

The art in Mexico consisted of close to two hundred works previously created by this artist and ten new pieces created by him in Mexico. Mr. Rauschenberg then went to Chile where new works were created and added to the art exhibited there. Significantly, the Mexican artworks shown in Chile became the ambassadors between those two nations since Mexico and Chile do not have diplomatic relations with each other. The art then went to Venezuela on army planes provided by the Venezuelan government. (Certainly the symbolism of military airplanes being used on a mission for peace was not lost on the participants.)

From Venezuela the art went to China where it was shown after he added still more works of art done for Lhasa (Tibet) and Beijing. In order to accomplish this very important and significant phase of the peace mission, Mr. Rauschenberg went heavily into debt to provide all the funds necessary.

The art is now stored in warehouses in Japan waiting for fulfillment of the remainder of its journey to seventeen more countries including Australia, Thailand, Germany, Sri Lanka, Israel, Indonesia, Egypt, India, Kenya, Spain, Russia and Italy. As stated above, the final major exhibition will take place at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. R.O.C.I. has demonstrated the capacity of art to enable people of different cultures to share with each other those special values which give each its unique identity. This idea and the project itself transcend the importance of the arts by revealing the unifying qualities of our differences.

EACH VIEWER HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE, IN A ONE TO ONE BASIS,
 The exhibition conveys the physical, emotional and spiritual impact of art in its highest form, ~~on a one to one basis with each viewer,~~
 who has available to view as of this date:

...A selection of forty-eight diverse yet coherent sculptures and paintings created with the assistance of regional artisans from five countries whose influences Mr. Rauschenberg has absorbed and incorporated in the works of art;

...A selection of one hundred twenty other works, including drawings, photos, prints, ceramics, sculpture and paintings from the late 1960's to 1984, many of which reflect the international influence on Mr. Rauschenberg's work which can be seen in his art;

Captiva

THE ROCI ROAD SHOW

He dances like a naked babe in the rainbow's ocean of colors, and the splashes raised by his mischievous hands are the elusive fairy-tale of his style. . . .

So wrote Yevgeny Yevtushenko in the Russian-language catalogue for ROCI/USSR, Robert Rauschenberg's mammoth exhibition that dazzled 145,000 Soviets in Moscow's Tretyakov Gallery in February.

At the gala opening in the Centr! House of Culture, the Tretyakov's new wing, Yevtushenko again waxed eloquent about Rauschenberg's grand gesture in international goodwill. "I believe no more Iron Curtains will divide U.S. and Russian artists," he told an audience that included Jack Matlock, American ambassador to Moscow, Vassily Zakharov, Soviet minister of culture, and Tair Safakhov, head of the Soviet Union of Artists.

ROCI/USSR, with more than 200 works, was the first major one-person exhibition in the Soviet Union by an American abstractionist. Five years ago, a show like this would have been unthinkable. The project had influential supporters: industrialist Armand Hammer, who has had strong ties with Soviet leaders since Lenin, introduced Rauschenberg to Zakharov, and an invitation from the Union of Artists followed.

"The show is very important for Soviet artists emotionally, spiritually, and socially," painter and critic Leonid Bazhanov told *Tampa Tribune* reporter Todd Simmons. "Never before have they seen works of such scale and quality. . . . To us, the show symbolizes freedom."

ROCI (pronounced "rocky") is the Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange, named after the artist's pet turtle. Since Rauschenberg announced its formation at the United Nations in New York in 1984, ROCI has traveled to what he calls "sensitive" areas—developing countries or countries under totalitarian governments that have not been exposed to American art or to many images from other countries.

The idea, says Rauschenberg, is to go to a country that may not be familiar with American artists. "to interact with the artists and artisans there, to learn their esthetic traditions, to talk to students—to touch on every aspect of art." He travels throughout each host country taking photographs. The works of art that emerge from the experience become the centerpiece of the exhibition that follows, usually in the country's national museum.

As the ROCI road show progresses, the audience in each country can see work inspired by the previous host countries as well as its own. The "Soviet-American" works weave images of St. Basil's Cathedral in Red Square with New York's World Trade Center; Tbilisi hanging laundry with New York construction workers; a zodiacal clock in a Moscow subway station with

Halloween costumes in a New York shop window; Samarkand cabbages with an urn in a New York bank. Videotapes by assistant Terry Van Brunt record Rauschenberg's journeys in every country and present everyday life as seen through his eyes.

Another leap for Soviet audiences was made by the Trisha Brown Company, of which Rauschenberg is chairman. At the Palace of Culture, in an industrial district on the outskirts of town, the company presented the world premiere of *Astral Convertible*. Rauschenberg designed the dancers' silver sheath costumes and the freestanding derricklike towers that contained the lights and music, which were powered by automobile batteries and triggered by the dancers' movements. The astonished audience, accustomed to traditional ballet, watched in puzzled silence until they finally exploded into applause.

Simple in concept, ROCI is complex in execution. The chief administrator of the venture is Donald Saff, an artist and professor of art at the University of South Florida and founder of its GraphicStudio. From his Tampa office, Saff makes the initial contact with the host country, gets in touch with its leading artists and writers, plots Rauschenberg's itinerary, negotiates arrangements with museum officials and government bureaucrats, and designs the installation in each museum.

ROCI's gifts to the Soviet Union did not stop with the exhibition. A corollary agreement signed by Zakharov and Saff will bring Soviet artists to GraphicStudio and send American artists and printmakers to work in a new "sister studio" in Moscow. "Artists and printmakers haven't worked together in the Soviet Union," says Saff. "We're hoping to help them skip thirty years in printing procedures."

Rauschenberg's collaboration with Saff and the highly organized ROCI workers is an example of the artist's favorite modus operandi. At a press conference held in Moscow he said, "I don't want to work alone. If you work alone, then the private ego takes control. I try to pick my assistants and collaborators to provide the most creative interruption to any bad habits that I might have artistically."

Rauschenberg has made more than 1,600 works for the ROCI tour, and spent more than \$4 million on the venture; he expects its total cost to be at least \$8 million. He considers the project a strong



Rauschenberg in Samarkand. His ROCI/USSR show in Moscow's Tretyakov Gallery was the first major one-person exhibition in the Soviet Union by an American abstractionist.

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message for the ideals of democracy, but he has not asked for—and does not want—government funding. “I’ve sold my early Twomblys and Warhols, most of my treasures from other artists, not to mention my own work,” he says. “I’ve mortgaged my house. But I expect to keep on until I totally run out or until some cosponsors come along. I was naive. I thought collectors and corporations would be rushing to support something concrete like ROCI, which is dedicated to peace. I even made up a list of contributors I *wouldn’t* accept. But they haven’t been breaking the door down.”

His goal for the undertaking, Rauschenberg says, is “to contribute to peace, by communicating, with my art, to the people of the world an awareness of each other.” He no longer thinks that politicians can bring about fundamental change in global human relations. “I’ve given up on the politicians,” he told a Havana audience last year. “Now it’s up to the artists to wage peace.” So far, in Mexico, China, Tibet, Chile, Venezuela, Japan, Cuba, and the Soviet Union, several million people have seen themselves and their global neighbors through Rauschenberg’s eyes.

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“ROCI tells its international audience about Rauschenberg—and, by inference, about the freedom of activity and expression that is allowed to flourish on the American scene,” says Jack Cowart, curator of 20th-century art at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., who visited the ROCI exhibitions in Havana and Moscow. “In that subtle way, and as an entirely intentional by-product of ROCI, to foreign audiences, especially those in countries where freedom of information is unknown, the exhibition makes a powerful statement about America itself. It also serves as an example of the range of personal initiatives that are accessible [to Americans] in an unofficial way.”

“It is the artists who will reflect change in their art,” says Darryl Pottorf, a Rauschenberg artist-assistant who has helped install ROCI around the world. Leonid Bazhanov in Moscow agreed. Once an “unofficial” underground artist, he said of ROCI, “If only this had happened twenty years ago, it would have helped me greatly. For [younger] artists, though, the exhibition shows what they can do.”

—Mary Lynn Kotz

The winds of glasnost carried Robert Rauschenberg and Tricia Brown to the Soviet Union in February, courtesy of those bastions of Socialist Realist purity, the Soviet Union of Artists and Gosconcert. It must have been a stretch for the Union to invite Rauschenberg to display 175 of his provocative combines, paintings, sculptures, prints and videos at the Tsentralnyi Dom Khudozhnika in Moscow [Feb. 2–Mar. 5], and to have paid his expenses once he got there. But their invitation to Tricia Brown verged on the revolutionary.

The closest thing to American avant-garde dance the Soviets have seen was the Paul Taylor tour in 1978, and Paul Taylor dances to classical music. At the Moscow Cultural Palace [Feb. 1–4], the Tricia Brown Company performed *Glacial Decoy* in silence, backed by Rauschenberg slide projections. They did *Set and Reset* to a Laurie Anderson score, and *Newark* with a set and sound concept by Donald Judd. Brown also gave a world premiere of *Astral Convertible*; the set, commissioned from Rauschenberg, consisted of eight skeletal steel towers, powered with car batteries and festooned with headlights and tape recorders. Both sound—by Richard Landry—and

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Robert Rauschenberg in
Moscow, 1988.

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In his letter of intent printed in the R.O.C.I. catalogue, Rauschenberg explains his belief "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, hopefully seducing us into creative mutual understanding for the benefit of all." Towards that end, he has packed 176 crates containing a large selection of his own works dating from about 1971, and he has thus far traveled with them to Mexico, Chile, Venezuela, China, Tibet, Japan and Cuba. According to Rauschenberg, he was so intent on going to Moscow that when he signed a contract to exhibit with M. Knoedler and Co., his agreement with the gallery stipulated that its owner, Dr. Armand Hammer, would get him to Russia.

For R.O.C.I., Rauschenberg visits each venue well in advance of his exhibition in order to assemble local found materials. Using those materials, he constructs new work which he then shows in that country as well as on other stops along the road. For his show in Chile, for instance, he constructed *Altar Peace Chile*, an aluminum cross-shaped sculpture laminated with the embroidered white satin of a priest's vestments.

For his Soviet exhibition, Rauschenberg photographed construction workers, statues of Lenin and Cyrillic signs. He juxtaposed these with American images to create six photogravure etchings, *Soviet/American Array*, at U.L.A.E.; these were also exhibited in New York at U.L.A.E.'s new gallery at 138 Watts Street.

Except for some early funding from the collector Frederick Weisman, Rauschenberg himself has underwritten most of the R.O.C.I. tour by selling his own art and works from his collection, and by mortgaging his Captiva Florida property. The last stop for the cumulative exhibition will be the National Gallery in Washington, probably in 1990.

(R.O.C.I., incidentally, is named after a turtle with whom Rauschenberg collaborated in a performance piece for the First New York Theater Rally in 1965. Actually, the turtle's name is Rocky, but it would have been hard to make an acronym out of that. Rocky was one of 30 turtles rented from Trefflich's animal store on Fulton Street. Rauschenberg's then 13-year-old son Christopher emptied the turtles out of a laundry hamper onto the stage and let them scamper about; flashlights attached to their backs provided lighting for the show. The other turtles were returned to Trefflich's afterwards, but Rocky went home to stay with Rauschenberg at 381 Lafayette Street, where he lives to this day.) —Amei Wallach

Rauschenberg Goes to Moscow

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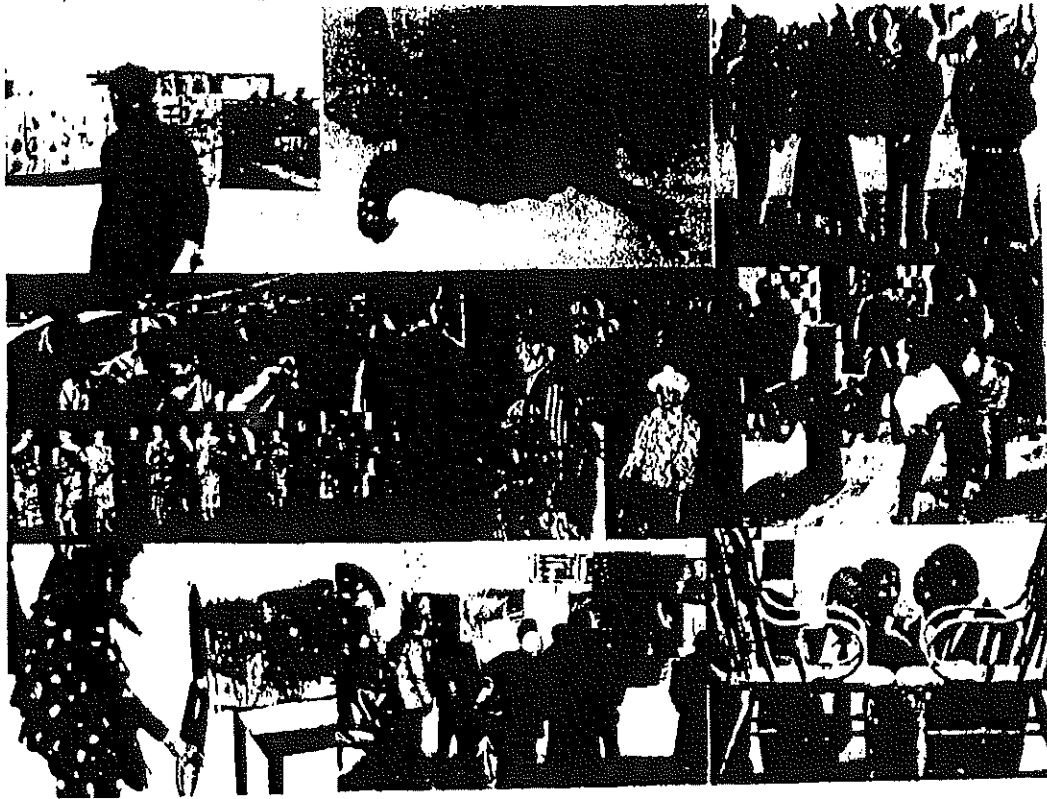
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The Red Tide

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

by Paul Bob



Robert Rauschenberg is reconstructing his way around the world. Since 1955, when he helped put contemporary art on the map, Rauschenberg has been working toward a universal artistic language; now, thirty years later, his art works are reaching a global audience. One of his current major projects is his own Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange, which made possible the first Western contemporary-art exhibition in Beijing's National Art Gallery and the Exhibition Hall in Lhasa, Tibet. In cities where the sight of foreign art is rare, his paintings and

constructions have attracted as many as four thousand people a day. Another project is a survey of his work from 1971 to the present, which is traveling throughout Texas, orchestrated by the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston. The reality of a Tibetan shepherd viewing an artist's work at the same time as students in China, or perhaps an oil baron in Texas, is exceptional, as shown in the photomontage above, made especially for Esquire. Rauschenberg remains one who asserts that art can break down cultural barriers and unite the people of the world.

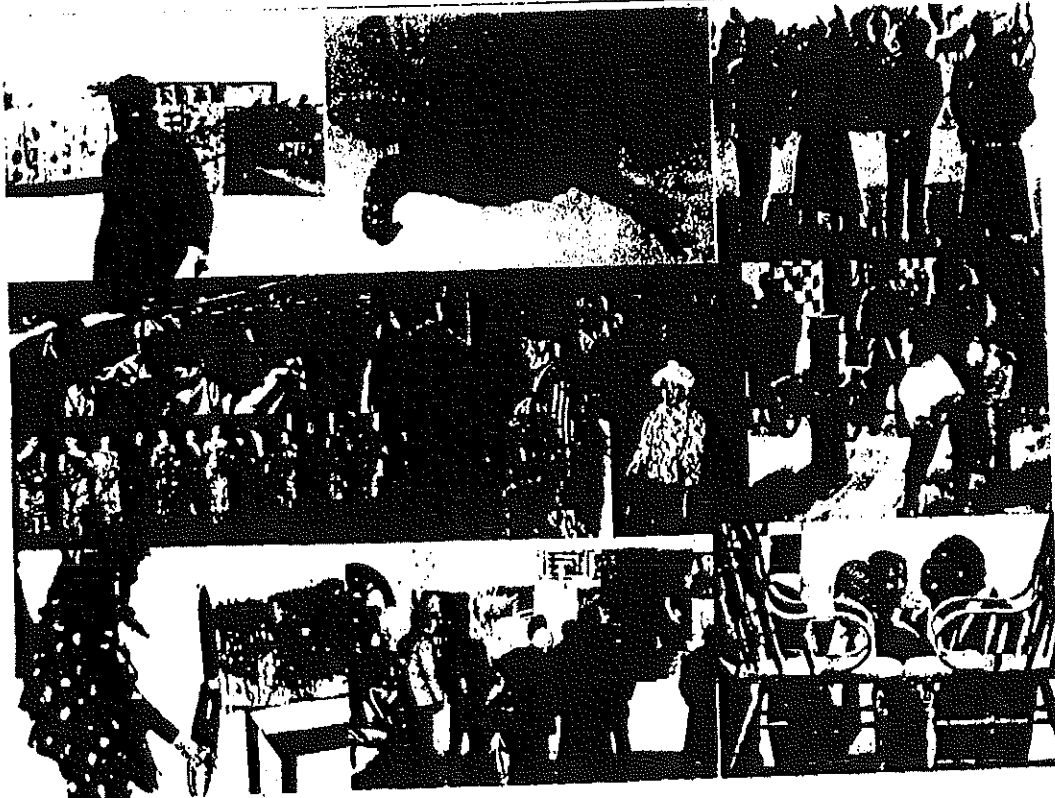


Photomontage created for Esquire by Robert Rauschenberg

I just saw this for the first time - How many copies does ROCI Tampa have?
 June 1 Please tell me!

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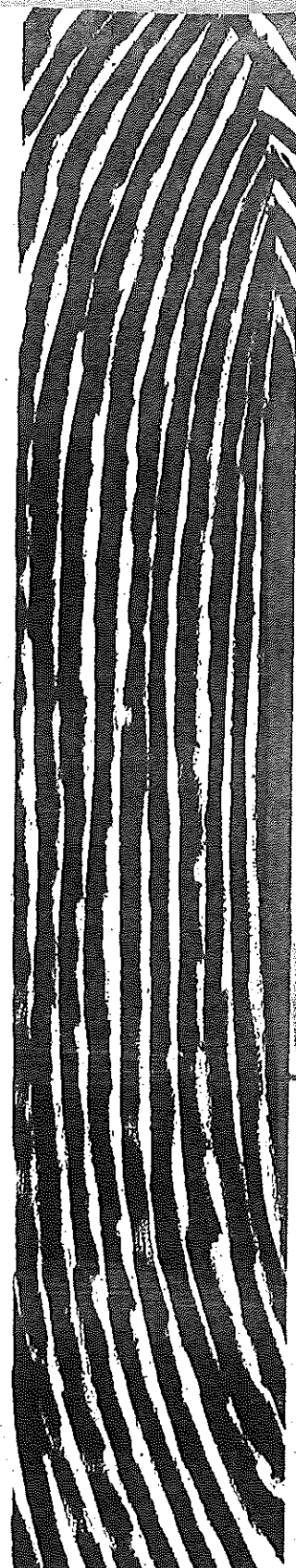
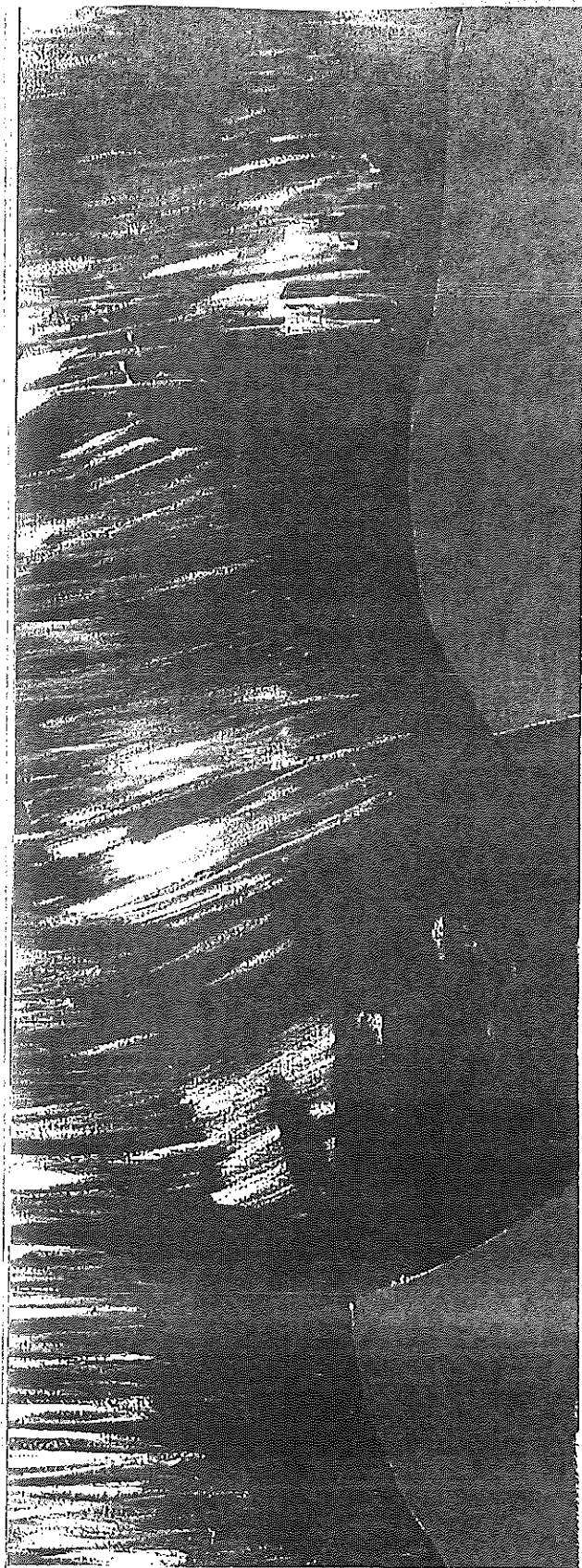
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ART-NOST

JANUARY 89 VANITY FAIR



Under Moscow skies, a Russian officer pushes past First Gallery founders, left to right, Alexander Yakut, Aidan Salakhova, Michael Krouk, and Evgeni Mitta. Opposite, a detail of a painting from Salakhova's "Still Orgasm" series.



The age of Gorbachev has opened up the Russian art world, creating lucrative opportunities for both Soviet artists and Western dealers—from Sotheby's to "Mary Booneskaya." But what about the art? ANTHONY HADEN-GUEST reports from Moscow and SoHo

It was the first-ever group show of American artists in the Soviet Union, and a clear grab at history's brass ring. Last fall in the Kuznetsky Most, an official Moscow exhibition space of the Artists Union, swirling around in the slightly deathly fluorescence of the rooms were twenty-seven of the participating American artists and various Soviet artists, both "official" and "unofficial" (as they were called before *perestroika* supposedly made such categories meaningless). Here, too, were such notables of the Muscovite art world as Tahir Salakhov, first secretary of the Artists Union, and his daughter Aidan, chic with a brush cut of black hair, who earlier in the year had opened Moscow's first SoHoesque private art gallery.

But, after a bit, it wasn't the surface decorum of the opening—*Pravda* was to call it *pishniy*, meaning posh—that held my attention. There was a lot of ragged energy at the edges. One Soviet artist was unstoppably eager to show one of the exhibition's organizers, Donald Kuspit, his entire portfolio of photographs. A dapper American who hove into view, piloted by a lean and vulpine Russian, turned out to be Ira Licht, former director of a Miami museum, now a "private consultant."

"I'm looking for some artists," he told me of his art-production plans. "I'll take them back to Miami to work. I'll put them in hotels."

Later, an American artist told me of a chat with a couple of art hustlers from Kiev. They boasted that they had an "American contract," and enumerated the terms—they were to pay the shipping costs of the art, and the incidentals, and they would then be paid 50 percent of the profits.

Suppose there were no profits? they were asked. "But it is an American contract," wailed one.

With which gallery? "That is what our agent will not tell us," they admitted. They knew where it was, though: Laguna Beach, a Southern California resort that does not usually figure on the itinerary of serious art acquirers.

An extreme, perhaps. But the art market, which is the last largely unregulated major money market in the West, has a growing appetite not only for the handful of Soviet painters prized in the Western art world and for the younger hopefuls, but also for the army of purveyors of *glasnost* kitsch (Lenin clutching a Coke, that sort of thing). At any rate, the collectors and curators, the dealers and deal-makers, have increasingly been cruising Gorbachev's ever more anarchic empire, while the Soviets, delighted at this ready source of hard currency, and appreciating that the more "dissident" it is the better, have been promoting their former rebels with gusto.

The change has been shattering. "For many years we lived under incredible pressure," says Eric Bulatov, one of the few Soviet artists to have earned serious critical attention in the West. "We almost had the feeling that we didn't exist. It was only our closeness that saved us." What remains to be seen is how artists who survived isolation, contempt, and K.G.B. surveillance will survive the heady, greedy embrace of SoHo.

