, Italy, with Twombly, who has won a travel fellowship from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. Rauschenberg photographed Twombly's paintings for the application portfolio. The two artists settle in Rome, near Piazza di Spagna.

SEPTEMBER 1952–FEBRUARY 1953: Rauschenberg accumulates a collection of objects from which he creates three significant groups of work: (1) Collages on shirtboards from Italian laundries, using local printed papers and old engravings found in bookstalls and flea markets.[15] (2) *Feticci Personali*, hanging "fetish" assemblages of wood, rope, animal fur, and various small objects, which may be inspired by ritual artifacts that he sees during travels to North Africa in late 1952 and early 1953.[16] (3) *Scatole Personali*, wood or metal boxes containing found objects and materials such as pebbles, sticks, dirt, engravings, and beads. These three groups reveal the influence of Joseph Cornell, with whose work Rauschenberg is familiar through exhibitions at the

7. Rauschenberg working on *Feticci Personali*, Rome, 1953

Egan Gallery, New York, and from having visited Cornell's home on Utopia Parkway, Queens, New York, to transport works to the Egan Gallery. During this period he takes photographs extensively. Rauschenberg later notes of his time in Europe and Africa: "I decided before I left that I wasn't going to get handicapped by trying to find a painting situation, and besides I didn't have the money to do that. I didn't want to get burdened by dragging equipment around but I couldn't keep from making things. ... I took advantage of the fact that people were bored of painting."[17]

OCTOBER: Rauschenberg and Susan Weil are divorced.

LATE OCTOBER: Out of money, Rauschenberg travels to North Africa and gets a job with the Atlas Construction Company in Casablanca. Twombly joins him after approximately a month and the two travel through Morocco to Tangier, where they meet writer Paul Bowles, a friend of Cage, with whom they travel to Tétouan.

1953

FEBRUARY: Rauschenberg and Cy Twombly return to Rome from Africa by way of Spain.

MARCH: In Rome, Rauschenberg visits artist Alberto Burri, who is ill, and offers him a healing fetish, a small box construction, as a get-well gift. Burri gives a small work to Rauschenberg.

8. *Feticci Personali* installed and photographed by Rauschenberg in Il Pinco Gardens, Rome, 1953

MARCH 3-10: The artist's first solo exhibition in Europe, *Scatole e Feticci Personali*, takes place at the Galleria dell'Obelisco, Rome, which exhibits works by such contemporary Italian artists as Afro and Burri. To both Rauschenberg's and the gallery owner's amazement, some of the boxes and hanging wall pieces are sold, and Rauschenberg earns enough money to travel back to New York. The show travels as *Scatole e Costruzioni Contemplative di Bob Rauschenberg* to the Galleria d'Arte Contemporanea, Florence, where Twombly's exhibition *Mostra de Arazzi di Cy Twombly* opens on the same day.

APRIL: Rauschenberg returns to New York and moves into a loft at 61 Fulton Street in downtown Manhattan. He is one of the first New York artists to establish a studio loft in a former industrial building. John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Morton Feldman, and Philip Guston live in a nearby loft building. Twombly occasionally works in Rauschenberg's studio.[18]

SPRING-SUMMER: Rauschenberg completes the last of the series of black paintings begun at Black Mountain College in 1951, and begins the *Elemental Sculptures*, made of wood, stones, twine, steel spikes, and other materials found in the Fulton Street neighborhood. He continues to create window designs for Gene Moore at Bonwit Teller, New York.

SUMMER: Eleanor Ward, owner of the Stable Gallery, New York, is brought to Rauschenberg's studio by painter Nicolas Carone. Ward offers Rauschenberg and Twombly shows. The two artists clean out the basement of the gallery, a

Fabian (Vittorio) in black and photographed by Rauschenberg in Il Pincio Gardens, Rome, 1953

10 Rauschenberg exhibition, Stable Gallery, NY, 1953

former horse stable, to present their works there and in the first-floor galleries. Rauschenberg will work as a handyman and janitor for the gallery.

SEPTEMBER 15–OCTOBER 3: Concurrent exhibitions of works by Rauschenberg and Twombly take place at the Stable Gallery. Rauschenberg exhibits two *White Paintings* (1951) and a selection of black paintings (1951–55), as well as *Elemental Sculptures*.[19] Cage writes a statement on the *White Paintings* for the exhibition:

> *To whom/No subject/No image/No taste/No object/No beauty/No message/No talent/No technique (no why)/ No idea/No intention/No art/No object/No feeling/No black/No white (no and)/After careful consideration, I have come to the conclusion that there is nothing in these paintings that could not be changed, that they can be seen in any light and are not destroyed by the action of shadows./Hallelujah! the blind can see again; the water's fine.*[20]

Rauschenberg writes: "I refer to the White Paintings as performance pieces."[21] The show elicits six, mostly negative, reviews in the New York press and in art journals. Writing of the work, critic Dore Ashton notes: "Beauty is purity, he says, but decay is implicit. Appliquéd newspaper is his disdain of perpetuity. Life is cheap."[22] None of the works are sold until the final day of the exhibition, when Rauschenberg's friends Carolyn and Earle Brown—a dancer and composer, respectively—purchase a black painting for $26.30, which is the amount of money in their pockets from cashing a telephone-deposit refund check.

FALL: Rauschenberg makes the *Elemental Paintings* out of tissue paper, dirt, and gold leaf.[23] While working on the *Elemental Sculptures* and *Elemental Paintings*, he creates *White Lead Painting*, a large work so heavy that it cannot be removed from the Fulton Street studio; Rauschenberg realizes this while creating the work, but decides to complete it anyway. When he moves out in 1955, he will abandon the work in the studio.

FALL: Rauschenberg creates *Automobile Tire Print* and *Erased de Kooning Drawing*. The first work is made with the collaboration of Cage on a quiet Sunday morning outside the Fulton Street studio. Cage slowly drives his Model A Ford while Rauschenberg applies black ink to the rear tire, which rolls down a long strip of paper approximately twenty-two feet in length. To create *Erased de Kooning Drawing*, Rauschenberg asks Willem de Kooning for a drawing to be erased and presented as Rauschenberg's own work; de Kooning offers him a drawing, made of pencil, crayon, and possibly ink, that will present a serious challenge. Rauschenberg spends almost a month erasing the work. (Traces of de Kooning's original marks remain.)

LATE FALL: He begins the *Red Paintings*, which he will continue to work on until early summer 1954. Rauschenberg welcomes the challenge to explore what he regards as "the most difficult color" to work with because of its aggressive connotations.[24] Like the black paintings completed at Fulton Street, the early *Red Paintings* are painted on canvases that incorporate newspapers and patterned fabrics as grounds. Inspired by Abstract Expressionism, Rauschenberg uses different types of brushstrokes—drips, heavy areas of impasto, paint applied directly from the tube—in a single work. As he continues to develop the series into the following summer, he will begin to incorporate found objects into the works.

LATE FALL: Rauschenberg is introduced by Suzi Gablik, a friend from Black Mountain College, to Jasper Johns on a New York street corner near Marboro Books, an art-book store where Johns works.

1954

WINTER: Rauschenberg meets Jasper Johns again at Sari Dienes's New York studio. Johns begins to work with Rauschenberg on window displays.

JANUARY 27–FEBRUARY 20: The artist participates in the *Third Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture* at the Stable Gallery, New York. He exhibits *Growing Painting* (1953). The work was created when seeds that Rauschenberg fed to birds accidentally fell into a *Dirt Painting* and he watered it until it became a grass painting. Rauschenberg visits the gallery every day to water the work, but ultimately the grass, and thus the painting, dies.

BETWEEN JANUARY 27 AND FEBRUARY 20: At the Stable Gallery, Rauschenberg meets dancer/choreographer Paul Taylor, who has recently left the Merce Cunningham Dance Company to form his own company. Rauschenberg will begin to work with Taylor as a set and costume designer later in the year, and Taylor will assist Rauschenberg and Johns on

11. Rauschenberg exhibition, Stable Gallery, NY, 1953

12. Rauschenberg exhibition, Egan Gallery, NY, 1954-55, photographed by the artist

window displays. Taylor will also rescue *Pink Clay Painting (To Pete)* (1953), one of Rauschenberg's clay paintings (the only extant example), from the garbage.

MID-SUMMER: Rauschenberg works again on the *Red Painting* series. He begins to reveal more of the newspaper surface and to incorporate found objects, art reproductions, and constructed appendages. This results in works such as *Collection* and, ultimately, *Charlene*; although these new works are predominantly red in color, they are considered the first Combine Paintings. The artist coins the term "Combine" to refer to the combination of aspects of painting and sculpture. He says: "Almost as a joke I thought I'd call them something, as Calder was supposed to have done with 'mobiles,' and it worked beautifully. Once I called them 'combines,' people were confronted with the work itself, not what it wasn't."[25]

DECEMBER 8: The premiere of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company's *Minutiae*, with set design by Rauschenberg, takes place at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York. Instructed by Cunningham to make a self-contained set through which dancers could move, the artist created a Combine (also called *Minutiae*), applying paint and various collage elements to fabric on a wooden structure. Rauschenberg will later remark: "I always have been envious of dance in the sense that it is so immediate. Maybe I am a bit jealous of the way all the people involved in a performance collaborate, everybody sharing their ideas and talents. In dance everybody is the material."[26]

"Almost as a joke I thought I'd call them something, as Calder was supposed to have done with 'mobiles,' and it worked beautifully. Once I called them 'combines,' people were confronted with the work itself, not what it wasn't."

DECEMBER 20, 1954–JANUARY 18, 1955: An exhibition of Rauschenberg's *Red Paintings* (1953–54) and Combines takes place at the Egan Gallery, New York. Reviews are mainly negative, except for one by poet and critic Frank O'Hara in *Artnews*, which is perhaps the first enthusiastically positive review of Rauschenberg's career to date. O'Hara remarks: "For all the baroque exuberance of the show, quieter pictures evidence a serious lyrical talent; simultaneously, in the big inventive pieces there is a big talent at play, creating its own occasions as a stage does."[27]

13. Rauschenberg next to *Monogram* (first state), Pearl Street studio, NY, ca. 1956

1955

Rauschenberg continues to work on his Combines: *Bed* is composed of a quilt, acquired at Black Mountain College from artist Dorothea Rockburne, that he stretches over a board and paints (he does not have enough money to buy canvas). *Odalisk* (1955/1958), in which female imagery is prevalent, includes a miniature blueprint of the full-size blueprint *Female Figure* (ca. 1950), as well as photographs of pinup girls and a reproduction of a figure in Titian's *Pastoral Concert* (ca. 1510–11). *Monogram* (1955–59) will evolve through three states, documented in drawings and photographs, before its completion in 1959. The work originates with a stuffed Angora goat that Rauschenberg purchases from a used-furniture store for $35, leaving $15 as a down payment. In its first state (1955–56), the goat stands on a shelf attached to a Combine painting that is later reworked and entitled *Rhyme* (1956). Much later on, the artist will explain his use of objects: "I think collage itself, and the activity of making collage, is the most direct way that you can relate diverse elements rather than their going through the transition of a translation. That is what I like about using real objects, as opposed to reproductions, like a painted image or a photograph. I like the directness, and the fact that it is not being soiled or diluted by my interpretation of it."[28]

APRIL 26–MAY 21: At the *Fourth Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture*, at the Stable Gallery, Rauschenberg shows *Short Circuit* (1955), a work protesting the absence of artists whom he recommended for inclusion in the show and who have not exhibited in the gallery's previous annuals. Rauschenberg asked four artists—Jasper Johns, Ray Johnson, Stan VanDerBeek, and Susan Weil—for works to be added to the larger painting, but only two paintings were ready in time, an oil painting by Weil and a small encaustic flag painting by Johns. Wooden doors marked "open" conceal Weil's and Johns's works. The Johns painting will be stolen from the work in 1965, and Rauschenberg will replace it in 1967 with a facsimile created by Elaine Sturtevant.

MAY 24: The Merce Cunningham Dance Company's *Springweather and People* premieres at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. Rauschenberg collaborated with Remy Charlip, Johnson, and Vera Williams on the costume designs, which he will redesign in 1957.

SEPTEMBER: Rauschenberg moves from Fulton Street to a top-floor studio at 278 Pearl Street, previously occupied by artist Rachel Rosenthal. Johns's studio is one floor below Rauschenberg's in the same building. Rauschenberg and Johns see each other daily, exchanging ideas and discussing their work. The artist later remembers the collaborative process: "Jasper and I literally traded ideas. He would say, 'I've got a terrific idea for you,' and then I'd have to find one for him."[29]

[FALL]: Rauschenberg continues to support himself by preparing window displays for Bonwit Teller and Tiffany & Co. With Johns as partner, he forms Matson Jones–Custom Display; "Matson" is Rauschenberg's mother's maiden name, and "Jones" is derived from "Johns."

1956

JANUARY 31–FEBRUARY 7: *Untitled* (1954), a red Combine painting, is shown in one of Gene Moore's window displays at Bonwit Teller, New York. The painting, which has been altered since the 1954 exhibition of *Red Paintings* at the Egan Gallery, is missing the two left panels as well as the far right panel. Within the year, Rauschenberg will further dismantle the work by cutting it into sections to make several smaller red Combine paintings.

FEBRUARY–NOVEMBER: Matson Jones–Custom Display creates six window displays, three for Bonwit Teller and three for Tiffany & Co. The displays present various tableaux: a mushroom field, cans pouring paint, caves, a night scene, eighteenth-century still lifes, and a Christmas forest.

MAY 6: Premieres take place for the Paul Taylor Dance Company's *Four Epitaphs*, a revised version of *Three Epitaphs*; *The Least Flycatcher*, for which Rauschenberg designed the

costumes and created a score consisting of recorded kitchen sounds; and *Untitled Duet*, for which Rauschenberg designed the costumes (which incorporate noise-making elements), at the Henry Street Playhouse, New York.

JULY 11: The Merce Cunningham Dance Company's *Nocturnes* premieres at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Becket, Massachusetts; Rauschenberg designed the costumes and set. The set includes a scrim of transparent white netting that partially obscures some dancers.

1957

JANUARY–OCTOBER: Matson Jones–Custom Display designs three window displays for Tiffany & Co., New York: tableaux of desert landscapes, cobwebs, and falling leaves.

FEBRUARY 10: The Paul Taylor Dance Company's *The Tower* premieres at Kaufmann Concert Hall at the 92nd Street YM-YWHA, New York, with a set by Rauschenberg (a Combine, *The Tower* [1957]) and costumes by Jasper Johns.

MARCH 8: Morton Feldman and Ilse Getz bring Leo Castelli and his wife, Ileana (later Ileana Sonnabend), to the Pearl Street studio. Rauschenberg introduces them to Johns; they become excited by Johns's work and offer him a show, but leave without any offer to Rauschenberg. Several days later, after receiving a phone call from Rauschenberg, they offer him a show in March 1958.

[LATE SPRING]: Rauschenberg continues work on *Monogram*. Now in its second state, the goat is encircled by an automobile tire and set on a platform in front of a vertical canvas, a single repainted panel from the dismantled five-panel *White Painting* (1951).

1958

[LATE WINTER]: Rauschenberg begins employing a solvent-transfer technique to make drawings using photographs from magazines: a solvent, such as turpentine, is applied to the printed image, which, when placed facedown on a sheet of paper and rubbed on the back with the tip of a pen or other implement, is transferred to the paper. He later uses lighter fluid in place of turpentine. The resulting image is a reversal of the original, and the movement of the rubbing implement across the back of the reproduction results in a hatching-like pattern over its surface. Rauschenberg finds that glossy magazine illustrations work best and frequently selects images from *Newsweek*, *Time*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Life*.

MARCH: The artist moves to 128 Front Street, on the second floor, after the Pearl Street building is condemned by New York City authorities. Jasper Johns moves into the same building, on the third floor.

MARCH 4–29: *Robert Rauschenberg* opens at Leo Castelli, New York. The exhibition includes approximately twenty Combines. Castelli buys *Bed* (1955), the only artwork sold. In 2005, Rauschenberg will reflect upon the meaning of the work, saying: "I think [*Bed*] is like a bouquet of some of the most beautiful moments in bed."[30]

14 Paul Taylor Dance Company performing *Images and Reflections* (1958), with costumes designed by Rauschenberg

15. *Robert Rauschenberg*, Leo Castelli, NY, 1960

[LATE SPRING]: Rauschenberg begins work on a series of drawings based on the thirty-four cantos of Dante's *Inferno*, which he has not yet read. The project was suggested earlier to Rauschenberg, Johns, and Knox Martin by Theresa Egan, the wife of Charles Egan. Rauschenberg will spend two and a half years on the project, finishing it in late 1960. Using John Ciardi's translation of the poem, which he reads one canto at a time, Rauschenberg works with Michael Sonnabend, a Dante scholar (and future husband of Ileana Castelli), to develop a composition for each canto. The compositions combine his own drawings and watercolors with reproductions from magazines, transferred to the paper with solvent. By using popular images of figures such as John F. Kennedy and Adlai Stevenson, Rauschenberg gives Dante's poem a contemporary context. Critic Dore Ashton will praise the drawings, writing: "It is not strange that R who has always drawn veils over his images; who has always hungered for morsels of real life only to blur and reconstrue them; who throws a film of irreality over the most ordinary of images should find his way to Dante. He says: I have a special kind of focus, I tend to see everything in sight. He not only sees everything in sight, but akin to the Florentine master of universal sightseeing, he hears, smells, touches, recoils, strolls, leaps, and swoons before what he sees. Then, with the film of his brush, he obscures and relates everything to everything."[31]

JUNE 8–29: *Bed* is included in *Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture—First Selection of Young American and Italian Artists* at the Festival of Two Worlds, Spoleto, Italy. Officials refuse to show the painting in the main gallery and place it in a storage room. Writing for *Artnews* in the summer of 1958, Rauschenberg notes: "I don't feel any direct relationship between what I do and existing art. Though there is an unavoidable progression: the things all paintings have in common are paint, and color, and some means of application. With that standard you can make any two pictures appear either alike or different. I don't think whether they're alike or different is really very interesting."[32]

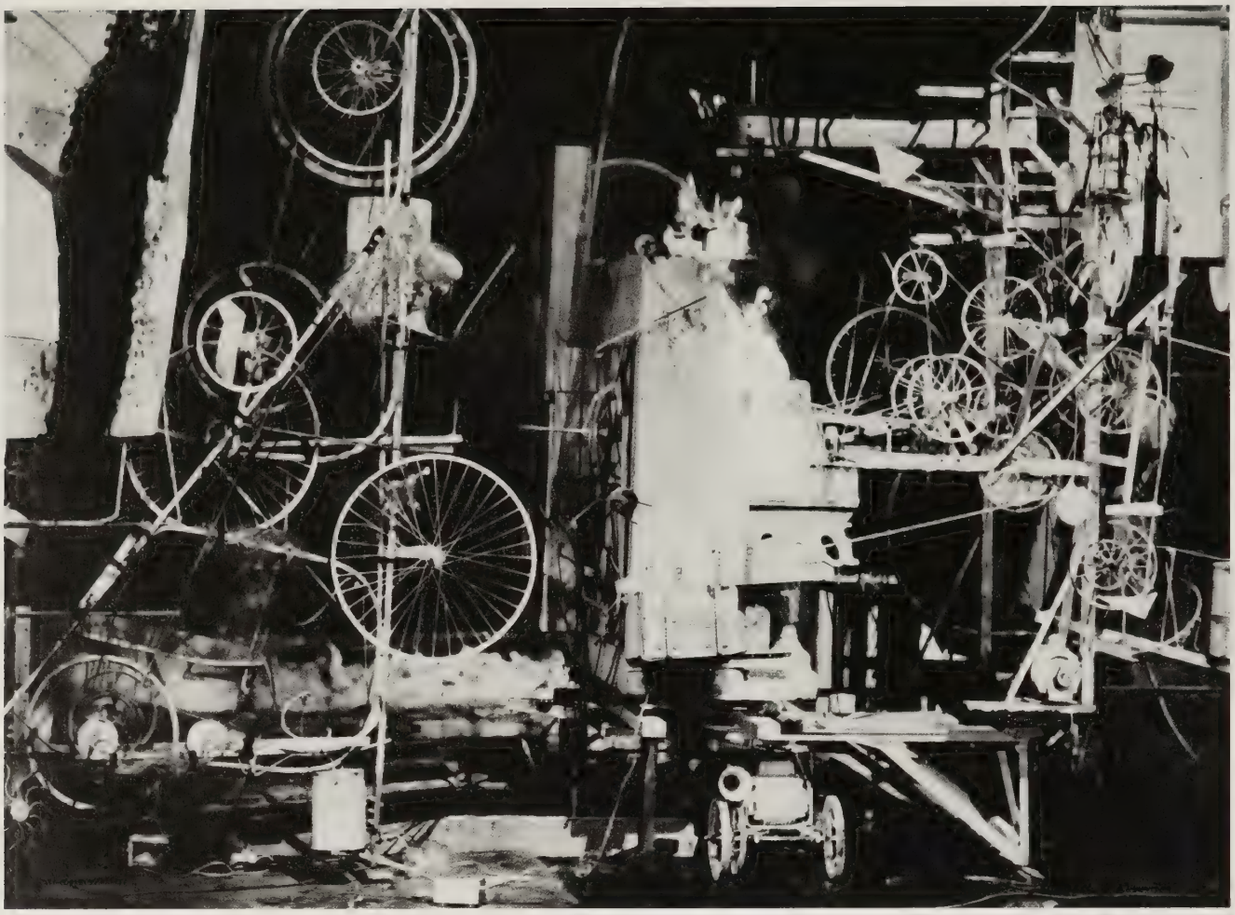
SEPTEMBER: Matson Jones–Custom Display designs two window displays for Tiffany & Co., one a tableaux of birds and the other of a forest; the latter is the company's last project.

FALL: After completing six Dante drawings, Rauschenberg applies for, but does not receive, a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation grant to complete the remaining twenty-eight drawings. Discouraged, he sets the project aside until mid-1959, when he will resume in earnest.

DECEMBER 5, 1958–FEBRUARY 8, 1959: He participates in *The 1958 Pittsburgh Bicentennial International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture* at the Carnegie Institute, exhibiting *Painting with Red Letter S* (1957). Seymour Knox acquires the work for his private collection, which will later become part of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York.

1959

Rauschenberg makes *Broadcast*, a painting in which three radios are concealed behind the canvas. Viewers are invited to manipulate dials that adjust the volume and change the stations. The work anticipates his technology works of the 1960s.



16. Jean Tinguely's *Homage to New York* in the sculpture garden of the Museum of Modern Art, NY, 1960; Rauschenberg's contribution, *Money Thrower for Tinguely's H.T.N.Y.*, can be seen in the center front

Alan Solomon, director of the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art (subsequently the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art), Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, purchases *Migration* (1959) for the institution's collection; this is the first museum purchase of a Rauschenberg painting.

[WINTER]: The artist completes *Monogram* (1955–59). Following Jasper Johns's suggestion that the animal be set within a picture on the floor, Rauschenberg places the goat in the center of a collaged and painted square platform mounted on wheels. The work's title results from the union of the goat and tire, which reminds Rauschenberg of the interweaving letters of a monogram.

JANUARY 12–FEBRUARY 6: He participates in *Art and the Found Object* at the Time-Life Building, New York, exhibiting *Odalisk* (1955/58), *Gloria* (1956), and *Interior* (1956). The artist purchases a readymade by Marcel Duchamp, *Bottlerack* (1914, fourth version 1960), from the exhibition for $3.22.

[AROUND JANUARY 30]: Poet and critic Nicolas Calas brings Duchamp to visit Rauschenberg's and Johns's Front Street studios.

MARCH 31–APRIL 8: Rauschenberg participates in *Three* at Leo Castelli, New York, which includes works by Norman Bluhm and Jean Dubuffet, as well as his own. He exhibits *Monogram* in its final state. Collector Robert Scull offers to buy the work as a donation to the Museum of Modern Art, but director Alfred H. Barr, Jr., declines the offer. In December 1964, the work will be purchased by the Moderna Museet, Stockholm.

MAY 30: A solo exhibition of solvent-transfer drawings by Rauschenberg opens at the Galleria La Tartaruga, Rome.

JULY 11–OCTOBER 11: He participates in *Documenta II: Kunst nach 1945*, in Kassel, West Germany, exhibiting *Bed* (1955), *Thaw* (1958), and *Kickback* (1959).

[LATE SUMMER]: Rauschenberg makes *Trophy I (for Merce Cunningham)*, the first work in a series of six "trophies" dedicated to his peers; the subsequent works are dedicated to Marcel and Teeny Duchamp (1961), Jean Tinguely (1961), John Cage (1961), Johns (1962), and Darryl Pottorf (1994). "I found that the Trophy works were a vehicle for saying unmentionable thanks to extra extraordinaries,"[33] the artist says. Only *Trophy I* contains a literal portrait, a photograph, of the subject.

SEPTEMBER 21–DECEMBER 2: He participates in *V Bienal*, São Paulo, in the American section of the exhibition, organized by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. He exhibits

Hazard (1957), *Painting with Red Letter S* (1957), and *Trophy I (for Merce Cunningham)*.

OCTOBER 2–25: He participates in *Première Biennale de Paris: Manifestation biennale et internationale des jeunes artists* at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, exhibiting *Talisman* (1958), *Forge* (1959), and *Photograph* (1959).

OCTOBER 4, 6–10: Allan Kaprow's *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* takes place at the Reuben Gallery, New York. During one evening's performance, Rauschenberg and Johns substitute for Red Grooms and Lester Johnson in the fifth part of the event: they leave their seats in the audience and paint, each with a single color, circles (which Rauschenberg makes by using the paint-can lid) and straight lines (Johns) on opposite sides of an unprimed canvas. (The resulting work is believed to have been lost or destroyed.)

DECEMBER 15, 1959–JANUARY 9, 1960: Rauschenberg participates in *School of New York: Some Younger Artists* at the Stable Gallery, New York. Eleven artists, including Rauschenberg and Johns, are represented. The exhibition coincides with the publication of the book *School of New York: Some Younger Artists*, edited by B. H. Friedman and including a text on Rauschenberg by David Myers.

DECEMBER 15, 1959–FEBRUARY 14, 1960: Rauschenberg participates in *L'exposition internationale du surréalisme, 1959–1960*, organized by André Breton and Marcel Duchamp, at Galerie Daniel Cordier, Paris. He exhibits *Bed* (1955) and *Odalisk* (1955/1958).

DECEMBER 16, 1959–FEBRUARY 17, 1960: Rauschenberg participates in *Sixteen Americans* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, exhibiting seven Combine paintings. The exhibition catalogue includes a statement by Rauschenberg that will become well-known: "Painting relates to both art and life. Neither can be made. (I try to act in the gap between the two.)"[34]

1960

Rauschenberg continues to work on the Combines, which tend toward more painterly reliefs with larger fields of bright color and fewer photographic images than earlier Combine works. He also uses new collage materials, such as hardware, electrical devices, and mechanical objects. He explains to a reviewer that he is trying to avoid the "souvenir quality" of some of his earlier works: "Nostalgia tends to eliminate some of the directness. Immediacy is the only thing that you can trust."[35]

Rauschenberg is introduced to Andy Warhol by Emile de Antonio at a party in New York. After Warhol's death in 1988, Rauschenberg will note: "His impact on our lives remains explosive."[36]

MARCH 17: Jean Tinguely's *Homage to New York* is staged in the sculpture garden at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Tinguely's large kinetic sculpture, made of bicycle wheels, old motors, a piano, and other objects found in junkyards, is designed to self-destruct within thirty minutes. Tinguely is assisted by Billy Klüver, an engineer in the Communications Research Department at Bell Telephone Laboratories, Murray Hill, New Jersey. Rauschenberg contributes *Money Thrower for Tinguely's H.T.N.Y.*, conceived as the mascot, a sculpture that scatters a dozen silver dollars into the audience.

MARCH 29–APRIL 16: *Robert Rauschenberg* is on view at Leo Castelli, New York. The exhibition includes *Broadcast* (1959), *Canyon* (1959), *Gift for Apollo* (1959), *Inlet* (1959), *Winter Pool* (1959), *Allegory* (1959–60), and *Hawk* (1960).