"Unofficial art" budded in the Soviet Union during Khrushchev's brief thaw. Prominent artists like Bulatov, Ilya Kabakov, Misha Bruskin, Vitaly Komar, and Alexander Melamid were too unorthodox for the Artists Union (membership of which ensured a studio, access to scarce art supplies, and an income, since the state guaranteed the purchase of so many paintings a year). Instead, they joined the graphic-workers' or illustrators' unions, lived by making commercial art, and labored on their own work in private.

The Brezhnev years, the "Period of Stagnation," as they are now known, were hostile to the avant-garde. Moscow's art underground consisted of about a hundred people; "catalogues" were typescripts, if they existed at all. An "exhibition" was the slightly furtive gathering of half a dozen people to see the new work of a friend. The détente at the end of the seventies had some cultural impact. Komar and Melamid were allowed to emigrate in 1977. Various U.S.-Soviet cultural exchanges were announced, including a Malevich exhibition, but then the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, and President Carter's sanctions took care of that.

The next move happened after Gorbachev came to power but before he announced his new plans. For several years there had been a showing of "official" Soviet artworks at a booth in the Chicago Art Expo. In 1984, though, the offering had been too abysmal, even by the standards of that unfussy venue, and the work was booted out. "This caused tremendous offense to the Soviets," says Anne Livet, an art consultant with ties to the expo. She went to Moscow that October to help the union put together a decent showing.

Another visit followed, with dealer Phyllis Kind. They visited union-recommended studios by day, "unofficial" artists by night. Their nosiness did not go unnoticed. "We were searched from top to bottom at the airport," Livet says. "They stole our Polaroids and Xeroxed our diaries." Methodically, though, Kind and Livet put together a list.

Glasnost dispersed the black smoke of the K.G.B.—"All the young artists put in an earring overnight," Livet says—but brought its own problems. Where they had been dealing with one stubborn power, the union, there were now conflicting power vortices, including the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Trade, Moscow and Leningrad artists' unions, and entrepreneurs running co-ops, who had as much clout as any. Still, the Western dealers, not only Kind but Ronald Feldman, Hal Bromm, and others, scurried in. Peter Ludwig, the German chocolate king, who had amassed a huge collection of Pop art and turned his attention to Soviet art, first "official," then "unofficial," let it be known that he would like to establish a museum in his name. In Moscow.

That was the situation when Sotheby's held Moscow's first international sale, on July 7, 1988, in Armand Hammer's Sovincentr. Pre-sale estimates had been that works would fetch from \$2,000 to \$70,000 tops. The auction was presided over by Sotheby's chairman, Lord Gowrie, and was conducted, tactfully, not in Yankee dollars but in a mixture of pounds sterling and a solid currency, used on such occasions, the "golden ruble." A canvas by Ilya Kabakov reached \$41,576, befitting his international art-world stature.

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and *Fundamental Lexicon*, by Misha Bruskin, was knocked down to a West German collector for the equivalent of \$415,756.

Bruskin was snapped up by the Marlborough Gallery. "He loves money. They deserve each other," says Phyllis Kind. Even the auction catalogues now change hands in Moscow for about \$500—about half a month's wages for a minister of culture.

There was an important subtext to the Sotheby's sale, and it had less to do with art than with politics. The message was: Give great countries freedom and they make great art. A cheering message for Moscow and Washington alike, to say nothing of the world's hungry art market. Whether it's true is another matter entirely.

The Sotheby's sale had a huge impact on Moscow's avant-garde, and by no means a wholly positive one. "This enormous sparkling world turns out to be too much for us," a woman painter, Svetlana Kopystiansky, told the New York documentarian Barbara Herbich. "We are dreaming of going back to our studios."

Younger artists, many living in collective squats of ferocious squalor, like one called "the Kindergarten," and another on Furmanny Street, were darkly satirical. (Herbich filmed a grimly funny parody of the auction, with "lots" by the Champions of the World collective, including a soap-bubble symphony and a letter to Lord Gowrie.) But when visa restrictions were loosened later in the year, as many as could get the wherewithal vanished overseas. "By November there wasn't an underground artist left in Moscow," notes Andrew Solomon, a British art critic.

After yet another record buster at Sotheby's in New York last year—a Pollock went for \$11 million—I was at a table at Odeon. Leo Castelli, the grand old man of dealing, was there, as was the relentlessly successful younger dealer Larry Gagosian, the painter Brice Marden, and a twenty-three-year-old visitor from Leningrad, Sergei Bugaku, who works under the nom de brush Afrika.

Gagosian and Castelli were marveling at the market, wondering how much longer it could last. Zeros rolled around the table like marbles.

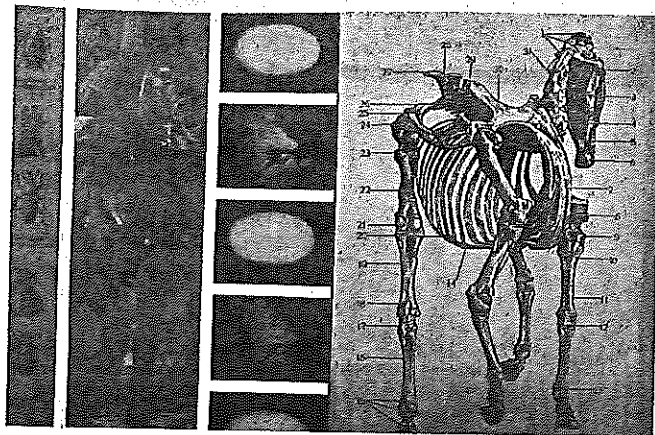
"How do you like all this?" I asked the young Russian, wondering if he mightn't be just a bit shocked.

"It's wonderful," he said.

A couple of days later I visited an apartment in which were hanging paintings by Bugaku and his Leningrad club, the Friends of Mayakovsky. Almost everything had sold, and he had just been commissioned to do a cover for *Art & Antiques*.

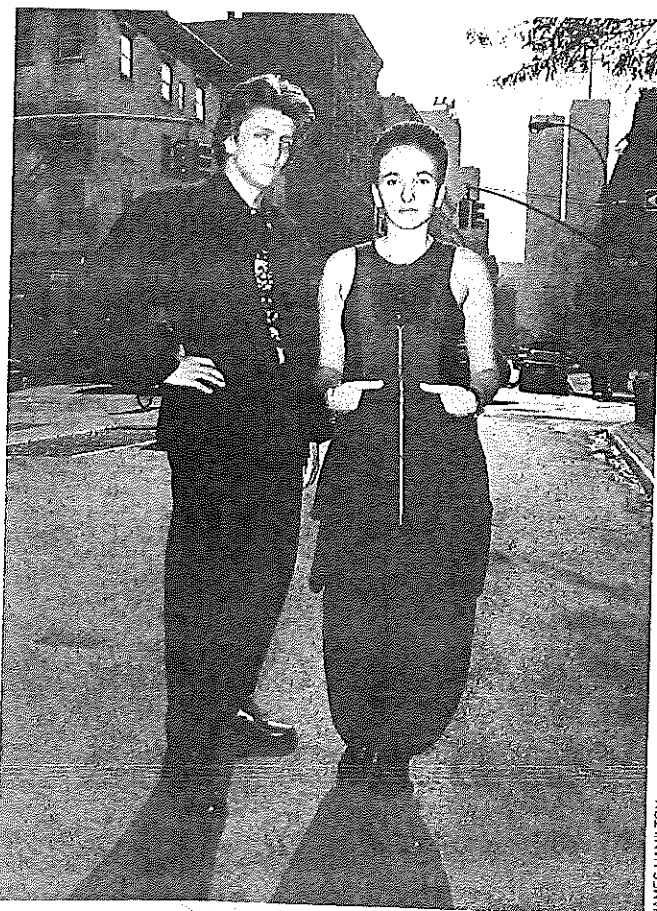
But the lunges of the younger Russians for the fruits of *perestroika* are mere awkward flailings compared with the moves coming out of America.

Nina Maric, a Yugoslav painter married to Ridley Whitaker, a Manhattan litigator and deal-maker, hit on the idea of putting together a group show of American artists in Moscow. Whitaker, an incongruously boyish forty-three-year-old, readily agrees that hanging in such a "historic" show would not be unhelpful to the career of his wife, who is little



Evgeni Mitta's painting *The Eating of the Red Horse*.

"In two years
you will see a lot of green
[Russian] pictures in the West,"
says Mitta.
"Green paint is all we have."



On the streets of SoHo, Evgeni Mitta and Aidan Salakhova.

JAMES HAMILTON

Blaze Star

known in New York. They went to Moscow in July 1987, but failed to meet Tahir Salakhov. Then a friend of Marie's parents, a well-connected Yugoslav, flew down to the painter-bureaucrat's dacha in Baku in the summer of 1988, taking slides of various American artists who might fit into such a show. Salakhov agreed. And suggested executing a contract when he was in New York that fall.

Ridley Whitaker met Tahir Salakhov in November at his New York hotel, the Plaza. He is quite a fellow, this Salakhov, one of the U.S.S.R.'s high-ranking Azerbaijanis (originally a Muslim culture). He has been head of the Artists Union for a dozen or so years, which is to say that he was presiding over it when it was inflexible toward the dissident artists, but he is also one of the few Brezhnev-era apparatchiks not only to have survived the coming of Gorbachev but also to have done so with aplomb, and an appetite for experiment. Salakhov was responsible for both the Bacon and Rauschenberg shows in Moscow. In fact, he had a copy of the Rauschenberg contract with him as a blueprint for his contract with Ridley Whitaker. Whitaker did not, however, find him alone.

"He had these two Soviet émigrés buzzing around him," Whitaker says. "Serge Sorokko and Eduard Nakhamkin. They were polite, but they were *competing*."

Indeed they were. Serge Sorokko, who is thirty-four, got out from the Soviet Union via Vienna with his wife, Nelly, in 1977. They arrived in San Francisco and tried to sell some icons and dissident art to Franklin Bowles, who owns galleries in S.F. and L.A. "I didn't like the icons," says Bowles. "But I liked him." Serge was hired by Bowles and is now a partner. Bowles sums up their (multimillion-dollar) turnover as "mostly Miró and Chagall prints. And we have a large collection of School of Paris." Which is to say it was nicely adjusted to its Beverly Hills location, where it has such neighbors as Giorgio's and Clinique.

In 1975 Eduard Nakhamkin opened up a tiny second-floor art gallery on West Fifty-third Street using \$2,000 from the sale of an "unofficial" canvas. A year later he moved to a ground-floor space on Madison Avenue between Eightieth and Eighty-first streets. The work he dealt with was exclusively Russian-émigré art, and ran the gamut from folksy kitsch to provincial modernism. Three years ago, he began to expand his operation with the speed and extravagance that have made him the focus of intense art-world curiosity. The Nakhamkin empire now comprises the original Madison Avenue gallery, an enormous two-tiered gallery directly opposite, two galleries in SoHo, one in Los Angeles, one in San Francisco, and one in Japan. He shows Russian art, both émigré and from the U.S.S.R. Even the Madison Avenue restaurant in which he has an interest is Russian. Artworlders have little idea who is actually buying from Nakhamkin—certainly not mainstream SoHo All-Stars collectors. With their finely honed taste for intrigue, they sometimes speculate that Nakhamkin may somehow be backed by the Soviet state. This is highly unlikely. Others suggest that Nakhamkin has made a great deal of money in real-estate dealings in Brooklyn and Manhattan. Or that he is financed by wealthy émigrés in Brooklyn, the so-called "Brighton Beach money." He (*Continued on page 136*)

ing the burlesque was hard," admits Lolita Davidovich, referring to her exfoliation scenes in the movie *Blaze* (in which she plays Blaze Starr, the infamous stripper whose year-long affair with Louisiana governor Earl K. Long shook the nation in the late fifties), but love scenes with her co-star, Paul Newman, were less traumatic: "He's such a pro," she purrs. Sparer and more velvety-looking than the original steel-ringed, torpedo-chested Starr, the twenty-seven-year-old Davidovich had to "borrow breasts from wardrobe" and grow a quivery belly dancer's torso for her role as the "Undisputed Queen of Burlesque." The vanilla-skinned and bonfire-locked actress, with only a few subliminal screen credits in cable staples like *Adventures in Babysitting* and *The Big Town* to her name, is matter-of-fact about her performance as Miss Spontaneous Combustion. "There is less in this than meets the eye," says the Canadian-born Yugoslav, quoting Tallulah Bankhead. "I'm average in the movie—I played the straight man."

But Davidovich's unschlocky portrayal of Starr, an Appalachian Mountain girl who was partial to squirrel gravy and kept her gloves on while she stripped, buoyed by Ron "Bull Durham" Shelton's mostly unsentimental script—"There's a higher class of people down there [in New Orleans], coz of France and all"—conveys at least some of the uncorny poignancy of Starr's bleak life. (It was captured less wholesomely by Diane Arbus's dark lens.) There are tears, stagg public declarations of love, and touches of *Rocky I*, but Davidovich does more than play the feel-good Show Girl to Newman's Prince. The actress, already fired up to tackle something a bit more "prickly," says her dream role would involve something less fleshy, "a preacher's wife, perhaps." —CHRISTA D'SOUZA

Photograph by FIROOZ ZAHEDI

Deborah Norville

Rita. Friends who attended the reception at the Lotus Club remember it as a lot of fun. A hot, dark-skinned Brazilian dance band entertained the tables of cool, blond Swedes.

Since the wedding, Deborah Norville has been on a treadmill, and her conversation revolves around three subjects: job, sleep, husband. Her alarm clock goes off at ten minutes to four in the morning, and there's an NBC limo waiting in front of her pleasant East Side address to whisk her off to the studio. She writes all of the seven o'clock news broadcast on *Today* and parts of the other three segments. She often spends twelve to fifteen hours at work.

There have been times when the strain has gotten to her. "I've seen her temper flash when things got screwed up," said a producer who has worked with her. "She'd flare up at the crew and the cameramen. Some of the older pros don't exhibit that kind of temper. She didn't come near being a Jessica Savitch, but Deborah would lash out at people in

public and demand, 'Why can't you get this right?'"

She tries to make time for old Chicago friends like Leah Keith and Erin Moriarty—a quick bite of lunch at the American Festival Cafe in Rockefeller Center, tea at the Plaza. Sometimes she talks about her desire to have a family, even though she doesn't relish the idea of bringing up kids in New York. She'll grab an hour's nap during the day so that she can accompany her husband to a business dinner at night. On weekends, she and Karl drive out to their home in Southampton, where she gardens and they occasionally entertain. "It's a very pleasant, comfortable sort of getaway rather than a statement," said Jack Cowell, one of their Hamptons acquaintances.

Even among her friends of many years, none claimed to know Deborah Norville very well. She was described with words like "private," "guarded," "close to the vest." Yet many women—especially women in the brutally competitive field of television—told me that they admired her a great deal. "This is a woman of the nineties," said Jill Brooke, the TV and

radio columnist of the *New York Post*. "She has brains, beauty, a gorgeous husband, and a very successful career. She has it all."

Not quite. It is still too soon to assess what damage has been done to Deborah Norville, both personally and professionally, by the badly bungled way she was heralded onto the *Today* show. "The talent on the show has been hurt," Dick Ebersol admitted. "They were really innocent pawns in this. It bothers me what's happened to Deborah." At the very least, Norville will have to labor for some time under an unfortunate image—the leggy blonde who was used by her male bosses to hype the morning ratings.

Ebersol didn't help matters by once stating that Norville was hired "to appeal to women." "I may have said that," he told me, "but the reason Deborah's on the air is because of her unique talents in being able to think on her feet and project cohesiveness. There are very few people in television who can do that in complete sentences without the aid of scripts or enormous preparation. Deborah can. She's special." □

Art-nost

(Continued from page 86) denies all this, saying his money all comes from art.

The art worlds of Serge Sorokko and Eduard Nakhamkin, in short, look wholly unlike. But this is deceptive. Both Sorokko and Nakhamkin come from Riga, Latvia. They have already locked horns once, when Sorokko took over one of Nakhamkin's most successful émigré artists, Mihail Chemiakin. Also, both of their businesses have, in terms of art-world esteem, languished in the shadows. Neither was accustomed to reviews by "serious" critics, even when they put on a praiseworthy show. "Suzanne Muchnic of the [L.A.] *Times* said she would never review a Rodeo Drive gallery," Serge Sorokko says. "We put on great shows of Robert Motherwell and David Hockney and she never gave us a review." Both Sorokko and Nakhamkin saw in this new Russian revolution an entrée to a different level of dealing. As with Nina Maric, it presented more than a business opportunity.

Sorokko at any rate translated the Rauschenberg contract into English for Whitaker's benefit. Emendations were agreed upon, and the contract was sent to Whitaker's office for drafting. Whitaker then took the Russians on a tour of SoHo

studios, including that of the hallucinatory painter Robert Yarber, who was present when Salakhov signed the contract over lunch in the West Broadway restaurant I Tre Merli. The venue of the exhibition was to be the Kuznetsky Most. Now all the Whitakers had to do was arrange the show and the financing.

They approached Ronald Feldman at the suggestion of Leo Castelli. Feldman's Mercer Street gallery represents the well-regarded Muscovite Ilya Kabakov and the émigré duo Komar & Melamid, who have achieved singular success along the lines of Gilbert & George. Feldman agreed. He envisioned an enormous show, some sixty-five artists, including the likes of Jasper Johns, and some of his own gallery artists. What it did not include were the artists on the Whitaker list except Yarber and Ford Crull. In Moscow with the Whitakers, Feldman rejected the Kuznetsky Most. He wanted the Tretyakov. Impossible, by the terms of the Salakhov contract. Exit Ronald Feldman.

On January 10, 1989, *The New York Times* reported that "a joint venture agreement" had been "signed yesterday between the Soviet Ministry of Culture, the Union of Soviet Artists and a New

York art dealer who will act as a wholesaler of their works."

The dealer was Eduard Nakhamkin, and the report raised a squall, especially among Soviet artists, who said they didn't want to be confined to a "ghetto." Phyllis Kind observed that Nakhamkin certainly didn't have a monopoly, since she had contracts with seven artists. She told the *Times* that the Nakhamkin agreement reduced picture dealing to "selling shoes."

"I was walking down the street a few days later, and I got this scream from Mr. Nakhamkin," she says. "I'm not selling shoes! I'm not selling shoes!"

As it happened, it was another *Times* story that alerted Mala Price, a curator at the Modern Art Museum, Fort Worth, to the Whitakers' plans. A surprise. Fort Worth was putting together what they had imagined would be the first group show of American artists to appear in the Soviet Union. It was to include Russian artists also, and was called "10+10," for the numbers involved. The mutual ignorance was easily explained. The Whitakers were talking to the Artists Union and Fort Worth was talking to the Ministry of Culture, and the union and the ministry did not necessarily talk to each other.



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RRFA10. Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

Art-nost

"10+10" opened in Fort Worth on May 14, 1989. The visiting Soviet artists were entertained royally by the Texans. Donald Sultan, one of the American 10, found it a tad surreal. "One of the Russians said he had been living in a plastic tent in an unheated warehouse," he says. At one dinner, a Mexican repast, a Soviet, who was eating slowly, apologized, saying he found it a bit strong. "For ten years I have only eaten cabbage," he explained. "10+10," at any rate, would have its grand American finale at Washington's Corcoran. Its first appearance on Russian soil would be at the Tretyakov in July 1990, months after the Whitakers' show opened at the Kuznetsky Most. The ire of Fort Worth at being scooped was said to be acute.

The Whitakers found a curator, Donald Kuspit, a prolific critic. For reasons of economy, they had decided on a show of paintings only, canvases, moreover, that could be transported in tubes (making the stretchers in Moscow would save \$35,000 in transport alone). Kuspit came up with a theme, "Painting Beyond the Death of Painting," an allusion to the critical diktat of some years back that actually putting paint on canvas was an obsolete activity. With a couple of months to go, he began assembling his team. Data on the artists, plus childhood portraits, were passed along to Julian Schnabel, who had agreed to design the catalogue. The \$30,000 cost of this would be borne by Serge Sorokko—as long as he could mount the show upon its return to the United States in his gallery on Rodeo Drive.

Not all the artists in Kuspit's show had chosen to come to Moscow for the opening—Julian Schnabel, who has the hectic travel schedule of a successful modern artist, was in Japan—but most made the trip. Some were simply curious about this new revolution and its art. A few had more personal reasons, like Alex Katz, whose family had come from a village fourteen hours from Moscow by train, and who had visited Moscow seven years before. "One of the older artists told me the only thing my generation has to paint is subjective," he remembers. "But the younger artists have magazines, they have the telephone. And in a few years you will see them in New York."

But our visits to various artists' studios chosen by our hosts, the union, were dispiriting. I asked a thin-faced painter with red hair if he was aware of the disfavor in

which "official" art was generally held. He was snappish. "He does not think he should be a dissident so that his pictures are appreciated abroad," the interpreter said.

Another studio belonged to an older man who had abandoned stuffy portraits for flower pieces in the Brezhnev years, and had been derided by his colleagues. Sadly, the flower paintings were vapid. "I changed my style when I had nothing," he told us proudly. What about his former colleagues, the ones who had laughed at him?

"They do nothing. They live on their pensions."

Why don't they change?

"They cannot."

There were four small oil sketches pinned to the wall, naturalistic, but liquid and alive, one like a Corot, another somewhat like a Reginald Marsh. Student pieces, he said when he saw us eyeing them covertly and misunderstood our interest. He pointed at them. "I have been trying to get rid of this manner of work for thirty years," he said.

Another visit was to a prosperous artist, bearded, with a silver-buckled belt and a guarded manner. He had antique implements on the wall, a big sixteenth-century icon, and his own paintings, which were competent but dead as mutton. This was a powerful man in the union apparently, and had been so while the "unofficial" artists were barely scraping by. An American artist, who had perhaps overdone the pepper vodka, looked at the canvases closely. "Do you mind if I ask you something?" he said to the painter through an interpreter. "Where's the anger?"

"There is no anger," the artist said tranquilly.

"Nothing connects," the American said, looking at the work. "Where's the anger? Do you believe in *calm*?"

The Soviet required no translation. "Da," he said, turning his back and throwing off fury as a stove throws off heat.

Perhaps *glasnost* had erased all prior distinctions between "official" and "unofficial," and certainly the ex-"unofficial"s were sweeping everything before them abroad, but these studio visits suggested that the conservatives, like their political colleagues, would be fighting every square canvas inch of the way.

Serge Sorokko's appearance was both stylish and unexpected. He was trimly bearded, wan, and dressed in high-fashion black. ("From South Molton Street," he told me. "London is the most creative.")

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**USE
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Art-nost

His wife, Nelly, was wearing a black T-shirt, upon which gold lettering read, "Festival International du Film, Cannes, Côte d'Azur, 1989." I ran into them at the Sovietskaya, Moscow's most elegant hotel.

Their appearance was unexpected because their relationship with the Whitakers had not ended well. For one thing, the Whitakers had come to suspect that Sorokko was trying to hog the credit for their Soviet action. For another, Whitaker had told Sorokko that he couldn't promise that his artists would agree to show on Rodeo Drive.

Serge Sorokko promptly withdrew his financial support. Julian Schnabel's much-admired catalogue remained unprinted. Sorokko was not invited to the opening in the Kuznetsky Most.

None of this could be gleaned from Sorokko's demeanor as he invited a group of us to dinner. We slipped through the Moscow night in a stretch limo—a *chaika*, or "sea gull"—pulling up at a discreet private restaurant, a "co-op," where we dined traditionally on caviar, smoked sturgeon, vodka, and sweetish Georgian champagne. Such co-ops, incidentally, are increasingly the target of protection gangs—"Mafias," the Russians call them—and several have been torched. One of Serge Sorokko's dinner guests asked the owner a bit nervously if he wasn't afraid of racketeers.

He laughed uproariously. "For what should I be scared?" he asked. "Me, I am racketeer." I was told he had a kalashnikov behind the bar.

The following day Sorokko drove us out to the dacha of Tahir Salakhov, which had formerly belonged to Brezhnev's daughter, Galina. Over lunch I asked Salakhov what art the union would find unacceptable nowadays.

Nothing, he said. The official line was that there was no official line.

When would the Peter Ludwig contemporary-art museum be opening? Both men looked at me impassively. Sorokko said that the editor of *Ogonyok*, the magazine that describes itself as "the loudspeaker of *glasnost*," was already planning a museum of modern art. Meaning, leave it to the Russians. Salakhov and Sorokko are as close as two bricks. Ridley Whitaker had perhaps been hasty in falling out with the Russian from Rodeo Drive.

Back in Moscow, we dined at Armand Hammer's Sovincentr, then took an elevator to the eleventh floor. I was told that we would be meeting the "Panty Hose

King of Riga." The hotel room was smallish, considering it cost the equivalent of \$200 a night. The Panty Hose King had a bony face and a shirt as vivid as a TV test pattern. He brought two abstract canvases out of a suitcase. "They are by Zverev," Sorokko told me, "an 'unofficial' artist with many problems. He died of drink in the seventies."

Unfortunately, the clandestinity, the repression that can produce incandescent writing seldom have that effect on painting. Anatoli Zverev can be good. These were dire. Sorokko politely turned them down. The Sovincentr elevator has a glass front. "Do you see that man talking to my wife?" Sorokko asked as we slid down. "He is a very dangerous man. A K.G.B. agent. When we arrive he will kiss me on the lips. You will see."

The man, who was young, in a nondescript suit, with metallic eyes, acted as predicted. The pair talked in an undertone a few feet off, and Sorokko casually scribbled something on a scrap of paper. The man left. It looked innocuous. Wrong.

"He said, 'I have got what you wanted,'" Sorokko said. "I never asked him for anything. He is a very dangerous man. He is trying to peddle some art." It had been a sophisticated pitch. The agent had promised a canvas by Ilya Kabakov. "Is buying a Kabakov illegal?" I asked. "There are always ways of finding something illegal," Serge observed lightly. Possibly the K.G.B. man wanted to bust him. It was also possible that he was just after hard currency. The newly monetarized Muscovite art market was turning into a parody of SoHo; a jungle, but with no ecological balance; a rabid zoo.

Sorokko would have been unavailable for a rendezvous with the police agent turned art scammer anyway. The following morning he and Nelly would be on a plane to San Francisco.

It is somehow a very Soviet situation that one of the makers of change in the Moscow art world right now should be Tahir Salakhov's daughter Aidan. Aidan Salakhova, pretty and sharp-featured in a black Issey Miyake pantsuit, is a painter whose work is urgently sexual. With three other young painters she opened Moscow's first private art gallery in January 1988. The First Gallery has a pristine postmodern look—there are broken pediments above the interior doorways—that zealously out-SoHos SoHo. Among the "Beyond the Death" painters, Aidan speedily acquired the nickname "Mary Booneskaya."

Their opening show, which had been of

photo-derived paintings and which had included Kabakov and Bulatov, had announced its global ambitions by its catalogue, which was in Russian and English. Their second exhibition, in May, was an homage by Soviet artists to Robert Rauschenberg, and ran concurrently with his show at the Tretyakov. The American contributed an exuberant canvas called *I Done Aidan*.

All this, it will be noted, was before the Sotheby's sale, which was prescient, because the gallery was primed to supply the mini-market that sprang up in the auction's wake. I met a typical new collector in the gallery, a successful movie director in acid-washed jeans and black Reeboks, who had bought seventeen canvases since the auction, hangs four in his three-room apartment, and rotates them, as do collectors with more space in the West.

Certainly the objective conditions for an art market exist in both Moscow and Leningrad, with tons of "new" money being made and a paucity of creature comforts to spend it on, but the new galleries see a negative aspect too. "There was a good side to the Sotheby's sale and a bad side," says First Gallery partner Evgeni Mitta. "The good side is that everybody looks at Soviet art. The bad side is that we all used to be equals. The collectors would buy just to help the artists. They would just pile the paintings up."

"It was dangerous to hang things up," Aidan says. "The K.G.B. would watch even who visited our studios."

"Now the collectors want to make money. They are speculators," Evgeni says. That dread word. "The money makes us not to be equals anymore."

Which is to say that the solidarity that isolation fostered is being riven by the dollar and the deutsche mark. A curator from Southern California was meeting with some artists she had picked for a show in Leningrad a while back when an aggrieved group of (unselected) artists made their entry. "Blood flowed!" says Phyllis Kind.

And the results of the Sotheby's sale aren't quite as fixed as might have been supposed. In its immediate wake, the state invented a "progressive tax," meaning that the artists received just 18 percent of the sale prices—admittedly in hard currency. Also, those results are not being repeated away from the superheated atmosphere of the Moscow sale. "It will be a long while before the artists see those prices again," says Phyllis Kind.

That said, Kabakov, Bulatov, and Bruskin have certainly become world-class artists, and all three, while de-

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minedly not émigrés, are working away from the U.S.S.R. Most of the younger former dissidents, like Afrika, have returned, though. Their former closeness irreparably gone, they find themselves in something of a limbo, neither wholly at home in the Soviet Union nor accepted by the West. Many of the ramshackle collective squats are gone, like the house on Furmanny Street, which is being expensively renovated, and the Kindergarten, which has broken up. There are still clubs, groups like Moscow's Champions of the World and the Medical Hermeneutic (which specializes in "actions and performances"), but there are also groups like the Fish Mafia from Odessa, so called because some of its leading members have piscine surnames like Karpov (yes, carp in Russian), which deliberately turn out stuff geared to the overseas market.

Russians certainly have the capacity to churn out kitsch as copiously as Americans, and already one can sense Haiti-like conveyor belts being set up to sell soulful strivings to guilty émigrés. But there are also seriously ambitious younger artists, who are daunted by having to assimilate decades of art history in a few gulps but struggle on, although conditions are tough, even for such children of the *nomenklatura*—the ruling class—as Aidan Salakhova and Evgeni Mitta (whose father is a successful movie director).

True, it is somewhat easier for them to find a room to paint in, but materials are as hard to come by for them as for anybody else. "There has been no black paint in Moscow for three months," Aidan says.

"In two years you will see a lot of green pictures in the West," says Mitta. "Green paint is all we have."

Neither the American nor the European press had been at the opening at the Kuznetsky Most, but the Soviet media had attended, and on Saturday, September 16, *Pravda* carried a fifty-line report on the show. It described the show as "The Face of New York," and said that it had been "organized by Serge Sorokko." There was no mention of Ridley Whitaker.

Most of the artists dropped into the gallery at least once, if only to gauge how the Muscovites were reacting, and they could be sensitive. "They hate it," painter Ford Crull told me, citing a public comment from the book at the door: "I paid a ruble for this."

Actually, the comments were six to four in favor. Rudolf Baranik, the only Russian-speaker among the American art-

ists, reported that the worst he had overheard was that the show was "too traditional." Which said, most of the younger work we saw in Moscow was indeed "radical," but only in that it aped radical work glimpsed in *Flash Art* or *Artforum*. Not all, though. One evening a group of us went to see a (formerly) underground painter/performance artist, German Vinogradov.

He was tall, young, monkish in a brown loincloth. His head was shaved, and there was the sort of smudge on his forehead that you see on Ash Wednesday. With him was a young woman, Natasha, pretty, pale, sweet, sort of a flower child come again. They led us into a small, rather squalid room. Scrap metal—girders and the like—was dangling from the ceiling, along with eight wire baskets, one below the other, with cubes of fuel in each. He turned out the light.

He struck the girders repeatedly, building up clangorous harmonies, and lit the fuel. Flames leapt. Excited cockroaches made flow patterns on the walls. Still making music, in a trance state, he began striking his forehead against a burning basket. That accounted for the smudge. A climax was reached, maintained, and Vinogradov handed each of us a wet stone, then a small bunch of grapes. Grapes are *precious* in Moscow. The stones, he later told us, were from the grave site of Malevich, the great mystical abstractionist. Vinogradov's performance was also based on a system of beliefs. He knew little about Western performance art, had seen none, and showed no signs of regretting this. We asked if he would like to leave Moscow. Absolutely not. He said he never took money, but he was grateful to be given some unused recording tape.

Most of the artists that we spoke with felt that it was necessary to be up with the art world so as to refine their own work, as their counterparts in Cologne, London, Barcelona, Los Angeles, and SoHo would agree—but for German Vinogradov, Russia is enough.

Aside from the rigors of the trip, the discomfort, the endemic corruption, such artists as I have discussed it with have had much food for thought. Robert Yarber has been brooding over photographs in his studio. Jedd Garett has developed a passion for the massive kitsch of Stalinist architecture, which he found to be quite as officially ignored as Constructivism had been by the Stalinists.

The sojourn in Moscow was also fruitful in other areas. Serge Sorokko, for instance, departed with a contract tucked in

his pocket. The contract was to organize seven "serious" shows of American and European contemporary artists at the Tretyakov Museum.

Shortly after his return, the former manager of the Upstairs Gallery, a nearby neighbor on Rodeo Drive, was busted as part of a multimillion-dollar forgery ring. They specialized in Chagall and Miró. There was much speculation that the California art world generally might be bruised by the hubbub. But Franklin Bowles was sunny. "There have been so many scandals over the years," he told me. "And it can rebound to your credit. People *know* us." But Serge Sorokko is actively looking for premises in both London and Santa Monica, "somewhere close to Blum Helman" (Irving Blum being to L.A. what Leo Castelli is to New York). He visited the studios of various artists in Manhattan and discussed giving them Moscow shows. He was wearing black leather and a jade-green shirt with a buckle alongside the throat. "Remember," he cautioned, "in Moscow things can change every day."

For Ridley Whitaker and Nina Maric, the experience has been a finite one. "We were offered a ten-exhibition deal," says Whitaker. "We turned it down. We can't afford the time and money." Not that Whitaker left empty-handed. He secured the legal business of a Muscovite rock star.

And the catalogue? "Julian's catalogue is sitting in pasteup form in L.A." It will be printed if an American venue is found for the returning show. Otherwise? "If I have to do a conventional catalogue, I'll do a conventional catalogue. But there *will* be a catalogue."

There was a loan exhibition of dance costumes in Eduard Nakhmkin's Madison Avenue outlet upon our return. After fourteen years without "serious" reviews, this show got two laudatory notices from the *Times*, from John Russell and Anna Kisselgoff. The Kisselgoff effusion was pasted to the glass front door as if to say: So there!

I attended Nakhmkin's next opening, a group show. Nakhmkin, tuxedoed, in a snowy breastplate of a shirt, and shiny-pated, looked as if he were playing himself in a movie. The show's next stop: the State Museum, Leningrad. So the "monopoly" may have come unglued, but things seem as rosy for Eduard Nakhmkin as for Serge Sorokko, thanks to *glasnost*.

Aidan Salakhova and Evgeni Mitta arrived in Manhattan in October. They ate at artists' restaurants, like Jerry's and 150

Art-nost

Wooster, and appeared on a panel discussing Soviet art at the Guggenheim Museum. They were so stylish—Aidan in black, of course—that they looked perfect SoHoites, and the other Guggenheim panelists looked more like men from Moscow.

There had been negative elements in U.S.A./U.S.S.R. art relations on both sides. The Mapplethorpe fiasco had almost certainly capsized the triumphal finale of "10+10" at Washington's Corcoran, and in Moscow, *perestroika* was growing more anarchic by the day (one speaker at the Guggenheim predicted civil war). "Every day they make a new law," Aidan says. One wheeze is that Soviet art can now be sold only for export by way of the Ministry of Culture, even pieces already outside the country. "A

Dutch woman consigned some paintings to Sotheby's in Amsterdam," Aidan says. "They accept them. Then a message comes from London, and they send them back. So Sotheby's take their orders from a totalitarian ministry." Sotheby's denies such an agreement exists.

Aidan and Evgeni were contemplating a Mapplethorpe show for the First Gallery. Their Helmut Newton exhibition, which had just closed, had drawn five hundred to seven hundred visitors a day for two weeks, and three thousand catalogues had been sold for the equivalent of five dollars apiece. Manhattan was exhilarating, a whirl of art, with dealers from Jay Gorney to Leo Castelli expressing interest in joint ventures. Mary Boone, when introduced and told that Aidan had been compared to her, said, "I'm flattered." They showed their transparencies around, and will be having a joint show at the Farideh Cadot Gallery in SoHo this May.

Some of what they saw, they found disturbing. "The galleries are like stores," Mitta says. "We want gallery more like a museum." But it wasn't so much the money mania that bothered him as the intrigue factor, the way that reputations rose and fell. But there was the wonder of seeing art previously familiar only in illustration. "It's like the difference between the object itself and a shadow," Mitta says. "All avant-garde tendencies arise from contact. Without that, I don't think our art can grow."

Soviet art is still a formless, unrealized thing, apart from a few isolated heavyweights. "It is because in Moscow things happen, but people forget them. Nothing is fixed. We have not yet found new structures." He believes that they will, and that great Soviet art will be produced—"perhaps not now, perhaps not for years"—as long as Soviet artists remain free to produce it. □

Daryl Hannah

(Continued from page 70) as not, canceling them. "Daryl Hannah defines the limitations of vegetarianism," says a filmmaker who doesn't cherish their time together.

The real Daryl Hannah, says her best and oldest friend, can be found somewhere in the middle of those characterizations. "Part of her appeal is that childlike quality, and she'll have it in her nineties," says Elise Paschen, director of the Poetry Society of America. "And that's what's charming, alluring—even compelling—about her. But that's a role she plays; it's a smoke screen. She appears to be ethereal and ephemeral when she's actually strong and courageous. And very smart—Daryl knows exactly what's going on. I went to Harvard and Oxford, and she's one of my smartest friends."

Which makes her smart enough not to blow the whistle on her own game. Instead, Daryl Hannah likes to tell the story of her childhood, which has more than enough evidence for her to make a case for herself as a woman so shy and insecure that, when scared, "I can go catatonic, I mean, I can't even think of the word 'egg.'" In this story, she's Eloise—with a bitter twist. After her parents divorced, her mother married Jerry Wexler, chairman of Jupiter Industries. Wexler had older children who would soon be going off to college, and so, while he spent one last year living with them, he installed his new

wife and her three young children in one of his hotels. The suite was posh, but Daryl had no idea why she was there. Since the breakup of her family, she'd made charts showing how much it would cost to feed her brother and sister three times a day at McDonald's and lists of the jobs she could get to pay for those meals; now she retreated so much she wouldn't communicate.

"Her teachers told me, 'She's delightful and charming, but she's just not with us,' so I took her out of school and went to the Bahamas," Sue Wexler recalls. There she did something remarkably sane—she let her daughter run wild. "I'd bring my teddy bear to the beach and to dinner," Daryl says. "Mom let me work it all out." She almost made it. "Daryl said, 'Let's go home,' so we did," Sue Wexler says, "but she still kept that reserve."

This translated into an early interest in an artistic career, preferably in a field that would pay well if her reconstituted family ever fell apart. She studied ballet with former New York City Ballet star Maria Tallchief Paschen (Elise's mother and a onetime Mrs. Balanchine), and had a chance for the big time. But she was discouraged by the prospect of years of training, so she switched to acting. What about that shyness? Well, she explains, she was too shy to perform at the theater where she took classes, but acting in films is different. "A movie camera is like having

someone you have a crush on watching you from afar," she says. "You pretend it's not there."

She miscalculated on one point. Between the actress and the camera are a sea of men, many of whom have no interest in watching a leggy blonde from afar. And when she moved to Los Angeles in 1981, ostensibly to study literature at the University of Southern California while she explored a movie career, those men seemed to appear all at once. With her luck, the location was a wrap party at the Beverly Hills Hotel; one of the producers had encountered Daryl on the street that afternoon and invited her.

"I didn't know how to make friends in Los Angeles—I met people in grocery stores," she recalls. "Usually I'd go out with a girlfriend so we could dance with each other; we didn't want to dance with people we didn't know. I went alone to this party, so I was dancing by myself. I didn't realize I was at a 'Hollywood party' or that anyone was watching. I must have looked like I just got off the bus, which I had—I was wearing a skirt and cowboy boots. But one thing they do well in L.A. is smell out fresh meat."

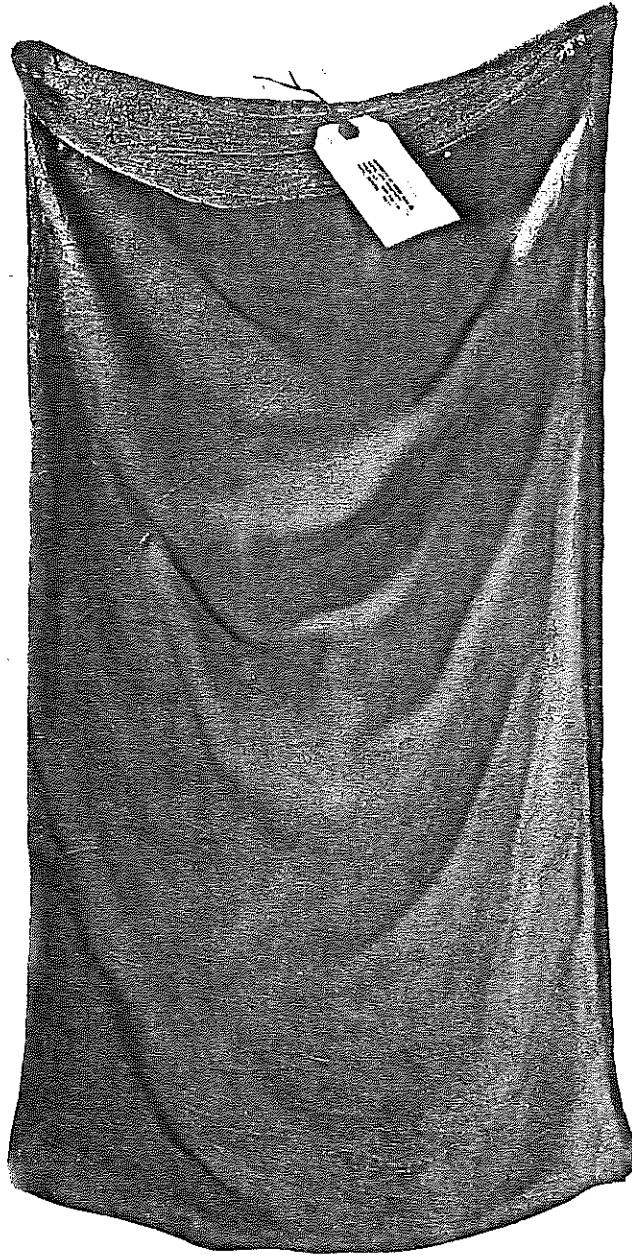
Chuck Binder, a fledgling talent manager, watched as twenty-five men forced their business cards into Daryl's hand. But when he called, he did a smart thing: he promised to protect her from interviews that were really dates. "Chuck could always tell when someone wanted

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Graphicstudio, U.S.F.

DONALD J. SAFF

Since its beginning at the University of South Florida in 1968, Graphicstudio has attempted to serve as a mechanism which could provide a focus for developing artistic excellence in a university setting. In concept, the approach was to be a major variation from the traditional artist-in-residence program while still providing students with a constructive and intimate situation for meeting artists... an idea with an apparent multiplicity of educational advantages.

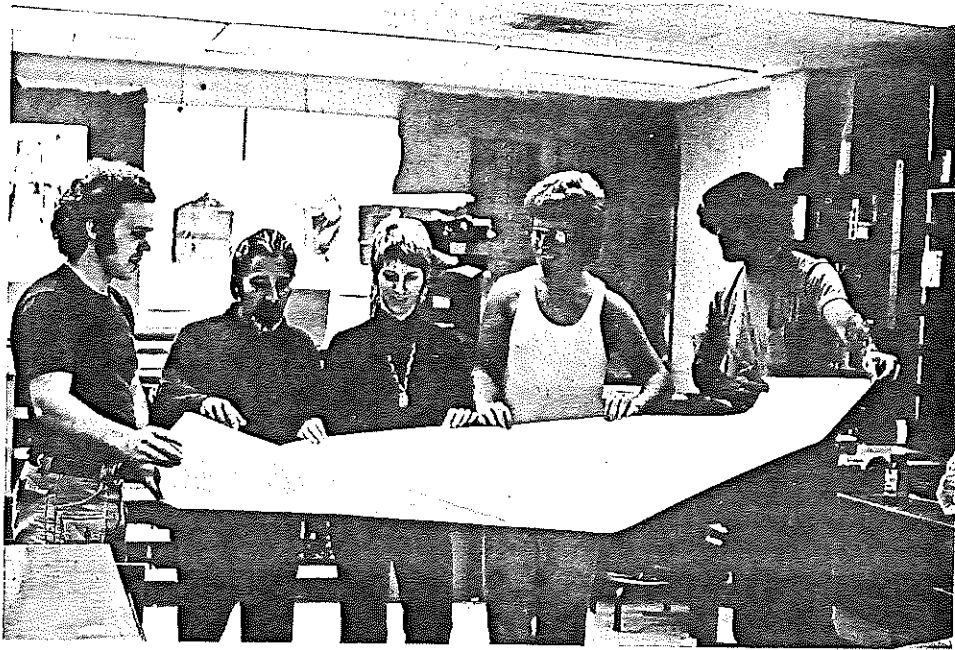
Since it is the stated role of Florida's university system to both transmit information and explore new areas through research that will contribute in a substantive way to knowledge, Graphicstudio was conceived as a way to realize this mission in the arts. Students would not only have access to artists in an informal setting, as opposed to the usual classroom/studio teaching, but they also would have the opportunity to see artists over an extended period, observing works evolving from their conception to a finished edition. The uniqueness of enabling students to witness the collaboration of artist and artisan in a noncommercial atelier was part of our purpose at the beginning. Further, not only does Florida present an attractive locale for artists to work in but the pedagogical value of locating Graphicstudio at the University of South Florida was enhanced because of its vital art department. Then, as now, the university did not have the resources to maintain both the high-caliber artists which constitute its permanent teaching faculty and a continuing flow of distinguished visiting artists, nor did it have the ability to spend large sums of money for the development of a comprehensive collection of art. However, with the development of Graphicstudio these advantages could be provided at minimal state expense. In addition, the university recognized that through Graphicstudio it could make further important contributions to the cultural life of the Tampa Bay community since many area residents looked to the University of South Florida as a source of major cultural nourishment. The community is probably the only city of its size without a museum of consequence. Through the Graphicstudio, the university could further its role as an urban institution by bringing artists into the local community for extended periods, by circulating the work produced in the studio, and by giving its constituency formal and informal access to a functioning workshop. Graphicstudio encouraged interested persons to begin developing comprehensive private collections while becoming informed observers or a more global art scene. In turn it was hoped that this would provide direct support for regional artists on a broader base of aesthetic evaluation.

Although commercial ateliers like Tamarind, Universal Limited Arts Editions, and Gemini altered in an irrevocably

positive way the artist's and the public's perception of print media, Graphicstudio could make yet another special contribution in the area of graphics that would be consistent with the research role of the university. The university's art department used the extensive resources at its disposal to provide Graphicstudio with a media range not constrained by the limited equipment or narrow technical expertise found in many commercial print facilities. Although the staff directly involved in Graphicstudio on an ongoing basis were few, some members of the art department would make themselves available for technical consultation. Against this background, the artist would be presented with the rare opportunity of creating his work in an atmosphere free from the pressures, however carefully guarded, of a commercial atelier. Here the artist's stay could be extended and the nature and complexity of his ideas could be explored more readily and expansively. The studio's stated aim of experimentation would provide through demonstrated accomplishment a redefinition of the role of the atelier in providing a special kind of effective collaboration.

Traditional production procedure and comprehensive technical documentation were to be of central importance, and perhaps one of the most arduous tasks in creating the studio was to locate printers who were well-trained in relatively traditional techniques but who could apply their technical expertise in completely novel and nontraditional ways. In addition to lithography, silkscreening, and etching, both silver and nonsilver photographic techniques would be explored and of primary importance was our hope that artists would choose to experiment with replication processes in sculpture and sculpture/print combinations.

Administratively, Graphicstudio was to be a joint venture between the art department and the Florida Center for the Arts, a management and support organization within the College of Fine Arts. In addition to working with visiting artists, the initial concept of Graphicstudio afforded an opportunity to produce works by members of the faculty as well and for a period of time the studio was able to carry out this activity. The Florida Center for the Arts which maintains responsibility for the print exhibition program at the university and the Art Bank Program, which provides exhibitions free of charge to the other public institutions in the state, became the direct recipients of the works produced in the workshop. It was to be the Florida Center's responsibility to circulate the prints, preliminary sketches, and drawings which were donated by the artists for public view. Since 1971 the Art Bank Program has provided U.S.F. with 10 Graphicstudio exhibitions and other state institutions with a



Left to right: Paul Clinton, Julio Juristo, Michelle Juristo, Charles Ringness, Dan Stack working in the Graphicstudio, 1972.

total of 27 Graphicstudio exhibitions. That organization also maintained a liaison with community subscribers for the collection of money and dissemination of work. Through the efforts of James Camp, currently a New York gallery owner, a small grant was received from the National Endowment for the Arts through the Florida Development Commission in the latter part of 1968.

As a *modus operandi*, the shop would be inaccessible only during the crucial proofing period so that the artist would be unhampered in his concentration. At all other times the studio and its personnel were to be accessible to students and public. In actuality, most of the artists did not require a cloistered atmosphere during proofing so for the most part the studio was accessible.