APRIL 22–MAY 30: Rauschenberg exhibits solvent-transfer drawings alongside works by Cy Twombly in *Zwei amerikanische Maler* at Galerie 22, Düsseldorf.

MAY 17–JUNE 18: He participates in *Society for Contemporary American Art Twentieth Annual Exhibit* at the Art Institute of Chicago, exhibiting *Inlet*, for which he is awarded a prize of $3,000.

JUNE 6–24: He participates in *New Media—New Forms* at the Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, exhibiting *Odalisk* (1955/1958).

FALL: Rauschenberg befriends a group of young choreographers who attend a dance-composition class taught by Robert Dunn at Merce Cunningham's studio from 1960 to 1962. The group will come to be known, in 1963, as Judson Dance Theater. Striving to break with conventions of modern dance, they explore unfixed choreography and nondance movements, and they adopt Rauschenberg's practice of using any available props and performers. Rauschenberg will later state: "a good Judson piece was really boring, usually too long with never enough

17. Rauschenberg, Niki de Saint Phalle, Jean Tinguely, and Jasper Johns on the occasion of *Feu à volonté*, Galerie J, Paris, 1961

happening."[37] In 1965, he will note: "I think that one of the reasons that I have been so preoccupied with theater is that it has in an extreme form two of the things that I like. I like the necessary control that one has to have in order to work with other people to put on a piece of theater. ... And I think I try to do pieces where every move is not choreographed, but it is planned and there's a great deal of open trust within an image on the stage."[38]

FALL: He retreats to Treasure Island, a small fishing village near Saint Petersburg, Florida, to complete his illustrations for Dante's *Inferno* (*XXXIV Drawings for Dante's Inferno* [1958–60]). Ileana Castelli and Jasper Johns visit on separate occasions.

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NOVEMBER: The artist creates the solvent-transfer drawing *Election* during the televised broadcast of the results of the presidential election, in which John F. Kennedy becomes the thirty-fifth president of the United States.

NOVEMBER 28, 1960–JANUARY 14, 1961: He participates in *International Surrealist Exhibition* at the D'Arcy Galleries, New York, exhibiting *Bed* (1955).

DECEMBER 6, 1960–JANUARY 7, 1961: The first exhibition of Rauschenberg's *XXXIV Drawings for Dante's Inferno* takes place at Leo Castelli, New York.

1961

The artist makes Combine paintings, such as *Pantomime* and *Reservoir*, that incorporate working electric fans, clocks, and other elements to create a sense of motion and real time. The works, which "perform," have a theatrical dimension.

MARCH 10–APRIL 17: At Billy Klüver's invitation, Rauschenberg creates the Combine painting *Black Market* for the exhibition *Bewogen/Beweging (art in motion)* at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Inside a valise attached to the painting are small objects that Rauschenberg invites viewers to take and replace with messages or drawings. The drawings thus record the work's development over time. When objects and drawings are taken and not replaced, Rauschenberg withdraws the invitation for viewer participation.

APRIL 15: The artist sends *Election* (1960) to President and Mrs. Kennedy. In a letter accompanying the gift, Rauschenberg writes: "My concern with the election, primarily your becoming our next president, interrupted a 2 ½ year project of illustrating Dante's *Inferno*. That fact + a need to celebrate your victory in my own medium is the subject. It is the only drawing in which the Dante image is used outside of the illustrations."[39]

MAY: The artist has a solo exhibition at the Galerie Daniel Cordier, Paris, where he shows a selection of drawings and twelve Combine paintings. Only one drawing and one painting are sold, although the show is popular with critics and artists.

MAY: An interview conducted by André Parinaud, "Un 'misfit' de la peinture new-yorkaise se confesse," is published in *Arts*, a Parisian weekly newspaper. The interview establishes Rauschenberg's reputation in Europe, where he becomes popular with critics.

MAY: The short-lived but widely circulated Italian journal *Metro* publishes three significant articles on Rauschenberg (by John Cage, critic Dore Ashton, and artist Gillo Dorfles). Cage describes the artist: "He is like that butcher whose knife never became dull simply because he cut with it in such a way that it never encountered an obstacle."[40]

MID-MAY: During the installation of *Rörelse i konsten (art in motion)* at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Rauschenberg creates *Johanson's Painting* and *Door*, Combine paintings made of materials gathered from nearby demolition sites. The title *Johanson's Painting* results from a woman's comment to Rauschenberg at the exhibition's opening reception; unaware that he is the artist, she tells him, "Ingemar Johansson could have made that painting" (a reference to the Swedish boxer), which immediately compels Rauschenberg to write on the canvas, "This is Johanson's." The startled woman forcibly stops him from writing more, but he later returns to add the word "painting."

MAY 15: *Les 41 présentent Iris Clert*, a group exhibition of portraits of the art dealer made in her honor, opens at Galerie Iris Clert, Paris. Rauschenberg, who is in Stockholm, forgets to submit the requisite portrait and sends instead a telegram: "This is a portrait of Iris Clert if I say so—Robert Rauschenberg."[41]

JUNE 20: Rauschenberg participates in Homage to David Tudor at the Théâtre de l'Ambassade des États-Unis, Paris. During simultaneous events staged by Rauschenberg, Niki de Saint Phalle, Jasper Johns, Jean Tinguely, and David Tudor, each artist performs spontaneous acts of their own choosing within a set amount of time. Rauschenberg creates *First Time Painting* onstage, using contact microphones attached to the canvas to capture and amplify the sound of its making; the back of the canvas faces the audience throughout the performance. When an alarm clock attached to the painting rings, Rauschenberg wraps the work in brown paper and gives it to a bellhop from the Hôtel Pont Royal (where Rauschenberg is staying), who carries it offstage. The audience never actually sees the work. Later in the decade, Rauschenberg will note: "I don't find

18. Rauschenberg creating *First Time Painting* onstage during Homage to David Tudor at Théâtre de l'Ambassade des États-Unis, Paris, 1961

[illegible] installation for *Dylaby (Dynamisch Labyrint)*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1962

20. *Rauschenberg: Première exposition (oeuvres 1954-1961)*, Galerie Ileana Sonnabend, Paris, February 1963

theater that different from painting, and it's not that I think of painting as theater or vice versa. I tend to think of working as a kind of involvement with materials, as well as a rather focused interest which changes."[42]

[JULY]: Rauschenberg moves from Front Street to a studio at 809 Broadway, a commercial building in which residential occupation is illegal. Painter Öyvind Fahlström moves into the Front Street studio.

AUGUST: Rauschenberg becomes the official lighting director and stage manager of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, with whom he tours through 1964. He will later write: "Local touring with dance co. was awkward, but beautiful addition to my work. The dances, the dancers, the collaboration, the responsibilities and trust which are essential in cooperative art became the most important & satisfying element in my life worked positively with the privateness and loneliness of painting."[43]

OCTOBER 2-NOVEMBER 12: Rauschenberg participates in *The Art of Assemblage* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. He exhibits *Talisman* (1958) and *Canyon* (1959). The exhibition, which includes works from the fifteenth century to the present, and from both Western and non-Western cultures, marks the first museum recognition of assemblage as an art form.

OCTOBER 19: In conjunction with *The Art of Assemblage*, Rauschenberg takes part in a symposium at the Museum of Modern Art. Panelists include Lawrence Alloway, Marcel Duchamp, Richard Huelsenbeck, William C. Seitz (who moderates), and Roger Shattuck. Rauschenberg, selected to represent the younger generation of artists, assumes the role of provocateur in the discussion.

NOVEMBER 7-DECEMBER 5: The exhibition *Rauschenberg* takes place at Leo Castelli, New York. It begins with Rauschenberg gradually replacing works in the previous exhibition with his own paintings and sculptures, and ends with him replacing his own works with works by other artists.

1962

MARCH 4-31: *Robert Rauschenberg* takes place at the Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles. The exhibition provides many California artists their first opportunity to see Rauschenberg's work in person.

MARCH 17-MAY 6: Rauschenberg participates in *4 Amerikanare: Jasper Johns, Alfred Leslie, Robert Rauschenberg, Richard Stankiewicz* at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm.

EARLY SPRING: After two years of invitations from Tatyana Grosman, founder of ULAE (Universal Limited Art Editions),

21. *Rauschenberg: Seconde exposition (oeuvres 1962-1963)*, Galerie Ileana Sonnabend, Paris, February-March 1963

West Islip, New York, and with the encouragement of Jasper Johns, Rauschenberg accepts an offer to create prints at the press. The occasion marks the beginning of a long collaboration in printmaking with Grosman. He will later note: "It seems that in theater and printmaking, every individual that you add to a project will result in ten times as many new possibilities. A good collaboration produces universal thinking."[44] He makes his first lithograph, *Abby's Bird*, published in an edition of fifty, for the New York Hilton Hotel.

APRIL 7-21: Rauschenberg exhibits *Ace* (1962), a multipanel Combine painting, at Leo Castelli.

MAY 4: He performs in *The Construction of Boston* at the Maidman Playhouse, New York. The fifteen-minute play is a collaboration among Rauschenberg (who designed the set), poet Kenneth Koch (who wrote the text), Niki de Saint Phalle, and Jean Tinguely. Merce Cunningham directed, but declined credit at the last moment. Rauschenberg, de Saint Phalle, and Tinguely act in the play with doubles (who also appear onstage) speaking their lines.

SPRING: Rauschenberg commences working with engineers Billy Klüver and Harold Hodges on an interactive sculpture, *Oracle* (1962–65), which incorporates radios to be operated by viewers, an idea originally intended for *Ace*.

SUMMER: He creates the Combine *Inside-Out*, featured in Gene Swenson's *Artnews* article "Rauschenberg Paints a Picture," on the making of the work. Swenson notes that Rauschenberg "'transforms' objects." He continues: "He does not use them as pure form and color, destroying our sense of their origin—which is what is usually meant by 'transformation.' Rather he seeks to retain or reinstate some quality the object possessed in its original environment."[45]

AUGUST 30-SEPTEMBER 30: The group exhibition *Dylaby (Dynamisch Labyrint)*, at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, consists of installations by Rauschenberg, de Saint Phalle, Martial Raysse, Daniel Spoerri, Tinguely, and Per Olof Ultvedt. Stedelijk Museum director Willem Sandberg and curator Ad Peterson invited the artists to collaborate on a single sculptural work—an environment or labyrinth to be walked through; however, the artists found it too difficult to reconcile their diverse views and, to Rauschenberg's disappointment, decided to create separate pieces. In addition to his installation in the show, Rauschenberg designed the cover of the exhibition catalogue.

SEPTEMBER 18: At the invitation of critic and curator Henry Geldzahler, Rauschenberg visits Andy Warhol's studio in New York. During the visit, he sees Warhol's recent silkscreened paintings. Warhol began to silkscreen canvas, using photographic images rather than stencils, the previous month.

22. Rauschenberg's first museum retrospective, *Robert Rauschenberg*, at the Jewish Museum, NY, 1963

AFTER SEPTEMBER 18: Warhol makes a series of silkscreened portraits of Rauschenberg, including *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1963), for which he requests family photographs from Rauschenberg; these are among Warhol's first silkscreened paintings to display varied imagery within a single painting and to feature a subject who is not a celebrity.

OCTOBER: After previous failed attempts to photosensitize canvas, Rauschenberg begins to silkscreen paintings, finding the techniques he has used to incorporate photographic imagery in his Combine paintings and solvent-transfer drawings restrictive because of the inability to alter their size or reuse the images. He will later say: "I had been working so extensively on sculpture that I was ready to try substituting the image—by means of the photographic silkscreen—for objects."[46] As with *XXXIV Drawings for Dante's Inferno* (1958–60), sources for his images include *National Geographic*, *Life*, *Esquire*, *Boxing and Wrestling*, and newspapers, as well as his own photographs. A black-and-white color scheme, Rauschenberg's preference in his own photography, will be dominant until 1963, when he will begin to use more color. The silkscreened images are complemented by gestural applications of oil paint, and in some works Rauschenberg experiments with additional collage elements.

[LATE FALL]: He begins—and substantially completes in twenty-four hours, during the filming of a CBS television documentary by Mike Wallace—*Barge* (1962–63), a thirty-two-foot-long silkscreened painting and his largest work to date. He later describes the inspiration and process: "I made *Barge* through the excitement of seeing an incredible Jim Dine. I was just passing by and dropped up to his studio to see what he was doing. He had done the piece with the big aluminum chair and sofa. Well, I was so moved by that piece, and about the lousy lighting he had in his studio, that I ran all the way to Rosenthal's art store to get the largest piece of canvas they had, and started *Barge* that very evening."[47]

1963

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, acquires Rauschenberg's *XXXIV Drawings for Dante's Inferno* (1958–60) through an anonymous gift from a donor, who purchased them from Leo Castelli for $30,000.

FEBRUARY 1–16; FEBRUARY 20–MARCH 9: Consecutive solo exhibitions take place at Galerie Ileana Sonnabend, Paris: *Rauschenberg: Première exposition (oeuvres 1954–1961)* and *Rauschenberg: Seconde exposition (oeuvres 1962–1963)*. Critic Pierre Schneider describes the work as "combining 'raw' objects (radio sets, stuffed goats, keys, neckties, etc.) with paint as sweetly tasty as the Good Humor man's goodies. There they are, the erstwhile ruffians of mass production with pretty pigments round their necks, like repentant delinquents meekly wearing the choir boy's surplice."[48]

23. *Sixteen Americans*, The Museum of Modern Art, NY, 1959–60

MARCH 14–JUNE 2: He participates in *Six Painters and the Object*, curated by Lawrence Alloway at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. The other artists in the exhibition are Jim Dine, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist, and Andy Warhol.

MARCH 31–MAY 12: The artist's first retrospective museum exhibition, *Robert Rauschenberg*, organized by director Alan Solomon, opens at the Jewish Museum, New York. The show consists of fifty-five works spanning his career to date. Rauschenberg created the exhibition poster, an offset lithograph, which is an adaptation of the lithograph *Rival* (also 1963). The exhibition initiates the Jewish Museum's contemporary-art program, which will thrive throughout the rest of the decade.

SPRING: Rauschenberg creates "Random Order," published in *Location*, a short-lived, New York–based magazine. The work consists of a full-page reproduction of the silkscreened painting *Sundog* (1962), a two-page collage of Rauschenberg's own snapshots and handwritten text, a full-page reproduction of the silkscreened painting *Renascence* (1962), and a full-page reproduction of a photograph by Rauschenberg labeled "View from the artist's studio." The project illustrates his interest in finding connections among the disparate events of daily life, or, as he writes, locating the "random order that cannot be described as accidental."[49]

APRIL 18–JUNE 2: Rauschenberg participates in *The Popular Image* at the Washington Gallery of Modern Art, Washington, D.C., exhibiting *Backwash* (1959), *Black Market* (1961), *Cove*, and *Express* (1963). In a recorded interview by Billy Klüver, Rauschenberg speaks about his sometimes unconventional materials: "I always thought about materials as whatever I use, whatever the results are, however I use them, that the method was closer to a collaboration than these materials being in the service of art."[50]

"I always thought about materials as whatever I use, whatever the results are, however I use them, that the method was closer to a collaboration than these materials being in the service of art."

MAY 9: The premiere of *Pelican*, choreographed by Rauschenberg, takes place as part of the Concert of Dance 5, an evening of performances by Judson Dance Theater, at the Pop Festival, Washington, D.C. In the performance, which takes place at America on Wheels, a roller-skating rink, Rauschenberg and artist Per Olof Ultvedt wear structures of stretched parachute silk on their backs and propel themselves on roller skates while Carolyn Brown, a member of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, dances on pointe between them.

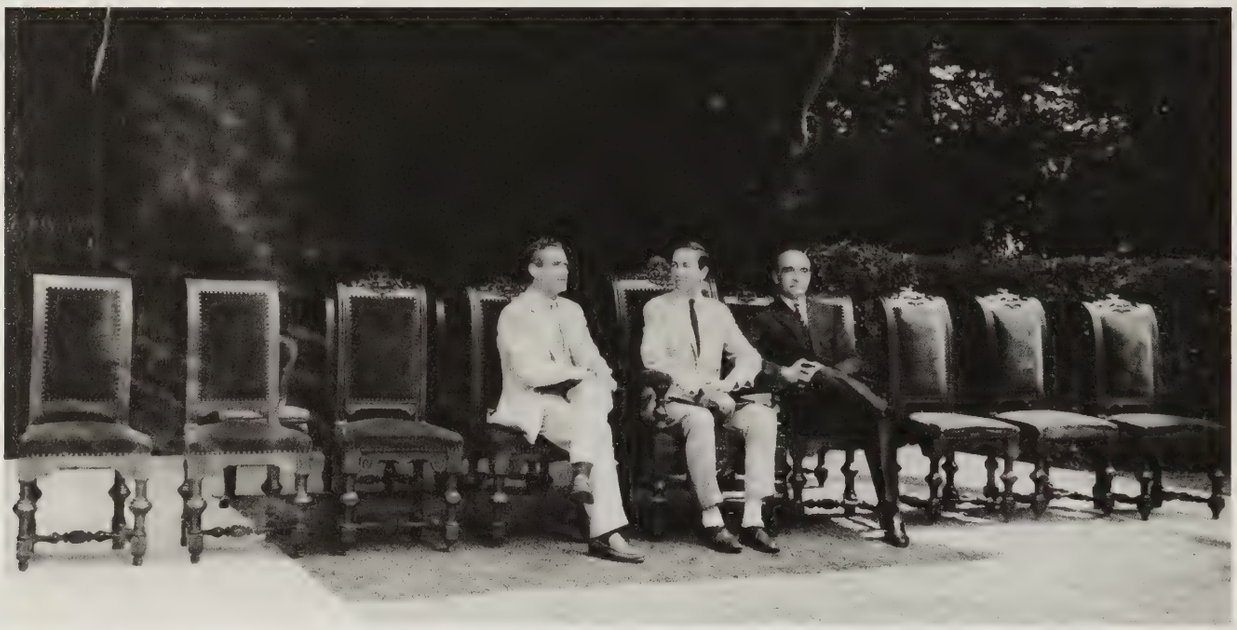
The accompanying music, created by Rauschenberg, is a collage of sounds ranging from radio, television, and film to music by George Frideric Handel and Joseph Haydn. *Pelican* is the first of eleven performances that Rauschenberg will choreograph and design between 1963 and 1968.

[JUNE]: He begins using color in his silkscreened paintings, occasionally using some of the same images previously included in the black-and-white silkscreened paintings. Rauschenberg quickly abandons attempts to replicate realistic color and to maintain exact color registration, choosing instead to highlight a handmade quality.

JUNE 9: *Accident* (1963) wins the Velika Premija (grand prize) at the *V Mednarodna Grafi˘cna Razstava* (fifth international exhibition of prints), at the Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia. This is the first time the award has been presented to an American. The title of the print, published by ULAE in an edition of twenty-nine, derives from the breaking of the lithography stones twice during the printing. When the second stone broke, Rauschenberg decided that he wanted to go ahead with the printing; the imprint of the crack and broken chips of stone at the bottom of the print documents the event.

24. Rauschenberg and officials at the presentation ceremony for the International Grand Prize in Painting, XXXII Venice Biennale, 1964

25. Rauschenberg receiving the International Grand Prize in Painting, XXXII Venice Biennale, 1964



JULY 24: The premiere of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company's *Story* takes place at Royce Hall, University of California, Los Angeles, with costumes and set designed by Rauschenberg. The costumes reflect Cunningham's "open form" technique, as realized in *Story*, in which dancers spontaneously choose to perform a sequence of material from a carefully rehearsed selection. At any moment, dancers may don any of thirty-five items (including shirts, pants, sweaters, dresses, a football player's shoulder pads, and a gas mask) located in bags in the wings. For each performance of *Story* during the 1964 world tour, Rauschenberg will design a new set, using existing features of the performance space as well as objects found locally. As Rauschenberg will later explain: "Neither dancers nor choreographers ever knew what to expect until curtain."[51]

EARLY OCTOBER: Rauschenberg's father dies of a heart attack. Rauschenberg returns to Louisiana for the funeral.

OCTOBER 26–NOVEMBER 21: The artist has a solo exhibition of color silkscreened paintings at Leo Castelli, New York. He exhibits *Archive*, *Bicycle*, *Die Hard*, *Overdrive*, *Shaftway*, and *Windward* (all 1963).

BETWEEN OCTOBER 31 AND NOVEMBER 2: The artist writes "Note on Painting" while on tour in the Southwest with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. The text, which will be published in the anthology *Pop Art Redefined* (1969), is punctuated with words he sees along the road, or brief descriptions of sights: "My fascination with images open 24 Hrs. is based on the complex interlocking of disparate visual facts heated pool that have no respect for grammar. The form then Denver 39 is second hand to nothing. The work then has a chance to electric service become its own cliché. Luggage. This is the invevitable fate fairground of any inanimate object freightways by this I mean anything that does not have inconsistency as a possibility built-in."[52]

[LATE FALL]: He begins to incorporate portraits of President John F. Kennedy, who was assassinated in Dallas on November 22, into his silkscreened paintings. Rauschenberg, who had made the screens prior to the assassination, considered not using the images, but then realized that this would be just as self-conscious a decision as the decision to use them.[53] They will appear in approximately twelve of his paintings.

1964

Rauschenberg creates *Shades*, an artist's book, published by ULAE in an edition of twenty-four. The work is an object-multiple, or editioned sculpture, consisting of lithographs printed on six square Plexiglas sheets, five of which can be lifted and rearranged by the viewer, with an electric light placed inside an aluminum base. Rauschenberg's decision to use Plexiglas arose from a remark made by Tatyana Grosman about the length of time required to make paper, to which he responded by suggesting that they try printing on a transparent material. After experimentation, he settled upon Plexiglas. The book's "text" consists of images culled from discarded photographic plates and printers' mats from the *New York Times*.

26. John Cage, Merce Cunningham, and Rauschenberg outside Sadler's Wells Theatre during a Merce Cunningham Dance Company world tour, London, 1964

JANUARY 9–FEBRUARY 9: He participates in *Black, White and Grey Contemporary Painting and Sculpture* at the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut. He exhibits a *White Painting* (1951), a black painting (1951–52), *Erased de Kooning Drawing* (1953, in its first public exhibition), and an untitled transfer drawing (ca. 1959).

JANUARY 30: Rauschenberg's *Shot Put* premieres at the Concert for New Paltz at the State University of New York, New Paltz. In this solo performance, he dances in darkness with a flashlight attached to his right foot, drawing with light in space, to the accompaniment of an eleven-minute tape recording of excerpts from painter Öyvind Fahlström's *A Lecture on Birds in Sweden*, which is a reading of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* using stylized vocalizations.

FEBRUARY 2: An interview with Rauschenberg by Bryan Robertson is broadcast on the BBC television program *Monitor*.

FEBRUARY 5–MARCH 8: The retrospective exhibition *Robert Rauschenberg, Paintings, Drawings and Combines* opens at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London. The *Sunday Telegraph* in London will later declare that Rauschenberg is "the most important American artist since Jackson Pollock."

FEBRUARY 29: Calvin Tomkins's extensive profile of Rauschenberg, "Moving Out," appears in the *New Yorker*. A self-portrait—an ink thumbprint with a stenciled monogram "RR"—is the accompanying illustration.

APRIL 22: The New York World's Fair opens. Rauschenberg's

27. Rauschenberg performing *Elgin Tie*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1964

28. Left to right: Robert Morris, Steve Paxton, Yvonne Rainer, Deborah Hay, Tony Holder, Sally Gross, Rauschenberg, Judith Dunn, and Joseph Schlichter performing Yvonne Rainer's *Parts of Some Sextets*, Avery Theater, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT, 1965

silkscreened painting *Skyway* (1964) is installed on the exterior of the New York State Pavilion, designed by architect Philip Johnson. Other artists commissioned to contribute murals and sculptural works for the pavilion include Peter Agostini, John Chamberlain, Robert Indiana, Ellsworth Kelly, Alexander Liberman, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Mallory, James Rosenquist, and Andy Warhol.

MAY–JUNE: Rauschenberg develops a new lithography technique at ULAE, pushing lithographic tusche through commercial photo silkscreens to transfer images (some of which also appear in silkscreened paintings) onto the stone. Resulting prints include *Kip-Up*, *Spot*, *Front Roll*, and *Breakthrough I*.

JUNE 18: The Merce Cunningham Dance Company performs *Antic Meet* (1958), *Summerspace* (1958), and *Story* (1963) at the Teatro La Fenice, Venice. Controversy surrounding Rauschenberg's eligibility for a Biennale prize adds excitement to the performance. His notoriety and increasingly visible presence onstage will soon lead to a thirteen-year break in his collaborations with the company.

JUNE 20–OCTOBER 18: Rauschenberg exhibits works at the *XXXII Esposizione Biennale Internazionale d'Arte*, Venice. The United States is represented by two related exhibitions at the Biennale, both organized by Alan Solomon under the auspices of the United States Information Agency: *Four Germinal Painters*, featuring Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Morris Louis, and Kenneth Noland; and *Four Younger Artists*, featuring Chamberlain, Jim Dine, Claes Oldenburg, and Frank Stella. Rauschenberg is awarded the International Grand Prize in Painting and two million lire ($3,200). The jury's decision is controversial, since initially only one Rauschenberg work was exhibited in the United States Pavilion on the festival's grounds, with other paintings by him being hung in the former American Consulate; at the last minute, however, Solomon moved three additional works by Rauschenberg to the United States Pavilion to satisfy the judges' eligibility requirements. Some European critics feel that the award selection is evidence of an American "takeover" in Europe. But as critic G. di San Lazzaro writes, for all the controversy, "no one can deny his real talent as a painter, and it is to this that the jury wanted to pay homage."[54] Upon receiving the prize, Rauschenberg calls studio assistant Tony Holder in New York, asking him to destroy the approximately 150 silkscreens in his studio as a preventive measure against self-repetition.[55]

JUNE 27–OCTOBER 5: *Axle* (1964) is exhibited at *Documenta III*, Museum Fridericianum, Kassel.

AUGUST 10–13: During the Merce Cunningham Dance Company's performance of *Story* (1963) at the Phoenix

29. Alex Hay, Steve Paxton, and Rauschenberg rehearsing *Spring Training* in Rauschenberg's Broadway studio, NY, 1965

Theater, London, Rauschenberg creates a new painting onstage (as he did in the collaborative performance Homage to David Tudor in 1961). The resulting Combine painting, completed during four consecutive evenings of performance, is also entitled *Story*.

SEPTEMBER 12–OCTOBER 18: *Robert Rauschenberg*, an exhibition of twenty-six Combine and silkscreened paintings and *XXXIV Drawings for Dante's Inferno* (1958–60), is on view at the Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, Germany.

SEPTEMBER 13: While on tour with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, he performs his works *Shot Put* and *Elgin Tie* (the latter in its only presentation) as part of Five New York Evenings at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm. In *Elgin Tie*, Rauschenberg lowers himself from a skylight by rope, donning pieces of clothing that are tied to the rope. He descends into a barrel of water on a flatbed hand truck and then emerges to slip his feet into a large pair of boots that are nailed to the truck. Meanwhile, a cow is led into the performance space.

NOVEMBER 20: Still on tour with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, Rauschenberg performs *Shot Put* and the single staging of *Tango*, a solo piece in which he drinks a quart of milk to music by Junosuke, at the Sogetsu Art Center, Tokyo.

NOVEMBER 28: Rauschenberg is invited to participate in a public conversation with critic Yoshiaki Tono at the Sogetsu Art Center, Tokyo. During the event, entitled Twenty Questions to Bob Rauschenberg, he does not respond verbally to questions, but rather answers by painting on or adding objects to a Japanese gold folding screen, creating the Combine *Gold Standard*. Deborah Hay, Alex Hay, and Steve Paxton are invited by Rauschenberg to add to the work at any time during the performance. The entire four-hour performance is filmed for Japanese television.