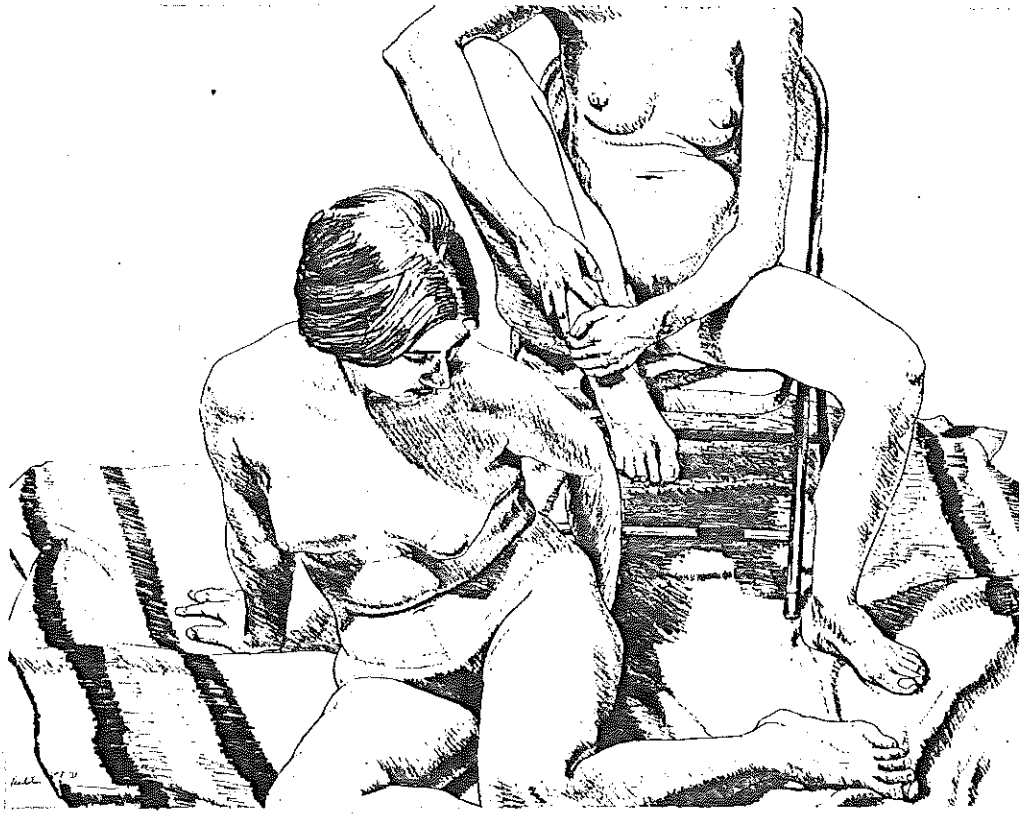
Things learned through concentrated research and collaborative time spent with major artists enabled the printers and other studio personnel to become important resources of extraordinary value in a variety of ways. In the occasional classes, seminars, and lecture/demonstrations taught by the studio personnel, there was an offering of traditional expertise as well as newly evolved procedures. Concurrently, they were able to interpret the views, approaches, and procedures of artists with whom they collaborated. This combination of experience offered an unquestionably unique educational circumstance to our students and the local community.

As Graphicstudio's reputation increased, the numbers of people on a local, regional, and national level who wished to see the work, visit its facilities, and meet with its personnel, similarly increased. Accumulated publicity was not only of value to Graphicstudio but also to the art department, the university and community, and the state of Florida. Major articles in *Art in America* and consistent references in *Print Collector's Newsletter* as well as other art journals, exhibition catalogues, and magazines, produced inquiries concerning undergraduate and graduate school programs. There were also

requests for Graphicstudio, Art Bank, and U.S.F. exhibition publications. Tampa was identified on an international level as a center for important print activities. By 1970 large numbers of works were being placed into the community through our subscription program and the community through its support became the beneficiary of consequential experimental work.

It was no simple matter to organize the administrative and fiscal structure within a state university which, as in all state organizations, carries its bureaucratic albatross tethered with red tape. No matter how much legal advice was sought, it was impossible to encapsulate the relationship between the Graphicstudio and other state agencies without there being yet another nuance to be considered. To this day many of the organizational questions pose challenges but the constant support of the university administration allows the studio to continue to function although it has no precedence in a university setting.

The University of South Florida is funded on a productivity formula which by definition places emphasis on the number of students taught. Against this pressure, it is difficult to utilize teaching positions solely for research, thereby reducing teaching productivity. To observe and maintain the value of research and "indirect" teaching in Graphicstudio represents an astonishing and bold commitment to the arts in a period when funds are being cut back, available positions reduced, and non-credit-hour-producing activities legislatively criticized. For the most part the contribution by the state was limited to space allocations and academic research positions utilized. Beyond this, gaining the financial support required for full utilization of these positions was no small matter. Major operating costs were generated, especially in the initial stages, by the personal support and generosity of a number of Tampa Bay community residents who believed deeply in the total



Philip Pearlstein, *Untitled*, lithograph, 22" x 29", 1969.

value of such a program. These few people supported the studio through gifts and subscriptions at a point well prior to the selection of its first artists.

In its earlier stages, the department of visual arts aided Graphicstudio by providing space, positions, and minimal funds for supplies and equipment. As Graphicstudio grew, it conversely was able to aid the department in various ways, some of which included purchasing equipment, donating pieces of equipment which were by-products of its various projects, and occasionally renting studios for graduate student use. Similarly, funds were allocated to the Florida Center for the Arts for concerts and a number of other activities.

Through the special generosity of a large gift by Mr. Gordon Gund, Graphicstudio's financial status was enhanced to a point where the daily or monthly fiscal crises were no longer present. Mr. Gund is an art collector who, up until that time, was primarily involved with early American works but who also had a particular interest in seeing the Tampa Bay community benefit from an influx of artists and art.

In addition to the previously mentioned small gift from the National Endowment for the Arts, larger sums from the Endowment's Workshop Grant Program have provided sufficient funds so that Graphicstudio could be run year round without utilizing precious state summer positions for its staff. This also facilitated uninterrupted collaboration and flow of work. The combination of grants and gifts and the annual sale of subscriptions has built a sound financial base for the program.

The program obviously requires extraordinary resources if

production and experimentation are to continue unencumbered and unrestrained. For a while the dearth of litho stones and other critical equipment presented a sizable problem. Items such as litho stones are difficult to locate regardless of available financial resources. Fortunately, Syracuse China Corporation in Syracuse, New York was changing from lithography to silkscreening as a way of producing oxide decals for design on their china. In 1968 Mr. Richard Besse, a vice president of Syracuse China, lent the studio two extraordinarily fine stones. In 1970 Syracuse China put up for sale an extensive number of equally fine large lithography stones, racks, automatic flatbed presses, and a host of other support material. Armed with prints from our first project by Philip Pearlstein, James Camp and I went to see Mr. Besse who, coincidentally, was on the board of the Everson Museum. Though his initial reaction was that Syracuse China should be paid for this equipment, further reflection and review of our program convinced him of the appropriateness of the corporation donating the equipment. Through his efforts the gift was made and this wealth of material helped Graphicstudio continue in its prescribed direction at a very critical stage of its development.

In addition to myself as director, the shop currently consists of a studio manager, Charles Ringness; two master printers, Paul Clinton and Julio Juristo; a curator, Michelle Juristo; one full-time assistant and one part-time assistant. Projects in the studio are organized by the director who negotiates and

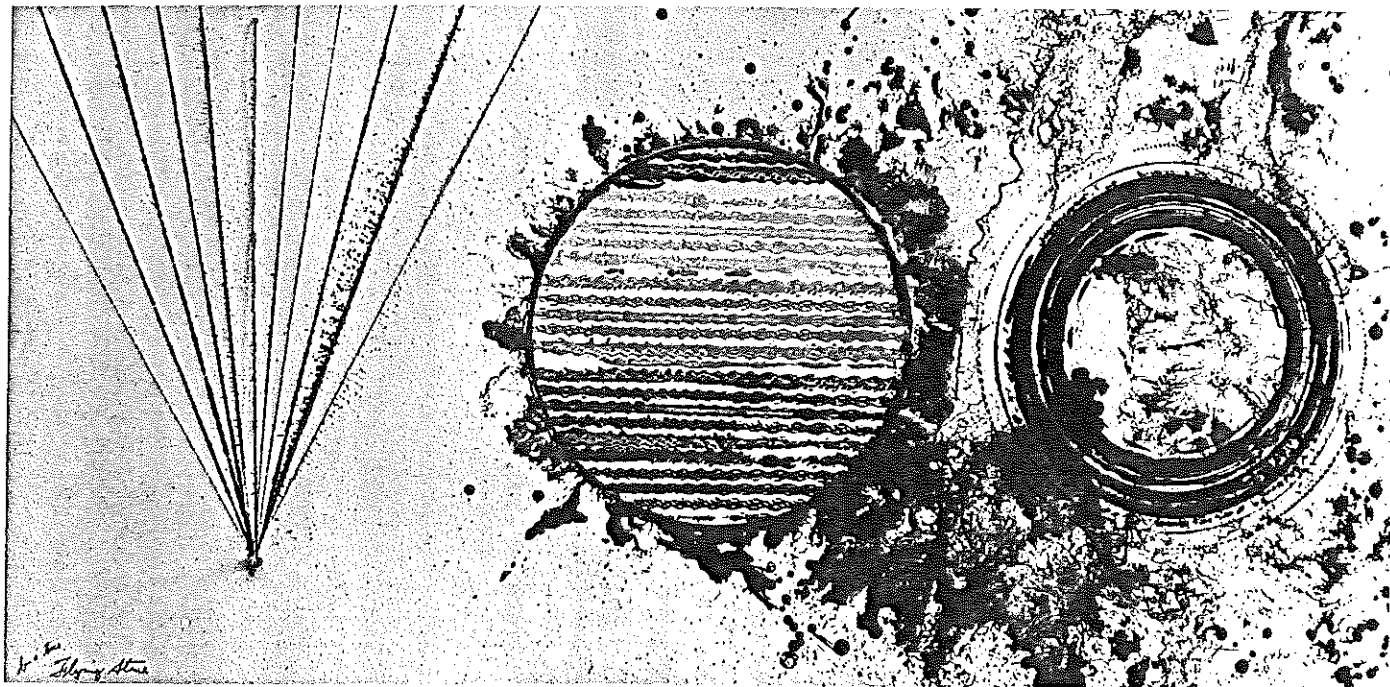


James Rosenquist working on *Flying Stone* (one of a suite of six lithographs) at the Graphicstudio, 1974. (Photo: Patrik Lindhardt.)

contracts with the artist after deciding whether a project would be mutually beneficial to the artist and the university. The studio manager then assigns proofing responsibilities and editioning responsibilities to himself and the other two master printers. During the period in which the artist is in residence at Graphicstudio, proofing is often a night-and-day activity as the facility and all its personnel are on round-the-clock availability to the artist. During editioning, the printing staff works a four-day week to compensate for extended time utilized during proofing. It is this concentrated effort that has aided in producing the experimental directions the works have taken. In conjunction with the printers, the curator prepares paper, participates in quality control, produces comprehensive documentation of the work, and readies the work for delivery to the Florida Center and to the artist. In addition, art faculty members assume consulting roles when projects become of particular interest to them. Secretarial staff in the College of Fine Arts' offices maintain complete records of Graphicstudio's complex material purchases, subscription sales, salaries, and other routine secretarial matters.

The facilities are housed both on and off campus as on-campus college facilities are in great demand, with available space at a premium. On campus, Graphicstudio is housed in the art building. There students can observe work in progress, meet artists, or have technical or aesthetic questions responded to. Off-campus studios have been refitted for use in one process or another depending upon the kind of project with which Graphicstudio was currently involved. While equipment of various types has been obtained through gift or purchase, state surplus properties have often provided arc lamps, file cabinets, cardboard and expendable material to equip the studio.

As soon as the university administration approved the Graphicstudio principle, a handful of Tampa Bay community members purchased the first subscriptions. Funds from the purchases enabled Graphicstudio to acquire its first press and



James Rosenquist, *Flying Stone*, lithograph, 36" x 74", 1974. (Photo: Patrik Lindhardt.)

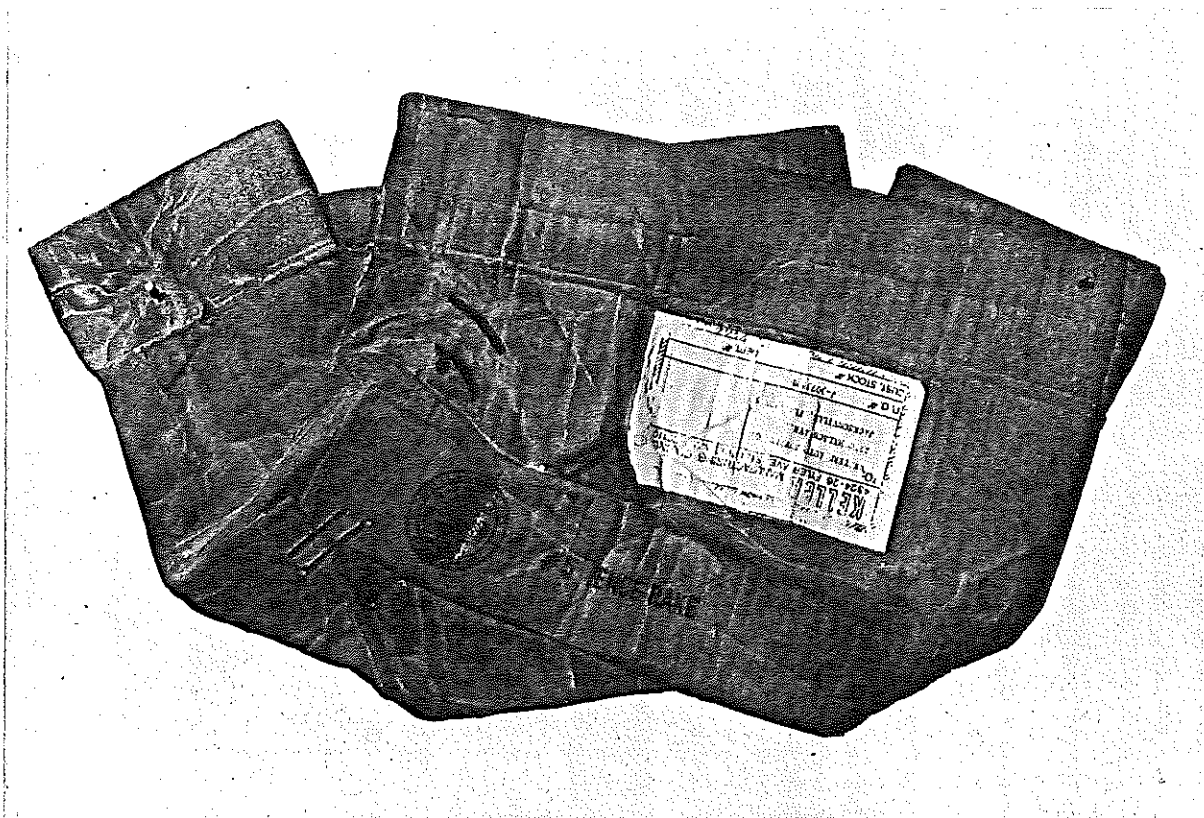
invite Philip Pearlstein to Tampa to collaborate with Master Printer Anthony Stoeveken. For a short period of time, Graphicstudio became involved with a group of Feigen Gallery artists through the efforts of Jacquéline Chambord, graphics director of Feigen. Faithfulness to exquisite printing and careful documentation resulted in professional products which delighted the community and added greatly to the U.S.F. collection. However, examples of advanced technology and conceptual experimentation in graphics were relatively few in these early works. Notable exceptions included the folded and cut prints by Richard Smith, embossing/lithography combinations by Charles Hinman and Adja Yunkers, and mezzotint/photographic screening as used by Mel Ramos.

In 1970 Anthony Stoeveken left Graphicstudio for a teaching position. The demands of Graphicstudio increased, however, requiring an expansion of the staff. Master Printers Theo Wujcik and Charles Ringness were hired. They began their activities at the university with the very arduous task of printing four- and five-color lithographs for Nicholas Krushnick which required perfecting techniques for producing broad lithographic flats of high quality. Upon completion of that suite, a project with Edward Ruscha was produced by utilizing gum mask, rubbing crayon, and number three pencil on stone.

By 1971 the complexion of the studio changed in that it sometimes seemed inappropriate to limit the number of suites produced for a given artist. During early discussions with James Rosenquist—with whom I had long wished to work—I realized it would have been counterproductive to limit the number of editions after hearing his thoughts concerning the nature and extent of the *Cold Light* series. He was, therefore, invited for an extended stay. In order to accomplish

exploration of the technical range he desired, a number of faculty members offered their assistance. Oscar Bailey of our photography staff aided Rosenquist in photographing newspapers and other items, placing these photographs in the appropriate two-point perspective in order to be consistent with other rendered forms. Rosenquist's wish for transparent hourglasses to be placed over two suites of prints was facilitated by Alan Eaker, a member of the sculpture staff who built the necessary molds for prototyping a vacuum-formed plexiglas overlay into which plastic beads were placed. The range of technical exploration in the suite extended from the technically traditional diminutive images of *Delivery Hat* and *Fedora* to the atypical print/hourglass construction of *Mastaba* and *Earth and Moon*. The evolution and maturation of prints in the *Cold Light* series was possible because production schedules provided for extensive uninterrupted time for proofing as well as substantial financial and technical support. It would be difficult to imagine many commercial ateliers, no matter how generous, continuously affording this dimension of support without wreaking havoc with financial ledgers.

During the Rosenquist proofing period, many students and faculty had the opportunity to meet with and know Rosenquist quite intimately and to observe him at work in a temporarily adopted studio. A circumstance such as this afforded those few students aggressive enough to come forward and ask questions, a situation that could not be provided even in the urban environments of New York, Los Angeles, or elsewhere. In addition to his print activities, Rosenquist utilized the staff and equipment for experimentation in a film produced during subsequent trips to Graphicstudio.



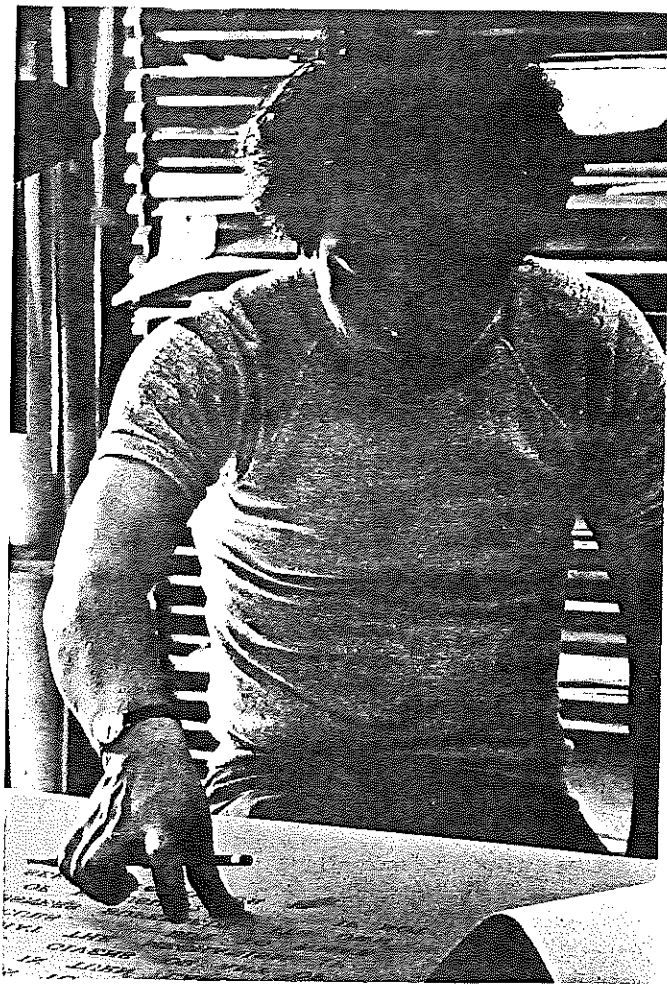
Robert Rauschenberg, *Tampa Clay Piece 4*, 9½" × 17" × 1½". 1972. (Photo: Oscar Bailey.)

It was Rosenquist's work that first attracted the attention of Robert Rauschenberg who visited the studio in late 1971 and found the environment and philosophy consistent with his working methodology. On January 1, 1972, he initiated Graphicstudio on an odyssey which was to expand our aesthetic sensibilities and consciousness.

In collaboration with Charles Ringness, Paul Clinton, and Julio Juristo, subject matter was found in the local environs. The cardboard boxes, box fragments, and paper bags were amassed in the studio, photographed by Oscar Bailey, and when Rauschenberg and the staff returned the following day, all the material was gone. Building custodians had efficiently removed it to the garbage dump. Armed with photographs of each item, the garbage dump was ravaged by Rauschenberg, the master printers, and the studio assistants. Personnel at the dump who were bulldozing the refuse stopped their work in amazement at the affluence of people who would photograph and reclaim their own garbage. From that day forward, building custodians were only allowed in the facility when Graphicstudio staff were present. It was a sort of "Garbage on Approval Only" program.

The techniques employed on these materials ranged from capturing the quality of a cardboard surface in lithography to the utilization of blueprinting and sepia printing. During one of many meetings, Rauschenberg in discussion with Alan Eaker decided to employ clay as a medium for reproducing his cardboard pieces. Over the succeeding months the superb skill and technical know-how of Alan Eaker were applied to create the prototype B.A.T.'s which were developed through press-molding clay into plaster. Successive firings of the work with oxide decals partially completed the replication of writing and printing information on the original cardboard boxes. Julio Juristo was responsible for perfecting the silkscreen decals and carrying out the production of these experimental works. *Tampa Clay Piece Number 5* was a reproduction of the burlap sack used to transport clay. Alan Eaker experimented extensively in an effort to retain the original burlap within the work but structural necessity required that other material be used. Michelle Juristo sewed fiberglass cloth, fashioning it after the burlap bag. Unlike burlap which burned out, the fiberglass fused at the appropriate temperature with the clay slip. The works once patinaed with damp soil gave us the feeling that alchemy had taken place as the pieces transcended a mere facsimile of material. Ordinary material was rescued from oblivion and transformed into art as we observed boxes, garbage bags, and rolls of waterproof paper become elements of Rauschenberg's vocabulary.

Rauschenberg's earlier experiments in blueprinting stimulated his interest in pursuing that technique in Graphicstudio. After research at various commercial blueprinting houses, it was found that, in order to accomplish his expressed wishes, the process would have to be pushed beyond the then existing limits. Rauschenberg wished to use blueprinting and brown sepia printing in combination with hand lithography on large-scale prints. Paul Clinton perfected the necessary procedure and technology. He was able to sensitize and develop large-scale prints on B.F.K. roll Rives, a process complicated by the fragility of the paper when wet. To complicate the process further, it was necessary to keep areas surrounding a particular image uncontaminated. This was especially necessary in *Tampa Number 11* which required a combination of blueprinting and sepia printing which is chemically incom-



Arakawa at work on lithograph in Graphicstudio, 1973. (Photo: Larry Miller.)

patible. The resultant imagery had rich coloration because of the deep chemical penetration of the colors into the unsized paper. Responding to Rauschenberg's needs, Graphicstudio developed blueprinting and brown sepia printing to a degree where it could be used in fine printmaking without the constraints of color fading or incompatibility with other processes. These prints, which were but a few in the Rauschenberg suite, required an entire studio to be constructed to accommodate the processing and scale; and although Paul Clinton attempted to collaborate with commercial houses, he found it necessary for the shop to construct all the support apparatus so that it could be totally self-sufficient. As a follow-up to this experimentation and as a positive educational consequence of Graphicstudio's discoveries, a number of art students effectively utilized the process for their own imagery.

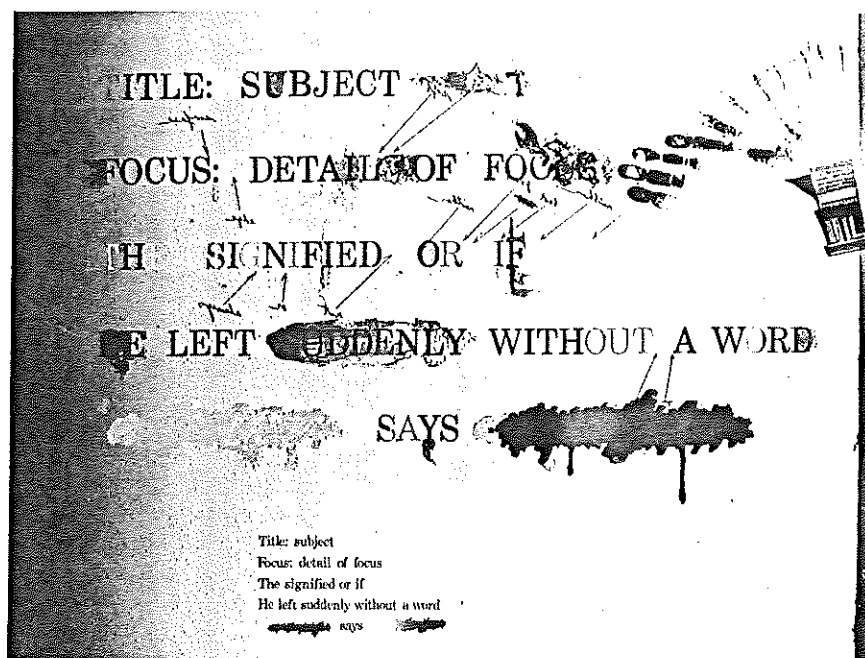
While working on the *Tampa* suite, Rauschenberg expressed the desire to be a full participant in the graphic process from its very beginning to the completion of the edition. In close collaboration with Charles Ringness, Rauschenberg launched the *Crops* suite in which he applied solvent transfer to newsprint and magazine material to a serigraphed surface. The five editions approximated the format of the B.A.T. in each case. With the aid of the Graphicstudio staff, Rauschenberg individually laid out and designed each print. For all of us, the

applied genius of Rauschenberg and the various resultant works represented a confirmation of the worth of the stated philosophy of Graphicstudio.

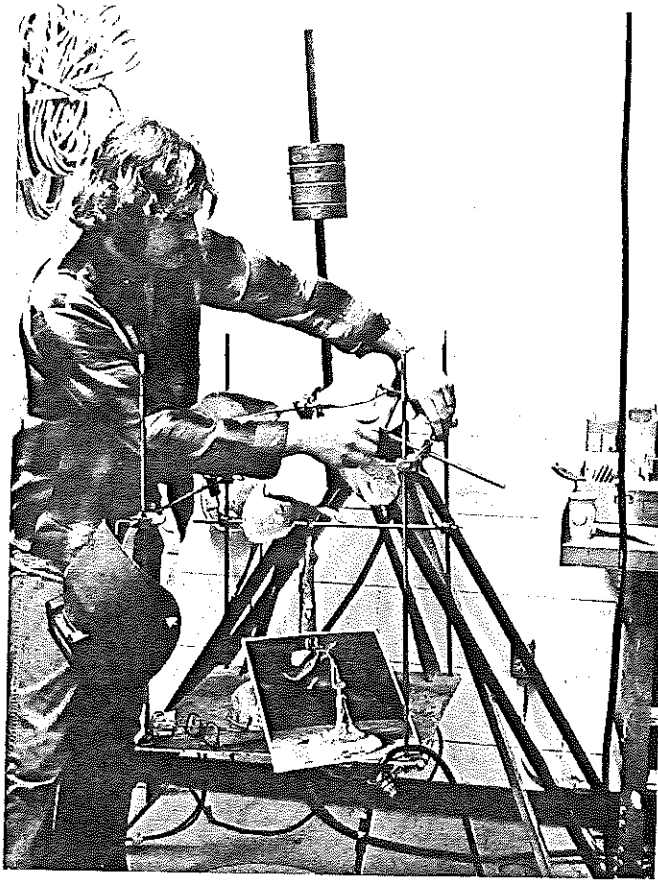
At this point, Arakawa and Richard Anuszkiewicz commenced their work at Graphicstudio. For both artists this was the first time they had worked in lithography. Theo Wujcik, who had primarily turned to teaching at U.S.F., collaborated with Richard Anuszkiewicz, producing prints employing extremely light and delicate colors. Concurrently, the full Graphicstudio staff worked with Arakawa who utilized a broad scope of lithographic processes. The rewards of providing the technical information and collaborative support of the printers for these artists were particularly gratifying. The lack of preconception with which Arakawa approached the process enabled an image to evolve which was rich in color and tactility. The application of overlay rainbow rolls, photo-lithography, mixed media and collage application produced a richness unlike that produced in previous collaborations. Working with Julio Juristo on the last print of the suite, "No," *Says the Signified*, Arakawa drew four stone washes in an effort to familiarize himself with the media and to gain confidence in the printers' ability to properly etch and print the delicate tonal range he sought. In the final days of the proofing session, Arakawa asked Julio Juristo to prepare another stone and with swift decisiveness produced an extraordinarily rich and delicate wash which was eventually used in the last print.

In June of 1973 I met with Jim Dine in Paris to discuss a possible project. While becoming better acquainted, we discovered a mutual interest in plants and Dine sketched out a five-step metamorphosis of a rubber plant turning into an electric fan and asked if Graphicstudio could produce the work in aluminum. By mid-July Alan Eaker, assisted by David Martin, produced examples of a number of wax leaves, stems, and flower pots, which suggested ways in which the artist might wish to realize his idea. Some of these were cast in

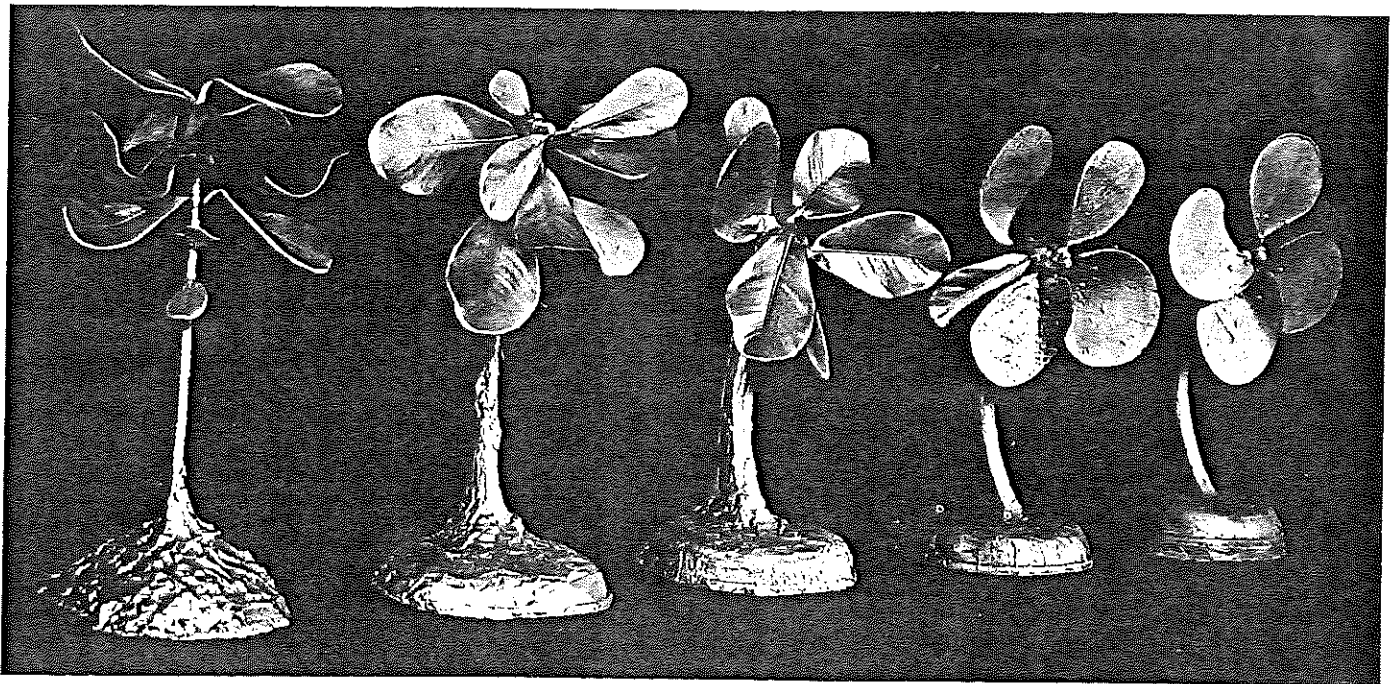
aluminum to demonstrate the process and provide an idea of the aesthetics involved. After these pieces were reviewed by Dine and with the encouragement and financial aid of Paul Cornwall-Jones of Petersburg Press, the project was initiated. In order to participate in this project, Graphicstudio once again varied from typical procedure. Because of Dine's schedule and working style, the facility had to be brought to the artist rather than the reverse. With extraordinary efficiency, two-piece molds for the component parts of the plant and the fan were trucked to Vermont in August. Under the supervision of Alan Eaker, Dine was furnished with waxes of the basic components with which the artist fashioned what was to become a most compelling sculptural metamorphosis. Essentially, Graphicstudio was temporarily domiciled in a barn in Vermont. The components were wax-welded together as well as joined together with various types of plasticene. The leaves and fan blades were suspended from threads attached to an overhead grid in the desired position. The threads allowed Dine to adjust the relationships of the wax parts. Aside from an untimely heat wave which threatened the wax, the sculpture presented a formidable technical problem. The usual two-piece plaster or hydrocal mold could not be employed because the waxes could not be cut into smaller pieces for conventional mold-making without destroying some surface integrity and because of the suspension system employed. After extensive experimentation, Dow-Corning's RTV-G was used as the mold material for it offered a resolution of definition that was genuinely exquisite and its vulcanization would not be inhibited by the sulphur or linseed oils in the plasticene. Eaker delicately layered the waxes with RTV over a two-week period. The pieces were carefully wrapped in foam and shipped to Tampa for further mold-making. To accomplish the qualitative demands of the project, a special burnout kiln was designed by Alan Eaker and graduate student David Martin, utilizing kaowool, a material used as the heat shield in space vehicles. After the basic components were cast, David



Arakawa, *Untitled 5*, lithograph, 22" x 30", 1973. (Photo: Patrik Lindhardt.)



David Martin working on one of Jim Dine's aluminum sculptures, 1974. (Photo: Patrik Lindhardt.)



Jim Dine, *The Plant Becomes a Fan*, set of aluminum sculptures, 1974. (Photo: Dawn Shea.)

FALL, 1974

Martin welded the leaves to the stem and the blades to the motor. This process required sophisticated equipment because of the inherent problems in aluminum welding. In addition to all the subtle techniques which had to be developed by Alan Eaker to accomplish mold-making, wax-making, and casting, a 360° swiveling table was developed by David Martin so that a continuous weld bead could be effected. For some students at U.S.F., the occasion to see the complexity of various applied foundry techniques and the utilization of newly developed welding machinery made them the educational beneficiaries of the project. In addition the equipment necessary to produce these works was donated to the university and a number of students were employed as apprentices on the project. One of the more extraordinary experiences was seeing the aluminum sculptures returned to Vermont and placed in the identical position of the original waxes, thus completing both the technical and artistic metamorphosis which had been undertaken so many months before.

Concurrently, Dine produced a suite of five masterfully drawn lithos of the metamorphosis on Natsume paper which was then silkscreened with pure varnish by Charles Ringness and Julio Juristo, giving the paper an extraordinarily parchmentlike quality. Dine also executed two bathrobe images. One bathrobe, a 12-color woodcut and lithograph combination, utilized various plywood boards and was hand-cut by Paul Clinton to bring about perfect, contiguous registration based on the master litho drawing by Dine. The combination of lithography and woodcut provided a rich Munch-like surface.

Graphicstudio's first major silkscreen project was done with the aid of William Weege who collaborated with Larry Bell in the production of six large flocked prints based on Bell's photographic imagery. By means of a specialized camera and the combined motion of the model and the camera, an attenuated distortion provided the basis for the broad, flat silkscreen planes which were complemented by the subtle tactility of flocking.

At the present time, James Rosenquist is working on a suite of large, colorful prints which combine lithography and silkscreen with such objects as rocks suspended from strings and modified windowshades. Rosenquist continues to spend a great deal of time working on preliminary drawings allowing the prints to organically evolve from experimentation in various media. Consistent with the fundamental approach of the studio, the entire facility and staff are at his disposal day and night for however long it is necessary to accomplish the initial proofs.

Graphicstudio plans to broaden its experimental role by

publishing innovative projects which include a portfolio of photographs for Lee Friedlander in an effort to make a contribution in that field. Further, it is felt that it would be very appropriate for Graphicstudio to avail its extensive facility to young artists who otherwise would be unable to work at prestigious ateliers and make available to them the collaborative ability of Graphicstudio personnel. Although one of the inherent problems of Graphicstudio moving in that direction will be the possible loss of some support through subscriptions which have come to be related to productions by key names in the art world, it is hoped that the majority of our subscribers will enthusiastically support this desirable direction.

Perhaps most formidable of all is faculty ambivalence and equivocation with regard to continued support. It is difficult for an individual who may lose his teaching position because of low departmental productivity to support an area of excellence which does not directly aid in the production of student credit hours, which in turn generate budget dollars and faculty positions for his department. As positions decline, developing a priority for programs will evoke substantive discussion. These facts added to growing material and labor costs create what will perhaps be in the near future an insurmountable obstacle. One hope of the future is for a change in the budgetary system but, more realistically, additional aid will have to be sought through grants, individual donations, and, as has happened in recent projects, gallery and publisher support.

Upon reflection, the successes of Graphicstudio have been the result of the beliefs and energies of a relatively small group of people. Supported by the financial contributions of our earlier subscribers and encouraged by the enthusiasm of the university administration, the untiring efforts of the studio staff, and the imaginative efforts of the artists who were determined to make this attempt succeed, Graphicstudio has been able to continue to evolve in a manner consistent with the philosophy with which it was conceived. Whatever contributions through the advancement of quality and imagination in the graphic arts have resulted from these efforts, it is due in large part to the hard work and deeply felt commitment to art which all those concerned have exhibited at a time when the worth of art and the values it represents are in question. It may very well be that the future of art and its place in the modern world is dependent upon this kind of commitment by those few, wherever they may be, who care. ■

Donald J. Saff is Dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of South Florida as well as the founder and director of the Graphicstudio.

RAUSCHENBERG OVERSEAS CULTURE INTERCHANGE

R.O.C.I.

07/27/87

Bradley -

Just thought you might
like to have these articles
from Cal Arts Spring, 1987
magazine, Articles.

Paz + Cage

Brenda

A CONVERSATION WITH

OCTAVIO PAZ

edited by Jo Berryman



Last semester, CalArts welcomed the distinguished poet, essayist, diplomat, and critic Octavio Paz to campus as part of the Poetry Today series. The following is taken from the question-answer session held after his poetry reading.



Carlos Fuentes suggested in a recent newspaper article that if the Latin American governments could work together without too much interference, they could solve the problem in Nicaragua. Would you comment on that?

I hesitate to comment, because I don't believe it. The problem is much more complex than that. There's more than American intervention to consider; there is also Cuban intervention and Soviet intervention. That is much more complex. And then, the Sandanistas are not the totally democratic group that some people pretend. It's an extremely complex situation. I believe that the real solution should be non-intervention. But that's an ideal.

The thing I believe very much is that history does not always offer solutions. That's one delusion of the Americans and all human beings, to think that we can have solutions and answers for everything, which is impossible. History is a long record of crimes and mistakes, and that's why James Joyce said that history was a nightmare, no? Well, it is a nightmare, but we believe in this nightmare. Let's try to be rather lucid and conscious that we live through a nightmare.

I believe also that more intervention is not good—for the Americans, for the Central Americans, for everyone. But it's very complicated, no? And I am also one of those defiant intellectuals who try to give lessons when the record of intellectuals in this century has been a record of innumerable mistakes. Remember that with the best of intentions, many European, Latin American, Mexican and American writers were helping Stalin at one point. That's one example. And you have this great poet Ezra Pound making apologies for Mussolini. To be an intellectual is no certification of wisdom—political wisdom.

In retrospect, how would you assess the influence on your art of your years in the diplomatic service?

It's very complicated because it's my whole life. I think diplomacy can be good, if you are skeptical, if you don't take very seriously your job. I mean you must work with your job in an honest way, but with some distance. For me it was important because I didn't have money to travel otherwise. Being Mexican, it was very difficult to live outside my own country. If I were an American, perhaps I could have. At this time, the universities were closed to writers. I was not a professor. Perhaps I could have been a minor journalist or something like that. Then, I preferred to be a minor diplomat and to travel a little and to have some experience.

One good point of a diplomatic life is that you deal with people. I think it's very dangerous for a writer to deal only with writers or with books. After all, literature is not made of books. One of the great dangers of modern literature is this literature on literature. Again, Pound is a good example. Pound was a very cultivated poet, but at one moment he decided to enter politics or to have political ideas. The choice was a disaster, because he chose the wrong way—with good intentions—as so many of the people of that generation. He was horrified by the war; he was horrified by what he had seen in the first part of our century, and he thought that perhaps fascism was a solution. But the interesting thing is that he began to deal with real things, real people, real issues, and not with book issues, and this was very good for his poetry. So even a mistake can be good. Perhaps in my case to be a diplomat was a mistake, but it was fruitful because it gave me time and the occasion to deal with real issues, and not only with abstract things.

I noticed in a postscript in The Labyrinth of Solitude, you mention Levi-Strauss. Could you comment on him?

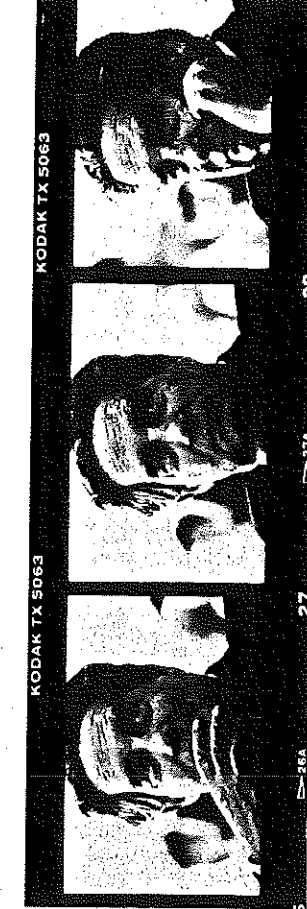
Well, I have written a book on him. I was in India when I read his work, and I was so impressed that I started to take notes, and finally the notes became a small book on his theories. It was a critical book, because I don't agree with all he says, but I admire him enormously. I think he is the most brilliant mind of France now—this country that has given so many sophists—brilliant sophists—in the last 20 years. It has given also an authentic savant—Levi-Strauss. I don't agree very much with his ideas on poetry, because he believes that poetry cannot be translated but that myths can be translated. Well, I believe that when you translate a myth, you change the myth; when you translate a poem, you change the poem—it is the same. I think the roots of myths are the roots of poetry. That I believe. He doesn't believe that. But this is very complex, and we are not going to discuss it now.

Can you make any generalizations about the creative Latin mind versus, say, the creative Anglo mind? Are there distinctions in artists' styles, in their roots, that draw from different sources?

We belong to different traditions, very different traditions. Latin is many things. Latin is Italian, is French, perhaps we should speak rather of Spanish or Portuguese instead of Latin, no? Or the English tradition and the American—they are very different. I think there has been a great deal of influence of American literature on Latin American literature. American poets, for instance, Whitman, had an enormous influence on our writing. Sometimes it was not so good, because Whitman is a very dangerous master, since he loves eloquence and he's cosmic. And Latin Americans have also a tendency to exaggerate. Sometimes Whitman gave justification to the bad rhetorical habits of many Latin American poets; for instance, there is a great poet I admire very much, Pablo Neruda. Neruda had one moment when he was under the spell of Whitman, and I think it was a bad moment.

Then there is another poet who had a great influence in Mexico—in all Latin America—in Mexico, especially: Eliot. Eliot had an enormous influence. That was different because he controls everything—an evangelist for being intellectual,* no? And there were many intellectual poets in Latin America who were also under the spell of Eliot. But I think it was a good influence, as Whitman was also. Whitman was a great liberating influence for us. Now Pound is very much read in Latin America, rather late, perhaps, but he is very much admired. And Ginsberg also has some admirers. It's very strange, because in the case of Ginsberg, I see also the influence of the Spanish poet Lorca. There has always been a relationship (between North American, Latin American, and European writers).

The prose writers have had great influence also: the novelists Faulkner and Hemingway—a great influence. In my own case, I should say that Melville was rather a great passion at one time and Whitman also. And then the modern poets were important for me. Now, in the last 20 years, I think there has been some influence of Latin American poets on American literature. I think it's very good. What is the saying? 'Each one has the influence that he deserves.'



**from Paz's One Earth, Four or Five Worlds: Reflections on Contemporary History:*

"The two missions of the modern intellectual are, first, to investigate, create, and transmit knowledge, values, and experiences; and, second, to criticize society and its uses, institutions, and politics."

When you were referring to diplomacy and the real world and when you were talking about Latin American intellectuals, I couldn't help thinking about the history of Latin America in the last 50 years and how important that has been to intellectuals who have been killed or tortured or unable to work. How much influence does history have on the creation of intellectuals, especially in Latin America?

6 First of all, let us be clear that we are—all of us—living history, no? We don't live outside history. Even Emily Dickinson lived in history. After all, history is an involvement of the spirit and the mind. I suppose that in Latin America, as in every place, history has been very important, but I don't believe that Latin American history has been more important to Latin American poets than American history has been to American poets or French history for French poets. Perhaps we should say that in some cases history has been a bad influence, when writers have become too political—sometimes for good reasons, for moral reasons; but it has touched the work. Also, perhaps history has had adverse influence when writers have had to go into exile. A great part of the Latin American literature of our time is a literature of exile, but I think even exile has been, in some way, beneficial for many writers—not for their happiness, perhaps, but for opening them to the world. But then it's ambiguous, no? The problem of death—that has been terrible—when people are in jail or have been killed by dictators—that has been a tragedy. Also, at times, exile. On the other hand, history has given to the Latin American writers a sense of reality. Perhaps life in the United States is sometimes too easy for the writers. I don't believe that. I don't believe that bad treatment is good for good literature. There are two people whom I admire very much who believe that to be harsh with writers was good for literature. One was Borges, who believed that sometimes censorship was good because then the writer who wanted to be free used many ways to escape it and became more creative. I think that's a very perverse way to seek creativity. The other was Jean Genet. I remember he made a great scandal in France when he said that nothing was as good for a young writer as to have a very unhappy childhood. Cruel parents were very good for good poets. I don't believe that.

In your book One Earth, Four or Five Worlds, you say something about revolutionary ideology losing its real motivating force in the modern world, and that maybe religion would become a motivating force again.

Yes. I had a conversation recently in London about this with Kolakowski, the Polish philosopher. The great failure of the utopian thinking in the 20th century that was, in its roots, very generous—to change the world—there is nothing more generous and more marvelous than to think we can change the world. But this utopian thinking has been transformed by bureaucratic dictatorships. Now Kolakowski thinks there is a renaissance of religion. I believe the same. For him, it's a good symptom. For me, it's ambiguous, because first, in the political revolutionary movements, we already have this confusion between religion and religious temper—fanatic temper.** Iran is one of the most terrifying examples of how religion can be converted into a political machine to oppress people. And I think the same is true with some versions—not all—but some versions of Islam. But religion could be good. In Chile, for example, the Catholic church has done good work defending democracy. In the Philippines also. That could be very important in Mexico perhaps also. It depends. Again, history is ambiguous always, no? We owe to religion some of the most beautiful things perhaps. We owe to religion Buddha, and we owe to religion Christ. But we also owe to religion human sacrifice, inquisitions and the burning of witches.



****from *One Earth, Four or Five Worlds: Reflections on Contemporary History*:
"Communism is not really a political party but a religious order animated by an exclusivist orthodoxy."
(p. 13)**

**from *Alternating Current*:
"Marxism is not a body of knowledge or a method of investigation but an ideology...in the communist countries it hides social realities beneath a veil of concepts and thus serves as a cover-up for basically unjust social relations; and in the non-communist countries, as Sartre himself admits, it has turned into a 'dogmatic metaphysics.'" (p. 183)**

From *One Earth, Four or Five Worlds*, copyright © 1983 by Octavio Paz, copyright © 1983 by Editorial Seix Barral, S.A. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

From *Alternating Current*, copyright © 1973 by Octavio Paz. Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

from *One Earth, Four or Five Worlds*:

"The historian Richard Morse has shown, with penetrating insight, that the function of Neo-Thomism was two fold: on the one hand, at times explicitly and at others implicitly, it was the ideological cornerstone of the imposing political, juridical, and economic edifice that we call the Spanish Empire; on the other, it was the school of our intellectual class and modeled their habits and their attitudes. In this sense—not as a philosophy but as a mental attitude—its influence still lingers on among Latin American intellectuals.