1965

Rauschenberg creates *CORE Poster* for a Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) benefit. CORE is a civil-rights organization, established in 1942, that protests segregation in the South through direct-action demonstrations such as restaurant sit-ins and voter-registration marches. The poster, typical of Rauschenberg's collages, incorporates magazine images of John F. Kennedy, a Native American, the Statue of Liberty, and a statue of a Civil War soldier, as well as New York street scenes. Rauschenberg's involvement with the project marks the development of his direct political activism. Interviewed later in the year, the artist will remark: "The one thing that has been consistent about my work is that there has been an attempt to use the very last minutes in my life and the particular location as the source of energy

and inspiration, rather than retiring to some kind of other time, or dream, or idealism. I think cultivated protest is just as dreamlike as idealism."[56]

JANUARY 8–FEBRUARY 4: *Robert Rauschenberg: Bilder, Zeichnungen, Lithos* takes place at Amerika Haus, Berlin.

FEBRUARY 26–APRIL 18: Rauschenberg participates in *The Twenty-ninth Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting* at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. He exhibits *Axle* (1964), for which he is awarded the William A. Clarke gold medal and a $2,000 prize.

APRIL 13–MAY 8: *Rauschenberg at Dwan* takes place at the Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles, for which Rauschenberg has designed the poster.

MAY 1–26: The First New York Theater Rally, produced by Steve Paxton and Alan Solomon, is held at a former CBS studio in New York. Participating artists include Rauschenberg, Carolyn Brown, Trisha Brown, Jim Dine, Judith Dunn, David Gordon, Alex Hay, Deborah Hay, Tony Holder, Robert Morris, Claes Oldenburg, the Once Group of Ann Arbor, Michigan, Steve Paxton, Yvonne Rainer, and Robert Whitman. Rauschenberg performs his *Spring Training* (1965) and *Pelican* (1963). *Spring Training* includes turtles with flashlights strapped to their backs (one of which becomes Rauschenberg's lifelong pet Rocky); the amplified sound of pages being ripped from a phone book, and of water being poured onto dry ice to create a cloud that envelops Rauschenberg; and such props as a shopping cart full of alarm clocks, stilts, tin cans, and a watermelon. During one segment, slides of the Empire State Building, the New York City skyline, canned food, and other scenes are projected onto a screen carried on a dancer's back.

MAY 3–JUNE 6: *Robert Rauschenberg, Paintings 1953–1964* is on view at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

MAY 15–JUNE 19: He exhibits *Oracle* (1962–65) at Leo Castelli, New York. The mobile sculpture consists of five separate pieces, each of which contains a radio operated by remote control from a console unit that the viewer is invited to manipulate.

30. Rauschenberg working on *Oracle* (1962–65) in his Broadway studio, NY, 1965

MAY 26: Rauschenberg breaks his foot after the final performance of the First New York Theater Rally. The next day, he creates a lithograph, *Post Rally*, which includes an impression of the cane he receives from Saint Vincent's Hospital, New York, where he is treated.

JUNE 3: He makes the collage *Untitled (for Astronaut White)* on the occasion of American astronaut Edward H. White's becoming the first person to walk in space during the *Gemini 4* space mission.

JUNE 14: Broadcast on BBC radio is an interview with Rauschenberg conducted by David Sylvester (the interview was recorded in August 1964 in London). Of the composition of his works, the artist notes: "In my own work I would like any time I'm finished with a picture for it to look complete, but not in the sense of 'complete' meaning 'filled.' I mean space is not to be just filled, it's to be dealt with. And I think the space in a room is brought into the painting by some sense of openness."[57]

JUNE 23: Rauschenberg is named the most important artist to have emerged since World War II in a survey of one hundred French intellectuals, conducted by the Paris weekly newspaper *Arts*. Rauschenberg is the only American on the list.

FALL: Harry N. Abrams publishes a limited deluxe edition of *XXXIV Drawings for Dante's Inferno* (1958–60). Each of the three hundred boxed sets also includes one original lithograph selected from a series of seven published by ULAE: *Plank*, *Mark*, *Sink*, *Ark*, *Kar*, *Rank*, and *Prize*.

SEPTEMBER 29: Rauschenberg attends a ceremony with New York Senator Jacob Javits and his wife, Marion Javits, in which a bill establishing the National Endowment for the Arts is signed. Rauschenberg was active in lobbying for the bill.

NOVEMBER 4: He stages *Map Room [I]* at Goddard College, Plainfield, Vermont. The work is performed by him, Alex Hay, Deborah Hay, Steve Paxton, and two student volunteers. After showing slides on a screen, Rauschenberg instructs some audience members to hang large white cards on their backs, onto which he projects a travelogue movie. He sits in a chair, illuminated from behind, making shadow pictures on the wall. Deborah Hay lies on a settee in a body stocking, performing sensuous movements. For the finale, Rauschenberg walks across the stage with cans of dry ice attached to his ankles and flashlights on his legs illuminating the vapor. Rauschenberg is dissatisfied with the piece and will redevelop it as *Map Room II*.

LATE FALL: He purchases a former orphanage building and chapel from the St. Joseph Mission of the Immaculate Virgin on Lafayette Street, New York. He will spend approximately one year renovating the space into a studio and living quarters before moving in. Rauschenberg will retain this building for the rest of his life.

DECEMBER 1–3, 16–18: The premiere of *Map Room II* takes place at the Expanded Cinema Festival, Film-Makers' Cinematheque, New York. The work begins with four blindfolded and tuxedoed participants holding up random selections from four sets of word cards to create nonsensical sentences. Blank cards are distributed to audience members to hang on their backs for a movie projection. Tires are prevalent props: one dancer crouches inside a tire and rolls across the floor, other dancers have tires attached to their legs. Deborah Hay wears a chicken-wire costume that holds three live doves. For the finale, Rauschenberg holds glowing neon tubes while wearing shoes encased in twenty-pound blocks of clear polyester resin, made by Arman. Critic John Gruen describes the piece as "an enigmatic, evocative study in juxtaposition—a Rauschenberg painting come to life—one of his *combines* seen moving and producing shattering noises."[58]

DECEMBER 17: *A Modern Inferno* is published in a special issue of *Life* commemorating the seven hundredth anniversary of Dante's birth. The work, a double panoramic image, is reproduced in two foldout sections. The project's recognizable imagery which consists primarily of photographs taken from *Life* and similar magazines includes a mushroom cloud caused by an atomic explosion, concentration camps, civil-rights demonstrations, and figures representing "good" (John F. Kennedy) as well as "evil" (Joseph McCarthy and members of the Ku Klux Klan). *Life* will later be sued by police officer Warren E. Wilson, whose blood-spattered face is featured in the collage.

DECEMBER 21: Rauschenberg is interviewed by Dorothy Gees Seckler for the American Art Oral History Program of the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Seckler will incorporate the interview into an article, "The Artist Speaks: Robert Rauschenberg," in *Art in America*.

DECEMBER 27: Invited to speak at the funeral of Frederick Kiesler in New York, Rauschenberg instead rolls a tire down the aisle of the church, props it near the coffin, and proceeds to paint it blue, yellow, green, and red, transforming it into a symbolic wreath.

1966

FEBRUARY 26: A dedication takes place for the Artist's Peace Tower, Los Angeles, one of the first and most dramatic efforts by an artists' organization established to protest the Vietnam War. More than four hundred artists attach their paintings to the fifty-eight-foot-tall tower, built by sculptor Mark di Suvero in an empty lot rented with funds contributed by Rauschenberg and CPLY (William N. Copley).

APRIL 26: Rauschenberg performs in the premiere of *Linoleum* and in *Pelican* (1963) as part of the NOW Festival at the National Arena (formerly America on Wheels), Washington, D.C. *Linoleum*, choreographed by Rauschenberg, features plastic suits wired for sound by

engineer Cecil Coker; a performer eating fried chicken and pushing himself, and a few live chickens, across the stage in a wire-mesh cage on wheels; and motorized sculptures. Rauschenberg projects his film *Canoe* (1966), created by editing footage from a found film. *Linoleum* will be performed and videotaped in the studios of WNET Channel 13, New York, for television broadcast.

MAY–JUNE: *Art in America* publishes an issue with a cover designed by Rauschenberg. The design, a collage of photographs of Ohio and works from the Cleveland Museum of Art's collection, honors the museum's fiftieth anniversary.

JUNE 28: As part of the television program *U.S.A. Artists*, National Educational Television presents *Robert Rauschenberg*, a film featuring conversations with Rauschenberg and Leo Castelli and footage of Rauschenberg at work in his studio and in performances.

FALL: Rauschenberg moves into the studio on Lafayette Street, New York.

SEPTEMBER 25: Billy Klüver, engineer Fred Waldhauer, Robert Whitman, and Rauschenberg found E.A.T. (Experiments in Art and Technology), New York. The organization seeks to promote the use of technology for nonindustrial purposes by arranging collaborations between artists and engineers, creating "the possibility of a work which is not the preoccupation of either the engineer, the artist, or industry, but the result of the exploration of the human interaction between these three areas." As vice president, Rauschenberg will assist in fundraising and organizing events and meetings. In September 1968, he will become chairman, a position he will hold until 1972. By 1969, E.A.T. will have forty chapters in the United States and abroad. On November 30, three hundred people attend the first meeting of E.A.T. at the Broadway Central Hotel, New York.

OCTOBER 9: Dressed in the plastic costume he wore in *Linoleum* and the Arman shoes he wore in *Map Room II*, Rauschenberg appears on the cover of the *New York Times Magazine*, in which Richard Kostelanetz's profile of him, "The Artist as Playwright and Engineer," is published.

OCTOBER 14–23: 9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering takes place at the Sixty-ninth Regiment Armory, New York. Performers in the series include Rauschenberg, John Cage, Lucinda Childs, Öyvind Fahlström, Alex Hay, Deborah Hay,

31. Tennis rackets used for Rauschenberg's *Open Score* at 9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering, 69th Regiment Armory, NY, 1966

32. Mimi Kanarek and Frank Stella performing Rauschenberg's *Open Score* at 9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering, 69th Regiment Armory, NY, 1966

33. Rauschenberg and Lucinda Childs discussing capabilities of the electronic environmental modulator with engineers Herb Schneider, L. J. Robinson, Per Biorn, and Billy Klüver, for 9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering, 69th Regiment Armory, NY, 1966

Steve Paxton, Yvonne Rainer, David Tudor, and Robert Whitman. Rauschenberg designed the festival's poster and choreographed *Open Score*, performed on October 14 and 23. The performance features a tennis match played with rackets that are wired for sound; with each impact of the tennis ball, the armory lights shut off one by one, until the theater becomes completely dark and the large screens of a closed-circuit, infrared television system reveal to the audience the cast of more than five hundred performers, who have quietly assembled onstage.

1967

Rauschenberg creates untitled transfer drawings for *In Memory of My Feelings* by Frank O'Hara. One drawing is overlaid with O'Hara's poem "A Step Away from Them." The limited-edition book includes photo-offset reproductions of forty-six drawings by Rauschenberg, Willem de Kooning, Niki de Saint Phalle, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman, Claes Oldenburg, and other artists.

JANUARY 15: E.A.T. publishes the first issue of *E.A.T. News*, which is designed by Rauschenberg. Subsequent issues of the newsletter will be published later this year, on June 1, November 1, and December 20, and the following year, on March 18.

FEBRUARY–APRIL: Rauschenberg begins his working relationship with print workshop Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles, making *Booster* and *7 Studies*. *Booster*, which contains a full-size reproduction of an X ray of Rauschenberg, is, at six feet in height, the largest hand-pulled lithograph to date, requiring two lithography stones connected by a honeycomb structure. To create the image, Rauschenberg used a new transfer technique for photomechanically reproducing newspaper and magazine images on printing plates. The project incorporates silkscreen and lithography, representing Gemini's first activity in combination printing.

MARCH: The artist participates in *Art in Process* at the Finch College Museum of Art, New York. He exhibits *Short Circuit* (1955).

MARCH 7: Rauschenberg creates and performs in *Outskirts* for an event coordinated by Irving Sandler at the Loeb Student Center, New York University. The performers crawl along the stage, their heads poking through holes in a white sheet, onto which Rauschenberg's film *Canoe* (1966) is projected.

APRIL 28–OCTOBER 27: Rauschenberg participates in *American Painting Now*, organized by Alan Solomon for the United States Pavilion at Expo '67, Montreal. He exhibits *Green Shirt* (1965–67), a multicolored painting of neon and enameled metal, which is installed inside R. Buckminster Fuller's geodesic dome. The work, which was commissioned in 1965, contains motifs found in Rauschenberg's silkscreened paintings, such as Venus, mosquitoes, and a diagram of a cube. The exhibition will travel to the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston.

EARLY SPRING: The artist makes six *Revolvers*, each sculpture consisting of rotating Plexiglas discs with silkscreened images on them. The discs are mounted one behind the other and

are powered by electric motors; by using a control box, the viewer can rotate the discs and create a kaleidoscopic effect among the images. The works will be featured in the broadcast "The Walls Come Tumbling Down" on the CBS television program *Eye on New York*, and will be exhibited at Leo Castelli, New York.

MAY 26: Rauschenberg and artists Jack Levine and Andrew Wyeth are featured in a broadcast of the NBC television program *The American Image*, a documentary series exploring American life as depicted by artists from colonial to contemporary times, focusing on four broad themes: the land, industrialization and cities, patriotism and politics, and people.

OCTOBER: The artist receives an honorary degree, a Doctorate of Humane Letters, from Grinnell College, Iowa. He meets Martin Luther King, Jr., who has been temporarily released from prison to accept an honorary degree from the college.

OCTOBER 10: A press conference and exhibition of artworks involving technology, including *Oracle* (1962–65), is held at Rauschenberg's Lafayette Street studio to formally introduce E.A.T. to the public. Speeches are delivered by Rauschenberg; Warren Brodey, Director of M.I.T. Science Camp; Ralph Gross, President, Commerce and Industry Association; New York Senator Jacob Javits; Herman Kenin, President, American Federation of Musicians; artist Robert Morris; Theodore Kheel, President, the American Foundation on Automation and Employment, and labor mediator; and John Pierce, Executive Director, Bell Telephone Laboratories.

OCTOBER 24: Rauschenberg participates in Elaine Sturtevant's *Relâche* at the School of Visual Arts, New York, a (non)performance based on Francis Picabia's and Erik Satie's 1924 ballet of the same name. Sturtevant's "performance" consists of a sign on the theater door announcing its cancellation (*relâche*) and a photograph entitled *Relâche*, which imitates a Man Ray photograph of a scene from Picabia's play *Cinésketch* (December 31, 1924) in which Marcel Duchamp and Brogna Perlmutter (Francine Picabia) appeared naked as Adam and Eve in a tableau vivant of Lucas Cranach's *Adam and Eve* (1533). In Sturtevant's photograph, Rauschenberg poses nude as Duchamp posing as Adam (with false beard and fig leaf) and she poses as Eve.

OCTOBER 24–DECEMBER 2: He participates in *Protest and Hope: An Exhibition of Contemporary American Art* at the New School Art Center, New York. Forty-three artists, including Rauschenberg, Elaine de Kooning, Red Grooms, George Segal, and Andy Warhol, contribute works relating to the show's antiwar and civil-rights themes.

NOVEMBER 10, 19: Rauschenberg creates and performs in *Urban Round* for Fall Gallery Concerts at the School of Visual Arts, New York. A silkscreened painting is used as the backdrop against which performers read aloud and backward from newspapers while being carried on brightly colored wood boards. Each performer reads an article, then descends to help carry a new reader.

34. Mike Wallace interviewing Rauschenberg for the CBS television program *Eye on New York*, NY, 1967

DECEMBER 8: *Time* features a cover designed by Rauschenberg, using film stills from *Bonnie and Clyde*, to accompany the article "Hollywood: The Shock of Freedom in Films."

1968

Rauschenberg creates the preface for *WORDSWORDSWORDS*, an artist's book of poetry by Edwin Schlossberg, published by ULAE in an edition of twenty-five. The poems are printed on a variety of materials, including folded paper, aluminum, acetate, and Plexiglas. Rauschenberg's preface comprises blind-embossed imagery and the phrase "Solar wind and its effect on the Earth and Moon."

Rauschenberg meets singer Janis Joplin, a fellow native of Port Arthur, Texas, at Max's Kansas City, a New York nightclub. They become close friends until her death on October 4, 1970.

JANUARY 14–16: Continuing the imagery of his *Time* cover project on *Bonnie and Clyde*, Rauschenberg uses publicity and film stills to create the lithographic series *Reels (B + C)* during sixty-four hours of continuous work. Gemini G.E.L. will publish the six prints in editions ranging from forty-six to fifty-one.

35. Rauschenberg's *Solstice* installed in the chapel inside his Lafayette Street studio, NY, 1968

JANUARY 22–FEBRUARY 22: *Robert Rauschenberg: Print* takes place at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. The exhibition consists entirely of *Autobiography*, an approximately sixteen-and-a-half-foot-tall color offset lithograph on three sheets of paper, published in an edition of two thousand by Broadside Art, Inc., New York, a new press sponsored by Marion Javits, wife of New York Senator Jacob Javits, to make billboard presses available to artists. *Autobiography* is the first fine-art print created on a billboard press. Each sheet includes an image of Rauschenberg: at top, a full-body X ray, the same one used in *Booster* (1967), but superimposed here on the artist's astrological chart; in the middle, a childhood photograph overlaid on a spiraling autobiographical text; and on the bottom sheet, a still of him performing in *Pelican* (1963), set within a montage of silkscreened images, including the New York skyline and a navigational chart of the Gulf of Mexico off Port Arthur.

FEBRUARY 23–APRIL 7: *Robert Rauschenberg* is on view at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. The exhibition will travel to the Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne. The thirty-seven works exhibited include a new technology work, *Soundings*, a collaboration with E.A.T. and engineers Per Biorn, Cecil Coker, Ralph Flynn, Billy Klüver, L. J. Robinson, and Fred Waldhauer. The work consists of a wall, seven feet ten inches in height and thirty-six feet in length, made of three layers of panels: the outermost of mirrored Plexiglas and the inner two of Plexiglas silkscreened with repeated images of a chair in various orientations. Concealed electric lights between the layers expose the images when activated by viewers' sounds. Two hundred different combinations of imagery are possible.

MARCH: An important series of lectures is delivered by Leo Steinberg at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. The ending lines of the final lecture are extemporized from notes that read:

> One final point concerning the picture plane. [Clement] Greenberg's criticism, oriented to the problems of Cubism, spoke in terms of its flatness, integrity, autonomy and so forth. There is another criterion—the angle of it. The upright worlds of earlier art—their makers were still nature painters [showing slide of Jackson Pollock's

Soundings and other works installed as part of the exhibition *Robert Rauschenberg*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1968

37. Rauschenberg holding transparency film used in prints for the *Stoned Moon Series*, 1969

> *Autumn Rhythm: Number 30* (1950)]. There is a radical shift in the fifties [slides of Jean Dubuffet's *Still Life with Passport* (1953) and Rauschenberg's *22 the Lily White* (ca. 1950)]. Not spaces . . . but imprints. The PP [picture plane] is horizontal.

In an amended version of the lectures published in *Artforum* in March 1972, including a new section titled "The Flatbed Picture Plane," Steinberg will write:

> What I have in mind is the psychic address of the image, its special mode of imaginative confrontation, and I tend to regard the tilt of the picture plane from vertical to horizontal as expressive of the most radical shift in the subject matter of art, the shift from nature to culture.

Discussing the Combine paintings, he explains: "Though they hung on the wall, the pictures keep referring back to the horizontals on which we walk and sit, work and sleep."[59]

JUNE 27–OCTOBER 6: Rauschenberg participates in *Documenta IV*. He exhibits the new technology work *Solstice*, among other works. Created with the assistance of engineers Biorn, Flynn, Robinson, and Tony Tedona, *Solstice* contains five motorized Plexiglas doors that slide open when the work is approached by viewers. Each door is silkscreened with images of architectural details, technical drawings, urban photographs, and words. Rauschenberg donates *Solstice* to Automation House, New York, where E.A.T.'s headquarters are located; it will later be sold to the National Museum of Art, Osaka.

OCTOBER 10–NOVEMBER 10: *Robert Rauschenberg: Oeuvres de 1949 à 1968* is on view at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. The exhibition, originally set to open in June, was postponed due to the May student riots.

OCTOBER 12–27: Rauschenberg exhibits *White Paintings* at Leo Castelli, New York. Since most of the original panels were recycled in later artworks, including *Yoicks* (1954), *K249765* (1956), *Trophy II (for Teeny and Marcel Duchamp)* (1961), and *Stripper* (1962), Rauschenberg has studio assistant Brice Marden prepare a new set of paintings, which continue to bear the date of their original conception (1951), regardless of when they are made. The refabrication is considered controversial by critics.

OCTOBER 22, 1968–JANUARY 26, 1969: Rauschenberg exhibits *Soundings* at the Museum of Modern Art.

NOVEMBER 26, 1968–JANUARY 5, 1969: *Some More Beginnings: Experiments in Art and Technology* is on view at the Brooklyn Museum, New York. The exhibition includes submissions to a competition for collaborations between artists and engineers, organized by E.A.T. and selected by a jury of scientists and engineers. Rauschenberg, in collaboration with Klüver and Julie Martin, designed the exhibition catalogue.

NOVEMBER 27, 1968–FEBRUARY 9, 1969: The artist participates in *The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age* at the Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition, which includes several works submitted to the E.A.T. competition, will travel to the Rice Museum, Houston, and the San Francisco Museum of Art.

1969

Andrew Forge's monograph *Rauschenberg* is published. The publication includes the autobiographical statement written by Rauschenberg for *Autobiography* (1968), set in a layout designed by Rauschenberg, in which his own black-and-white photographs (published for the first time as photographs) are overlaid with Forge's text printed in black, making reading the text difficult.

WINTER: Rauschenberg makes *Carnal Clocks*, unique five-foot-square metal boxes with silkscreened Plexiglas, concealed electric lights, and timing mechanisms. To indicate the time, the lights illuminate, causing images of genitalia, natural forms, and other objects, photographed by Rauschenberg, to appear on the mirrored surface; at noon and midnight, all the lights turn on. The artist notes in a statement about the work: "The mechanics of making these pieces is little more than cultural gossip. Any aspect of the work that can be discussed can be seen conditioned literally by the time."[60]

JANUARY 5–FEBRUARY 2: *Robert Rauschenberg: Selections* takes place at the Fort Worth Art Center Museum. The exhibition presents a survey of the artist's career.

SPRING: Commissioned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, to create a poster commemorating its one hundredth anniversary, Rauschenberg composes a handwritten proclamation on graph paper that incorporates images from the museum's collections and is signed by museum officials. His text reads:

> Treasury of the conscience of man. Masterworks collected, protected and celebrated commonly. Timeless in concept the museum amasses to concertise a moment of pride serving to defend the dreams and ideals apolitically of mankind aware and responsive to the changes, needs and complexities of current life while keeping history and love alive.

JULY 9–SEPTEMBER 3: He participates in *Pop Art Redefined* at the Hayward Gallery, South Bank Centre, London, exhibiting *Pail for Ganymede* (1959), *Winter Pool* (1959), and *Art Box* (1963). Rauschenberg's "Note on Painting" (1963) is reprinted in the exhibition catalogue.

JULY 16: At the invitation of the NASA Art Program, Rauschenberg watches the launching of *Apollo 11*, the first manned space mission to land on the Moon, from Cape Kennedy, Florida. Rauschenberg has always admired the space program for being one of the few technological projects not involved in war and destruction.

AUGUST 1969–JULY 1970: Inspired by the launching of *Apollo 11*, he works on the *Stoned Moon Series* lithographs at Gemini G.E.L. (the first works are printed in September 1969 and the last in July 1970). The series of thirty-three lithographs uses photographs supplied by NASA, as well as drawings made directly on the lithography stones with water-based tusche and crayon. Some of the works, including *Waves* and *Sky Garden*, are the largest prints made thus far on a hand-operated lithographic press. In 1970, Rauschenberg will create *Stoned Moon Book*, using collages of photographs, media images, transfer images, telegrams, and transcript notes intended for publication but never released.

SEPTEMBER 21: He meets with John Stoller and Felice Wender of Dayton's Gallery 12, Minneapolis, to discuss the creation of a work for a fifty-one-foot-long wall in the gallery. Subsequently, he will begin to develop the concept for the *Currents* project.

LATE OCTOBER: Following an October 25 fire in his Lafayette Street studio, during which few works are damaged, Rauschenberg retreats to Malibu, California, where he works on the *Currents* project with the assistance of Robert Petersen, a printer at Gemini G.E.L. The project, comprising a related group of works, marks the beginning of Rauschenberg's new focus on political and social activism. Contemporary photojournalism, headlines, and texts from the *New York Times*, *New York Daily News*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Minneapolis Star*, and *Minneapolis Tribune* will serve as source material for thirty-six collages entitled *Studies for Currents*. Using these original newspaper

collages, Rauschenberg will work with printer Adolph Rischner at Styria Studio, Glendale, California, to create a single silkscreened work, *Currents*, fifty-four feet long (on paper measuring six by sixty feet), the largest known printed work at the time. Printing the edition of six (with two trial proofs)—incorporating all thirty-six screens (one for each collage study) on each sheet—will consume almost three hundred hours. Styria Studio will also issue two related sets of smaller, square screenprints, both based on *Studies for Currents: Surface Series* (from *Currents* #37–54), eighteen prints published in an edition of one hundred; and *Features* (from *Currents* #55–80), twenty-five prints published in an edition of fifty. Much later, the artist will say of his involvement with contemporary issues: "I've always wanted my work to look more like what was going on outside the window than in the studio. Having all this activity going on is one way of bringing the outside in. I like to think that my work in material and in visualization is filled with natural events, and this kind of activity helps you stay pretty much in tune with what's going on around you."[61]

NOVEMBER 20: *Apollo 12*, the second lunar-landing mission, leaves an untitled drawing by Rauschenberg, as well as drawings by John Chamberlain, Forrest Myers, David Novros, Claes Oldenburg, and Andy Warhol, on the Moon: engineer Fred Waldhauer reduced and etched versions of the works onto a tiny ceramic wafer, which was attached to the leg of the *Intrepid*, the lunar module that explored the Moon's surface.

DECEMBER 10, 1969–JANUARY 18, 1970: *Rauschenberg in Black and White: Paintings 1962–63, Lithographs 1962–67* is on view at the Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, California. The exhibition will travel to the Phoenix Art Museum; University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; and the Seattle Art Museum.

1970

FEBRUARY 1: An Automation House advertising supplement with a cover designed by Rauschenberg is distributed in the *New York Times*.

APRIL 1–MAY 10: *Rauschenberg: Graphic Art*, the first significant exhibition of Rauschenberg's prints, is on view at the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. The exhibition will travel to the Art Gallery, State University of New York, Albany; Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute, San Antonio; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

APRIL 4–MAY 2: Rauschenberg exhibits *Currents* and selections from the related *Studies for Currents*, *Surface Series*, and *Features* (all 1969) at Dayton's Gallery 12, Minneapolis. The works are exhibited with a recorded sound track of excerpts from various news reports. Rauschenberg created the exhibition poster, published in an edition of three hundred, from fragments of the *Minneapolis Tribune* and other newspapers. *Currents* and selections from the related series will be exhibited at Automation House, New York, Castelli Graphics, New York, and Pasadena Art Museum. Rauschenberg notes: "Art can encourage individual conscience. Everyone's independent devotion is the only vehicle that can nourish the seed of sanity."[62]

APRIL 22: The first annual Earth Day is celebrated. To mark the occasion, Rauschenberg has created the poster *Earth Day*, published in an edition of three hundred signed and ten thousand unsigned copies by Castelli Graphics to benefit the American Environment Foundation, Washington, D.C. The work consists of images of cleared forests, land devastated by strip mining, factories emitting black smoke, junkyards, and living creatures, including the endangered bald eagle and gorilla. Gemini G.E.L. will publish a lithograph based on the poster design, in an edition of fifty.

"I've always wanted my work to look more like what was going on outside the window than in the studio. Having all this activity going on is one way of bringing the outside in. I like to think that my work in material and in visualization is filled with natural events, and this kind of activity helps you stay pretty much in tune with what's going on around you."

JUNE: Rauschenberg joins a group of artists who withdraw their artworks from the United States Pavilion at the *XXXV Esposizione Biennale Internazionale d'Arte*, Venice, in protest against United States military action in Vietnam. The Emergency Cultural Government Committee of the New York Art Strike, which represents the artists, states in a telegram sent to the Biennale's organizing committee that the artists "are denying the use of their art as a cultural veneer to cover policies of ruthless aggression abroad and intolerable repression at home."[63] The retracted works will be exhibited at Museum, a cooperative gallery on lower Broadway, New York, in July.

AUGUST 6–SEPTEMBER 27: *Robert Rauschenberg: Prints 1948/1970*, a comprehensive retrospective exhibition devoted to the artist's prints, takes place at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

SEPTEMBER: Rauschenberg establishes Change, Inc., New York, a nonprofit organization providing a maximum of a thousand dollars to artists for such nonart emergency expenses as rent, medical costs utilities bills or theft and disaster. The organization, which is supported by contributions of art for benefit auctions, will help more than three thousand artists. From this point on, Rauschenberg will donate the proceeds from the sale of one print in each new edition to Change, Inc.

NOVEMBER: *Arts Magazine* publishes an issue with a cover designed by Rauschenberg.

38. *Mud Muse* (1968–71) and other works installed, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1973

LATE FALL: Rauschenberg establishes permanent residence and a studio in Captiva, Florida. Though he maintains his studio on Lafayette Street, New York, he will spend most of his time in Captiva. Three decades later, he will remark: "I think that everyone has landscapes that are sympathetic to them. I have lived on water all my life. … It makes me happy to look at the ocean."[64]

DECEMBER 1970–OCTOBER 1971: At his new studio in Captiva, he creates *Cardboards*, a series of works made from found cardboard, and *Cardbirds*, print facsimiles of cardboard prototypes that are published in an edition of seventy-five by Gemini G.E.L. The artist will later explain his choice of material: "I could not get my usual supply of material from the streets, as I did in New York. Anyhow, the blocks down here are a little too long to walk around. And what if you bump into an alligator?"[65]

1971

SPRING: With the assistance of Robert Petersen, Rauschenberg establishes Untitled Press, Inc., in Captiva. Rauschenberg's neighbor, artist Maybelle Stamper, contributes proofing stones and an old Fuchs and Lang proofing press, which Petersen, Rauschenberg, and assistant Hisachika Takahashi restore. Gemini G.E.L. contributes lithography stones. The press's name derives from a suggestion by Ileana and Michael Sonnabend that the word "untitled" is widely understood in Europe, where it is commonly associated with contemporary art.[66] The prints are distributed by Castelli Graphics. The first series of prints is made by Cy Twombly in April. Other visiting artists include David Bradshaw and Brice Marden. Robert Whitman and Susan Weil will visit in 1973 and 1974, respectively. Eventually, the press room will serve less as a guest-artist workshop than as a studio for Rauschenberg.

MAY 11–AUGUST 29: Rauschenberg participates in *Art and Technology* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, an exhibition featuring collaborations between artists and engineers. He exhibits *Mud Muse* (1968–71), the result of a three-year collaboration with Teledyne, Los Angeles. Rauschenberg has worked principally with engineers Carl Adams, George Carr, Lewis Ellmore, Frank LaHaye, and Jim Wilkinson. Among the other participating artists are Newton Harrison, Rockne Krebs, Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, Richard Serra, Tony Smith, Robert Whitman, and Andy Warhol. *Mud Muse* is a room-size vat filled with driller's mud that bubbles in response to sound. (A system of control valves and compressed-air inlets inside the tank produces the bubbling.) A tape recording of the bubbling mud plays, causing the mud's continuing response. On opening day, visitors unexpectedly seize the mud and smear it on the museum's walls. The artist will later note of the relationship

between his work and its audience: "my art is about just paying attention—about the extremely dangerous possibility that you might be art."[67]

OCTOBER 16–NOVEMBER 6: Rauschenberg exhibits *Cardboards* (1970–71) at Leo Castelli, New York (until November 2), and *Cardbirds* (1970–71) at Castelli Graphics, New York (until November 6).

LATE FALL: The artist makes *Poster for Peace*, published in an edition of 250, for the National Peace Action Coalition, New York. Viewers are invited to add newspaper clippings to designated areas of the poster.

[LATE FALL]: At Styria Studio, New York, he creates *Opal Gospel* (1971–72), published by Racolin Press, New York, in an edition of two hundred. Rauschenberg's second artist's book, it is similar to *Shades* (1964): nine traditional Native American poems from six nations (Nootka, Chippewa, Navajo, Iglulik, Pawnee, and Apache) and images of animals and nature are silkscreened in iridescent inks on ten Plexiglas sheets, which are mounted upright in a slotted Lucite base and stainless-steel case.

1972

First Landing Jump (1961) is acquired by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, as a gift from Philip Johnson, who purchased the work in 1964 at the encouragement of the museum's director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr.

Emile de Antonio's film *Painters Painting*, which includes an interview with Rauschenberg, is released. The film is based on the exhibition *New York Painting and Sculpture, 1940–1970*, held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, from October 18, 1969, to February 8, 1970.

Rauschenberg is introduced by New York Senator Jacob Javits to Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban. Through Eban, Rauschenberg meets Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan of Egypt and becomes interested in creating a work, never realized, relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

JANUARY: The artist establishes a working relationship with Graphicstudio, University of South Florida, Tampa. The studio is under the direction of Donald Saff, who founded the studio in 1968 as a center for print research and collaboration with the university's departments of chemistry, engineering, and architecture.

"my art is about just paying attention—about the extremely dangerous possibility that you might be art."

JANUARY–MARCH: At Graphicstudio, working with Saff, Rauschenberg makes *Made in Tampa*, twelve works published in editions of forty, incorporating lithography, blueprint, and sepia print, and introducing elements of collage. He makes *Made in Tampa Clay Pieces*, five clay works published in an edition of twenty, at the suggestion of Graphicstudio sculptor Alan Eaker, who proposed that Rauschenberg turn cardboard boxes into ceramic pieces, just as he had previously created *Cardbirds* (1970–71) from prototypes.

APRIL 25: Rauschenberg receives the Skowhegan Medal for Graphics from the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, Maine, in a ceremony at the Plaza Hotel, New York.

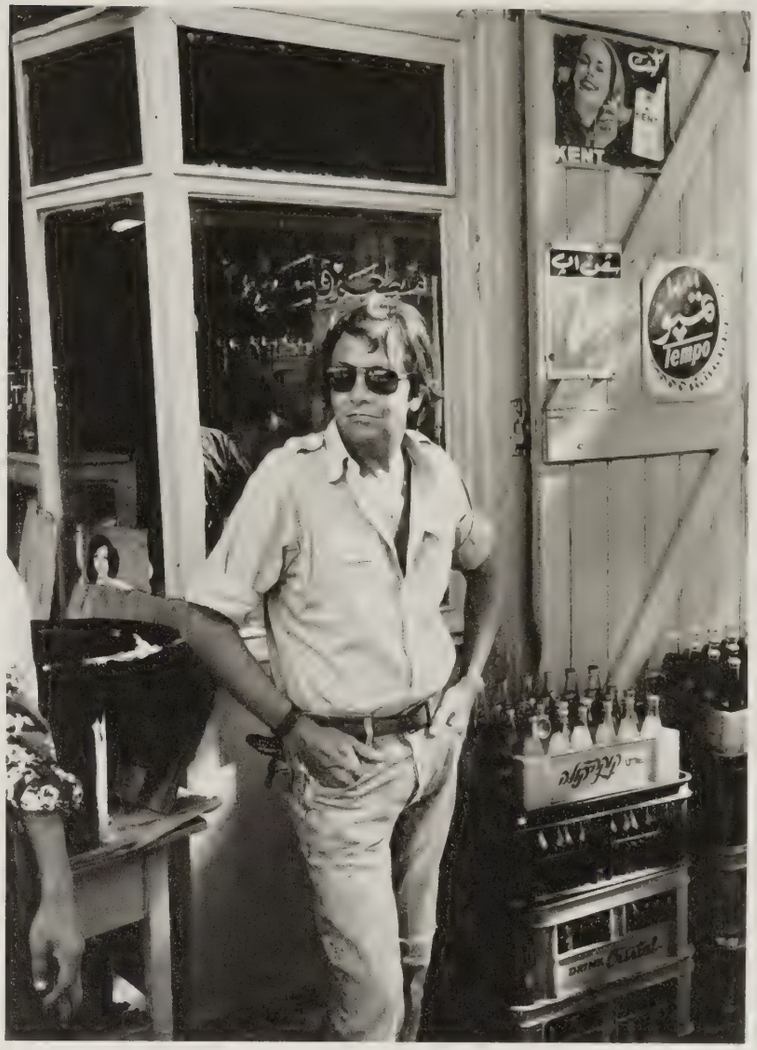
MAY: Under the sponsorship of ULAE, he begins a collaboration with novelist, philosopher, and screenwriter

39. *Cardboards* and *Cardbirds*, Leo Castelli, NY, 1971

Alain Robbe-Grillet on a book, *Traces suspectes en surface*, published in an edition of thirty-six. Tatyana Grosman, aware of Rauschenberg's interest in working on a handmade book, paired the artist and the author after hearing Robbe-Grillet express admiration for Rauschenberg's work in a lecture at New York University in April. Robbe-Grillet and Rauschenberg agree that Rauschenberg will loosely respond to the text of the novel, which deals with romance and murder, rather than diligently illustrate it. Robbe-Grillet will send Rauschenberg the first three pages of text inscribed on aluminum plates in the fall of 1972. Rauschenberg will respond with three pages of lithographs created, using the solvent-transfer technique, with images of everyday life from European publications to complement the text and suggest new ideas to Robbe-Grillet. By 1974, after about twelve exchanges, all of the text and images will be completed. Printing will begin in 1976, and the book will be published in 1978. Rauschenberg will create a simple red clothbound box for the prints.

LATE JUNE: The artist begins his *Venetian*, a series of sculptural works, the majority of which are made in 1973. Inspired by his many visits to Venice, the *Venetians* are made of plain materials, including branches, tire treads, and glass jars, with an emphasis on the natural shapes of ordinary found objects. Of the city, the artist will say: "what an incredible idea, to build with stone and rock, in water! Put rocks on water ... We've heard that one before."[68]

OCTOBER 27: A party is held in honor of Princess Christina of Sweden at Rauschenberg's Lafayette Street studio, New York, to raise funds for the New York Collection for Stockholm. The collection, comprising works by American artists selected by Pontus Hultén, director of the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, and organized by E.A.T. between 1971 and 1973, is assembled for donation to the Moderna Museet. At Rauschenberg's resquest, Teledyne, Los Angeles, will donate *Mud Muse* (1968–71) to the collection.



40. Rauschenberg traveling in Israel, 1974

1973

Rauschenberg appears in the film *American Art in the Sixties*, written and narrated by Barbara Rose and produced by Michael Blackwood Productions.

AUGUST: The artist makes *Pages and Fuses* over a four-day period at Moulin à Papier Richard de Bas, a producer of high-quality handmade paper since the fourteenth century, in Ambert, France, under the auspices of Gemini G.E.L. and in collaboration with Marius Peraudeau, the mill's director. For the five *Pages*, Rauschenberg shapes plain paper pulp, adding elements used to make the paper itself, such as rags and twine. For the seven *Fuses*, he designs molds, constructed by a local tinsmith, into which he pours colored paper pulp and incorporates images that he had previously silkscreened onto Japanese rice paper. The editions, published in 1974, are the first of Rauschenberg's collaborations with artisans abroad, an activity fully developed in the ROCI (Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange) project of 1984–91.

[SUMMER]: He begins the *Early Egyptian* series, works made from cardboard boxes coated with glue, rolled in sand or wrapped in gauze, and painted on the back with Day-Glo colors, which are reflected by the wall. He will continue to work on the series into 1974. He notes: "The *Early Egyptian* and *Scriptures* series came about as the results of fantasies and an honest insistency of working on the beach."[69]

OCTOBER 18: Postwar and contemporary paintings and sculpture from the collection of Robert C. Scull are auctioned at Sotheby Parke Bernet, New York. Rauschenberg's works sell for record prices, heightening his concern over profits made by collectors through the resale of artworks, from which artists do not benefit. Rauschenberg will take up this cause in earnest with the United States Senate.

1974

MAY: Rauschenberg travels to Israel to prepare for an upcoming exhibition at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

Rauschenberg installing *Rauschenberg in Israel* at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 1974

He is invited as a guest artist by the museum and lives in the Jerusalem Foundation's Mishkenot Sha'ananim, a residence for artists and scholars. He spends three weeks gathering materials—such as sand from various sites in Israel, local newspapers, and found objects—and using them to create *Made in Israel*, a series of sculptures that relates to the *Early Egyptian* works. In tribute to Israel's religious heritage—and specifically referencing the Dead Sea Scrolls—he creates *Scriptures*, a suite of drawings incorporating paper bags, cardboard, and gauze. He makes all the artworks inside the museum, and donates several of them to the museum. Rauschenberg documents the project in a book of photographs that he also designs, *Robert Rauschenberg in Israel*.

MAY 14–JUNE 3: The exhibition *Rauschenberg in Israel* is on view at the Israel Museum. Although some Israelis are offended by his use of "trash," Rauschenberg explains that he has always sought "to confront people with something that might remind them of their own lives. In some way, they might look at it differently."[70]

FALL: The artist begins his *Hoarfrost* series, on which he will work through 1976. The series, employing solvent-transfer images on unstretched fabric, develops when Rauschenberg notices that the cheesecloth used in print workshops to clean lithography stones retains traces of newsprint images. The series is also inspired by James Rosenquist's birthday gift to Rauschenberg of a bolt of shimmering transparent silk, which reminds Rauschenberg of "hoarfrost," a word used in Dante's *Inferno* to refer to a translucent layer of thin ice. He notes the transitional state that is implied by his technique, "presenting the imagery in the ambiguity of freezing into focus or melting, from view."[71]

42. *Robert Rauschenberg*, Ca' Pesaro, Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna, Venice, 1975

NOVEMBER 20–DECEMBER 29: He participates in *Poets of the Cities: New York and San Francisco, 1950–1965* at the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts and Southern Methodist University, Dallas. The exhibition will travel to the San Francisco Museum of Art and Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut.

DECEMBER 7–28: The artist exhibits *Hoarfrosts* at Leo Castelli, New York, and Sonnabend Gallery.

1975

MAY: Rauschenberg arrives in Ahmadabad, India, a textile center and the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi, where he will work for a month at an ashram mill, creating the *Bones and Unions* series published by Gemini G.E.L. He was invited to work on a project of his choosing by a wealthy Indian family, the Sarabhais, whom he met in 1964 while touring with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. The ashram was founded by Gandhi to provide specialized training in papermaking and other handicrafts for Dalits ("untouchables").[72] It is the first collaborative effort for the mill, which primarily produces writing paper; later, the Sarabhais will offer invitations to other American artists, including James Rosenquist, Keith Sonnier, and Frank Stella. Rauschenberg's son, Christopher, who accompanies his father to India, later describes him as being "just amazed at the colors. A new sense of fabric came to him there."[73] The experience will influence later examples of the *Hoarfrost* series, executed after his return from India, as well as the *Jammer* series (1975–76), in which colorful silks are used. The artist will later remark: "you have this really cruel combination of disease and starvation and poverty and mud and sand and yet it was all punctuated with maybe just that one piece of beautiful silk that somebody had. And it could be all they owned. But that's what gave me permission to give up my prejudices that I had about luxurious materials and sumptuous colors."[74]

AUGUST 30–OCTOBER 11: The artist exhibits *Bones and Unions* at Gemini G.E.L. The exhibition will travel to Castelli Graphics, New York.

SEPTEMBER 6–OCTOBER 6: *Robert Rauschenberg*, featuring selected works from the *Cardboard* (1970–71), *Early Egyptian* (1973–74), *Scripture* (1974), and *Hoarfrost* (1974–76) series, takes place at the Museo d'Arte Moderna Ca' Pesaro, Galleria Internazionale di Arte Moderna, Venice. The exhibition will later travel to the Forte di Belvedere, Florence, and the Palazzo dei Diamante, Ferrara.

FALL: Rauschenberg begins his *Jammer* series, on which he will work through 1976. These completely imageless works

Rau[illegible] Petersen on *Hoarfrosts* at Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles, 1974

44 and 45. *Robert Rauschenberg*, Ca' Pesaro, Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna, Venice, 1975

of colorful sewn silk either hang on the wall or are propped up with rattan poles. The series title derives from the windjammer, a type of sailboat; many of the individual works have nautical titles as well.

[DECEMBER]: The artist makes *Yule '75*, the first of the *Spread* series. (He will begin work on the series in earnest in 1976 and continue through 1982.) Rauschenberg cuts *Yule '75* into fifty-six irregular pieces to distribute as Christmas gifts to friends. The work will be reassembled for Rauschenberg's 1976 retrospective exhibition at the National Collection of Fine Arts (now the Smithsonian American Art Museum), Washington, D.C. "Spreads," a term used by cowboys to describe wide open expanses of land, is also a reference to the works' large wood or foam-core supports, which are covered with fabric. "'Spread' means as far as I can make it stretch," Rauschenberg later says, "and land (like a farmer's 'spread') and also the stuff you put on toast."[75] The large-scale works consist of images transferred with solvent onto silk, then affixed to the rigid supports, with attached found objects and often electric lights.

1976

JANUARY 25–APRIL 11: Rauschenberg exhibits *Rodeo Palace (Spread)* (1975–76), a work commissioned by the Fort Worth Art Museum for *The Great American Rodeo*, an exhibition celebrating the American Bicentennial. *Rodeo Palace*, which does not portray the rodeo, but rather the glamour and grit of a rodeo performer's life, is in many ways a celebration of Rauschenberg's roots, containing references to his own experiences both past and present.

FEBRUARY 21–MARCH 10: The artist exhibits selected works from the *Jammer* series (1975–76) at Leo Castelli, New York. Works from the series will also be exhibited at Ace Gallery, Los Angeles, and Ace Gallery, Vancouver.

MARCH 13–MAY 9: He participates in the *Seventy-second American Exhibition* at the Art Institute of Chicago, exhibiting *Flood (Hoarfrost)* (1974), for which he wins the Logan Award.

JUNE 13: Rauschenberg is awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Fine Arts by the University of South Florida, Tampa.

JUNE 22: With James Rosenquist, Rauschenberg lobbies the U.S. Congress for a bill to reinstate the tax credit provided to artists for artworks donated to nonprofit, educational, and other institutions. On August 4, 1976, the Senate will pass New York Senator Jacob Javits's tax-reform amendment,[76] which allows artists to contribute artworks to cultural institutions at market value and receive an equitable tax credit for their contributions.

OCTOBER 29, 1976–JANUARY 2, 1977: The artist's second retrospective exhibition, *Robert Rauschenberg*, organized by Walter Hopps, is on view at the National Collection of Fine Arts (now Smithsonian American Art Museum), Washington, D.C., in honor of the American Bicentennial. The 158 works in the exhibition are installed in reverse chronological order, beginning with *Rodeo Palace*. Rauschenberg designed the poster and cover of the exhibition catalogue. The exhibition will travel to the Museum of Modern Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; and the Art Institute of Chicago. The selection of works will change slightly with every venue, which the artist notes is interesting as it changes the perception of the exhibition: "As opposed to the works themselves just influencing the exhibition space I like to do things which work in the opposite way."[77]

BETWEEN NOVEMBER 17, 1976 AND MARCH 15, 1977: Rauschenberg visits *Treasures of Tutankhamun* at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., an exhibition he will later acknowledge as having a significant impact on the *Spread* (1975–82) and *Scale* (1977–81) series: "I was so moved by it that I was afraid I'd never be able to paint again—so I went to Florida and started right in. … Seeing the Tut show was very close, for me, to the surprise of walking down a New York street. … to me it was as foreign and as titillating as walking in New York and seeing the changes—the marvelous catalogue of trash."[78]

NOVEMBER 29: *Time* features a cover story about Rauschenberg, its first on a living visual artist. Designed by Rauschenberg and entitled *Rauschenberg by Rauschenberg*, the cover image is a collage consisting of reproductions of several of his artworks and color photographs of himself and of Captiva. The accompanying article about Rauschenberg, "The Most Living Artist," is by Robert Hughes, who describes the artist as "the enfant terrible of American modernism: a permanent scalawag, handing out indulgences to all comers. He is a model of the joy of art."[79]

[DECEMBER]: Rauschenberg spends several weeks in Dallas with David Tudor and the Viola Farber Dance Company working on the video *Brazos River*, which documents a dance choreographed by Farber in which movements create electronic sounds. Rauschenberg designed the sets, which at times also function as costumes for the dancers. The sixty-minute video is produced by the Fort Worth Art Museum and KERA Channel 13, Dallas.

1977

Rauschenberg begins his *Scale* series, on which he will work through 1981. The *Scales*, the sculptural equivalent of the *Spreads* (1975–82), also use solvent-transfer images on fabrics attached to wood structures, but now three-dimensional objects are added to the works. The artist will describe the *Scales* to a reporter in a March interview: "Right now, I'm working on some pieces that are averaging about 12 feet, between 12 and 16 feet. I'm making them out of door skins, a material which Jim Rosenquist found. They are the mahogany veneer of a regular door. You can either mount them on stretchers and trim them with a knife or since they're thin, you can pass them through the press."[80]

46. Rauschenberg working in his studio, Captiva, FL, 1977

JANUARY 18: The premiere of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company's *Travelogue*, with costumes and set by Rauschenberg, takes place at the Minskoff Theater, New York. It is Rauschenberg's first collaboration with John Cage and Merce Cunningham in thirteen years. The set, titled *Tantric Geography*, includes a row of chairs, on each of which is placed an upturned, sometimes spinning, bicycle wheel. The colorful silk panels used in the costumes and set reflect the influence of the *Jammer* series (1975–76). Cunningham gave Rauschenberg only the slightest description of the work, explaining that the dancers "were going to travel around the stage at different points in different ways."[81] Cage's sound track, *Telephones and Birds*, unknown to the dancers until the first performance, consists of Australian birdcalls and telephone recordings, including horse-racing results.

MARCH 17: A one-minute display designed by Rauschenberg is shown once an hour on a computer-operated Spectacolor electronic sign at 1 Times Square, New York. The sign has operated since December 1, 1976, showing commercial and public messages, but Rauschenberg is the first to create an artwork for it. His display will continue to appear every hour for a month.[82]

MARCH 25: *Announcement*, designed by Rauschenberg, illustrates John Russell's article "Art That Sings" in the *New York Times*, published on the occasion of the opening of the retrospective exhibition *Robert Rauschenberg* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

APRIL 23–MAY 23: The artist exhibits selected works from the *Spread* and *Scale* series at Leo Castelli and Sonnabend Gallery, New York, and Ace Gallery, Venice, California.

JUNE 14: Rauschenberg attends a White House luncheon given by President Jimmy Carter in honor of *1977 Inaugural Impressions*, an exhibition held at the Capitol of a portfolio published by ULAE in an edition of one hundred to help defray the cost of Carter's presidential inauguration. Rauschenberg contributed the lithograph *Presidential Inauguration*, which includes images of the Lincoln Memorial and the Capitol and a photograph of Carter embracing his daughter, Amy.

LATE JUNE: The artist receives a commission from the Fort Worth Art Museum to create a work for its permanent collection. He dedicates the work, entitled *Whistle Stop (Spread),* to his father. It will be exhibited at the museum in September 1978, on the occasion of which Rauschenberg will be named an honorary citizen of Fort Worth by Mayor Hugh Palmer.

"Right now, I'm working on some pieces that are averaging about 12 feet, between 12 and 16 feet. I'm making them out of door skins, a material which Jim Rosenquist found. They are the mahogany veneer of a regular door. You can either mount them on stretchers and trim them with a knife or since they're thin, you can pass them through the press."

SEPTEMBER 26: With Donald Judd, Jack Youngerman, and other artists, Rauschenberg lobbies the U.S. Congress for artists' rights and support for the arts.

1978

WINTER: Rauschenberg meets Russian poet Andrei Voznesensky through Tatyana Grosman, who began working with the poet in December 1977. In July, Rauschenberg will create lithographs at ULAE for six poems by Voznesensky: "Darkness Mother," "ECHO WHEN," "Long Island Beach" (dedicated to Rauschenberg), "From a Diary," "Seagull-Bikini of God," and "Picture Gallery," all eventually published in Voznesensky's *Nostalgia for the Present.*[83]

FEBRUARY 6: Rauschenberg is elected a member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, New York, an organization that provides awards and scholarships to writers, artists, and composers.

MAY–AUGUST: The artist exhibits selected works from the *Spread* (1975–82) and *Scale* (1977–81) series at Galerie Ileana Sonnabend, Paris, and the Mayor Gallery, London.

SEPTEMBER 8–OCTOBER 29: *Rauschenberg: Works from Captiva* is on view at the Vancouver Art Gallery. This is the first presentation of *Hiccups* (1978), a sixty-two-foot-long artwork consisting of transfer drawings on ninety-seven handmade sheets of paper joined by metal zippers. The

47. Rauschenberg outside his fish house, Captiva, FL, 1979

Rauschenberg and Terry Van Brunt installing *Spread* and *Scales*, 1978

exhibition also includes thirteen works from the *Spread* and *Scale* series. Rauschenberg will later say of his work: "I want people to clear their eyes and look with innocence that hasn't been corrupted. I see life in all of this!"[84]

[FALL]: The artist conceives of an exhibition of his work that will travel throughout the world, an idea that ultimately evolves into the ROCI project of 1984–91.

1979

JANUARY–MARCH: Rauschenberg exhibits selected works from the *Spread* (1975–82) and *Scale* (1977–81) series at the Sonnabend Gallery, New York; Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago; Akron Art Institute, Akron, Ohio; Ace Gallery, Venice, California; and Richard Hines Gallery, Seattle.

MAY 7: The premiere of *Glacial Decoy*, by the Trisha Brown Company, takes place at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, with costumes and set designed by Rauschenberg. Rauschenberg's white pleated diaphanous gowns with winglike sleeves emphasize the dancers' flowing movements. (After the first performance, he will redesign the costumes.) The set consists of four floor-to-ceiling screens, onto which several hundred black-and-white photographs, taken in and around Fort Myers, Florida, are projected at four-second intervals, moving sequentially from stage right to stage left. The clicking sounds of the projectors serve as the sound track for the dance. Rauschenberg will use the images again in a series of five prints, using color etching and photoetching, in editions of twenty-two (1979) and in a series of four lithographs in editions of twenty-two and twenty-five (1979–80), both in the *Glacial Decoy Series*, which will be published by ULAE, and in a series of eleven lithographs called *Rookery Mounds* (1980), which will be printed by Gemini G.E.L. in editions ranging from fifty to fifty-five. The hundreds of unique photographs that the set required rekindles Rauschenberg's passion for photography and will inspire him to begin the *Photem Series* in 1981.[85]

JUNE 20–24: The New York premiere of the Trisha Brown Company's *Glacial Decoy* takes place at Marymount Manhattan College Theater.

[FALL]: Rauschenberg receives his first architectural commission, from Equitable Trust, Baltimore, for its new corporate headquarters. He creates *Bank Job*, a twenty-nine-foot-long *Spread*, which will be exhibited for the first time at Leo Castelli, New York, in February 1980, before its dedication at the Equitable Bank Center, Baltimore, on May 17, 1981.

DECEMBER 30: A special end-of-the-decade issue of the *Miami Herald*'s magazine *Tropic*, with a wraparound cover designed by Rauschenberg, is published. The design, entitled *Piece for Tropic*, is a collage of Rauschenberg's photographs of Florida. The cover is printed in an edition of more than 600,000; one hundred signed copies are delivered at random to the newspaper's subscribers. Rauschenberg received a $1,000 honorarium for the project, which he donated to Change, Inc., New York.