"In the beginning, Neo-Thomism was a system of thought aimed at defending orthodox beliefs against Lutheran and Calvinist heresies, which were the first expressions of modernity. Unlike the other philosophical tendencies of that era, it was not a method

for exploring the unknown but a system for defending the known and the established. The Modern Age began with a criticism of first principles; Neo-Scholasticism set out to defend those principles and demonstrate their necessary, eternal, and inviolable nature. Although this philosophy vanished from the intellectual horizon of Latin America in the eighteenth century, the attitudes and habits that were consubstantial with it have persisted up to our own day. Our intellectuals have successively embraced liberalism, positivism, and now Marxism-Leninism; nonetheless, in almost all of them, whatever their philosophy, it is not difficult to discern—buried deep but still alive—the moral and psychological attitudes of the old champions of Neo-Scholasticism. Thus they display a paradoxical modernity: the ideas are

today's, the attitudes yesterday's. Their grandfathers swore by Saint Thomas and they swear by Marx, yet both have seen in reason a weapon in the service of a Truth with a capital T, which it is the mission of intellectuals to defend. They have a polemical and militant idea of culture and of thought: they are crusaders. Thus there has been perpetuated in our lands an intellectual tradition that has little respect for the opinion of others, that prefers ideas to reality and intellectual systems to the critique of systems. (pp. 163-64)

from *Alternating Current*:
No one is a poet unless he has...experienced the fascination of non-meaning and the no less terrifying fascination of meaning that is inexpressible. Between the cry and silence, between the meaning that is all meanings and the absence of meaning, the poem arises." (p. 68)

"Neither philosophy nor religion nor politics has been able to withstand the attack of science and technology. But art has borne up under the onslaught." (p. 119)

from *One Earth, Four or Five Worlds*:

"In one of the drafts of Holderlin's hymn to peace on which Heidegger wrote a famous commentary, the poet says that we humans learned to name the divine and the secret powers of the universe for the reason that, and from the moment that, we realized we are a dialogue and can hear each other. Holderlin sees history as dialogue. Yet time and time again this dialogue has been broken off, drowned out by the din of violence or interrupted by the monologue of ranting leaders. Violence exacerbates differences and keeps both parties from speaking and hearing; monologue denies

FOR THE STUDENTS FACULTY STAFF DEANS THE PROVOST THE PRESIDENT AND THE TRUSTEES OF THIS SCHOOL

Composer
richard K.
winslow

at wesleyan university in connecticut
has a habit of singing

of singing
very quietly almost imperceptibly

while you're walking
beside him down the street

during the two years

per I too
what I

one to him i was a fellow
in wesleyan's center
for advanced studies
i once went to a ceremonial

not as unique
as this

but i was touched

seeing people honoring people
that came from my eyes

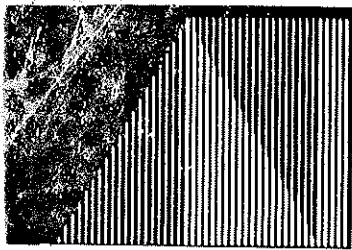
being a college student
i the day it never meant an honorary
degree

some day he said not about because of the school
that offer

i I

quietly you'll just say thank you

John Cage, May 1986



ARTS INTERNATIONAL

RR page 3

WINTER, 1985
Vol. 2, issue 5

Arts International is a Washington-based, non-profit, organization dedicated to the encouragement of international cultural exchange.

Music Celebrations in the GDR, 1985

The German Democratic Republic will pay homage to three important German composers, marking the 400th anniversary of the birth of Heinrich Schütz, and the 300th anniversaries of George Frederick Handel and Johann Sebastian Bach. Three independent events are planned: Handel Days as part of the 34th Handel Festival, from Feb. 22-26 in Halle; Bach Days as part of the 5th International Bach Festival, March 19-27 in Leipzig; and Schütz days as part of the Heinrich Schütz Festival, Oct. 13-14, in Dresden. Each festival will be accompanied by international conferences focusing on theoretical interpretation of works performed.

Participants in the International Bach Festival include soloists and music groups from Great Britain, the Netherlands, Switzerland, West Germany, the USSR, Japan, Romania, Poland, Canada, and the U.S. The American representatives, sponsored by a \$35,000 travel grant from USIA, are the Washington Bach Consort (including a choir of 40 and an orchestra of 24), Director and Organist, J. Reilly Lewis, and Concert Master/Violinist Jody Gatwood. The artistic programs of the festival will feature Bach's familiar choral works as well as other less well-known works.

Partial Scholarships Available for U.S. Students' European Study in Arts, Crafts & Music

Open Door Student Exchange, a nonprofit tax-exempt educational organization has been promoting and organizing international student exchange programs since 1963. Recently, special emphasis has been placed on artistic exchange at the high school level. In late December Open Door received a major grant from the USIA to provide scholarship assistance to U.S. high school students to participate in Open Door's Arts, Crafts and Music Programs in Europe during the Summer of 1985. Grant monies also include scholarship assistance to foreign students to participate in Open Door's six week program in the U.S. which includes a three week American Folk Art, Music and Hospitality Exchange at Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop, Davis & Elkins College, West Virginia. Joe Lurie, Open Door's Executive Vice President and champion of the organization's arts approach to international youth exchange, welcomed the announcement of U.S. government support: "The USIA grant will make it possible to provide generous scholarships to young artists who seek a rich and practical face-to-face encounter with a particular art form. The international arts dimension of our program is designed to foster artistic growth while providing a dynamic vehicle for enriched communications across cultures."

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AUG 29 1985

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COMPETITIONS, FELLOWSHIPS & GRANTS

- The New Works Program from the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, funds the creation and production of contemporary art work by bringing together artists from around the world with cultural institutions in Massachusetts. The Council is specifically interested in projects which expand the limits of their artistic discipline, using modern or traditional means to produce innovative new works. The program is designed to encourage Massachusetts organizations to work with artists and to provide a variety of contemporary work for Massachusetts audiences. For further information concerning the New Works Program, please contact Michael Tarantino at the Council: 617/727-3668.

- Deadlines for Fulbright Award Applications are as follows: June 15, 1985 for Fulbright Lecturing and Research Awards in Australia, India, Latin America and the Caribbean; Sept. 15, 1985 for Fulbright Lecturing and Research Awards in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East; Nov. 1, 1985 for Fulbright Junior Lectureships to France, Germany, Italy and Spain; Feb. 1, 1986 for Fulbright Research Fellowships in Spain, Travel-Only Awards for France and Germany. For more information contact: Dr. M. Carlota Baca, Executive Associate, Council for International Exchange of Scholars, 11 Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036.

- A listing of deadline dates for grants under the U.S.-Spanish Joint Committee for Cultural and Educational Exchange are available from the Council for International Exchange of Scholars, 11 Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20036; 202/833-4967.

- The American Ballet Competition is accepting applications for participants in the fifth Moscow International Ballet Competition, June 12-28, 1985. Up to \$10,000 in stipends will be awarded each dancer who is selected. Regional audiences will be held in 6 US cities during February. National finals will be held in Philadelphia in April, where the final selection process will take place. The US team will compete for medals and cash prizes on the Bolshoi Theatre stage with dancers from more than 20 countries. Dancers between the ages of 17-25 who wish to compete should contact: the American Ballet Competition, Box 328, Philadelphia, PA 19105; 800/523-0961.

- A new artist exchange program between the US and France was formally initiated in late November, 1984. Under the United States/

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Profiles

In each of our newsletters we feature a selection of organizations involved in some aspect of international arts exchange which we feel will be of particular interest to our readers.

•ASTRAL FOUNDATION

Glennede Trust Co.,
229 South 18th Street
Philadelphia, PA, 19103
215/875-3200
Barbara Yarnall, President

Founded with the working philosophy that "music and dance are an international language, speaking of a civilized nation," the Astral Foundation is dedicated to supporting and advising emerging artists as ambassadors of American art and culture. As a publicly-funded charity, the Astral Foundation provides professional project grants and career guidance to individual artists in the fields of voice, composition, dance, and piano. Artists are chosen carefully and with respect to their artistic promise, integrity and commitment to their professions.

Voice and piano grants include support for preparation for an audition, competition, or performance, or for master coaching. Grants are also available to help with expenses of concert tours, promotional materials, management services and participation in competitions in the U.S. and abroad. The Astral Foundation works to encourage the performance of more American music, particularly 20th century music. In light of this belief, contemporary composers may receive support for the completion or performance of new works.

Because dancers usually work under the umbrella of professional ballet schools or dance companies, the Astral Foundation does not generally offer grants to individual dancers except to support their participation in international competitions. Young choreographers may receive grants to help them complete a project, develop their craft or reach an audience. Most dance support goes toward dance organizations (such as Jacob's Pillow and the Prix de Lausanne) with well-designed dance projects that benefit many young dancers.

The grant selection process is rigorous. To be eligible for a grant, singers, composers and choreographers must be 35 and under; pianists 32 and under. Applicants are not judged competitively, but against standards appropriate to their training and experience. Applications are accepted only for specific projects that will move artists ahead in their careers and must include detailed project descriptions with indications of professional benefit, itemized budgets, timetables, and professional recommendations. Auditions are held in New York and Philadelphia by distinguished professionals and specialists.

•RIKSUTSTALLNINGAR, Alsnogatan 7, S-11641 Stockholm, Sweden Tel. (8)-449720

Riksstallningar, meaning Swedish Traveling Exhibitions Centre in English, is a state-run foundation that both organizes traveling exhibitions of its own and puts on tour exhibitions arranged by other organizations. Exhibitions, usually cultural or artistic in content, are organized in collaboration with schools, libraries, municipal arts councils, and special interest groups. Once arranged, the exhibitions are sent on tour for a year or more to various bodies or organizations that request them. Approximately 50 new exhibitions are completed each year (10 from outside organizers), and together with shows from previous years, there are about 200 exhibitions circulating throughout Sweden at any one time.

All exhibitions are planned, researched, designed and packaged at Riksstallningar's headquarters in Stockholm, where the technical facilities include a large carpentry shop, metal-working shop and a photography laboratory. The staff number about 60 people, who work in close collaboration with free-lance artists, designers, educational experts and specialists in the subject matter of the exhibition. By providing advice and technical assistance, Riksstallningar encourages special interest groups to express themselves through the medium of the exhibition.

•PAMAR - PAN AMERICAN MUSICAL ART RESEARCH, INC. 155 E. 55th St., New York, NY, 10022; 212/838-5956.

PAMAR is an international arts organization founded "to promote the better understanding among the various cultures and countries of the Americas, primarily through an ongoing and vital exchange of their classical music." Serving as an artistic resource center for the Western hemisphere, PAMAR has plans to videotape, record and publish the works of selected artists. In addition, PAMAR is co-sponsoring a broad range of composers and performers, and plans are currently being made for a concert series, an Inter-American Classical Music Competition, and for the sponsorship of various festivals. PAMAR has worked cooperatively with existing organizations in an effort to build a creative international network. For more information contact: Antonio Jordao Vecchiatti, Executive Director, PAMAR.

•THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE, ARTS WITH THE HANDICAPPED, 1825 Connecticut Ave., N.W, Suite 417, Washington, D.C., 20009; 202/332-6960.

The International Committee, Arts with the Handicapped, is a newly established part of the National Committee, Arts with the Handicapped, and was created in response to the needs expressed by participants in the International Seminar on Arts with the Handicapped held in Washington, D.C., May 1984. As a global network of professionals dedicated to promoting arts accessibility, the International Committee aims to foster world-wide awareness of the benefits the arts provide towards integrating disabled individuals into the mainstream of society. In addition, the Committee works to provide information on the implementation and promotion of arts programs with disabled populations and to facilitate the exchange of resources and technical information internationally. Thirty-eight countries are affiliated with the Committee.

• RAUSCHENBERG OVERSEAS CULTURAL INTERCHANGE

The Rauschenberg Overseas Cultural Interchange (R.O.C.I.) will begin this spring and will carry Robert Rauschenberg to 22 countries over the next five years. Along with an exhibition of his works, Rauschenberg hopes to absorb as much of the local culture and politics as possible and use these as inspiration for a series of new works. And in turn, these new works will be exhibited at future stops on the five year tour. The first two stops on the tour include: Museo Rufino Tamayo Arte Contemporaneo, Mexico City, in April, 1985; and Museo de Bellas Artes, Santiago, Chile, in July, 1985. Caracas, Peking and Tokyo are a sample of other future exhibition sites and R.O.C.I. hopes to include Sri Lanka, Australia, Spain and the Soviet Union. Mr. Rauschenberg commented about his new project to the *New York Times* earlier this year: "Peace is not popular because it is related to a stoppage of aggressive energies. Starting a new use, aggressively, of our unique curiosities, our impatience with ignorant cruelty and encouraging the most generous personal contributions will make war ashamed of itself and art clear."

Next issue:

PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVALS, PARTICIPANTS & COMPETITIONS

Please send information to the Editor by March 1, 1985.

Robert Rauschenberg

P.O. Box 54, Captiva, Florida 33924

FYI DON: per HIS REQUEST

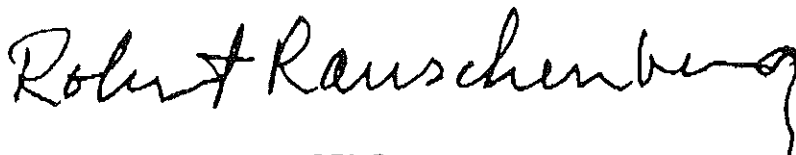
STATEMENT ABOUT ART AND OBSCENITY FOR ARTNEWS MAGAZINE

"ART ACCEPTS NO CONTROL, BUT MAY GROW WITH SUPPORT. RESISTANCE CANNOT MEASURE QUALITY. IT IS AN INDICATOR OF CHANGE WITHIN UNEXPLORED SIGHTS THAT CAN CREATE A NEW DAY- A WAY OF SEEING OR FEELING THE UNFAMILIAR.

"NO LAW OR JOINT AGREEMENT COULD ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING BUT AESTHETIC ROT. WE HAVE SMELT THAT STENCH BEFORE IN MANY COUNTRIES ATTEMPTING POLITICAL MUSCLE BY INHIBITING THE CREATIVITY OF THE ARTS. THIS POLICY HAS BEEN THE DOWNFALL OF THE MOST AGGRESSIVE POWERS.

"BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE WAS A MONUMENT AND MODEL TO EDUCATION BECAUSE HITLER WAS FIRST AFRAID OF THE ARTIST (BAUHAUS). THE JOB OF THE ARTIST IS TO KEEP THE INDIVIDUAL MIND OPEN, DISCOURAGING A MASS AGREEMENT ON AN ENFORCED POINT OF VIEW.

"ART IS AN EXPERIENCE DESIGNED TO ALLOW EVERY INDIVIDUAL TO BE AND FIND THEMSELVES. THE ONLY ETERNAL WORLDLY COMMUNICATION BETWEEN EARTHLY CULTURES IS ART. THIS FREEDOM IS EASIER SAVED THAN RECREATED."



ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG
AUGUST 9, 1989
CAPTIVA, FLORIDA

- D Magazine, March 1987, p 26 -

Rauschenberg Returns To Texas At The DMA

Fittingly, "Robert Rauschenberg, Work from Four Series," now on display at the Dallas Museum of Art, is the last official exhibit of the Texas Sesquicentennial celebration. The Port Arthur-born Rauschenberg is easily the most famous artist produced by the state, a near-legendary figure who, in the early Sixties, turned the New York art world upside down with a stunning series of works that made use of such recycled objects as a mattress, a tire, and a stuffed goat. Rauschenberg is still recycling objects after all these years. Furniture, a mailbox, a screen door, images found in newspapers and magazines—whatever catches the artist's eye finds its way into his work, where it is transformed, yet remains somehow the same. His playful wit and expansiveness may have something to do with where he was born. "Texas is a big, flat country where you can go in every direction without going anywhere," he said in a recent interview. The thirty-nine works in the exhibit survey the artist's career from 1971 to the present and represent four major series of works: the "Cardboards," "Hoarfrost," "Bifocal," and "Kabal American Zephyr." Through Feb 9 at the Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 N Harwood. Tue, Wed, Fri, Sat 10-5; Thur 10-9; Sun noon-5. 922-0220.

—Ken Barrow

D Magazine, March 1987, p 27

re-photographs and hand-colors. Jan 10-Feb 28 at the Afterimage in the Quadrangle, 2800 Routh. 871-9140

Melissa Miller. Lions and tigers and bears — oh my! — become actors in the sometimes amusing, sometimes amazing moral fables gorgeously painted by this Austin artist who has lately won national and international recognition. Through Jan 4 at the Fort Worth Art Museum, 1309 Montgomery. Tue 10-9, Wed-Sat 10-5. Sun 1-5. (817) 738-9215.

TEXAS, JAPAN, ETC.: ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG'S SENSE OF PLACE

MARJORIE WELISH

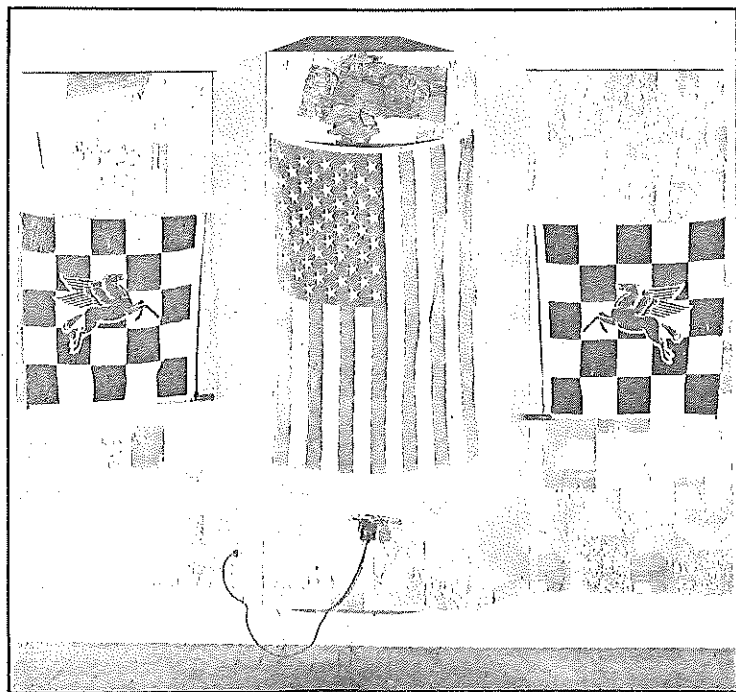
When traveling, Robert Rauschenberg, unlike most tourists, does not want to possess a country or capture it by photographing its landmarks; but at home, whether he admits it or not, he has indeed created landmarks.

Recently I asked Robert Rauschenberg why he travels so much: I'm tired of sitting around in bars like artists used to and arguing about one line or another. I think those days are fairly obsolete. 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, Tworckov. I mean, God, that's a real bargain.

Always on the move these days, Rauschenberg has been traveling more and more to feel "the impact of different societies and different cultures"—to Mexico and Chile, China and Tibet—thanks to the Rauschenberg Overseas Cultural Interchange (R.O.C.I.), an organization he initiated in 1983 to sponsor his artistic tours. Traveling the cultural world for inspiration rather than absorbing it from the cosmopolitan center of the art world points to a shift in Rauschenberg's life; but does it point to a shift in his art? Given his lifelong restlessness and his recent far-flung travels, the relevance of place to the style of Rauschenberg's incorrigible artifacts is, at any rate, an obvious matter to consider.

The specific occasion for thinking about the impact of place on Rauschenberg's art is the exhibition of his work that opened in December at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, to help celebrate the 150th anniversary of Texas as a state. What better choice to inaugurate Texas' Sesquicentennial than Rauschenberg, the state's flagship artist, born in Port Arthur 60 years ago (the same community that spawned Janis Joplin), and ranked far and away as Texas' most celebrated visual artist. After closing in March, the exhibition will travel to Dallas, San Antonio, and Corpus Christi on a two-year tour of the state. Indeed, this show is best understood in the context of TexArt/150,

Robert Rauschenberg, *Pegasus' First Visit to America in the Shade of the Flatiron Building (Kabal American Zephyr)*, 1982. Solvent transfer, acrylic, and collage on wood veneer and aluminum with objects, 96½ x 133½ x 22½". Courtesy Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston.



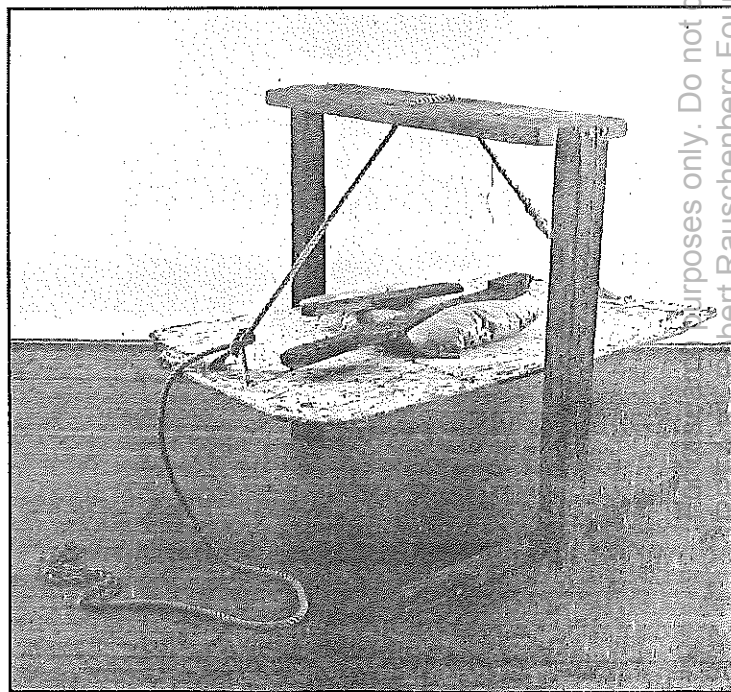
a gala promotion of Texas that also includes the exhibitions "Handmade and Heartfelt," organized by the Laguna Gloria Art Museum in Austin, an exploration of contemporary folk art in Texas; "Honky-Tonk Visions," at the Museum of Texas Tech University in Lubbock, which explores through the works of artists and musicians the influence of West Texas music on popular culture; and "The Texas Landscape," at the Museum of Fine Art in Houston, intended to show the ways artists have related to the Texas landscape through their work.

According to Ron Gleason, Director of the Tyler Art Museum and coordinator of TexArt/150, this explosion of arts events began in conversations between Linda Cathcart, Director of the Contemporary Arts Museum, and Peter Marzio, Director of the Museum of Fine Art, before expanding beyond Houston to include arts institutions statewide. A patriotic occasion, Texas' Sesquicentennial is interested in finding and celebrating that which is indigenous to the culture, and in proclaiming these local elements as evidence of a regional identity. But whether rural or urban, regional ethos may be appreciated as long as it is taken lightly. Appropriate to the spirit of this sentimental occasion, remembrance of growing up in a culturally deprived corner of Texas, in the instance of Rauschenberg, proves much less important than his independent attitude toward this situation.

The exhibition at the Contemporary Arts Museum, compiled from recent work, is best seen as a flashback, not a retrospective, of Rauschenberg's artistic independence. Nor would a retrospective be appropriate, coming so soon after the mammoth shows of his work touring the United States in 1976-77 and Europe in 1980. Scattered throughout the elongated diamond of the museum are the Cardboard series from 1971, the Hoarfrost series from 1974-75, the Kabal American Zephyr series, done in 1981-82, and the Bifocal series, from 1982, with the four series hung not chronologically but scrambled. Not only the temporal order but the physical installation in the museum is playfully chaotic. Anarchy prevails, with theatrical pieces off-axis and unprepossessing constructions lying directly in the viewer's line of sight. Nothing is where it ought to be in this impure museum installation, and, of course, this is its purpose. An arrangement lacking a single reference point but accommodating many is perhaps the best orientation to Rauschenberg's aesthetic, and the museum's choice to scramble the sequence of works, decentralizing the art visually as well, provides an ideal introduction to the artist's unique vision. For the uninitiated, the installation is inviting and friendly; for veteran viewers, it rescues a show of familiar work from easy delectation and gives it its most compelling aspect.

The clichés about Texas—that it is big and flat—offer facile analogies

Robert Rauschenberg,
The Ghost of the Melted Bell (Kabal American Zephyr), 1981. Construction with acrylic, 48¾ x 51½ x 66¾". Private Collection. Courtesy Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston.



to an art whose creator should be celebrated for his having forfeited illustrative homage to the region; Robert Rauschenberg's work is certainly not regarded as a commemorative regionalism. If Rauschenberg is the artist of the American Scene, it comes by way of experience, not ideology. The landscape of his formative memories of growing up is particular, if not unique, to Port Arthur. As he has said, "My memories are terribly local: that you could tell the direction the wind was blowing because of the smell [coming from the oil refinery]; that we were close to the beach, and that the beach was covered with oil slick. But as a child, this is your pleasure." That which is local, not locale, is relevant to Rauschenberg. The experiences that disgust an adult are free from taint from the viewpoint of a child. If Rauschenberg's coastal memories are not very pretty, neither are they to be construed as aesthetically ignominious. Flotsam from beach and trash from town are not visually disgraceful—at least not in the uninhibited assemblages Rauschenberg learned to make of them.

Rauschenberg's childhood reality evidently led to a totally atypical vision of landscape. "In Texas, you can either see over something or see past it," he says; "you can either run over something or run past it"—a tantalizing statement, to say the least, suggesting several meanings key to his aesthetic. Foremost, it seems to be a response to a spacious, if easily mastered environment in which a person's relation to things is more stimulating than the things found in it. There is the sense that the given world is not so much empty as filled with commonplaces a person is free to respect, manipulate, or ignore—perhaps accomplishing all these at once. Here is the origin, perhaps, of Rauschenberg's aesthetic attitude, a hyperactive disinterestedness, which springs as much from temperament as environment, expressing itself in reckless handling of place. Contrast his indifference to the scenic to the willed veneration of agrarian locale to which Grant Wood was so devoted. To do so is to realize that Rauschenberg is infinitely more matter-of-fact towards landscape and infinitely more imaginative in his transformation of it than the regionalist ever dreamed possible.

If there is a further observation to be made from all this, it is that Rauschenberg is a scavenger, regardless of region. Trash is a free spirit, and available as much in one place as another. The Cardboards on view at C.A.M. come from the artist's having made peace with whatever is available on Captiva, an island off the coast of Florida where he moved in 1971, as much as from seeing over things at Port Arthur or scavenging the streets of New York. The Cardboards were, in fact, the first series done after his move from New York to Florida; wary of doing "beachcraft," he chose cartons to work with because they are "universal" detritus. Torn, flattened, and mounted on the wall "as if" they were art, these Cardboards exist on the periphery of culture, *objets trouvés* commerce has washed up for us to consider. Their appeal is precisely this imaginative formulation of an object redefining itself as art before our eyes. Not so much the recycling of waste that

civilization has both discarded and taken for granted, but the kind of creativity T.S. Eliot discerned in "thinking immediately at the tips of the senses," is the quality that characterizes the best of these homeless Cardboards.

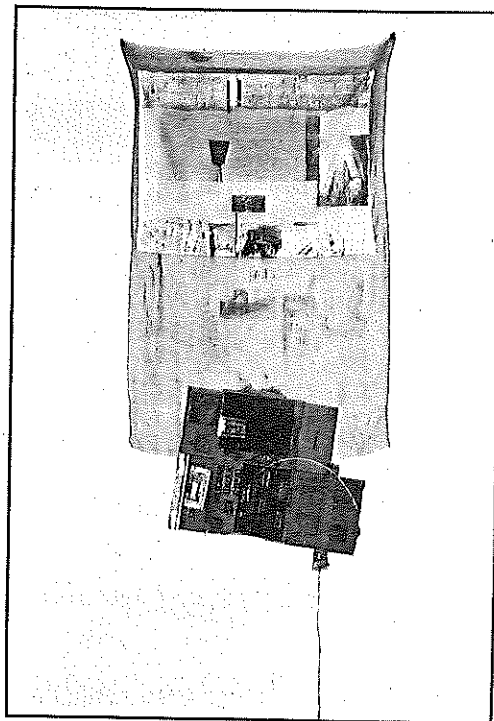
Yet the issue of place haunts the exhibition at C.A.M., for everywhere in evidence is Rauschenberg's romance with exotic images. Though none of the series came about while traveling, the Kabal American Zephyr series was produced concurrently with the Japanese Clayworks and the Chinese collages exhibited at Sonnabend, Castelli/Greene Street, and 112 Greene Street in 1983. For those who remember that show, the remarkable feature was the quantity of art on display, not the impact of travel to China on, say, the 100-foot-long photomontage bisecting the Castelli gallery; that spectacular scroll of images from that country seemed a rather characteristic idiosyncrasy within the eccentric invention we had come to expect from the artist.

Generally speaking, materials, images from exotic lands, and even format had relatively little impact on Rauschenberg's style. Now, two years later, viewing the Kabal American Zephyr series in a new context, one gets the same impression. In these constructions, once again, "found" nature and contrived technology are driven together, the technological support invariably spread with images of travel appropriated from magazines. "Why select one image over another?" I asked Rauschenberg. "If it's insignificant, but interesting, if it doesn't make a single point, then it's mine."

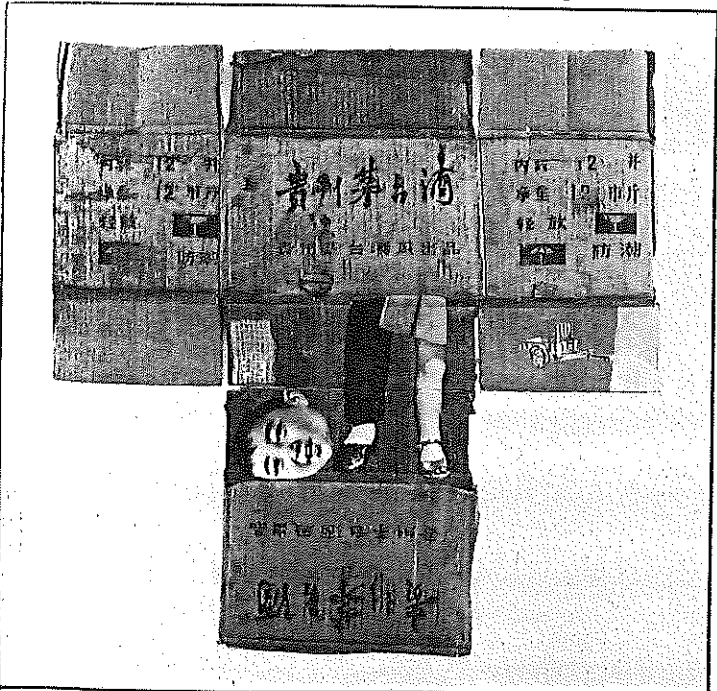
Images clipped from magazines (such as *Scientific American* and *National Geographic*), then brushed with a solvent transfer and pressed onto the wood veneer panels comprising the technological element are standard procedure for Rauschenberg at this time. Incorporated into one Kabal American Zephyr, *The Interloper Tries His Disguises* of 1982, are (along with tire treads and a wheel) Asian images functionally indistinguishable from the "insignificant, but interesting" images representing other cultures around the globe papering this series and sprinkled throughout the Hoarfrost series, the point being that that which identifies Rauschenberg's style—his discontinuous, roving imagination—is equally available to all his work. Travel is surely on the artist's mind, but not for the sake of doing ethnological studies. Indeed, Linda Cathcart's and Curator Marti Mayo's motivation for scrambling all the series in the installation was exactly their perception of the stylistic unity binding Rauschenberg's vicarious travelogues.

This stylistic fixity of Rauschenberg's oeuvre persists despite the artist's declared intention to collaborate with foreign cultures. His humanitarian impulse is well known. Charitable at home, giving money to underwrite young artists' shows or to cover the costs of needy artists' hospital bills, Rauschenberg has begun traveling on his own behalf to exhibit his art and to make art for the purpose of exposing foreign artisans to his creative process, but also to give the countries

Robert Rauschenberg, Paper Riddle, 1982. Collage and acrylic on cardboard, 32½ x 33". Private Collection. Courtesy Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston.



Robert Rauschenberg, Short Throttle (Hoarfrost), 1974. Solvent transfer and collage on fabric, 103 x 40". Courtesy Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston.



he visits the art he has made there along with something else to remember beyond his own personal self-promotion—for instance, the help of a crew sent in advance of his scheduled show to repair Santiago's National Museum of Fine Arts (its dome originally designed by Eiffel), severely damaged by earthquake. Still, fellow feeling is not to be confused with reciprocal artistic influence. At least, to judge by the Chinese paper works and the Japanese Clayworks, in which local artisans were enlisted to help Rauschenberg produce his own work, calling on native techniques resulted not so much in a collaboration of cultures (as he had once collaborated with Merce Cunningham and John Cage, pooling their aesthetic independence) but in something quite different: a transposition of a Rauschenberg into an exoticized version of itself. In this sense, Rauschenberg travels not to experience but to express, to express his own artistic suppositions. To see past the given image to the visual event of his own making overrides all other considerations.

The flashback of art from the 1970s, *Made in U.S.A.*, along with the memory of work done concurrently while abroad, suggests that however much Rauschenberg may travel to do art, his work is not about place; it is about the euphoria of sight. Rauschenberg may not be studios but he is engaged in an activity in which the scavenging of materials and images is merely the starting point for the liberty and ascendancy of our visual world. As behavioral studies of early childhood have shown, exercising our senses is preliminary to play, and play preliminary to genuine and original creativity. Piaget recalls a child who, having developed the habit of bending back to look at the world upside down, soon evolved the practice of bending back for its own sake, laughing as he did so. Considering the world from different viewpoints is not frivolous but intrinsic to the evolution of symbolic thought.

Early modernism is to a considerable extent synonymous with such play. The ludic impulse of Kandinsky, Matisse, and Picasso is not excessive energy that spills into play once work is done, but, *contra* Schiller, intrinsic to creativity of any kind, whether its goals are functional or functionless. Nevertheless, as Schiller did realize, play is indispensable to artists. In particular, play has enabled modern artists to invite fugitive materials and transient perspectives to collaborate with autonomous form, and Cubism has been instrumental in this process. Thinking with Cubism, Picasso and Braque uncovered unlimited possibilities in pictorial structure; Schwitters expanded and perfected art's material possibilities through collage.

Rauschenberg, benefiting from these aesthetic advances after a youth lived with a high tolerance for anarchy and an enormous capacity for uncensored play, put the entire realm of sight at art's disposal. He first gained notoriety by a disposition fundamentally unintimidated by the vernacular materials, images, and objects found in the actual world; but he owes his importance to a greater power. As the originality of Merce Cunningham stemmed from defining dance as movement, and that of John Cage came from defining music as sound, Rauschenberg's undeniable contribution began in his defining art as sight. That eagles and tires cohabit with paint is nothing compared to the conceptual leverage of the generalization that visual art is about opening up imaginary perspectives from within the world of sight as such.

Evaluating Rauschenberg's current achievement, however, leads me to say that the cluster of recent work at C.A.M. manages to convey these strong aesthetic ideals but compromised by ingratiating form. Pleasing variants of early, tougher work or unfocused interpretations of new ideas render the show less than it should be. Among the better Kabal American Zephyr series works are *Pegasus' First Visit to America in the Shade of the Flatiron Building* (1982) and *The Ghost of the Melted Bell* (1981). The latter is an instance of expedient bricolage: an artifact via improvisation in which the playful impulse of beachcombing joins forces with and is redeemed by the utility of traditional Japanese packaging. In traditional Japanese practice, natural materials, such as bark, pulled around an air-tight sushi box hold it fast, or a sheaf of bamboo folded over a bit of candy preserves it with its own secreted pectin. In Rauschenberg's improvisatory version of this economy, weathered pieces of wood, supporting a pillow painted shell pink and sand, are lashed and nailed together with a direct functional clarity that refreshes this functionless construction.

The Ghost of the Melted Bell is a lovely piece, but compared with *Bed*, a masterpiece of disjunction, *Ghost* is courteous. To those of us

who believe the disjunction of collage to be a significant form of thought, such structural loveliness as *Ghost* produces is not enough: the part-to-part and part-to-whole spatial relationships are expected: the imaginary perspectives, unchallenging. Writer Donald Bartheleme once said, "The principle of collage is the central principle of all art in the twentieth century of all media." A collagist in his own writing (and a native Texan), Bartheleme is the perfect choice to write the catalogue appreciation for this current show. He writes nostalgically however, for in his essay, "Being Bad," Bartheleme praises the messy and disjunctive composition of current work, but as if addressing the imaginative toughness of the art he loved 20 years ago.

It is tempting to blame the lyrical sensibility for the ingratiating mentality of the show at C.A.M., but to do so would be to fall victim to an all-too-common prejudice. Lyricism in art is almost always dismissed as weak, but neither pastel color nor calibrated tonality is in itself tasteful, as anyone who knows Cézanne's watercolors of Mont Sainte Victoire and Monet's late waterlilies can attest. If Cézanne and Monet are historically significant, it is because they are aesthetically (which is to say, philosophically) tough—providing art with, as Maurice Denis remarked, a new synthetic order of the world. In any event, material loveliness does not necessarily render art intellectually soft, and in fact the physically pliable and delicate Hoarfrosts are collectively the toughest series in the show. In this instance, to run over vernacular objects with a fine translucence—cloth, or cloth impressed with the world of representations—is to go beyond design. It is a superimposition in the modernist sense of that term, a layering of principles of nature and culture in a rigorous—and beautiful—way.

Critics often describe Picasso's gargantuan output as "prolific." Intended as a compliment, "prolific" has nevertheless always seemed to me a euphemism employed by critics for "unedited productivity." Rauschenberg, too, always prolific, admits to some of the artistic impatience he attributes to his hero, Picasso. When during our interview I observed that though his objects often show a wonderful spontaneity, sometimes (thinking of the Janus-faced cardboard Bifocals) they are too casual too breezy, Rauschenberg answered, "They're only supposed to be an invitation to your life, not a monument to my permanence."

For those who are conversant with Rauschenberg's career, it is clear he has never been engaged in the pursuit of masterpieces. Still, his poetical answer points to an underlying question nagging many contemporary artists: whether to give priority to transient activity or to permanent form. Fluxus and Arte Povera are art movements that attempt to radicalize the ephemeral, the transient. Each in its own way proposes an ideology of placelessness that gives priority to artistic activity, and promotes scavenging and giving temporary shelter to materials that society not only had discarded but set adrift from physical and cultural context. Compared to practitioners of Fluxus and Arte Povera, however, Rauschenberg is both more intuitive and more object-conscious; he is surely more formalist. The issue for him to face, then, would seem to be that while the aesthetics of scavenging and sensitized play seem to militate against selection and judgment, yet such judgment is necessary for flux to remain intelligent. Wallace Stevens' "Notes toward a Supreme Fiction" offers some advice on this matter:

There was a will to change, a necessitous
And present way, a presentation, a kind
Of volatile world, too constant to be denied,

The eye of a vagabond in metaphor
That catches our own. The casual is not
Enough. The freshness of transformation is

The freshness of a world.

If there is an ingratiating aspect to Rauschenberg's recent work, it comes by way of his rationalizing weak artistic decisions as necessary by-products of the flux of productivity. This stance is not worthy of him, for what he makes of what his vagabond eye sees matters very much. Sloppiness or neatness isn't the remedy; advanced or strenuous application is. When traveling, Rauschenberg, unlike most tourists, does not want to possess a country or capture it by photographing its landmarks; but at home, whether he admits it or not, he has indeed created landmarks, and these landmarks have always been built of insignificant materials transformed by a significant imaginative perspective.

The Price of Unjustifiable Art

WASHINGTON — Sen. Pat Moynihan, D-N.Y., sent a two-sentence note attached to his statement opposing the legislation that would forbid the National Endowment for the Arts from supporting art that is "obscene or indecent" or is hostile to almost any individual or group for almost any reason. Moynihan's note said: "The '20s are coming on fast? I knew we would regret the end of Cold War."

Perhaps that is it. Detente has relieved us from seriousness. We have returned to "normalcy" and do not remember how to act sensibly.

The legislation moved by Sen. Jesse Helms is a foolish reaction to two photographic exhibits supported by institutions receiving NEA funds, exhibits that included photos of sadomasochistic practices and a crucifix in a jar of urine. The amendment is a recipe for timidity, paralysis and, of course, litigation. But many of the arguments — or the hysteria and arrogance serving as arguments — against the amendment are intellectually incoherent, indeed anti-intellectual.

Opponents of the amendment say government is obligated to support art and equally obligated not to think about what art is, or is good for. They argue that government support for the arts serves the public interest, but that government cannot express an interest in the kind of art that is supported.

The argument for subsidizing the arts must be communitarian, not severely individualistic. It must be that it serves some social good, not just that it gives pleasure to individuals (artists, certainly, and perhaps viewers). Were that the argument, there would be as strong an argument — stronger on strictly democratic grounds — for subsidizing bowling or poker.

Artists who say art has a public purpose say that purpose can include discomforting the comfortable. Shocking the bourgeoisie is fun and, arguably, good for one and all, but it is cheeky of artists to say the bourgeoisie is obligated to subsidize the shocking. America's bourgeoisie has a remarkable record of generously subsidizing the ridiculing, despising and subversion of itself. If you doubt that, examine a public university's liberal-arts curriculum.

Another problem for the NEA is art that eschews all purpose, art that is not shocking but baffling to the common viewer. What of the post-minimalist artist who exhibited a pig in a cage? The artist who draped a curtain across a Colorado valley? The "environmental artist" whose "kinetic sculpture" was a bucket of fireworks atop the Brooklyn Bridge? The police called that a bomb.

A milestone in the liberation of art from the law

was the 1928 court ruling that Brancusi's "Bird in Space" — a graceful shaft symbolizing flight, but not resembling a bird — was sculpture and therefore not subject to import duties. Customs agents would not be defining art.

But artists welcomed government into their world in the form of NEA subsidies. Subsidies require reasoning about public purposes. Yet some artists deny that art has any such purpose.

Abstract art and its degenerate progeny were once celebrated as "democratic" because purged of "academicism" and immediately "accessible" to "understanding" by everyone. But this was the egalitarianism of nihilism, art equally understood by everyone because it had no meaning. Having no content, it was immune to the charge of elitism. But the people don't like it, preferring art depicting the human condition and passions about it.

The artist Robert Rauschenberg, wanting no restrictions on his entitlements and no critical standards to inhibit his fun, says: "It is extremely important that art be unjustifiable." But government expenditures must be justified. Some years ago someone asked the NEA to support this work of art: He would dribble ink from Haley, Idaho, to Cody, Wyoming, birthplaces of Ezra Pound and Jackson Pollock respectively. The NEA refused. It must have had a reason.

If art has no improving power or purpose, it has no claim on the interest of government. So advocates of government support for the arts must say that art serves society. There is a long American tradition of support on the grounds that the arts elevate the public mind by bringing it into contact with beauty, and even ameliorate social pathologies. But if the power of art is profound, it need not be benign. And the policy of public subsidies must distinguish between art that serves an elevating purpose and that that does not.

The Helms amendment should be quietly killed. However, alarmists relishing the fun of faking great fear about the impending end of civilization say the ruckus over the amendment will have a "chilling effect" on the NEA. If that means the NEA may think more often about the public interest in the visual arts, then: good.

If, as some artists say, no one can say what art is (or, hence, what the adjective "fine" means as a modifier), then art becomes a classification that does not classify. Then the NEA should be the NEE — National Endowment for Everything. It will need a bigger budget.

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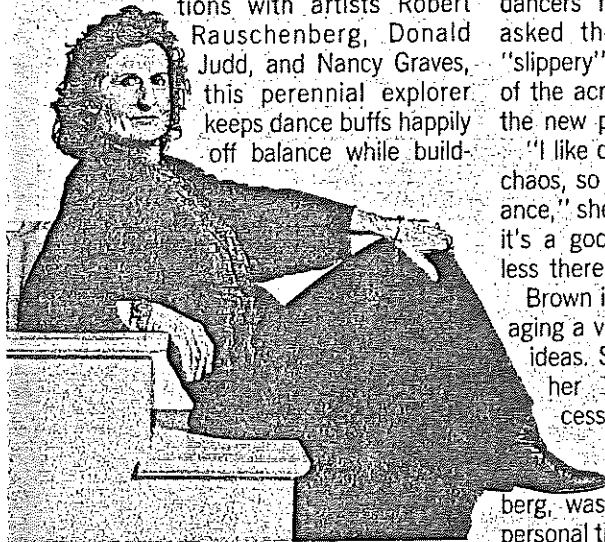


ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

L'un des artistes américains les plus célèbres a décidé que le reste du monde méritait de voir davantage de ses œuvres, pourtant déjà très bien disséminées dans les musées d'art moderne. C'est ainsi que Robert Rauschenberg, 59 ans, entreprend, sous le titre quelque peu prétentieux du « Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange », un périple dans vingt-deux pays qui ne durera pas moins de cinq ans. Au mois d'avril, c'est le musée Rufino Tamayo de Mexico qui aura la primeur de cette exposition itinérante de cent-cinquante œuvres, laquelle sera complétée sur place par des œuvres « régionales » créées par l'artiste. D'autres pays d'Amérique latine accueilleront ensuite Rauschenberg, mais dès le 15 novembre c'est la galerie nationale d'art de Beijing (Chine) qui exposera ses œuvres. Dans l'immédiat, la France devra se contenter de la rétrospective organisée l'année dernière à la Fondation Maeght de Saint-Paul-de-Vence.

STUDIES IN BROWNIAN MOTION

LOIS GREENFIELD



Choreographer Trisha Brown stretches dance form until it breaks.

"I like dancers who look happy when they're off balance," says choreographer Trisha Brown. The same goes for her audiences. From her startling pieces of the early Seventies—which included performers walking on walls—to her recent multimedia collaborations with artists Robert Rauschenberg, Donald Judd, and Nancy Graves, this perennial explorer keeps dance buffs happily off balance while build-

York's City Center theater marks the choreographer's third collaboration with Rauschenberg. She asked him for a set that could adapt to any space; the resulting plans call for eight movable columns housing lighting and sound elements that are triggered by dancers' motions. Brown also asked the artist to create "slippery" costumes, because of the acrobatic floor work in the new piece.

"I like coherence, Bob likes chaos, so we're a perfect balance," she says. "I don't think it's a good collaboration unless there's argument."

Brown is known for encouraging a vigorous exchange of ideas. She feels the reason her 1983 popular success, the ebullient *Set and Reset* collaboration with Rauschenberg, was not an unqualified personal triumph was that at a certain moment "there was no one to argue with anymore." The choreographer found *Set and Reset*—which also boasted a commissioned score by Laurie Anderson—such a "tough act to follow" that it propelled her into a new phase of experimentation. Instead of developing movement herself and then teaching it to her company, Brown "worked extemporaneously with the dancers, really sculpting them in motion." As a result, her signature silky style is taking on a more vigorous, virtuosic edge.

One element hasn't changed: Brown's commitment to "abstract" dance. "I'm one of the last of the Mohicans to work without story," she says. "I think that looking at art or looking at dance should be a kind of adventure where you make discoveries that are not explicable or immediately brokered into words."

PAM LAMBERT

ing a reputation as a top-rate postmodern dance maker.

Brown, 52, started out in the Sixties with Manhattan's experimental Judson Dance Theater, which challenged dance and performance conventions. She segued to "equipment pieces," defined by architecturally related tasks; then to the austere sequences of gestures known as "accumulation pieces." Back then, Brown called herself "a bricklayer with a sense of humor."

In the Seventies, her works were built on complex mathematical structures in which the choreographer and her company performed liquid, distinctive Brownian movement. In 1979 she moved from alternative spaces to mainstream stages. The proscenium presented a new set of possibilities to play with. "I take the limitations of a form until I get hot under the collar—and then I break it," Brown says.

Her current season at New

FACES DANCE

Over the years, Robert Rauschenberg has delivered surprise after surprise. It was he who hung a tire on a stuffed goat in 1959, thus helping to open the way for the noisy exuberance of Pop Art. And it was Rauschenberg who moved, with his 1974 "Pyramid Series" of all-white drawings, to hypersubtlety and visual silence. Recently the artist took another bold step. On New Year's Eve, Rauschenberg opens an exhibition in New York's Leo Castelli Gallery, showing the fruits of a trip to the Far East last summer: ceramics he made in Japan; collages he assembled out of Chinese paper; and, most remarkable, a 100-foot-long, twenty-eight-inch-high scroll chronicling his travels through China. It consists of a single photograph developed from a montage negative—a mosaic strip made of trimmed and sometimes fragmented individual negatives. No one has ever made a continuous print of such length before.

"My scroll was not inspired by any oriental idea," says Rauschenberg. Instead, creating it appealed to his love of collage: he perceives the world not as an orderly sequence of events through time but as a disjunctive simultaneity in which percep-

tions collide, jumble, and overlap. As the artist concedes, "I prefer to think of everything happening at once." The scroll's imagery switches accordingly—from sharp focus to blurry, from close-ups to long views, from right side up to upside down. We move from urban to rural, modern to ancient. Even so, in a scroll format: simultaneity is transformed into a narrative.

Rauschenberg did not want a literal story, however. "The scroll is a compositional tale," he says. "Colors and materials are the characters, and the piece unfolds according to its own appetite—what is already there dictates what goes next. I had no particular program about executing my feelings about China. I let the camera be my witness, as opposed to editorializing."