1980

Rauschenberg and Gemini G.E.L. settle a lawsuit brought against them by Morton Beebe, the photographer of an image of a diver incorporated into *Pull (Hoarfrost Edition)* (1974) and *Emerald (Hoarfrost)* (1975). Beebe's photograph, entitled *Diver*, was published as part of an advertisement for Nikon in the early 1970s. Rauschenberg and Gemini admit to no wrongdoing, arguing that Rauschenberg's process of transfer, collage, and reversal transforms the printed imagery. From this time forward, he will almost exclusively use his own photographs in his artworks. Rauschenberg will also be sued by Dennis Brack for his use, in the silkscreen *Signs* (1970), of a photograph taken by Brack during the 1967 Detroit riots and subsequently published in *Newsweek*.

Rauschenberg receives a commission from the Rockefeller Center Development Corporation, New York, for the new Wells Fargo Building, Los Angeles. He will create *Fargo Podium*, a three-dimensional, mixed-medium installation. The work will be installed in 1981.

The sale of his limited-edition screenprint *After Homage to Picasso* raises $400,000 for Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy's unsuccessful bid for the Democratic presidential nomination.

JANUARY 11: The artist is featured at work in Captiva, on the ABC television program *Good Morning America*. He discusses commissions for public spaces, including *Bank Job* (1979) for the corporate headquarters of Equitable Trust, Baltimore, and *Periwinkle Shaft* (1979–80) for the Children's Hospital Medical Center, Washington, D.C.

MARCH 23–MAY 4: The retrospective exhibition *Rauschenberg: Werke 1950–1980* is on view at the Staatliche Kunsthalle Berlin. The exhibition will travel to the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark; Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich; and the Tate Gallery, London.

APRIL 20–MAY 30: *In + Out City Limits: Ft. Myers, Florida* is on view at the Photographer's Gallery, Sanibel Island, Florida. The exhibition is the first in a series of presentations featuring Rauschenberg's photographs of various locales in the United States: Baltimore; Boston; the area around his home in Captiva; Charleston, South Carolina; Los Angeles; and New York. Exhibitions will be held in each of these cities. ULAE will publish *In + Out City Limits: Boston* (1981) and *In + Out City Limits: New York* (1982).

FALL: *Off the Wall: Robert Rauschenberg and the Art World of Our Time*, a monograph on the artist by Calvin Tomkins, is published.

OCTOBER 3: The dedication of *Periwinkle Shaft* takes place at the Children's Hospital Medical Center. The colorful

49. Rauschenberg searching for source materials at the photo archives of the Miami Herald, Miami, 1979

mural, which is installed in an escalator shaft, contains mirrors and animal images.[86]

1981

Rauschenberg begins *Kabal American Zephyrs*, a series he will return to in 1983, 1985, 1987, and 1988. The sculptural series is inspired by nineteenth-century Japanese woodblock printmaker Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, whose work Rauschenberg saw in the exhibition *The Bizarre Imagery of Yoshitoshi: The Herbert R. Cole Collection* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1980. Yoshitoshi's prints depict violent events in beautiful settings, creating what Rauschenberg later calls a sense of "fantasy-macabre,"[87] which he seeks to capture in his juxtapositions of found objects and transfer-printed imagery. Rauschenberg also appropriates several of Yoshitoshi's titles.

The artist is named Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French minister of culture and communication.

He is named a member of the board of directors of the Association Internationale de Défense des Artistes—U.S.A. (AIDA—USA), which defends the rights of artists who are victims of political oppression in any country.

JANUARY: Rauschenberg creates *Photems*, large-scale, multiple-image totemic configurations of his own black-and-white photographs mounted together on aluminum. The series will be shown at Sonnabend Gallery, New York, and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, later this year. He will return to the series in 1991. Of his interest in photography, he says: "One gets as much information as a witness of activity from a fleeting glance, like a quick look, sometimes in motion, as one does staring at the subject. Because even if you remain stationary your mind wanders, and it's that kind of activity that I would like to get into the photography—a confirmation of the fact that everything is moving."[88]

MARCH 25: With choreographers Jerome Robbins and Eliot Feld and actors James Earl Jones and Jean Stapleton, he

50. Rauschenberg working on *Photem Series I #25* in his studio, Captiva, FL, 1981

lobbies the U.S. Congress against budget cuts for the National Endowment for the Arts.

SPRING: Gemini G.E.L. arranges a collaboration with author William Burroughs on a series of six lithographs, titled *American Pewter with Burroughs*, printed in an edition of thirty-four to forty-eight each. Burroughs provides a sheet of text, written specifically for the project, from which Rauschenberg selects six phrases. In Captiva, Rauschenberg prepares the lithography stones, then sends them to Los Angeles, where they will be printed by Gemini. Burroughs's phrases are embossed on paper and surrounded by Rauschenberg's photographs of America, printed in metallic grays and gray-greens suggestive of pewter. The project, which will be completed in 1982, is Gemini's first collaboration between an artist and an author.

APRIL 1–MAY 27: *Rauschenberg Photographe*, organized by Alain Sayag, takes place at the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris. The exhibition will travel throughout Europe. In a statement for the catalogue, Rauschenberg notes that when he first began to work with photography in 1949, "the camera functioned as a social shield. In 1981 I think of the camera as my permission to walk into every shadow or watch while any light changes. ... Photography is the most direct communication in non-violent contacts."[89]

JUNE: A poster by Rauschenberg, *AFL-CIO Centennial Commemorative Artwork*, is published on the cover of the *AFL-CIO American Federationist* magazine. The poster, an offset lithograph, incorporates images of workers' protests.

[LATE FALL]: The artist begins work on *The ¼ Mile or 2 Furlong Piece* (1981–98), intended to be the longest artwork in the world. In it he will utilize techniques employed throughout his career, and sequences will recall past series. By 1998, Rauschenberg will have created 191 panels and sculptural elements, which together would total approximately one quarter mile in length. The work will be shown at various points during its creation, accompanied by an audio recording of sounds from his home and travels.

51. Rauschenberg holding his Grammy-winning packaging for the Talking Heads album *Speaking in Tongues*, 1984

Of the work, he says: "¼ Mile is like a river—concepts flow."[90]

1982

Rauschenberg creates a poster for the 1984 Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

APRIL 27: He receives the Skowhegan Medal for Painting from the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, Maine, in a ceremony held at the Plaza Hotel, New York.

JUNE 10–JULY 14: The artist travels to China to work on a project initiated by Gemini G.E.L. at Xuan Paper Mill, the world's oldest paper mill, in Jingxian. Prior to spending two weeks at the mill, Rauschenberg travels with Donald Saff throughout China for three weeks, visiting museums, cities, villages, and archeological sites, and meeting with art students in Beijing.[91] At the Xuan Paper Mill, working with the assistance of Chun-Wuei Su Chien, he creates *7 Characters*, 491 unique collages in seven suites. For each work, a pulp relief of one of seven Chinese characters—meaning "truth," "individual," "change," "trunk," "howl," "red heart," or "light"—is added to a base of thirty sheets of paper and a layer of silk; images from posters found in Shanghai are then attached and overlaid with a thin transparent paper. In Los Angeles, Rauschenberg will apply gold leaf to the edges of the paper and will attach cloth medallions that hang from the works. While in China he also takes photographs for *Chinese Summerhall*, a project with Graphicstudio II at the University of South Florida, Tampa, that he will begin in the fall.

JULY 15–AUGUST 31, SEPTEMBER 22–OCTOBER 8: He visits Japan twice and works with ceramics for the second time in his career (the first was in 1972 at Graphicstudio), at Otsuka Ohmi Ceramics Company, Shigaraki, Japan. Rauschenberg works with chemists to produce glazes with which he can silkscreen his photographs onto ceramic. The first group of works he creates, *Japanese Clayworks*, recalls the motifs of the Combines by including elements such as a tire track, a reference to *Automobile Tire Print* (1953), and a ladder, a reference to *Winter Pool* (1959), in combination with imagery from ancient and modern Japan printed on photographic decals, painted with glazes, and fired. The second group, *Japanese Recreational Clayworks*, made while he is waiting for the first group to be fired, consists of ceramic paintings in which Rauschenberg reworks prefabricated art ceramics—of such icons of Western art as Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* (ca. 1503–05) and Jacques-Louis David's *Bonaparte Crossing the Alps at Grand-Saint-Bernard* (1801)—with his own signature style, combining images of contemporary Japan. Later in the year, the artist will note the provocative quality of materials in his work: "Objects + materials occupy real space very much the way ideas have elbows."[92]

FALL: The artist creates a thirty-inch-high, one-hundred-foot-long mural of photographs taken during his travels in China in the summer. The composite image will be published as *Chinese Summerhall* (1982–83) on a single sheet of Kodak paper in an edition of five by Graphicstudio II, which will also publish five studies for the work in an edition of twenty-five, and twenty-eight individual photographs in editions of thirty and sixty.

OCTOBER 14: The artist attends the memorial service in West Islip, New York, for Tatyana Grosman, owner and founder of ULAE. In her memory, he will create a ceramic piece using *Tanya*, a lithograph published in 1974 by ULAE.

DECEMBER 2, 1982–FEBRUARY 1, 1983: *Rauschenberg in China* is on view at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Works from *7 Characters* are exhibited.

1983

FEBRUARY 24–MARCH 23: Rauschenberg travels in Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Japan, creating the series *Sri Lanka*, *Thai*, and *Kyoto*, drawings on ceremonial mats and dedication boards.

AUGUST 11–SEPTEMBER 30: *Rauschenberg/Performances, 1954–1979*, organized by Nina Sundell, is on view at the Galleria di Franca Mancini, Pesaro, Italy. It presents photographs documenting the artist's performance works. An expanded version of the exhibition, *Rauschenberg/Performances 1954–1984*, will incorporate his latest collaboration with Trisha Brown Company, *Set and Reset* (1983), as well as a selection of props and costumes, and will travel throughout the United States from December 1983 through September 1985.

[FALL]: The artist begins his *Salvage* series, on which he will continue to work through 1985. The series evolves from Rauschenberg's costume designs for Trisha Brown Company's *Set and Reset*: as he was silkscreening the costumes, the images bled through the fabric to a dropcloth beneath, and he decided he wanted to try to "salvage" the effect. The series consists of canvases painted and silkscreened with his own photographs. As well as "salvaging" photographs and techniques from his past, Rauschenberg includes other autobiographical elements, including a reproduction of Thomas Gainsborough's *The Blue Boy* (ca. 1770), one of the first artworks he ever saw firsthand, in 1944, and references to his colleagues (a flag for Jasper Johns and soup cans for Andy Warhol).

OCTOBER 20: The premiere of the Trisha Brown Company's *Set and Reset* takes place at the Next Wave Festival, Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York. Rauschenberg designed the costumes and set, and Laurie Anderson composed the music, which features Richard Landry playing jazz on the alto saxophone, electronic percussion, and Anderson whispering the song "Long Time No See." The set, *Elastic Carrier (Shiner)*, is an eleven-by-thirty-six-foot freestanding structure, consisting of two pyramids flanking a rectangular box, all covered with a reflective silver fabric developed by NASA. As the theater darkens, film montages (compiled from newsreels, television programs, and NASA footage) are projected on the structure, which then rises to float above the dancers. The costumes consist of loose-fitting sheer outfits, upon which black-and-white photographs of New York by Rauschenberg are silkscreened.

1984

FEBRUARY 4–19: At the invitation of the Port Arthur Public Library and the Historical Association, Rauschenberg exhibits work in Port Arthur, Texas. The occasion marks his first trip to his hometown in forty years. Mayor Bernis Sadler declares February 4 Robert Rauschenberg Day. In conjunction with the exhibition, a print and a poster designed by Rauschenberg are published; the sales will be used to raise funds for the Robert Rauschenberg Scholarship Fund at Lamar University, Port Arthur. The poster includes photographs of Rauschenberg as a boy in front of Port Arthur's former library, as the Venice Biennale Grand Prize winner, and on his travels.

52. Trisha Brown and Dianne Madden in costumes designed by Rauschenberg for the Trisha Brown Company's *Set and Reset*, 1983

Rinschenberg frames the space shuttle Discovery on its launch pad, Cape Canaveral, FL, 1984


R

FEBRUARY 28: The artist receives a Grammy Award for Best Album Package from the National Academy of Recording Artists, Los Angeles, for the commissioned cover of a limited-edition version of the Talking Heads' *Speaking in Tongues* (1983). Rauschenberg's design consists of a transparent LP and an offset-printed album cover that incorporates clear spinning discs printed with photo-derived images in red, yellow, and cyan.

MAY 12–JUNE 30: He exhibits works from the *Salvage* series (1983–85) in *Robert Rauschenberg: Peintures récentes*, on view at the Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul de Vence, France.

MAY 24: He is awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts by New York University.

AUGUST 8, 9: The artist attends the launch of the space shuttle *Discovery* at Cape Canaveral, Florida. He is one of seventy artists invited by NASA to portray the shuttle in their own medium. He is photographed by *Life* with his work in progress.[93]

AUGUST 14–25: Rauschenberg visits Toluca, Oaxaca, and other sites in Mexico in preparation for the ROCI project.

SEPTEMBER 14–OCTOBER 27: The artist participates in *Disarming Images: Art for Nuclear Disarmament* at the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, exhibiting the drawing *Cot* (1980). The exhibition will travel throughout the United States through 1986. In conjunction with the show, an image of *Cot* is used for a poster; Rauschenberg signs one hundred copies to raise funds for Art for Nuclear Disarmament.

OCTOBER 19–22: Rauschenberg visits Tobago, where he writes the "Tobago Statement," on the purpose of the soon-to-be-announced ROCI project:

> The Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange, after six years of only spiritual support, is now a reality. ROCI, as we shortly put it, is a four-year private project taking, making and exchanging art and facts around the world.
>
> Emphasis will be placed on sharing experiences with societies less familiar with non-political ideas or communicating "worldly" through art. A selection of works done in, or influenced by, participating countries will then continue to travel, including videos, photographs, sound, drawings, prints, and catalogues, to the next country, systematically eclipsing the opening exhibit, which functions as a catalyst, enabling the international exhibition and collaboration to exist and grow.
>
> I feel strong in my beliefs, based on my varied and widely traveled collaborations, that a one-to-one contact through art contains potent peaceful powers, and is the most non-elitist way to share exotic and common information, seducing us into creative mutual understandings for the benefit of all.

54. Rauschenberg in Venezuela during ROCI, 1985

> Art is educating, provocative, and enlightening even when first not understood. The very creative confusion stimulates curiosity and growth, leading to trust and tolerance. To share our intimate eccentricities proudly will bring us all closer. When I was a student at the Art Students League in New York City, I was surrounded by groups of artists, all investigating the comparable similarities and likenesses between things. It was not until I realized that it is the celebration of the differences between things that I became an artist who could see. I know ROCI could make this kind of looking possible.[94]

OCTOBER 25–NOVEMBER 10: Rauschenberg travels to Chile, visiting Santiago, the countryside, and the desert in preparation for the ROCI project. Because of the repressive regime of President Augusto Pinochet, he meets with students, artists, and political activists in Catholic churches—the only institutions trusted by the people and in which it is safe to gather.

DECEMBER 13: He announces the ROCI project at the United Nations, New York. The project is an evolving collaborative process of art making with artists and artisans in foreign countries. Through ROCI, Rauschenberg seeks to expand communication and understanding among diverse cultures. The project specifically includes countries that are either developing nations or controlled by totalitarian governments, or that have little contact with the United States. The initial plan includes twenty-two countries,

although in the end the project will be realized in only eleven: Mexico, Chile, Venezuela, China, Tibet, Japan, Cuba, the Soviet Union, East Germany, Malaysia, and the United States. Rauschenberg's twenty-plus-year-old turtle Rocky, who performed in Rauschenberg's *Spring Training* (1965), becomes the project's symbol. Donald Saff is artistic director of ROCI. Sponsorship is not forthcoming from governmental, corporate, or private sources, and—ultimately preferring to keep the project free from any interference—Rauschenberg funds it almost exclusively himself by selling his own works and works by other artists from his collection. Over the next several years, Rauschenberg will travel to each host country for several weeks at a time, gathering materials and learning local traditions. A videotape is made by assistants to document the experience. Each project closes with an exhibition from which Rauschenberg presents one work to the host country. The exhibitions present Rauschenberg's paintings and objects created from the 1970s onward; later exhibitions include works from previous ROCI exhibitions. In all, Rauschenberg will create more than 125 paintings, sculptures, and editioned objects during the ROCI project. A program of such magnitude has never been attempted by any other artist.

1985

FEBRUARY 8: *Rauschenberg*, a small retrospective exhibition, opens at the Fundación Juan March, Madrid. The exhibition will travel to the Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona.

APRIL 17–JUNE 23: *ROCI Mexico* is on view at the Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City. Mexican poet and critic Octavio Paz has written a poem, "A Wind Called Bob Rauschenberg," for the exhibition catalogue.

JUNE 20–JULY 1: Rauschenberg visits Venezuela in preparation for the ROCI project, traveling to the cities of Caracas and Maracaibo, and to the Amazonas Territory, where he meets with native tribes.

JULY 17–AUGUST 18: *ROCI Chile* is on view at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago. Rauschenberg has provided financial assistance for repairs to the museum, which was damaged by an earthquake in March. During his research trip, Rauschenberg visited a copper mine and foundry outside Antofagasta, which led him to use copper and brass sheets as supports for silkscreened photographs, in a series entitled *Copperheads* (1985/1989). The surfaces of the works are patinated with tarnishing agents to create green, black, and brown hues. Rauschenberg chose copper as a sign of solidarity with the Chilean people, many of whom work in the mines, against President Augusto Pinochet. Through 1995, the artist will continue to explore using metal as a support for his painting.[95] *ROCI Chile* receives a prize in the plastic arts category from the Circle of Arts Critics of Chile.

SEPTEMBER 12–OCTOBER 27: *ROCI Venezuela* is on view at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Caracas. It receives the Andres Bello Medal for outstanding achievement in the fields of culture and education, presented on behalf of Venezuela by President Jaime Lusinchi.

OCTOBER 3: Supported by Vermont Senator Robert T. Stafford and Florida Senator Paula Hawkins, an amendment for which Rauschenberg has lobbied is added to the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, providing indemnity coverage to American exhibitions traveling abroad. The amendment specifically cites the ROCI project as a prime candidate for indemnity.

OCTOBER 30: Rauschenberg receives the Outstanding Learning Disabled Achiever Award for overcoming dyslexia. It is presented by First Lady Nancy Reagan at the Lab School, Washington, D.C.

NOVEMBER 15–DECEMBER 5: *ROCI China* is on view at the National Art Gallery, Beijing. More than 300,000 people attend the exhibition. In conjunction, the Trisha Brown Company performs *Glacial Decoy* (1979), *Set and Reset* (1983), and other works at Min Zhu Wen Hua Gon Theater, Beijing, on November 17 and 19. Rauschenberg receives a Certificate of Merit from the Ministry of Culture, Beijing, for *ROCI China*'s contribution to cultural exchange.

55. Rauschenberg surrounded by *Japanese Clayworks*

DECEMBER 2–23: *ROCI Tibet* is on view at the Tibet Revolutionary Hall, Lhasa. Rauschenberg found it difficult to create works for Tibet "because they have that total respect for all things. … there is no hierarchy in materials. … I thought they were so close to my own sensibility that I think that was the most difficult show I had to make."[96] The exhibition includes sculptures constructed with found objects from junkyards in Florida. Rather than donate a work of art to the people of Tibet, which has no cultural institutions to receive one, he will give video equipment.

DECEMBER 21, 1985–MARCH 16, 1986: *Robert Rauschenberg, Work from Four Series: A Sesquicentennial Exhibition*, organized by the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, tours Texas. Rauschenberg is named Sesquicentennial Artist of Texas during the state's celebration of its 150th anniversary of independence from Mexico.

1986

Rauschenberg begins the *Bellini* series, a group of photogravures published by ULAE in editions ranging from thirty-six to fifty. Appropriating imagery of the Virtues—including Fortune, Truth, and Justice—from small panels painted by Renaissance artist Giovanni Bellini of Venice, Rauschenberg isolates selected images and places them in montages of contemporary urban scenes. He will continue to work on the series through 1993.

JANUARY 6: *Time* publishes an issue with a cover designed by Rauschenberg. The issue features Deng Xiaoping as Man of the Year, and the cover design is a collage using photographs of the Chinese leader and Rauschenberg's own photographs of China.

[LATE WINTER]: The artist makes *Shiners*, on which he will work through 1993, silkscreening his photographs onto large sheets of stainless steel and mirrored and anodized aluminum and attaching other metallic objects, such as car grilles and silver-leafed chairs. The artist notes: "With the 'Shiners' I think my preoccupation is the contrast between the surface absorbing its entire environment by light in reflections, like with mirrors … because I don't want the piece to stop on the wall. And it has to somehow document what's going on in the room and be flexible enough to respond."[97]

[SPRING]: He begins *Gluts*, a result of his recent experiences in Texas, where he became aware of how a glut of oil on the market had caused a marked negative effect on the state's economy. "It's a time of glut, greed is rampant. I'm just exposing it, trying to wake people up. … I simply want to represent people with their ruins," the artist says.[98] The first works of the series incorporate gasoline-station signs, license plates, and street signs found in Captiva, Florida. He will continue to work on the series intermittently through 1995.

APRIL 18–MAY 31: *Rauschenberg: The White and the Black Paintings, 1949–52* is on view at the Larry Gagosian Gallery, New York.

56. Rauschenberg with *Balcone Glut (Neapolitan)*, Naples, Italy, 1987

"With the 'Shiners' I think my preoccupation is the contrast between the surface absorbing its entire environment by light in reflections, like with mirrors … because I don't want the piece to stop on the wall. And it has to somehow document what's going on in the room and be flexible enough to respond."

OCTOBER 24–DECEMBER 6: *Robert Rauschenberg: Drawings 1958–1968* is on view at Acquavella Contemporary Art, New York. This is the first exhibition devoted to the transfer drawings.

NOVEMBER 22–DECEMBER 28: *ROCI Japan* is on view at the Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo.

LATE DECEMBER: When the set, designed by artist Nancy Graves, for Trisha Brown Company's *Lateral Pass* (1985) is delayed in its overseas shipment, Rauschenberg, who is in Naples to see the company's performance, collects scrap metal and fabric and creates a temporary replacement set of

57. Rauschenberg's set for the Trisha Brown Company's *Lateral Pass* (1985), Teatro di San Carlo, Naples, Italy, 1986

hanging sculptures for the Teatro di San Carlo. Pieces of the set will later be incorporated into the *Neapolitan Gluts*.

1987

FEBRUARY 3: An exhibition of selections from *The 1/4 Mile or 2 Furlong Piece* (1981–98) opens at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Eighty-one units made to date will be on view for one year, inaugurating the Helen and Milton A. Kimmelman Gallery of the new Lila Acheson Wallace wing.

MARCH 30: An issue of *Time*, with the lead article "Change the Weather: America's Agenda after Reagan" by Lance Morrow, features a cover designed by Rauschenberg.

AUGUST: Rauschenberg travels throughout Cuba in preparation for the ROCI project.

SEPTEMBER 22: Rauschenberg testifies before the Senate Judiciary Committee in Washington, D.C., at a confirmation hearing for Judge Robert H. Bork's nomination to the Supreme Court, expressing his fear that Bork's interpretation of the First Amendment endangers all forms of creative expression: "I have discovered a compulsive insistence on the letter of the law and abuse to the exceptional and the minorities. If this country is to remain the enviable land of growth and promise, that's what has to be gardened."[99]

NOVEMBER: On its eighty-fifth anniversary, an issue of *Artnews* with a cover designed by Rauschenberg is published.

LATE FALL: The artist begins *Bleachers*, a series of unique photographs, on which he will continue to work through 1991. The *Bleachers* evolve during experiments in drying black-and-white photographs made with a large-format Polaroid camera when Rauschenberg notices that the sun fades some parts more rapidly than others. Using bleach, Rauschenberg manipulates the fading of the images himself.

1988

JANUARY: Rauschenberg begins the *Galvanic Suite* series, in which images are silkscreened with paint on stainless and galvanized steel. He will continue to work on the series through 1991. Of his working style Rauschenberg says: "I think that my mental attitude is to drive with the brakes on, and when I sense a funny smell, then I just turn off the ignition."[100]

Rauschenberg working on *Wax Fire Works*, 1990

FEBRUARY: He begins *Urban Bourbons*, a series of images silkscreened with expressionistic brushstrokes—in bright blue, red, yellow, and orange acrylic—on enameled, mirrored, and anodized aluminum, on which he will work through 1995.

FEBRUARY 10–APRIL 3: *ROCI Cuba* is on view at the Museo Nacional, Casa de las Américas, and Castillo de la Fuerza, Havana. ROCI Cuba works are made on galvanized stainless steel, anodized aluminum, and mirrored aluminum, painted in the vivid primary colors of the American cars built before 1959 that are a common sight in Havana. Some viewers feel that the works do not celebrate the complete history of Cuba, but Rauschenberg counters: "To break down barriers, I think you need to see as an alien does—to get lost in the city, or in the country, to see things in Cuba that maybe you are blind to."[101] President Fidel Castro honors Rauschenberg with an official dinner at the Palacio de la Revolución, Havana, the evening before the exhibition opens.

APRIL: Rauschenberg travels to the USSR to meet with the minister of culture and representatives from the Artists' Union in Moscow in preparation for the ROCI project.

JULY: He travels to Leningrad, Tbilisi, and Samarkand in preparation for the ROCI project.

1989

FEBRUARY 1–4: Concurrent with the opening of *ROCI USSR*, the Trisha Brown Company's *Astral Convertible* (1989), commissioned by the Montpellier Festival in France, premieres at the Cultural Palace, Moscow. Rauschenberg designed the costumes and set, and Richard Landry composed the music. At Brown's request, Rauschenberg created a portable, self-contained system of set, sound, and lighting: with the assistance of engineers Billy Klüver and Per Biorn, he constructed eight freestanding aluminum towers, which range from two to eight feet in height and are equipped with sensors, powered by car batteries, that detect dancers' movements and trigger sound (Landry's sound track of music and traffic noises) and lights (a system of headlights designed by Ken Tabachnick). Brown explains that Rauschenberg entitled the performance with reference to the car parts he used as well as to "passage through the sky. And 'convertible,' he said, was to permit whatever changes I wanted to make."[102]

FEBRUARY 2–MARCH 5: *ROCI USSR* is on view at the Tretyakov Gallery, Central House of Culture, Moscow. This is the first solo exhibition of a Western post–World War II artist to be held in the USSR. Over 145,000 people attend the exhibition. Concurrent with *ROCI USSR*, a group of young, nonunion Soviet artists present an exhibition of their own work in tribute to Rauschenberg's arrival in Moscow. Entitled *Rauschenberg to Us—Us to Rauschenberg*, it is the inaugural exhibition of Moscow's first commercial gallery, which will become known as the First Gallery. The Soviet minister of culture will select works from *Rauschenberg to Us—Us to Rauschenberg* to represent the USSR at the *XLIV Esposizione Biennale Internazionale d'Arte*, Venice, in 1990.

MAY: Rauschenberg cancels the ROCI Berlin project due to his frustration with East German officials' resistance to a simultaneous East Berlin–West Berlin installation of the exhibition that could be seen by all Germans.

JUNE 1: Rauschenberg wins a Learning Through Art Award for important contributions through the ROCI project, presented by the Learning to Read Through the Arts program of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, on the occasion of its twentieth-anniversary exhibition of children's artworks.

AUGUST: He begins *Borealis*, a series he will continue to work on through 1992. Using tarnishing agents, such as acetic acid and ammonium salts, which gesturally interplay with images silkscreened onto sheets of brass, bronze, and copper, he creates what he calls "corrosions." (Because of the corrosive nature of the tarnishes, the metal carries the image.) The general tonal range of these works is far more restrained than in previous works, though also luminous.

SEPTEMBER 16–OCTOBER 3: Rauschenberg travels throughout Malaysia in preparation for the ROCI project. He attends the inauguration ceremony for the new king of Malaysia, visits Malaysian tribes, including a tribe of headhunters, and witnesses a cock fight. In Sarawak, Borneo, he buys hundreds of "Save the Forest" T-shirts and bamboo bracelets, hoping to help local peoples whose livelihoods as hunters are being destroyed along with the rain forests.

NOVEMBER: With the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, Wolfgang Polak, director of the Zentrum für Kunstausstellungen der Deutsche Demokratische Republik, immediately contacts Rauschenberg to reinitiate arrangements for ROCI Berlin. Rauschenberg travels to Berlin to gather materials for the project and begins work in the next month.

1990

JUNE: The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, New York, is founded, a nonprofit organization devoted to issues of particular interest to Rauschenberg, including medical research, education, the environment, homelessness, world hunger, and the arts. Initially no monetary grants are awarded, but such organizations as the Natural Resources Defense Council and Best Buddies Organization, and programs of the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, New York, benefit from the donation of prints and posters created by Rauschenberg.

MARCH–MAY: The artist makes artworks for the ROCI Malaysia exhibition.

MARCH 10–APRIL 1: *ROCI Berlin* is on view at the Neue Berliner Galerie im Alten Museum, Berlin.

APRIL 21: For the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day, Rauschenberg has created his second Earth Day

59. *ROCI USA*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1991

screenprint, published by Gemini G.E.L. in an edition of seventy-five.

MAY 15: The artist testifies before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Washington, D.C., in support of the continued funding of the National Endowment for the Arts.

MAY 21–JUNE 24: *ROCI Malaysia* is on view at the National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur. The works reveal Rauschenberg's concern for the country's conflict between urban and indigenous cultures.

MAY 27–SEPTEMBER 30: *Orrery (Borealis)* (1990) is exhibited in the Soviet Pavilion at the *XLIV Esposizione Biennale Internazionale d'Arte*, Venice.

[FALL]: Rauschenberg makes the portfolio *Shirtboards—Italy and Morocco*, which will be published by Styria Studio, New York, in an edition of sixty-five in 1991. The portfolio reproduces in lithography and screenprint collages made in Europe and North Africa in 1952, in a format fifty percent larger than the originals.

FALL: Congress passes legislation, for which Rauschenberg has worked, providing artists with better copyright protection and opportunities for compensation in the event of the destruction or mutilation of their work.

SEPTEMBER 22: The premiere of the Trisha Brown Company's *Foray Forêt* takes place at the Biennale de la Danse, Lyons, with costumes and set designed by Rauschenberg. The male dancers wear matte-gold skirt-pants, their chests bare, while the female dancers wear glimmering gold outfits. During the performance, a local brass band plays while marching outside the theater.

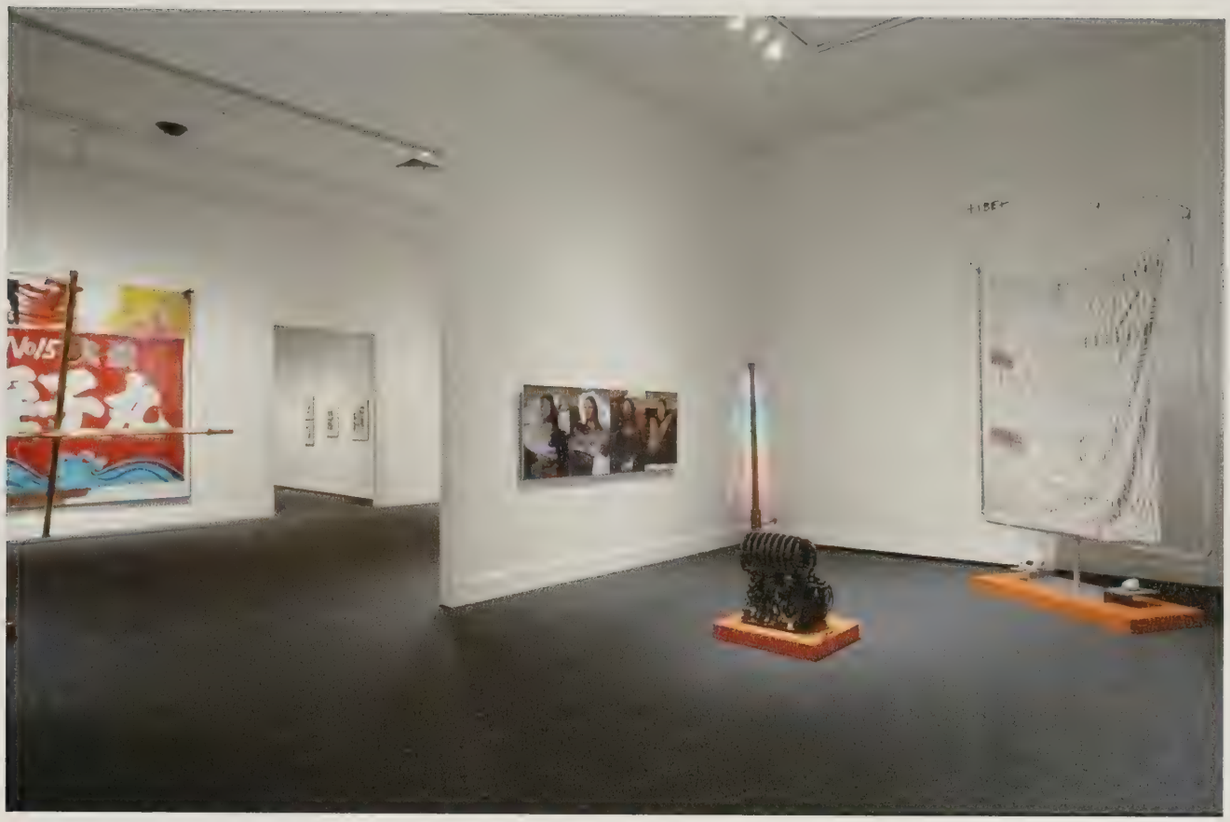
OCTOBER: The artist begins to make works for ROCI USA. The series, entitled *Wax Fire Works*, is made in association with Saff Tech Arts, Oxford, Maryland. Rauschenberg uses a technique developed by Donald Saff (for which Rauschenberg coins the term "fire wax"), in which pigmented beeswax is painted or silkscreened on polished aluminum supports and then fixed with heat in the manner of traditional encaustic painting. Colorful acrylic and collage elements are added.

OCTOBER: Construction of a new house in Captiva, Florida, designed by Rauschenberg and Darryl Pottorf, is completed.

OCTOBER 3, 1990–JANUARY 15, 1991: The artist participates in *High and Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture*, organized by Kirk Varnedoe and Adam Gopnik at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

NOVEMBER: Mary Lynn Kotz's monograph *Rauschenberg: Art and Life* is published.

DECEMBER 7, 1990–MARCH 17, 1991: *Robert Rauschenberg: The Silkscreen Paintings, 1962–1964* is on view at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, marking the first assessment of this body of work.



60. *ROCI USA*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1991

1991

MAY 12–SEPTEMBER 2: The final ROCI exhibition takes place, *ROCI USA*, at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. All the ROCI works, inspired by the eleven host countries, are exhibited.

MAY 14: The premiere of the Trisha Brown Company's *Astral Converted (50")* takes place. It is the first choreographic commission by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. The work, which is performed on the steps outside the museum, reuses Rauschenberg's set for *Astral Convertible* (1989). The performance marks the first collaboration by Rauschenberg, Brown, and John Cage, who composed music for the performance.

JUNE 15–AUGUST 11: *Robert Rauschenberg: The Early 1950s*, organized by Walter Hopps, is on view at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. The exhibition will travel to the Menil Collection, Houston; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Guggenheim Museum SoHo, New York. Included are works from 1949 to mid-1954, many of which have never before been exhibited or published.

JUNE 16: The artist is interviewed by Pat Mitchell for the CBS television program *Sunday Morning*.

[SUMMER]: Rauschenberg works on his *Night Shade* series, in which photographic images are silkscreened onto brushed aluminum with acrylic washes. The overall tone ranges from dark gray to black, with a tarnished effect similar to that of the *Borealis* series (1989–92).

[SUMMER]: The artist makes his *Phantom* series, using clear epoxy to silkscreen photographs onto mirrored aluminum. The series takes the reduction of color even further than previous works: the images are rendered milky white and difficult to recognize.

OCTOBER 26–NOVEMBER 30: *Robert Rauschenberg: Print Survey in Themes, 1952–1992*, with related performance videos, is on view at Leo Castelli.

DECEMBER 6: At the United Nations, New York, Rauschenberg presents the lithograph *Last Turn, Your Turn*, published by the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, New York, in an edition of two hundred, to generate public awareness of Earth Summit, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which will be held in Rio de Janeiro in June. The print will also be produced as a color offset poster.

1992

Rauschenberg is named Commandant de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French minister of culture and communication.

He begins his *Waterworks* series (formerly titled *Day Lights* and *Night Sights*), on which he will continue to work through 1994. For these works, he uses an Iris printer and biodegradable vegetable dyes to make digital color prints; he then transfers these images to paper using water and an electric press.

He creates three bus billboards, *Last Turn-Your Turn* (based on the 1991 print of the same title), *Ozone*, and *Pledge*, to draw public attention to environmental issues. The billboards are placed on buses in major cities throughout the U.S., courtesy of Transportation Displays, Inc., an outdoor advertising company based in New York.

JANUARY 28: He receives the Federal Design Achievement Award, given every four years by the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C., for the exhibition catalogue *Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange*.

JUNE 1-12: The artist attends the Earth Summit conference in Rio de Janeiro, further cementing his concerns regarding the environment. Upon his return, he begins to create the *Eco-Echo* series in collaboration with Donald Saff. The windmill-like structures, of silkscreened and painted aluminum and Lexan, are sonar-activated, responding to the viewer's presence.

AUGUST 12: John Cage dies. Speaking at his memorial, Rauschenberg notes: "John Cage and his work in every medium is a reward to all + will be for centuries. The innocence + challenging audacity of his unique attitude has created a labyrinth with no exit."[103]

1993

Rauschenberg makes his *Off Kilter Keys* series, aluminum sheets folded into sharply creased forms that project from the wall. Some surfaces are painted white, and their configurations often hide other surfaces silkscreened with brightly colored paints.

MARCH: The construction of a new studio in Captiva, Florida, designed by Rauschenberg and Darryl Pottorf, is completed.

APRIL 22: The artist is presented with the first Earth Day Award for Environment and the Arts by the magazine *Imagine* at the National Arts Club, New York.

OCTOBER 7: The artist is awarded the National Medal of Arts by President Bill Clinton. Rauschenberg is one of thirteen recipients selected for the ninth annual award by the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C. He will develop a close friendship with the president and Hillary Clinton after meeting them at the awards ceremony.

NOVEMBER 2: Rauschenberg receives the Second Hiroshima Art Prize from the Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, an award given to artists who promote peace and understanding among different cultures. In conjunction with the award, a commemorative exhibition, *The Second Hiroshima Art Prize—Robert Rauschenberg*, is held at the museum from November 3, 1993, to January 16, 1994.

NOVEMBER 6, 1993-JANUARY 10, 1994: The artist participates in *Roma–New York 1948–1964: An Art Exploration* at the Murray and Isabella Rayburn Foundation, New York. He exhibits works created from 1950–60,

61. *Robert Rauschenberg: New Paintings: Vydocks and Doubleluck, Reefs*, Gagosian Gallery, NY, 1995

including *22 the Lily White* (ca. 1950), collages on Italian shirtboards (ca. 1952), photographs (1952–53), *Monk* (1955), and one of the Drawings for *Dante's Inferno* (1958–60).

1994

MAY 3: The premiere of Trisha Brown's solo performance *If you couldn't see me*, for which Rauschenberg designed the costume, a white sheath dress, and composed electronic music, takes place at the Joyce Theater, New York. At Rauschenberg's suggestion, Brown dances with her back to the audience, never permitting a full view of her face.

MAY 7–JULY 10: *Robert Rauschenberg* is on view at the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf. The artist exhibits works selected from the *Glut* (1986–89, 1991–95), *Shiner* (1986–93), *Galvanic Suite* (1988–91), *Urban Bourbon* (1988–95), *ROCI* (1985–90), *Borealis* (1989–92), *Phantom* (1991), and *Night Shade* (1991) series.

LATE SUMMER: The artist makes *Shales* using the fire-wax technique developed with Donald Saff, in which Rauschenberg's photographic images are transferred, using encaustic, to wax-covered canvas. The clarity and depth of the wax medium creates a trompe l'oeil effect, as if the actual objects are suspended in wax.

SEPTEMBER 13: A performance of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company's *Event*, for which Rauschenberg created the set, a large unstretched painting titled *Immerse*, takes place at the Joyce Theater, New York.

1995

Rauschenberg makes a group of works entitled *Faux-Tapis* ("fake tapestries"). The works incorporate fabrics, based on photographs by the artist, made at a batik workshop in Sri Lanka in 1983.

MARCH 18–MAY 13: *Robert Rauschenberg: Night Shades and Urban Bourbons* is on view at the Galerie Beyeler, Basel. The exhibition will travel to Ordrupgaard Samlingen, Copenhagen.

MARCH 25–APRIL 29: Rauschenberg participates in *Tribute 21*, an exhibition of prints created for a print and notecard project published by Felissimo, Tokyo, on view at Leo Castelli, New York. The prints, which accompany statements by prominent figures such as Vice President Al Gore, writer Toni Morrison, and Olympic athlete Bonnie Blair, are reproduced on notecards, sold to benefit Future Generations Alliance Foundation, a nonprofit branch of Felissimo.

MAY 27–JULY 22: The artist exhibits *A Quake in Paradise (Labyrinth)* (1994) at the Galerie Jamileh Weber, Zurich. The installation consists of silkscreened acrylic on freestanding aluminum and Lexan panels in a variety of configurations, presenting a maze that the viewer navigates.

SUMMER: Rauschenberg makes *Vydocks*, a series of large, vertical bonded-aluminum panels that are painted and silkscreened with photographs. He also makes *Reefs*, a series of tall, narrow rectangular structures of mirrored bonded aluminum. The interiors of the structures are silkscreened with his photographic imagery and embellished with gestural strokes of acrylic.

SUMMER: Rauschenberg begins to work on the *Anagram* series (1995–2008). As with the *Waterworks* series (1992–94), the images are transferred from vegetable-dye Iris prints to paper, but now at a larger scale. The artist's hand is more apparent in the *Anagrams* because Rauschenberg uses a handheld scraper rather than an electric press to transfer the images.

"I love and respect collaboration. Limitations are an invitation to unmeasured freedom. As far as changes resulting from experience and work—that remains without consideration because situations are always unique, requiring me to never make up my mind. My job is to start and finish."

SEPTEMBER 11–DECEMBER 1: *Robert Rauschenberg: Two Decades at Graphicstudio*, is on view at the University of South Florida, Tampa. Early in the summer, the artist wrote of printmaking: "I love and respect collaboration. Limitations are an invitation to unmeasured freedom. As far as changes resulting from experience and work—that remains without consideration because situations are always unique, requiring me to never make up my mind. My job is to start and finish."[104]

SEPTEMBER 23–OCTOBER 21: *Robert Rauschenberg: New Paintings: Vydocks and Doubleluck, Reefs* is on view at Gagosian Gallery, New York.

OCTOBER 22–DECEMBER 31: The first retrospective exhibition devoted solely to Rauschenberg's imageless sculpture, *Robert Rauschenberg: Sculpture*, takes place at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas. The exhibition will travel to the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami.

DECEMBER 16: The artist receives the Leonardo da Vinci World Award of Arts from the World Cultural Council, in a ceremony at the Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City.

1996

JANUARY 6–FEBRUARY 3: Rauschenberg exhibits works from the late 1960s and early 1970s in *Rauschenberg: Carnal Clocks, Cardboards, Jammers* at the Sonnabend Gallery, New York.

FEBRUARY 6: The artist exhibits twenty-nine posters, created for various United Nations organizations, philanthropic groups, and events, at the United Nations, New York. He unveils the print and poster *Clan Destiny*, created for the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), also known as the "City Summit," which will be held in Istanbul in June.

JUNE: He travels to Istanbul for the City Summit and visits various archeological sites in Turkey to photograph them.

JUNE 7: Rauschenberg is awarded the fifth annual Lifetime Achievement in Contemporary Sculpture Award by the International Sculpture Center, Washington, D.C.

JUNE 22–JULY 31: The artist exhibits *A Quake in Paradise (Labyrinth)* (1994), *Tribute 21* (1995), and his *Quattro Mani* (1996) paintings, a series on which he collaborated with Darryl Pottorf, at the Monastero Mechitarista dell'Isola di San Lazzaro degli Armeni, Venice.

JULY 17: At a White House ceremony attended by President Bill Clinton, the Friends of Art and Preservation in Embassies, Washington, D.C., awards the artist a Tribute of Appreciation for Internationalism. Rauschenberg presents *Domicile*, a lithograph published by the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, New York, in an edition of fifty, in recognition of the organization's tenth anniversary.

[AUGUST]: He begins work on the *Arcadian Retreat* series of frescos, made with Donald Saff of Saff and Company (formerly Saff Tech Arts), Oxford, Maryland. Inspired by the gift of a Pompeiian fresco fragment by Saff, he uses his own photographs from Turkey to create Iris prints as a means to transfer images to wet plaster. The process is similar to that used in the creation of the *Waterworks* (1992–94) and *Anagram* (1995–2008) series. This is the first time that the artist has used fresco as a medium.

"The evidence of my existance [sic] seems to me like an interesting adventure had by a stranger that I would like to meet."

SEPTEMBER 19–OCTOBER 19: *Robert Rauschenberg: Anagrams* opens at PaceWildenstein, New York. The works include images derived from recent photographs of figures, landscapes, and architectural details. In the accompanying catalogue, Bernice Rose writes: "As Rauschenberg washes image over image, 'abstract' and representational foreground and background constantly shift roles, creating spatial ambiguities that escape the expanded Cubist grid structure."[105]

1997

JANUARY: Rauschenberg travels to Asia to attend the openings of two exhibitions of his recent work, at TAKSU Kuala Lumpu and at Wetterling Teo Gallery, Singapore.

FEBRUARY 15–JUNE 30: The artist participates in *Proof Positive: 40 Years of Contemporary American Printmaking at ULAE: 1957–1997* at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., where Rauschenberg and master printer Bill Goldston speak about their collaboration on April 2. The exhibition travels to the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; Denver Art Museum; and Armand Hammer Museum of Art, Los Angeles.

FEBRUARY 28–APRIL 13: Rauschenberg exhibits photographs in *Robert Rauschenberg: Through the Lens* at the University of Missouri, Kansas City Gallery of Art.

MARCH 18: The artist is awarded First Prize in Contemporary Art at the ARCO International Contemporary Art Fair, Madrid.

MARCH 22–MAY 19: *Robert Rauschenberg: Haywire, Technologische Hauptwerke aus den sechziger Jahren* is presented at Aktionsforum Praterinsel, Munich. The exhibition includes the newly restored *Soundings* (1968).

APRIL 23: Rauschenberg attends a celebration in Houston for the ninetieth birthday of arts patron Dominique de Menil (a longtime collector of his work) and the tenth anniversary of the Menil Collection.

LATE SUMMER/EARLY FALL: Working for the first time in glass, the artist re-creates domestic-type objects that have previously informed his imagery, such as a tire, a pillow, a shovel, and a broom, each of which is presented on a silver-plated pedestal.

SEPTEMBER 10: Rauschenberg attends a luncheon celebrating Leo Castelli's ninetieth birthday at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. He has contributed the print *Caucus* to the portfolio *Surprise*, produced for Castelli's party. The portfolio also includes prints by Jasper Johns, Ellsworth Kelly, Joseph Kosuth, Roy Lichtenstein, Bruce Nauman, James Rosenquist, Ed Ruscha, and Richard Serra. Castelli has represented Rauschenberg since 1958.

SEPTEMBER 19–OCTOBER 18: *Robert Rauschenberg: Arcadian Retreats* is held at PaceWildenstein, 32 East Fifty-seventh Street, New York. On view at PaceWildenstein MacGill, New York, are Iris prints of black-and-white photographs taken by the artist between 1949 and 1984.

SEPTEMBER 19, 1997–JANUARY 11, 1998: *Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective*, featuring 482 artworks, takes place at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Guggenheim Museum SoHo, and Ace Gallery, New York. The exhibition will subsequently travel to Houston, where it will be displayed at the Menil Collection, Contemporary Arts Museum, and the Museum of Fine Arts; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; and Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Spain. The September issue of *Artforum* is devoted to Rauschenberg, and feature articles on the artist and his work appear in *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and the *New Yorker*. In a text titled "Seen of the Crime," written in conjunction with the Guggenheim opening and published in *Grand Street*, Rauschenberg writes: "The

Robert [illegible] ective,
Solomon R. Gugg[illegible] 997

63. *Robert Rauschenberg: Haywire, Technologische Hauptwerke aus den sechziger Jahren*, Aktionsforum Praterinsel, Munich, 1997

evidence of my existance [sic] seems to me like an interesting adventure had by a stranger that I would like to meet."[106]

SEPTEMBER 23–NOVEMBER 1: *Rauschenberg: Art for Change* is on view at Gemini G.E.L. at Joni Moisant Weyl, New York.

OCTOBER 23: The artist makes *Mirthday Man*, a ten-foot-by-fifteen-foot three-panel work from the *Anagram [A Pun]* series, on the occasion of his seventy-second birthday. The series, begun earlier in 1997 and continuing through 2002, uses the same technique as the *Anagram* series, but the polylaminate paper is now mounted on a rigid panel without glazing, giving the works a more painting-like appearance. *Mirthday Man* includes a reproduction of the full-size X ray of the artist first used in the print *Booster* (1967), and will debut as part of *Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective* in Houston. Rauschenberg will replicate *Mirthday Man* in two ceramic editions the following year, at the request of the Otsuka Omi Ceramic Company in Japan, which will retain one example for their museum.

NOVEMBER 10: The artist attends the premiere of the BBC film *Man at Work*, which documents his working practice, at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

1998

JANUARY: Rauschenberg travels to Los Angeles to work at Gemini G.E.L. on the series *L.A. Uncovered*, printed in editions ranging from fifty to sixty-four. The series will be shown at Gemini G.E.L. at Joni Moisant Weyl, New York, later in the year (October 20–December 8).

JANUARY 29–MARCH 7: *Robert Rauschenberg: New Paintings* is on view at Galleria Lawrence Rubin, Milan.

FEBRUARY 14: Robert Rauschenberg and Trisha Brown discuss their collaboration in a public event at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston.

FEBRUARY 14–APRIL 11: *Robert Rauschenberg (Anagrams)* is on view at the Texas Gallery, Houston.

MAY 5: At the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, New York, the artist is presented with the Spirit of the City Award by Tishman Speyer. The award honors those whose efforts on behalf of New York have brought distinction to the city.

JUNE: Rauschenberg travels to Rome at the invitation of the Vatican, which has commissioned him to contribute a work on the theme of the Last Judgment for the Liturgical Hall at the Renzo Piano–designed Padre Pio Piligrimage Church, San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy. He visits the ninth-century Byzantine mosaics in Santa Prassede, Rome, for inspiration.

JULY: The artist completes and installs *Riding Bikes*, a sculptural commission for the Daimler-

Benz headquarters on Potsdamer Platz in Berlin. The commission consists of two bicycles mounted to face each other on stainless posts contoured with multicolored neon tubes, set in a pool of water.

AUGUST 21–SEPTEMBER 12: *Robert Rauschenberg (Tribute 21)* is on view at the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi. It will travel to the Museum of the Gulf Coast, Port Arthur, Texas, from September 19 to November 30.

SEPTEMBER 12: Seattle Symphony inaugurates Benaroya Hall, Seattle. The new building features a commission by Rauschenberg, *Echo* (a nine-panel *Anagram*), installed above the entrance to the S. Mark Taper Foundation Auditorium.

OCTOBER 29: The artist receives the Praemium Imperiale for painting, presented by the Japan Art Association, Tokyo.

NOVEMBER 23: Rauschenberg receives the Kitty Carlisle Hart Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Visual Arts, presented by the Arts and Business Council of New York.

1999

For his commission for Padre Pio Piligrimage Church, San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy, Rauschenberg creates *The Happy Apocalypse*, comprising images of world maps and spirtual crystals taken with the artist's kaleidoscope camera, specially designed and fabricated for this project. The Vatican ultimately rejects the work, on the grounds that his choice to depict God as a satellite dish is an inappropriate theological reference. The twenty-foot-long maquette will be donated to the Menil Collection, Houston, in 2005. Rauschenberg will later recall: "I thought it was very awkward to convey a sense of joy to people who were in great pain, which is the reason why they would have made the pilgrimage to Padre Pio. … So I tried to illustrate the story as sensitively as I could. … I managed to transform the Judgment Day into something to celebrate, something that would heal you through faith. My art is based on hope and aims to inspire spirituality and life."[197]

"to grow out of themselves, to contain their own contradictions and get rid of narrative, which is the sex of picture-making. … I was really *trying* not to make narrative, to keep the images apart and have them relate the way real memories relate to one another by their look, by their shape or their transparency, by their colors and their atmospheres. It was very hard to do. It's hardest thing since I erased Bill's drawing."

The artist begins work on the *Apogamy Pods*. The term *apogamy* refers to a form of asexual reproduction, and in this series Rauschenberg replicates his own earlier works. He says that he wants the paintings "to grow out of themselves, to contain their own contradictions and get rid of narrative,

64. Trisha Brown Company performing *Glacial Decoy* (1981)

which is the sex of picture-making. ... I was really *trying* not to make narratives, to keep the images apart and have them relate the way real memories relate to one another by their look, by their shape or their transparency, by their colors and their atmospheres. It was very hard to do. The hardest thing since I erased Bill's drawing."[108] The works will debut at PaceWildenstein, New York, in 2000.

JANUARY 16–APRIL 18: *Rauschenberg in Transparency* is on view at the Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, California. Featuring works made since the 1960s, it is the first exhibition to focus on transparent works by the artist.

MARCH 19–APRIL 17: *Robert Rauschenberg: Anagrams (A Pun)* is on view at PaceWildenstein, New York. In a statement included in the catalogue, the artist says: "We are all unique. It is a precious thing to compare ourselves to nothing else. This is my working attitude. I do not feel shame in my joy nor regret or fright in history."[109]

MARCH 28: The artist attends the TWO × TWO for AIDS and Art fundraiser benefiting amfAR, the Foundation for AIDS Research, and the Dallas Museum of Art, hosted at the museum. Rauschenberg has been active in amfAR since its inception in 1985, supporting its mission to end the global AIDS epidemic through research.

APRIL 7: The documentary *Robert Rauschenberg: Inventive Genius* airs on PBS as part of the *American Masters* series.

APRIL 8–MAY 15: *Robert Rauschenberg Photographs: 1949–1985* is on view at the Galleria Lawrence Rubin, Milan.

APRIL 17: The artist is presented the Butler Medal for Life Achievement in American Art by the Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio.

MAY 7–SEPTEMBER 6: *Robert Rauschenberg*, an exhibition of new acquisitions in the permanent collection, is on view at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The fourteen works, made between 1949 and 1964, were acquired from the artist's collection the previous year, and include such seminal pieces as *Automobile Tire Print* and *Erased de Kooning Drawing* (both 1953).

MAY 19: The artist receives the Gold Medal for Painting from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, at its annual ceremony, presided over by Louis Auchincloss. The Gold Medal is the academy's highest award.

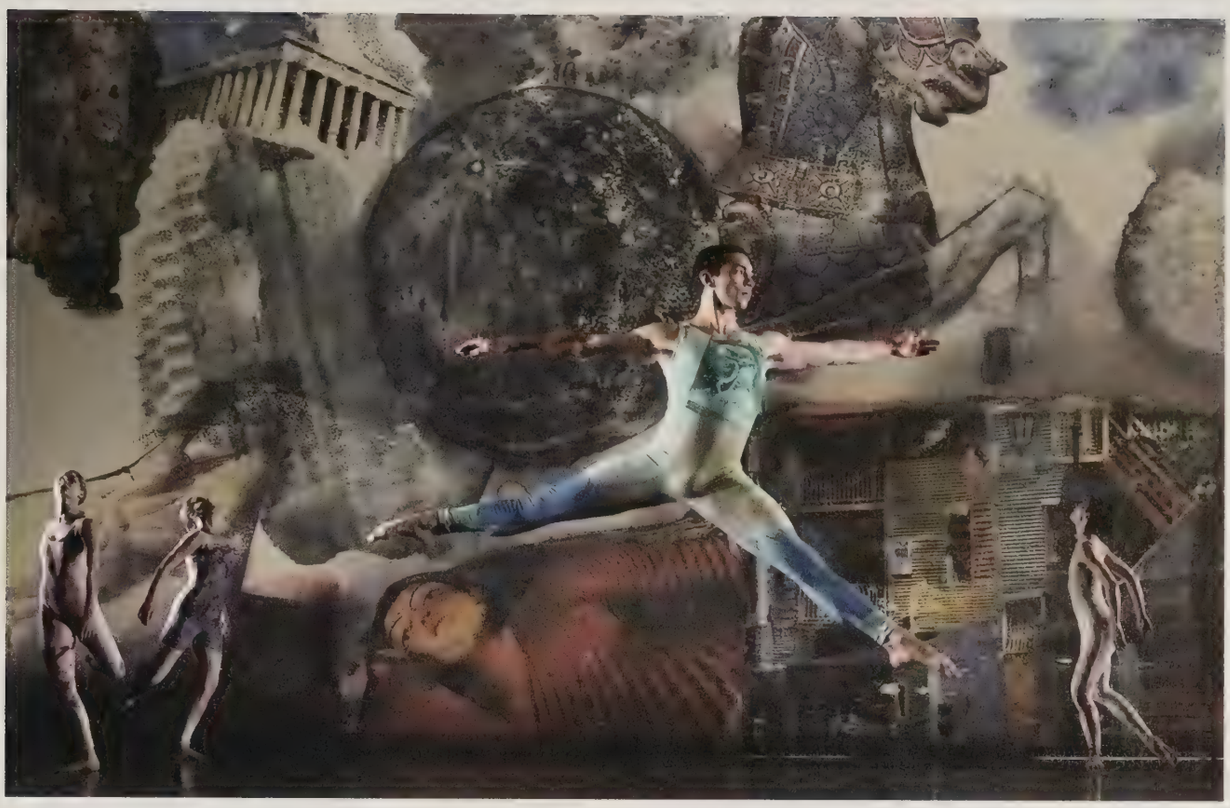
MAY 25: The artist's mother dies.

MAY 30, 1999–APRIL 9, 2000: Rauschenberg's *The ¼ Mile or 2 Furlong Piece* (1981–98) is among the loans that inaugurates the new Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in North Adams, Massachusetts. The work is installed in a football-field-sized gallery.

JUNE 14: *Time* publishes an issue profiling "100 Heroes and Icons of the 20th Century," with a cover designed by Rauschenberg.

JUNE 20: The artist travels to Marrakech to take photographs that will be used the following year in

65. Rauschenberg and Merce Cunningham in front of the set designed by Rauschenberg for Cunningham's *Interscape*, Teatro La Fenice, Venice, 2000



66. Merce Cunningham Dance Company performing *Interscape* (2000), with set and costumes by Rauschenberg, 2008

Marrakitch, a series of prints published by Gemini G.E.L. in editions ranging from fifty to fifty-four.

DECEMBER 31: He attends the thirty-first White House "American Creators" dinner, followed by the Millennium Gala at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C., as a guest of President Bill Clinton.

2000

The artist begins the *Short Stories* series, which he will continue to work on through 2002. In the *Short Stories*, Rauschenberg uses motifs from nature and combines them with his more characteristic imagery, such as trucks, telegraph poles, and road crossings, creating densely layered images. The works' titles are page and paragraph numbers, as if referring to segments of a book, and the viewer is encouraged to personally engage with the imagery as one would read the pages of a short story. The artist says of these works: "Think of them as seeds … the stories can change as time does."[110]

He completes the *Ruminations* series, begun the previous year. The series employs images representing important figures and moments in the artist's early life. The nine images are published by ULAE, each in an edition of forty-six.

FEBRUARY 27: Rauschenberg receives the Award of Excellence for Artistic Contributions to the Fight Against AIDS, presented by Sharon Stone on behalf of amfAR at the TWO × TWO for AIDS and Art event in Dallas.

MARCH 10–APRIL 16: *Robert Rauschenberg: Recent Work* is on view at the Gallery of Fine Art, Edison State College, Fort Myers, Florida. The artist agrees to donate the sale of one hundred prints, three hundred signed posters, and three hundred unsigned posters to establish a gallery endowment.

APRIL 6: The world premiere of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company's *Interscape*, with a musical score by John Cage and costume and set design by Rauschenberg (the set is titled *Interscape Mirage*), takes place at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C.

APRIL 13: A conversation between Rauschenberg and curator Walter Hopps takes place at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, in conjuction with the museum's acquisition of the artist's works the previous year.

MAY 15: Leo Steinberg's *Encounters with Rauschenberg (A Lavishly Illustrated Lecture)* is published. Steinberg offers an in-depth discussion of such major pieces as *Erased de Kooning Drawing* (1953), *Bed* (1955), and *Monogram* (1955–59), explaining the subtle differences between his interpretations and those of other critics, such as Clement Greenberg and Hilton Kramer, candidly reflecting on how he has changed his mind about the artist's work over the years, and defending his new ideas about Rauschenberg's work with precise, fresh arguments.

MAY 16–JUNE 4: *Robert Rauschenberg* is on view at the Wexner Center for the Arts at the Ohio State University, Columbus, in conjunction with his receipt of the eighth annual Wexner Prize, which honors a major contemporary artist who has been consistently original, influential, and challenging to convention. Previous recipients include John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Bruce Nauman, Gerhard Richter, and Louise Bourgeois. He is presented with the award at an event on May 22.

JUNE 29–OCTOBER 8: *Robert Rauschenberg: Synapsis Shuffle* is on view at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *Synapsis Shuffle* (1999) is a participatory "performance" piece comprising fifty-two panels, which are selected and arranged, in compositions of between three and seven panels, by someone other than Rauschenberg each time the work is installed. The artist notes: "if I had wanted to put the panels together myself, I could have done it, but I wanted to see how other people would do it."[111] He considered asking the first twelve taxi drivers to arrive at the Whitney to make the selection of panels, but ultimately invited friends to do so, including Chuck Close, Merce Cunningham, Walter Hopps, Robert Hughes, Edwin Schlossberg, Ileana Sonnabend, and Mike Wallace, among others. Discussing the work, the artist says: "Screwing things up is a virtue. … Being right can stop all the momentum of a very interesting idea."[112]

NOVEMBER 17–DECEMBER 30: *Robert Rauschenberg: Apogamy Pods* is on view at PaceWildenstein, New York.

DECEMBER 6, 2000–MAY 20, 2001: *Robert Rauschenberg: Painting + Sculpture*, curated by Helen Molesworth, is on view at the Baltimore Museum of Art. The exhibition focuses on the artist's work from the 1950s through the 1980s.

2001

JANUARY 27: Rauschenberg attends the gala dinner establishing the Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial Achievement at the Menil Collection, Houston. The biennial prize recognizes early- to mid-career curators who have made significant contributions to the field of contemporary art.

MARCH 18: A conversation between Rauschenberg and art historian Dave Hickey is hosted at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

APRIL 6–MAY 12: *Robert Rauschenberg: Short Stories* is shown at the Texas Gallery, Houston.

MAY 12–JULY 28: *Robert Rauschenberg: Short Stories* is on view at Galerie Jamileh Weber, Zurich.

AFTER SEPTEMBER 11: Rauschenberg designs the poster *I Love New York*, showing an image of the Statue of Liberty holding the towers of the World Trade Center, to benefit the families of World Trade Center victims.

OCTOBER 15: The artist receives the World Leaders Prize from the Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, during World Leaders: A Festival of Creative Genius, which honors fourteen men and women whose accomplishments have transformed their particular field of creativity as well as the world around them. The gala dinner includes a theatrical skit of Rauschenberg's life and art, followed by a conversation between Rauschenberg and curator Susan Davidson.

2002

The artist begins to work on the *Scenarios* series (2002–06). Using the same transfer process employed since 1992, the *Scenarios* each consist of two panels whose imagery is arranged in a more gridlike format, with less overlap than previous works. Rauschenberg describes them as "a refinement of last year's *Short Stories* … the viewers gave the pictures their content and became their authors; they were sort of fragmented parts that one could go around and put in any location or in any time frame of their choice. … that is what these series have in common; they are just stories in a book."[113]

JANUARY 30–FEBRUARY 10: *Robert Rauschenberg: Beamers* is on view at Eckert Fine Art, Naples, Florida. Among the works shown are the BMW 635 CSi "art car" painted by the artist for BMW in 1986 and works from the *Beamers* series (1988), comprising acrylic on vinyl film and enameled-aluminum paintings.

FEBRUARY 28–APRIL 6: *Robert Rauschenberg* is on view at Pace/Macgill Gallery, New York. The exhibition features works from the artist's *Photem Series* (1981).

MARCH 28–APRIL 28: *Robert Rauschenberg: Recent Work* is on view at the Gallery of Fine Art, Edison State College, Fort Myers, Florida, presenting works from the *Short Stories* series (2000–02).

"Screwing things up is a virtue. … Being right can stop all the momentum of a very interesting idea."

SPRING: Rauschenberg suffers a stroke that leaves his right side partly paralyzed and confines him to a wheelchair. Working with his left hand and with a group of longtime assistants, the artist remains prolific in the studio. He later remarks to Calvin Tomkins: "I can't stand myself or anyone else if they start whining. I just have to figure out ways to continue without getting so distraught."[114]

MAY 22–AUGUST 18: *Robert Rauschenberg: Recent Work* is on view at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The museum also presents the artist with their seventh annual Medal Award.

JUNE 6–JULY 6: *Robert Rauschenberg: Short Stories* is on view at Waddington Galleries, London. A statement by the artist describes the intention behind these works:

Rauschenberg in his studio, Captiva, FL

"In this group of works there are no mistakes nor right, nor wrong. They are acronical [sic] of what you personally see or imagine. No tracks. No traces. Your story or dream and imagined or real these are your personal treasures to share or keep secret, choose to expand your reality or live it in the future."[115]

JUNE 6–OCTOBER 14: *Robert Rauschenberg*, curated by Bernice Rose, is on view at the Musée Maillol, Paris. The exhibition features works made in the last decade and includes a new configuration of *Synapsis Shuffle*, arranged by various French friends, celebrities, and colleagues of the artist.

2003

As a result of his stroke of the previous year, Rauschenberg is no longer able to hold a camera. His paintings now include photographs taken by various studio assistants and employees, who travel internationally attempting to capture Rauschenbergian images.

FEBRUARY 6–MARCH 30: *Rauschenberg Reprise* is on view at the Simmons Visual Arts Center, Brenau University, Gainsville, Georgia. Also on view is *Quattro Mani: The Collaborative Work of Robert Rauschenberg and Darryl Pottorf*, in the university's Presidents Gallery.

MARCH 15–APRIL 26: *Robert Rauschenberg: Prints and Unique Works* is on view at Jim Kempner Fine Art, New York.

APRIL 5–MAY 3: *Robert Rauschenberg: Short Stories: You Are the Author* is on view at PaceWildenstein, New York. The artist says of the work: "The more open they are, the more room there is for spectators to get involved. I don't want my personal taste to be part of the viewer's inhibitions or blindness. The more I don't say, the more room there is for you to say. And if I happen to find out what you think. ... Well, I enjoy that, too."[116]

APRIL 25: Rauschenberg produces a limited-edition print, *Captiva Coda,* with Gemini G.E.L. to benefit the Lee Memorial Health System Trauma Center, Fort Myers, Florida.

OCTOBER 16: The artist attends the opening of his close friend James Rosenquist's retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. In conjunction with the exhibition, the museum will host a conversation between Rauschenberg and Rosenquist on December 16.

2004

JANUARY 31–MARCH 18: *Robert Rauschenberg: An American Iconoclast* is on view at the Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery, Nashville, Tennessee. The exhibition, which includes works from the *Wax Fire Works* series (1990) and a series of photographs from *Study for a Chinese Summerhall* (1983), honors a major gift to the university by Donald and Ruth Saff.

FEBRUARY 7–SEPTEMBER 5: *Robert Rauschenberg: Current Scenarios* is on view at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut. It is the first public showing of the *Scenarios* (2002–06), seventeen of which are on display. The large-scale panels feature commonplace images, such as traffic signs, billboards, plants, and animals, derived from the artist's existing photographs. The artist says of his imagery: "I like photographs of anything uninteresting. Maybe just two doors on a wall."[117] The exhibition also includes *Gluts* (1986–89, 1991–95) and

68. *Robert Rauschenberg: Hoarfrosts*, Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY, 2005

69. *Robert Rauschenberg: Combines*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, 2005–06

works from the museum's collection: *Features* and *Surfaces* from the *Currents* project (1969).

FEBRUARY 29–JUNE 6: The artist's first retrospective exhibition in Italy, *Rauschenberg*, curated by Susan Davidson and David White, is on view at the Palazzo dei Diamanti, Ferrara. Works created over the previous six decades, many of which were inspired by the artist's long-standing engagement with Italy, are included.

JUNE 4–JULY 11: The Bob Rauschenberg Gallery is inaugurated at Edison State College, Fort Myers, Florida, in honor of the artist's twenty-five-year engagement with the college. It is the first institutional facility to be named after the artist. On view as part of the gallery's inaugural exhibition, *Bob Rauschenberg: Scenarios*, are ten works from the *Short Stories* (2000–02) and *Scenarios* (2000–06) series.

JULY 15–AUGUST 28: *Robert Rauschenberg: Paintings, Screenprints, and Lithographs* is on view at John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco.

AUGUST 8: The artist appears on *CBS Sunday Morning* with Morley Safer. He is adamant that his best work is yet to come, saying: "Wouldn't you just hate the fact if the future wasn't the best thing you ever did?"[118]

AUGUST 13: Hurricane Charley reaches the Gulf Coast of Florida, with the eye traveling almost directly over Captiva, where the artist, his friends, and studio staff remain throughout the storm. The eight houses and studios on his twenty-acre property sustain mostly water damage, but the surrounding jungle is decimated. The artist evacuates the island by helicopter the next day. He takes this opportunity to renovate his living quarters and puts considerable effort into replanting the jungle. He later says: "You have to keep step—don't fall behind. … The hurricane has gotten in the way, but you can't let things stay in your way. … There is no life without art."[119]

OCTOBER: The Robert Rauschenberg Gallery opens within the Museum of the Gulf Coast in Port Arthur, Texas. The gallery's permanent installation features twenty-one works donated or loaned by the artist, including *Opal Gospel* (1971–72) and prints from his ROCI (1985–90) and *Star Quarters I–IV* (1971) series.

"Wouldn't you just hate the fact if the future wasn't the best thing you ever did?"

OCTOBER 28, 2004–JANUARY 22, 2005: *Robert Rauschenberg, Artist-Citizen: Posters for a Better World* is on view at the University Art Gallery, California State University, Hayward. Among the institutions to which it will travel are the Dallas Museum of Art; Hofstra University Museum, Hempstead, New York; and the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery, Edison State College, through early 2008. The exhibition focuses on posters made by the artist between 1969 and 1996, addressing political and social concerns.

NOVEMBER 14: Rauschenberg is one of a number of artists asked to design a menu for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the famed New York resturant Chanterelle, where he has dined regularly over the years.

NOVEMBER 16: The artist attends the reopening of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, following the redesign of its building by architect Yoshio Taniguchi.

2005

JANUARY 7–FEBRUARY 26: *Rauschenberg's A Quake in Paradise (Labyrinth)* (1994) is on view at the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery, Edison State College, Fort Myers, Florida.

JANUARY 14–FEBRUARY 5: *Robert Rauschenberg: Scenarios* is on view at PaceWildenstein, New York.

MARCH 4–JULY 3: *Robert Rauschenberg*, curated by Peter Boswell, is on view at the Miami Art Museum. The exhibition includes new paintings from the *Scenarios* series (2002–06). In the exhibition catalogue, Oscar Hijuelos writes: "They are anti-advertisements about American life, and fly in the face of the polished and neatly organized documents that we, in our information-glutted age, live with daily."[120]

MARCH 10–JUNE 12: *Robert Rauschenberg: Posters*, curated by Carter Foster, is on view at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The exhibition includes more than one hundred mass-editioned posters, created by the artist during the previous fifty years.

MARCH 17–MAY 15: *Robert Rauschenberg*, organized by Susan Davidson and David White and featuring works from the *Gluts* series (1986–89, 1991–95), is on view at the Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, Valencia, Spain. The artist is awarded the fifth Julio González International Prize by the museum for his lifetime contribution to contemporary art. Previous recipients have included Georg Baselitz (2000), Cy Twombly (2001), Anish Kapoor and Eduardo Chillida (2002), and Markus Lüpertz (2003).

APRIL 13: The artist is honored at the thirty-fifth anniversary gala of the Trisha Brown Company in New York.

MAY 21–SEPTEMBER 3: *Robert Rauschenberg: Scenarios and Short Stories* is on view at the Paul and Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum at the University of Louisiana in Lafayette, the hometown of the artist's family from 1945 on. Running concurrently are exhibitions by the artist's son, Christopher, a photographer, and Darryl Pottorf, Rauschenberg's longtime studio assistant. All three exhibitions travel to the Herron School of Art and Design, Indiana University–Purdue University, Indianapolis, and the Jepson Center for the Arts at the Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia.

JUNE: The Museum of Modern Art, New York, acquires the artist's painting *Rebus* (1955) for a reported thirty million dollars.

70. *Robert Rauschenberg: Combines*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2005–06

JUNE 24, 2005–JANUARY 2006: *Robert Rauschenberg: On and Off the Wall, Oeuvres des Années 80 & 90*, curated by Susan Davidson and David White, is on view at the Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain in Nice, France. The show will travel to the ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum in Aarhus, Denmark. On display are works from the *Borealis* (1989–91), *Gluts* (1986–89, 1991–95), *Night Shade* (1991), *Photem* (1981), and *Urban Bourbon* (1988–95) series.

AUGUST 12–OCTOBER 23: *Robert Rauschenberg: Hoarfrosts*, organized by David White, is on view at Guild Hall, East Hampton, New York. The exhibition includes sixteen works from the artist's *Hoarfrost* series (1974–76).

DECEMBER 20, 2005–APRIL 2, 2006: *Robert Rauschenberg: Combines*, organized by Paul Schimmel, is on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. It will travel to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Centre Pompidou, Paris; and Moderna Museet, Stockholm. The first exhibition devoted solely to the artist's Combines, it showcases sixty-seven works made between 1954 and 1964 and highlights the strategy by which Rauschenberg reinvented collage. The artist describes the experience of seeing the works as one of "joy, like seeing old friends you haven't seen in decades."[121] In his review of the exhibition, critic Robert Hughes sums up Rauschenberg's pragmatic worldview in the 1950s and 1960s: "He didn't give a damn about pie in the sky; what interested him more was a disc of used rubber from a truck tyre in the street, and what might happen if you nailed it on a striped board as part of a randomly accumulated 'palette of objects.'"[122]

2006

Rauschenberg casts his 1981 sculpture *The Ancient Incident* in bronze in an edition of five with an artist's proof.

FEBRUARY 5: In conjunction with the exhibition *Robert Rauschenberg: Combines*, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, hosts a conversation between the artist and Calvin Tomkins. They will reprise this conversation at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, on May 21. Curators Nan Rosenthal and Paul Schimmel serve as the moderators at their respective institutions.

APRIL 17: The artist is honored by the Merce Cunningham Dance Company at their benefit gala.

APRIL 28–SEPTEMBER 24: *Art from Life: Prints by Robert Rauschenberg from the Marmor Foundation and the Fearer Family Collection* is on view at the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University, Stanford, California. The exhibition focuses on the artist's work with ULAE and Gemini G.E.L. over the previous four decades.

OCTOBER 27–NOVEMBER 25: *Robert Rauschenberg: Scenarios and the Ancient Incident* opens at PaceWildenstein, New York.

71. *Robert Rauschenberg: Combines*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2005–06

NOVEMBER 7, 2006–JANUARY 17, 2007: *Rauschenberg: Express*, organized by Barbara Rose, is on view at the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid. The exhibition focuses on the artist's silkscreened painting *Express* (1963), which is in the museum's collection, and highlights the prints from the late 1950s through the early 1960s, including eight works from the *XXXIV Drawings for Dante's Inferno* (1958–60).

2007

Rauschenberg begins work on the *Runts*, which will be the artist's last series. It gains its title from the fact that the paintings are smaller in scale than the *Scenarios* (2002–06). Rauschenberg states that he decided to work at a smaller scale after his dealer remarked that the *Scenarios* were larger than most private spaces. The series will debut at the Galerie Jamileh Weber, Zurich, in May.

JANUARY 12–FEBRUARY 24: *Rauschenberg: Scenarios* is on view at the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery, Edison State College, Fort Myers, Florida. The exhibition features his most recent *Scenarios*, from 2006, which have not previously been exhibited.

FEBRUARY 23–MARCH 13: *Robert Rauschenberg: Transfer Drawings from the 1960s* is on view at the Jonathan O'Hara Gallery, New York. The exhibition contains forty-four drawings, with imagery ranging from portraits of Malcolm X and Richard Nixon, to the *Apollo* 7 astronauts and Merce Cunningham, to newspaper headlines. In a review of the exhibition, critic Roberta Smith notes that the transfer hatching marks could be a "cousin, once removed, of Pollock's drips."[123]

FEBRUARY 23–MAY 13: *Robert Rauschenberg: Cardboards and Related Pieces*, conceived by the late Walter Hopps and Josef Helfenstein, is on view at the Menil Collection, Houston. It is the first comprehensive view of these works and the first major exhibition of cardboard pieces since the artist began the works in 1971. On February 24, Rauschenberg holds a public conversation with curators Susan Davidson and Josef Helfenstein.

MAY 25–SEPTEMBER 8: *Signs of Life: Robert Rauschenberg Posters* is on view at the Black Mountain College Museum and Arts Center in Asheville, North Carolina. It contains nearly two dozen posters collected over the previous three decades by Rauschenberg biographer Mary Lynn Kotz.

SEPTEMBER 15, 2007–FEBRUARY 17, 2008: *Robert Rauschenberg's Currents: Features and Surface Series* is on view at the Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University, Atlanta.

OCTOBER: Rauschenberg begins the *Lotus* series, a suite of twelve prints in an edition of fifty each, published by ULAE. The images are derived from photographs the artist took in China in 1982, 1984, and 1985.

OCTOBER 5–6: Merce Cunningham Dance Company's performance *X Over* premieres at Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, with a set designed by Rauschenberg, adapted from his work *Plank* from the *Scenarios* series.

OCTOBER 26, 2007–JANUARY 6, 2008: *Robert Rauschenberg: Travelling '70–'76*, curated by Mirta d'Argenzio, is on view at the Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, Porto, Portugal. The exhibition, which includes works from the *Cardboard* (1970–71), *Jammer* (1975–76), *Hoarfrost* (1974–76), *Venetian* (1972–73), and *Early Egyptian* (1973–74) series, among others, will travel to the Haus der Kunst, Munich, and the Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donna Regina, Naples.

OCTOBER 28, 2007–MARCH 30, 2008: *Let the World In: Prints by Robert Rauschenberg from the National Gallery of Art and Related Collections* is on view at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

NOVEMBER 24, 2007–JANUARY 26, 2008: *Robert Rauschenberg: Three Decades* is on view at Galleri Faurschou, Beijing. Included is work from the mid-1980s until 2007 that emphasizes the artist's American imagery. It is his first solo show in China since his ROCI tour in 1985.

2008

JANUARY 11–FEBRUARY 16: *Robert Rauschenberg: Runts* is on view at Pace Gallery, New York.

MARCH 6–APRIL 12: *Last Turn–Your Turn: Robert Rauschenberg and the Environmental Crisis* is on view at Jacobson Howard Gallery, New York. The exhibition chronicles Rauschenberg's prophetic rendering of current issues related to global warming and the intersection of industrial development and planetary health. Proceeds of sales from the exhibition benefit the Nurture Nature Foundation, New York, an organization dedicated to environmental protection.

MAY 12: Robert Rauschenberg dies at his home in Captiva, Florida. In an obituary published on May 14, the *New York Times* lauds his many professional accomplishments: "he helped obscure the lines between painting and sculpture, painting and photography, photography and printmaking, sculpture and photography, sculpture and dance, sculpture and technology, technology and performance art—not to mention between art and life."[123]

OCTOBER 26 AND 27: Memorial services are held in New York, accompanied by a two-day event at three locations around the city. The event begins with a panel discussion at the Museum of Modern Art, titled "Living and Working with Rauschenberg–A Conversation." Panel speakers include Trisha Brown, Brice Marden, Julie Martin, Darryl Pottorf, Dorothea Rockburne, Barbara Rose, James Rosenquist, and Susan Weil. The Guggenheim Museum

hosts an exhibition of photographs of and by the artist, accompanied by a memory wall where visitors can leave comments. The Metropolitan Museum of Art hosts an event in the Temple of Dendur and the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, with a roster of speakers that includes Janet Begneaud, Janine Boardman, Trisha Brown, Bill Clinton, Chuck Close, Merce Cunningham, Christophe de Menil, Kat Epple, Dennis Hopper (video message), Thomas Krens, Dickie Landry, Darryl Pottorf, Christopher Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist, Nan Rosenthal, Donald Saff, and Edwin Schlossberg. Services will also be held in two additional cities close to Rauschenberg: on November 23 in Los Angeles, and on May 29, 2009, in Venice at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, on the occasion of the first homage exhibition, *Robert Rauschenberg: Gluts*, organized by Susan Davidson and David White.

NOTES

1. Barbara Rose, *Rauschenberg: An Interview with Robert Rauschenberg* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), p. 13.

2. Ibid., p. 18.

3. Sam Hunter, *Robert Rauschenberg: Works, Writings and Interviews* (Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafa, 2006), p. 119.

4. Robert Hughes, "The Most Living Artist," *Time*, November 29, 1976, p. 59.

5. Josef Albers, quoted in Martin Duberman, *Black Mountain: An Exploration in Community* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993), p. 56.

6. Hughes, "The Most Living Artist," p. 59.

7. Marjorie Welish, "Texas, Japan, Etc.: Robert Rauschenberg's Sense of Place," *Arts Magazine* 60, no. 7 (March 1986), p. 52.

8. "Speaking of Pictures," *Life*, April 9, 1951, p. 23.

9. Many of the exhibited works are destroyed the following summer in a fire at the Weils' summer home or in 1957 in a fire at the apartment of artist Sari Dienes. Only four of the seventeen works are extant today: *Crucifixion* and *Reflection* (ca. 1950), *Mother of God* (ca. 1950), *22 the Lily White* (ca. 1950), and *The Man with Two Souls* (1950). Two additional works, *Number 1* (1951) and *Should Love Come First?* (ca. 1951; now known as *Untitled [small black painting]*), were repainted black in 1953. Photographs by Aaron Siskind document four of the lost or destroyed works; the photographs are published in Roni Feinstein, "The Unknown Early Robert Rauschenberg: The Betty Parsons Exhibition of 1951," Arts Magazine 59, no. 5 (January 1985), pp. 126–29.

10. Calvin Tomkins, "Everything in Sight: Robert Rauschenberg's New Life," *New Yorker*, May 23, 2005, p. 77.

11. Alain Sayag, "Interview with Robert Rauschenberg," in *Robert Rauschenberg Photographs* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), unpaginated.

12. The handwritten letter is reproduced in Walter Hopps, *Robert Rauschenberg: The Early 1950s*, exh. cat. (Houston: Menil Collection and Houston Fine Arts Press, 1991), p. 230.

13. For an additional account of the event, see Duberman, *Black Mountain*, pp. 350–58, and William Fetterman, "John Cage's Theatre Pieces: Notations and Performances," Ph.D. diss. (New York University, 1991), pp. 174–87.

14. No other information about the exhibition is known; only the printed announcement survives.

15. Of these intimately scaled collages, thirty-three are known to still exist.

16. None of the *Feticci Personali* is known to exist, although several are documented in photographs taken by Rauschenberg in Rome (ca. 1953) and in his Fulton Street studio (ca. 1954).

17. Roberta J. M. Olson, "Rauschenberg, the Extraordinary Ragpicker," *Soho Weekly News*, March 31, 1977, p. 19.

18. Photographs taken by Rauschenberg document Twombly in the Fulton Street studio.

19. Ten of the works in the exhibition have been lost or destroyed. They are documented in photographs of the exhibition made for *Life*, although they were never published in the magazine.

20. John Cage's statement, distributed as a handout in the gallery, is quoted in its entirety in Emily Genauer, "Art and Artists: Musing on Miscellany," *New York Herald Tribune*, December 27, 1953, sec. 4, p. 6.

21. Note, n.d., Rauschenberg studio archive.

22. Dore Ashton, "Bob Rauschenberg," *Art Digest*, September 15, 1953, p. 21.

23. None of the paper paintings is known to exist, although two are documented in photographs taken in Rauschenberg's studio at the time. One dirt, one clay, and ten gold paintings have survived.

24. Rose, *Rauschenberg: An Interview*, p. 53.

25. Richard Kostelanetz, "'I never thought of it as much of an ability': An Interview," in Hunter, *Robert Rauschenberg: Works, Writings, Interviews*, p. 138.

26. Mario Codognato and Mirta d'Argenzio "Interview with Robert Rauschenberg," in Julia Blaut and Susan Davidson, *Rauschenberg*, exh. cat. (Ferrara: Palazzo dei Diamanti, 2004), p. 99.

27. F[rank] O'H[ara], "Bob Rauschenberg," *Artnews* 53, no. 9 (January 1955), p. 47.

28. Jason Kaufman, "Interview: Robert Rauschenberg, 'Business sure screwed up the art world universally,'" *Art Newspaper*, no. 73 (September 1997), p. 17.

29. John Richardson, "Rauschenberg's Epic Vision," *Vanity Fair*, September 1997, p. 323.

30. Rosetta Brooks, "Rauschenberg: Round the Block Once or Twice, a Conversation with Rosetta Brooks," *Modern Painters*, December 2005/January 2006, p. 75.

31. Dore Ashton, "Rauschenberg's Thirty-four Illustrations for Dante's Inferno," *Metro*, no. 2 (May 1961), p. 53.

32. Robert Rauschenberg, statement, in J[ames] S[chuyler], "Is Today's Artist with or against the Past," *Artnews* 57, no. 4 (June–August,1958), pp. 46, 56.

33. Note, n.d., Rauschenberg studio archive.

34. Robert Rauschenberg, statement, in Dorothy C. Miller, ed., *Sixteen Americans*, exh. cat. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1959), p. 58.

35. "Emperor's Combine" *Time*, April 18, 1960, p. 92.

36. Note, July 8, 1988, Rauschenberg studio archive.

37. David Sears, "A Trisha Brown–Robert Rauschenberg Collage," *Ballet Review* 10, no. 3 (Fall 1982), p. 48.

38. Dorothy Gees Seckler, oral history interview with Robert Rauschenberg, December 21, 1965, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, accessed October 10, 2010, at www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/rausch65.htm.

39. Letter, April 15, 1961, Rauschenberg studio archive.

40. John Cage, "On Robert Rauschenberg, Artist, and His Work," *Metro*, no. 2 (May 1961), p. 41.

41. Calvin Tomkins, *Off the Wall: Robert Rauschenberg and the Art World of Our Time* (New York: Penguin, 1980), p. 192.

42. Kostelanetz, "'I never thought of it as much of an ability,'" p. 140.

43. *Rauschenberg*, "Autobiography," in Andrew Forge, Rauschenberg (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1969), p. 226. The text originally appeared in the lithograph *Autobiography* (1968).

44. Rose, *Rauschenberg: An Interview*, p. 85.

45. G. R. Swenson, "Rauschenberg Paints a Picture," *Artnews* 62, no. 2 (April 1963), p. 46.

46. Ibid., p. 67.

47. John Gruen, "Robert Rauschenberg: An Audience of One," *Artnews* 76, no. 2 (February 1977), p. 48.

48. Pierre Schneider, "Art News from Paris," *Artnews* 62, no. 2 (April 1963), p. 48.

49. Robert Rauschenberg, "Random Order," *Location* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1963), p. 28.

50. Billy Klüver, interview with Robert Rauschenberg, in Klüver, ed., *On Record: 11 Artists 1963* (New York: Experiments in Art and Technology, 1981), p. 41.

51. *Robert Rauschenberg*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, 1977), p. 40.

52. Robert Rauschenberg, "Note on Painting" (1963), reprinted in Hunter, *Robert Rauschenberg: Works, Writings and Interviews*, p. 122.

53. Forge, *Rauschenberg*, p. 18.

54. G. di San Lazzaro, "La XXXIIe Biennale de Venise," XXe siècle 26, no. 24 (December 1964), unpaginated supplement (author's translation).

55. Tomkins, *Off the Wall*, p. 235.

56. Seckler, oral history interview.

57. Bryan Robertson, interview with Robert Rauschenberg, broadcast on the BBC television program *Monitor*, February 2, 1964.

58. John Gruen, "Painter Dancing in the Dark," *Sunday Herald Tribune Magazine*, January 2, 1966, p. 34.

59. The content of Steinberg's lectures was clarified by Steinberg in a telephone conversation with Susan Davidson on August 11, 1997, and by a facsimile of the original lecture notes. For the amended version of the lectures, see Leo Steinberg,

"Reflections on the State of Criticism," *Artforum* 10, no. 7 (March 1972), pp. 37–49; for the two passages quoted here, see pp. 46–47.

60. Note, n.d., Rauschenberg studio archive.

61. Donald Saff, "Conservation of Matter: Robert Rauschenberg's Art of Acceptance," *Aperture*, no. 125 (Fall 1991), p. 26.

62. Handwritten note, 1970, Rauschenberg studio archive.

63. Grace Glueck, "Artists to Withdraw Work at Biennale," *New York Times*, June 6, 1970, sec. 1, p. 27.

64. Deborah Solomon, "Questions for Robert Rauschenberg: Growing Old, Artfully," *New York Times Magazine*, February 15, 2004, p. 13.

65. Codognato and d'Argenzio, "Interview with Robert Rauschenberg," p. 98.

66. Jack Cowart and James Elliot, *Prints from the Untitled Press, Captiva, Florida*, exh. cat. (Hartford, CT: Wadsworth Atheneum, 1979), p. 5.

67. Rose, *Rauschenberg: An Interview*, p. 111.

68. Transcript of footage for the unreleased film "Mostly about Rauschenberg," 1974–75, Rauschenberg studio archive.

69. Ibid.

70. Unpublished transcript of a meeting with Israeli students at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, May 29, 1974, quoted in Mary Lynn Kotz, *Rauschenberg: Art and Life* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990), p. 195.

71. Transcript of footage for the unreleased film "Mostly about Rauschenberg," 1974–75, Rauschenberg studio archive.

72. Rosamund Felsen, "Rauschenberg's Trip to India," in Paulette Long, ed., *Paper: Art and Technology* (San Francisco: World Print Council, 1979), p. 84.

73. Kotz, *Rauschenberg: Art and Life*, p. 206.

74. Joan Lowndes, "Rauschenberg," *Vancouver Sun*, September 3, 1976, p. 35A.

75. Thomas B. Hess, "Replenishing Rauschenberg," *New York*, May 16, 1977, p. 79.

76. Amendment #308 to the Tax Reform Act of 1976, HR 10612.

77. Olson, "Rauschenberg, the Extraordinary Ragpicker," p. 18.

78. "Talk of the Town: Rauschenberg," *New Yorker*, May 23, 1977, p 31.

79. Hughes, "The Most Living Artist," p. 54.

80. Olson, "Rauschenberg, the Extraordinary Ragpicker," p. 18.

81. Merce Cunningham, quoted in Anna Kisselgoff, "A Dance Revolutionary on Broadway," *New York Times*, January 16, 1977, sec. D, p. 8.

82. "The Talk of the Town: Rauschenberg," pp. 30–31.

83. Andrei Voznesensky, *Nostalgia for the Present* (New York: Doubleday, 1978).

84. Maureen Bashaw, "Artist Spills His 'Gluts,'" *News-Press* (Fort Myers, FL), March 26, 1987, p. 9D.

85. The work has since been deinstalled and is now in the collection of the Baltimore Museum of Art.

86. This work has been deinstalled.

87. Robert Saltonstall Mattison, *Masterworks in the Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Collection* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1995), p. 123.

88. Sayag, "Interview with Robert Rauschenberg," unpaginated.

89. Ibid.

90. Note, n.d., Rauschenberg studio archive.

91. See Larry Rohter, "China: A Brush with the Master," *Newsweek*, August 2, 1982, p. 40, and Yoshiakai Tono, interview with Robert Rauschenberg, in *ROCI Japan*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: Setagaya Art Museum, 1986), pp. 11–12.

92. Handwritten note, November 19, 1982, Rauschenberg studio archive.

93. The photographs appear in David Friend, "All Aboard the Shuttle," *Life* 7, no. 11 (October 1984), pp. 72–73. The untitled work was subsequently dismantled

94. Robert Rauschenberg, "Tobago Statement," in *ROCI: Rauschenberg Overseas Cultural Interchange*, exh. cat. (Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1991), p. 154.

95. Rauschenberg, exhibition guide (Ferrara: Palazzo dei Diamanti, 2004), p. 23.

96. Robert Rauschenberg and Donald Saff, "A Conversation about Art and ROCI," in *ROCI: Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange*, pp. 169–70.

97. Rose, *Rauschenberg: An Interview*, p. 110.

98. Bashaw, "Artist Spills His 'Gluts,'" p. 1D.

99. "Panel Hearing on Bork as Justice: Professors and Artists Voice Their Views," *New York Times*, September 23, 1987, sec. A, p. 28.

100. Rose, *Rauschenberg: An Interview*, p. 111.

101. Unpublished transcript of a ROCI Cuba forum for students and the public at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, February 6, 1988, quoted in Kotz, *Rauschenberg: Art and Life*, p. 37.

102. Jennifer Dunning, "A Set to Upstage the Dancers," *New York Times*, March 14, 1989, sec. C, p. 17.

103. Notes dated November 8, 1992, Rauschenberg studio archive.

104. "On Printmaking," unpublished note, July 27, 1995, Rauschenberg studio archive.

105. Bernice Rose, "Anagrams," in *Anagrams*, exh. cat. (New York: PaceWildenstein, 1996), p. 9.

106. Robert Rauschenberg, "Seen of the Crime," *Grand Street*, no. 62, p. 16.

107. Codognato and d'Argenzio, "Interview with Robert Rauschenberg," p. 97.

108. Dave Hickey, "Apogamy Pods: Rauschenberg Erases Rauschenberg," in *Rauschenberg: Apogamy Pods*, exh. cat. (New York: PaceWildenstein, 2000), p. 6.

109. Bernice Rose, "Anagrams," in *Anagrams*, exh. cat. (New York: PaceWildenstein, 1996).

110. *Robert Rauschenberg: Short Stories*, exh. cat. (Zurich: Galerie Jamileh Weber, 2001), p. 3.

111. Howard Kissel, "Rauschenberg Roulette: Famed Artist Brings in a Circle of Friends to Finish His Latest Project," *New York Daily News*, June 25, 2000.

112. Michael Kimmelman, "The Irrepressible Ragman of Art," *New York Times*, August 27, 2000, accessed October 10, 2010, at www.nytimes.com/2000/08/27/arts/art-architecture-the-irrepressible-ragman-of-art.html.

113. Codognato and d'Argenzio, "Interview with Robert Rauschenberg," p. 93.

114. Calvin Tomkins, "Everything in Sight: Robert Rauschenberg's New Life," *New Yorker*, May 23, 2005, accessed October 10, 2010, at www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/05/23/050523fa_fact_tomkins.

115. Note, 2002, Rauschenberg studio archive.

116. Sarah Schmerler, "Out There," *Time Out New York*, April 3, 2003, p. 6.

117. Deborah Solomon, "Growing Old, Artfully," *New York Times*, February 17, 2004, accessed October 10, 2010, at www.nytimes.com.

118. Transcript of footage for "CBS Sunday Morning," August 8, 2004, Rauschenberg studio archive.

119. Barbara Linstrom-Arnold, "Artist in Residence," *Times of the Islands*, March/April 2005, p. 59.

120. Quoted in Rauschenberg *Scenarios*, exh. pamphlet (New York: PaceWildenstein, 2005), pp. 7–8.

121. Carol Vogel, "The Robert Rauschenberg Reunion Tour," *New York Times*, December 18, 2005, sec. 2, p. 38.

122. Robert Hughes, "Spirit of the Age," *Guardian* (London), January 26, 2006, sec. G2, p. 18

123. Roberta Smith, "A Rarely Seen Side of a Rauschenberg Shift," *New York Times*, March 8, 2007, accessed October 10, 2010, at www.nytimes.com/2007/03/08/arts/design/08raus.html.

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Rauschenberg, 1969

LIST OF WORKS

SHORT CIRCUIT (COMBINE PAINTING), 1955
Oil, fabric, and paper on wood supports and cabinet with two hinged doors containing a painting by Susan Weil and a reproduction of a Jasper Johns *Flag* painting by Elaine Sturtevant
40 ¾ × 37 ½ × 4 ¼ inches
(103.5 × 95.3 × 10.8 cm)
pp. 39–41

GREENHOUSE (COMBINE), 1950
Wire mesh, twigs, wire, paint, glass globe, and glass shards
54 × 12 × 12 inches
(137.2 × 30.5 × 30.5 cm)
pp. 42–45

UNTITLED (ELEMENTAL SCULPTURE), ca. 1953
Bricks, mortar, metal rods, and concrete
14 ¼ × 8 × 7 ¾ inches
(36.2 × 20.3 × 19.7 cm)
pp. 46–47

UNTITLED (ELEMENTAL SCULPTURE), ca. 1953
Wood block and iron spike
10 ⅞ × 3 ⅛ × 2 ⅞ inches
(27.6 × 7.9 × 7.3 cm)
p. 49

WHITE PAINTING, 1951
Oil on canvas, in two parts
72 × 96 inches
(182.9 × 243.8 cm)
pp. 51–52

UNTITLED (MATTE BLACK TRIPTYCH), ca. 1951
Oil on canvas, in three parts
72 × 108 inches
(182.9 × 274.3 cm)
pp. 53–54

THREE TRAPS FOR MEDEA (COMBINE), 1959
Oil, paper, fabric, metal, and glass bottle on wood with fabric, metal, string, hair, and plumb bob on wire
24 × 26 × 15 inches
(61 × 66 × 38.1 cm)
pp. 56–59

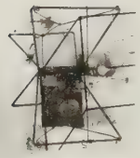
AEN FLOGA (COMBINE PAINTING), 1961
Oil on canvas with wood, metal, and wire
73 × 50 × 13 ¾ inches
(185.4 × 127 × 34.9 cm)
pp. 61–63

THE BELL (COMBINE), 1961
Wood, metal, rock, and string
43 × 20 ½ × 14 inches
(109.2 × 52.1 × 35.6 cm)
pp. 64–65

DYLABY (COMBINE PAINTING), 1962
Oil, metal objects, metal spring, metal Coca-Cola sign, ironing board, and twine on unstretched canvas tarp on wood support
109 ½ × 87 × 15 inches
(278.1 × 221 × 38.1 cm)
pp. 67–69

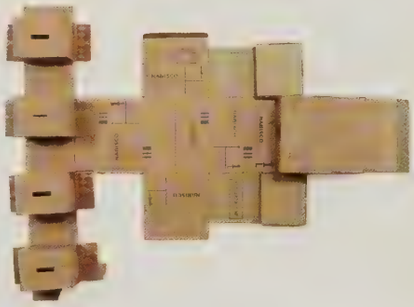
ART BOX (COMBINE PAINTING), 1963
Oil on wood crate and paper with enameled telephone sign, Plexiglas, and wing nuts
31 × 16 ½ × 12 ¾ inches
(78.7 × 41.9 × 32.4 cm)
pp. 72–73

UNTITLED (SILKSCREEN PAINTING), 1962
Oil and silkscreen ink on canvas, in two parts
8 × 16 inches
(20.3 × 40.6 cm)
p. 75



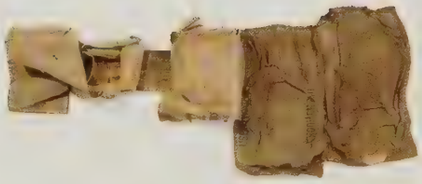
DRY CELL (SILKSCREEN), 1963
Silkscreen ink and oil on Plexiglas, with metal coat hanger, wire, string, sound transmitter, circuit board, and battery-powered motor on metal folding camp stool
15 × 12 × 15 inches
(38.1 × 30.5 × 38.1 cm)
pp. 77–79

UNTITLED (SILKSCREEN PAINTING), 1964
Oil and silkscreen ink on canvas
37 × 46 ⅛ inches
(94 × 117.2 cm)
p. 81

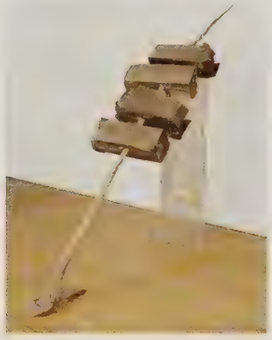


NABISCO SHREDDED WHEAT (CARDBOARD), 1971
Cardboard
70 × 95 × 11 inches
(177.8 × 241.3 × 27.9 cm)
pp. 83–84

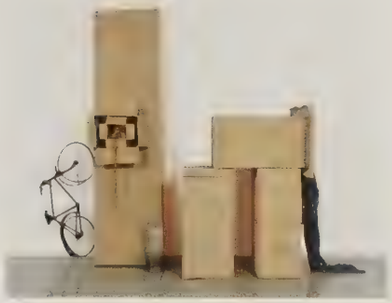
ANCHOR/FEDERAL/TUMBLER (CARDBOARD), 1971
Cardboard
92 ¾ × 78 ½ × 8 ½ inches
(235.6 × 199.4 × 26.1 cm)
p. 87



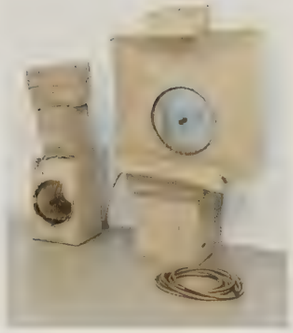
UNTITLED (VENETIAN), 1973
Cardboard, burlap, and resin
44 × 130 × 15 inches
(111.8 × 261.6 × 38.1 cm)
pp. 89–91



UNTITLED (VENETIAN), 1973
Cardboard, wood branch, and lace curtain
93 × 29 × 108 inches
(236.2 × 73.7 × 274.3 cm)
p. 93



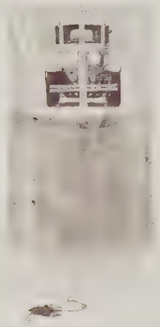
UNTITLED (EARLY EGYPTIAN), 1973
Cardboard, sand, Day-Glo paint, bicycle, fabric, twine, and metal bucket on wood stand
155 ½ × 203 × 47 inches
(395 × 515.6 × 119.4 cm)
pp. 99–101



UNTITLED (EARLY EGYPTIAN), 1974
Cardboard, sand, Day-Glo paint, spoked wheels, pillow, and hose
80 ¼ × 78 × 36 inches
(203.8 × 198.1 × 91.4 cm)
p. 103

JETTY (HOARFROST), 1975
Solvent transfer on fabric, cardboard, and paper bag
64 ½ × 40 ½ inches
(163.8 × 102.9 cm)
p. 105

SULPHUR BANK (HOARFROST), 1974
Solvent transfer on fabric, cardboard, and paper bag
65 × 35 inches
(165.1 × 88.9 cm)
p. 107

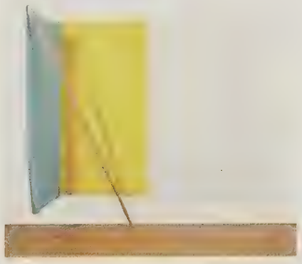


HONEYMOON (HOARFROST), 1974
Solvent transfer and collage on fabric with rope
88 × 46 inches
(223.5 × 116.8 cm)
p. 109

UNTITLED (HOARFROST), 1975
Solvent transfer on silk fabric, and collaged cardboard
84 ½ × 49 ½ inches
(214.6 × 125.7 cm)
p. 113

UNTITLED (HOARFROST), 1974
Solvent transfer on fabric and collage with graphite
77 ½ × 35 ½ inches
(196.9 × 90.2 cm)
p. 115

JACKPOT (JAMMER), 1975
Fabric collage and wood
74 ½ × 60 ¼ inches
(189.2 × 153 cm)
p. 117



PILOT (JAMMER), 1976
Sewn fabric, rattan pole, and string
81 × 85 × 39 inches
(206 × 216 × 100 cm)
p. 119

UNTITLED (JAMMER), 1976
Fabric-covered rattan pole with painted and collaged tin cans and string
110 inches (279.4 cm) tall;
width and depth variable
p. 121

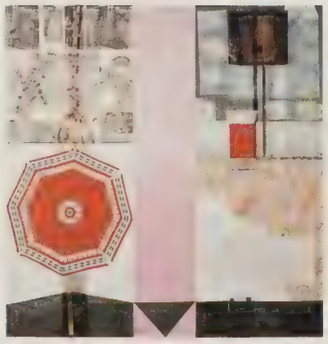
VOW (JAMMER), 1976
Sewn fabric and rattan pole
84 ½ × 40 × 19 ½ inches
(214.6 × 101.6 × 49.5 cm)
pp. 122–23

CORAL ROE (SPREAD), 1977
Solvent transfer, acrylic, fabric, and graphite on wood panels with fabric and dowels
85 × 180 × 55 ¾ inches
(215.9 × 457.2 × 141.6 cm)
pp. 125–27

PALLADIAN XMAS (SPREAD), 1980
Solvent transfer, acrylic, and collage
on wood panel
74 ¼ × 133 ¾ × 7 ½ inches
(186.6 × 339.7 × 19.1 cm)
pp. 129–31

MELIC MEETING (SPREAD), 1979
Mixed media, including solvent transfer
on fabric collage, and mirror
96 × 132 × 14 inches
(243.8 × 335.3 × 35.6 cm)
pp. 133–35

BUNK (SPREAD), 1981
Solvent transfer, acrylic, and collage
on wood panel
96 ½ × 92 inches
(245.1 × 233.7 cm)
pp. 137–39



TANTRIC RIDDLE (SPREAD), 1981
Solvent transfer, acrylic, and collage
on wood panel
96 × 92 × 5 inches
(243.8 × 233.7 × 12.7 cm)
p. 141

UNTITLED (SPREAD), 1983
Solvent transfer, acrylic, and collage
on wood panel with umbrellas
74 ¼ × 96 ¾ × 35 inches
(188.6 × 245.7 × 88.9 cm)
pp. 143–45

PNEUMONIA LISA (JAPANESE RECREATIONAL CLAYWORK), 1982
Transfer on high-fired Japanese art ceramic
32 ¼ × 86 ½ inches
(81.9 × 219.7 cm)
p. 147

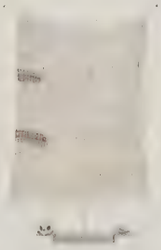
ALL ABORDELLO DOZE 2 (JAPANESE RECREATIONAL CLAYWORK), 1982
Transfer on high-fired Japanese art ceramic
53 ⅛ × 52 ½ inches
(134.9 × 133.4 cm)
p. 149

INDEX (JAPANESE CLAYWORK), 1985
Transfer on high-fired Japanese art ceramic
89 ¼ × 63 ⅝ inches
(226.7 × 161.6 cm)
p. 151

ROLLINGS (SALVAGE SERIES), 1984
Acrylic and collage on canvas, in two parts
152 × 155 ½ inches
(386.1 × 395 cm)
pp. 153–55

ANDY BOY POLKA (BIFOCAL), 1982
Solvent transfer, acrylic, and collage on cardboard
77 ½ × 25 ¼ inches
(196.9 × 64.1 cm)
pp. 158–59

UNTITLED (BIFOCAL), 1982
Collage on cardboard
33 ¼ × 30 ¼ inches
(84.5 × 76.8 cm)
pp. 160–61



RAINBOW HARP (ROCI TIBET), 1984
Fabric, metal rings, and wire on aluminum stand with animal skull and turquoise
119 ¾ × 102 × 8 inches
(302.3 × 259.1 × 20.3 cm)
pp. 162–63

MEXICAN CANARY (ROCI MEXICO), 1985
Acrylic and collage on canvas with metal frame
80 ⅜ × 150 ¾ inches
(204.2 × 382.9 cm)
pp. 164–167

CARYATID CAVALCADE II (ROCI CHILE), 1985
Acrylic on canvas
138 ½ × 260 ¾ inches
(351.8 × 662.3 cm)
pp. 169–171

PETRIFIED RELIC FROM THE GYRO CLINIC (KABAL AMERICAN ZEPHYR), 1981
Metal table with metal wheel, rule, and duct
42 × 19 ½ × 46 inches
(106.7 × 49.5 × 116.8 cm)
p. 173

UNTITLED (KABAL AMERICAN ZEPHYR), 1983
Metal chair with metal object and advertising thermometer
73 × 20 × 24 inches
(185.4 × 50.8 × 61 cm)
p. 175

UNTITLED (LATE KABAL AMERICAN ZEPHYR), 1985
Rubber cycle wheels on metal structure with hand crank
73.5 × 24 × 28 inches
(186.7 × 61 × 71.1 cm)
p. 177

SUNFLOWER ECLIPSE (KABAL AMERICAN ZEPHYR), 1981
Solvent transfer, acrylic, and collage on aluminum with wood
72 ¾ × 78 × 18 ½ inches
(184.8 × 198.1 × 47 cm)
pp. 178–81

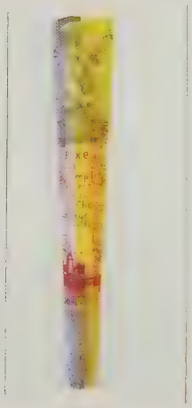
UNTITLED, 1987
Shoeshine stand with mirror and mirrored Plexiglas
24 ½ × 26 × 15 inches
(62.2 × 66 × 38.1 cm)
pp. 182–83

CROSSINGS (BOREALIS), 1990
Tarnishes on brass
72 ¾ × 96 ¾ inches
(184.8 × 245.7 cm)
p. 187

BOWERY PARADE (BOREALIS), 1989
Acrylic and tarnishes on brass
72 ¾ × 72 ¾ inches
(184.8 × 184.8 cm)
p. 189

UNTITLED (BOREALIS), 1991
Acrylic and tarnishes on brass
120 ¾ × 48 ¾ inches
(306.7 × 123.8 cm)
p. 191

SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE (NIGHT SHADE), 1991
Tarnishes on brushed aluminum
61 × 49 inches
(154.9 × 124.5 cm)
p. 193



SCORE XXII (OFF KILTER KEYS), 1993
Acrylic and enamel on aluminum
96 ⅜ × 45 ⅛ × 21 ½ inches
(244.8 × 114.6 × 54.6 cm)
p. 195

UNTITLED, 1995
Glass jar and lid with ivory-handled magnifying glass and silver chain
9 × 5 × 5 inches
(22.9 × 12.7 × 12.7 cm)
p. 197

COURIER (ARCADIAN RETREAT), 1996
Fresco
74 ½ × 38 ½ inches
(189.2 × 97.7 cm)
p. 201

CONTEST (ARCADIAN RETREAT), 1996
Fresco
74 ½ × 38 ½ inches
(189.2 × 97.7 cm)
p. 203

OASIS (SCENARIOS), 2003
Pigment transfer on polylaminate
85 ½ × 120 ½ inches
(217.2 × 306.1 cm)
pp. 205–07

WATCHDOG, 2007
Rusted metal buckets on mirrored aluminum composite base
13 × 96 × 14 inches
(33 × 243.8 × 35.6 cm)
pp. 209–11

UNTITLED (RUNTS), 2007
Pigment transfer on polylaminate
61 × 73 ½ inches
(154.9 × 186.7 cm)
p. 213

Published on the occasion of the exhibition

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