To be sure, Rauschenberg admits that his personal tastes and feelings did creep into the scroll. Reading it from left to right, as he intended, we are offered a record and a recollection of the artist's journey. We glimpse and imagine what he saw; we cannot know the whole, complete with beginning, middle, and end. Images flicker and flow. They are as vivid, elusive, fragmentary, jumbled, and astonishing as memory itself.—Hayden Herrera

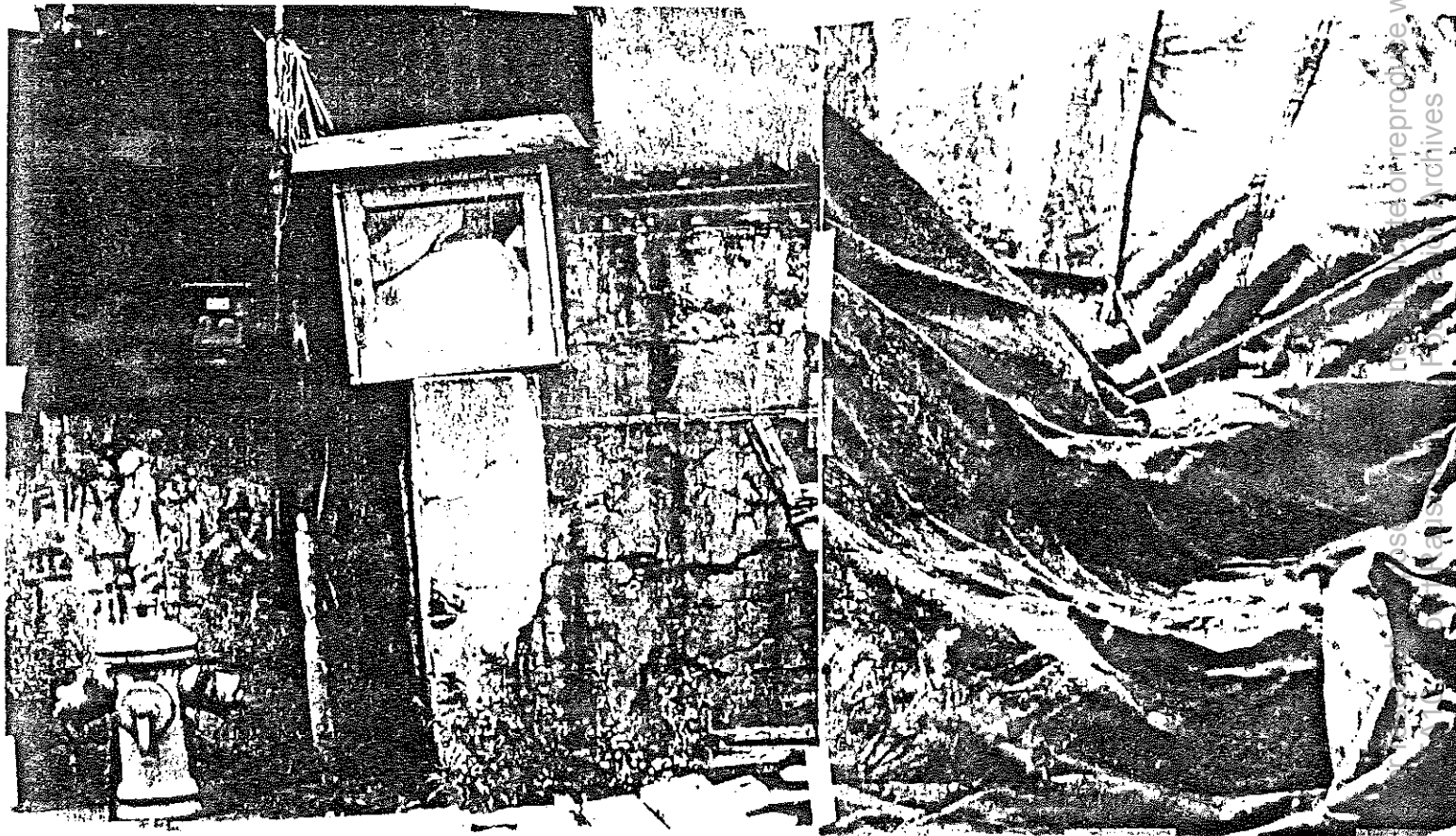
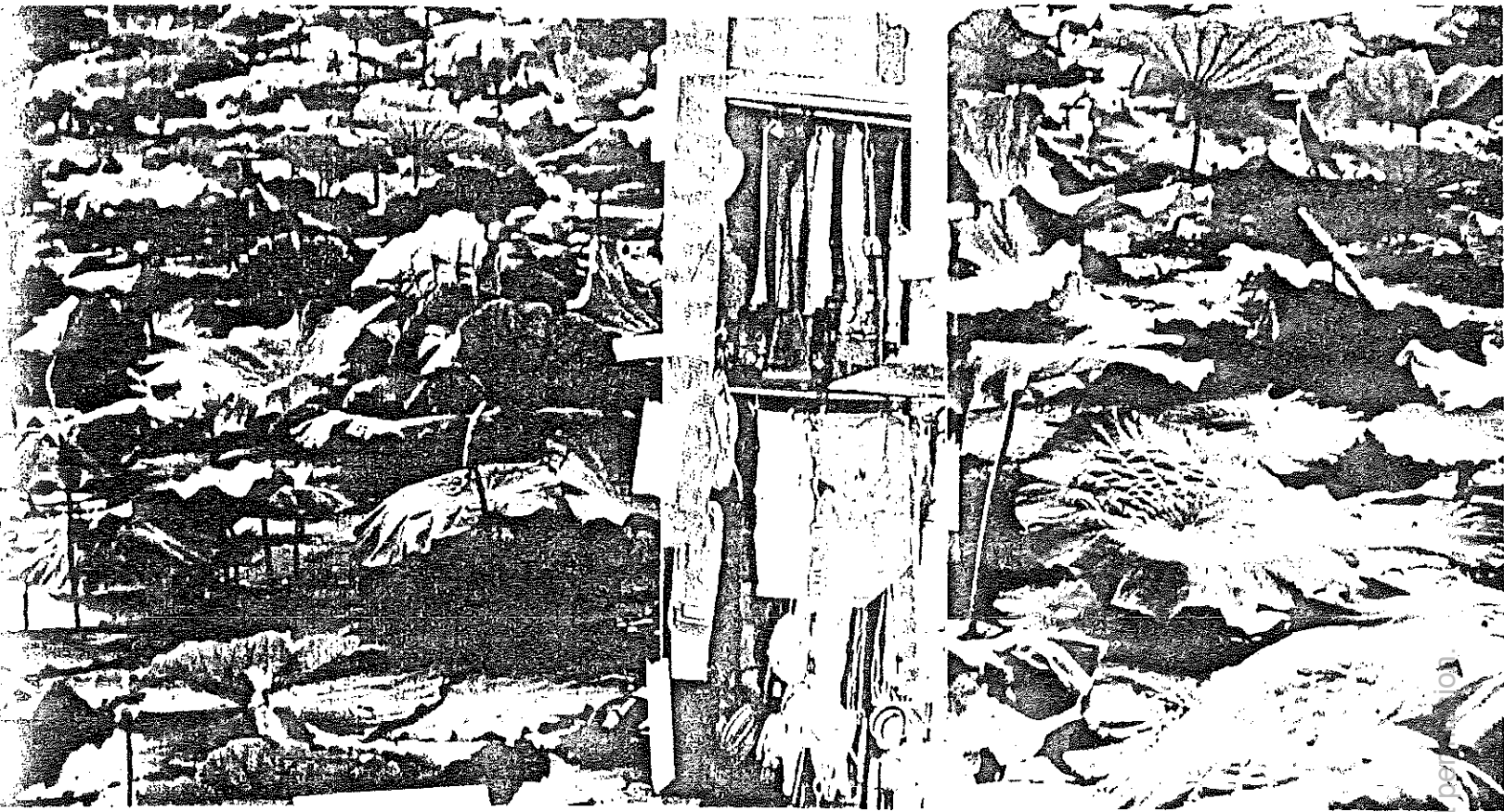
RAUSCHENBERG'S SCROLL

In his newest work the inventive artist combines travelogue and memoir.



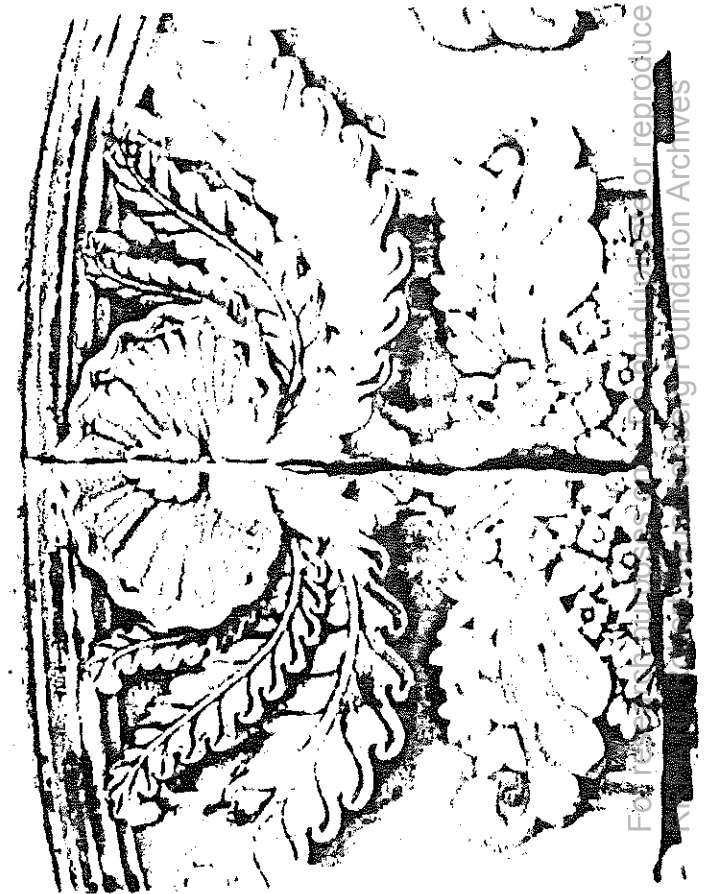
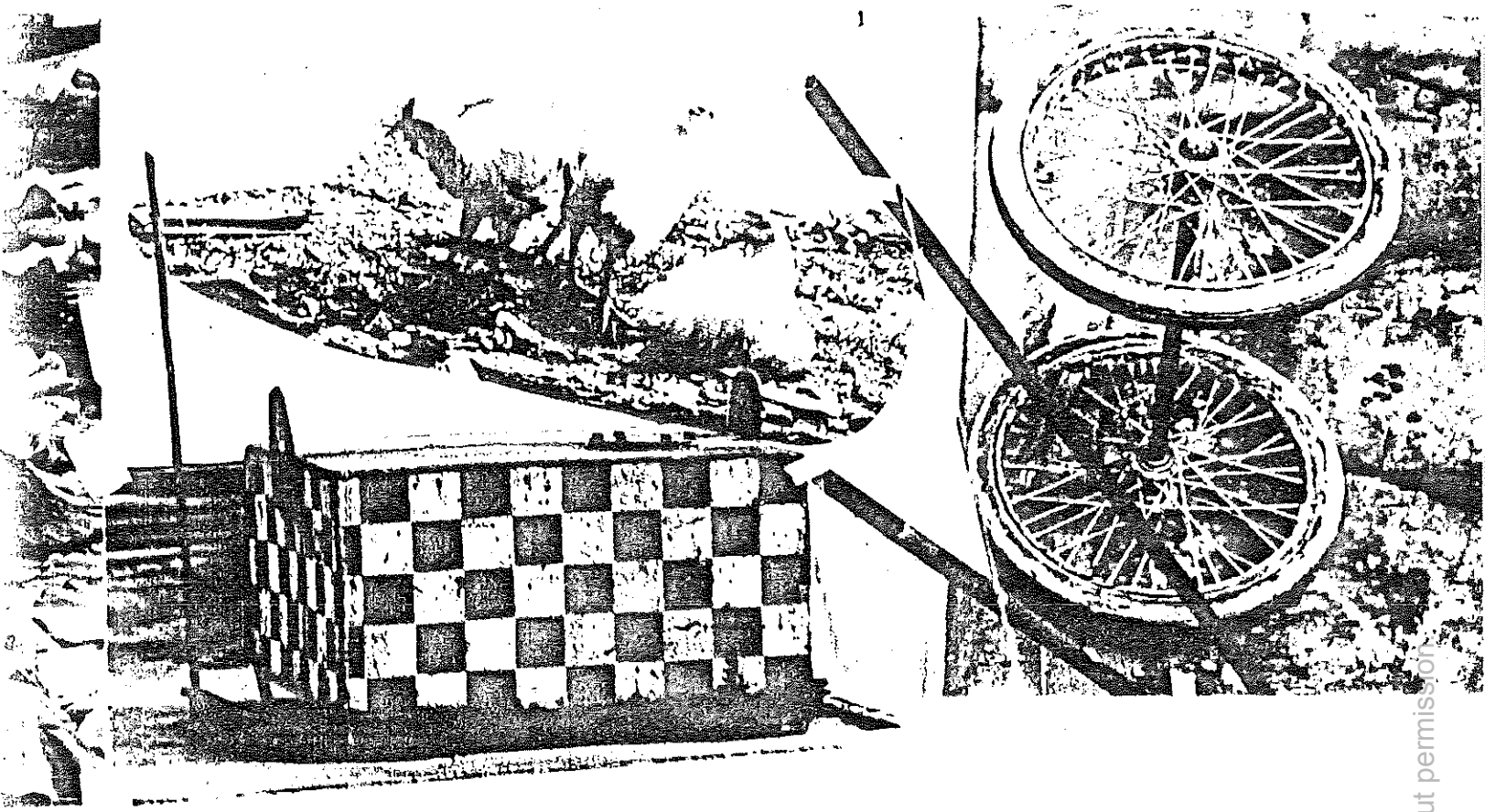
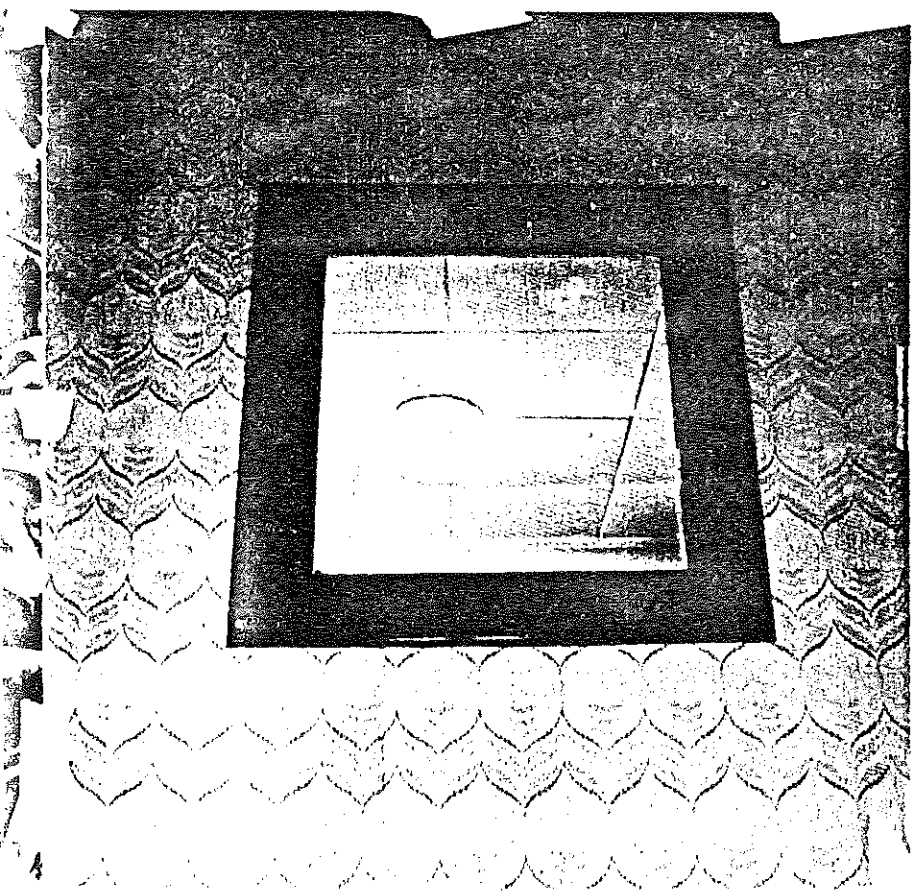
TERRY VAN BRUNT

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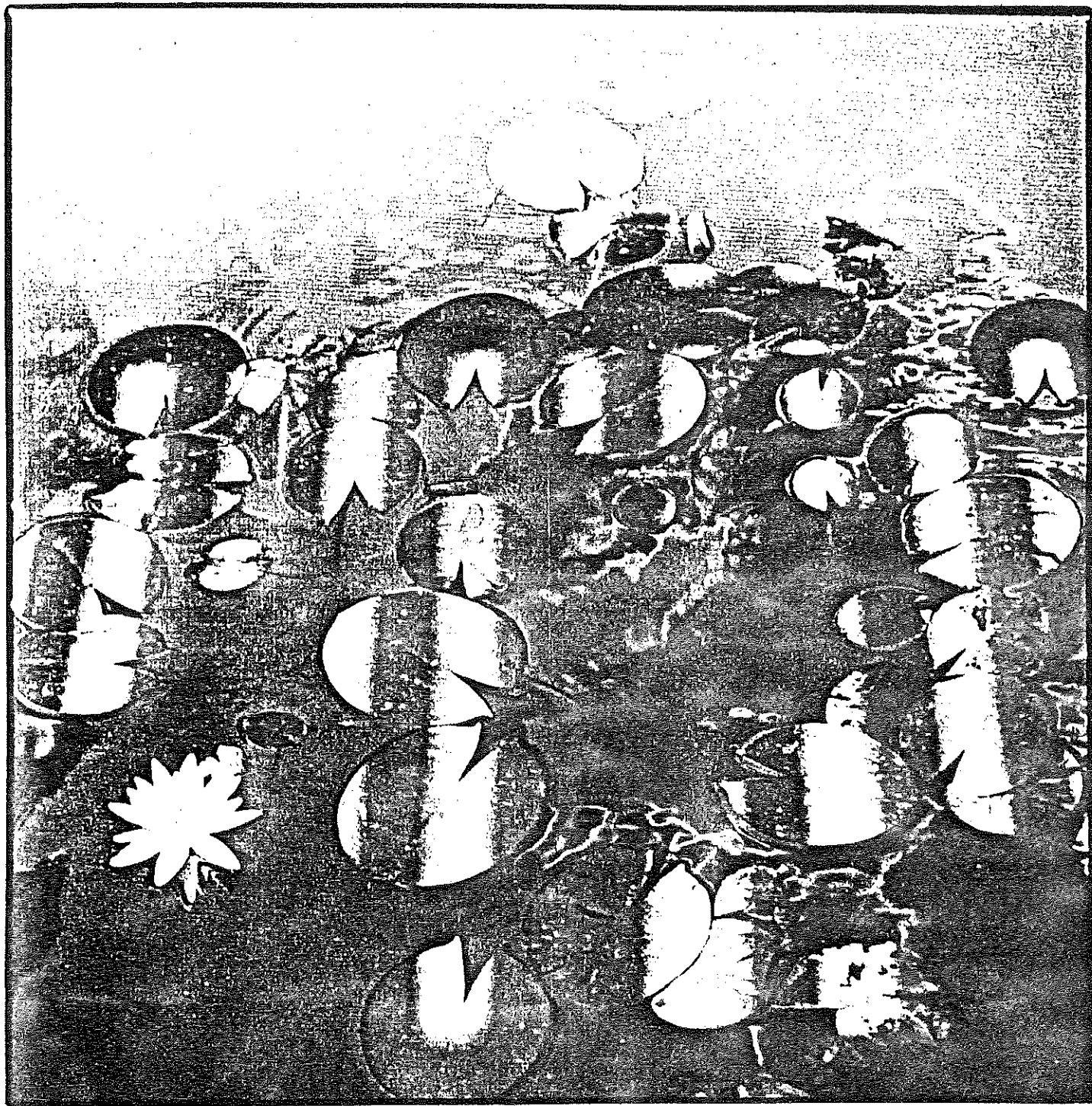
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Always fascinated by multiple images of reality, the artist was intrigued by this storefront in Xian: the faces of people standing outside, seen in sharp focus, are reflected in the window as they stare (with us) into the warm, soft-focus interior.



Rauschenberg took some 500 photographs in China, of which he used about 150 in his scroll. He found this "perfect lily" in a hotel-lobby pool in Beijing and could not resist the tart color and bizarre luminosities.

Rauschenberg's Renaissance

By Kay Larson

Three exhibitions show the artist at a new peak.

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG, EMINENT AMERICAN avant-gardist and one of the world's foremost living artists, has just come in from windsurfing on the shining waters of the Florida Gulf, which sweeps up from the Everglades to take a slice out of the front yard of his house on Captiva Island, south of Tampa. It's four o'clock in the afternoon, and Rauschenberg has been getting his toes wet before breakfast. He is being tutored by his chief assistant, Terry Van Brunt, in the art of keeping one's balance on a stumpy surfboard with a mast and sail protruding from its middle. The tutor has already had his shins dinged by Rauschenberg's board, and the eminent avant-gardist is convulsed by a fit of giggles. "There's a whole ocean out there, and I had to run into Terry," he cackles. So he goes inside to pour himself "a lot of water and a little Jack Daniel's" and ponder the mysteries of standing upright.

This scene may seem lifted from a movie about the great artist who gives it all up to dissipation. But Rauschenberg is in the most productive phase of his career. He is about to head off to his studio, buoyed by the pleasures of the life he leads and the joy he finds in work, to put together yet another collage using the gorgeous silks and gloriously colored posters he brought back from his five-week stay in China last summer. He is in a wonderful mood. In fact, he has been working so hard in the past few years on so many collaborative ventures—among them a 100-foot-long photograph of China, 491 collages made in China, and a plan to send his work around the world—that he threatens to turn himself into one of his own "combines," a word that describes not only his assemblages of painting and sculpture but his omnivorous appetite for life, and his determination to give back to the world some of the good things it has given him. At 57, Rauschenberg has appointed himself a roving ambassador for art.

Ten years ago the artist was not

feeling quite so undaunted. The 1970s were the closest he has come to a career crisis. Too good-humored to use such language on himself, he thinks of that period as a lull. But in a painting career so prolific that it seemed to be conducted at 90 miles an hour, even a temporary slowdown was regarded by his public as a dead halt. Besides, that decade's purified aesthetics seldom had a place for his rampant, restless appetites. He felt a bit adrift, and his work was out of favor. Like Dickens, whose audiences at some points muttered, "Not another 600-page masterpiece," Rauschenberg was the prime sufferer in his own success.

THE CAUSES OF HIS MALAISE WERE MANY. Proclaimed American art's *enfant terrible* in the 1950s, first-prize winner for the United States at the Venice Biennale in 1964, Rauschenberg, now widely heralded as one of the most influential artists this country has produced, discovered in the mid-seventies that he was too old to be an *enfant* and that his *terribleness* was all a bit predictable. Since the mid-sixties and his apotheosis at the Biennale, he had thrown himself into collaborations: with dancers Merce Cunningham and Trisha Brown, engineer

Combining cultures: At work on Captiva.



Billy Klüver, composer John Cage, and countless other contributors. He continued to turn out paintings and prints at a teeth-rattling pace, but in ten years he had invented only two or three major new modes, among them the "Jammers," his least complex series, consisting of poles propped against gauzy wall hangings, and the evanescently beautiful "Hoarfrosts," silk-screened collages on the sheerest, silkiest, iciest fabrics. His private self, meanwhile, had become a public possession, and the prices of his greatest works were edging toward that heart-stopping half-million-dollar mark. To top it all, the man who had said that "success terrifies me" was faced with two looming retrospectives. The first, organized

Photographs by Terry Van Brunt.



Omnivorous appetite: Rauschenberg has drawn on Asian sources for much of his recent work.

by Walter Hopps in 1976 for the National Collection of Fine Arts, a branch of the Smithsonian, in Washington, stopped off at the Museum of Modern Art on its way around the country. The second originated in Berlin in 1980 and ended up at Britain's national contemporary museum, the Tate Gallery, in London. Since curators normally put together such monumental shows only when they feel an artist's most significant work is past, the message was clear: Rauschenberg might repeat himself, but he wouldn't surpass himself.

He is about to prove everybody wrong. On that most symbolic of nights, New Year's Eve, he will show us what he means when he says that "my work is my health—it's where

my spirit and energy are now. I'm really fit and strong right now." He is about to reveal, in three exhibitions at once, four new variations on his almost infinitely expandable aesthetic, created with methods he has invented for the occasion, and produced on a scale more ambitious than any he has attempted. Leo Castelli Gallery, at 142 Greene Street, will show the 100-foot photograph, which is a composite—printed on a single sheet of Kodak paper—of some of the hundreds of pictures he took on his visit to China last summer. At the beginning of December, the Museum of Modern Art opened an exhibition (which runs through February 1) of the collages made during the same trip, the result of an invitation by the

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“...The latest work ranges from ceramics and collage

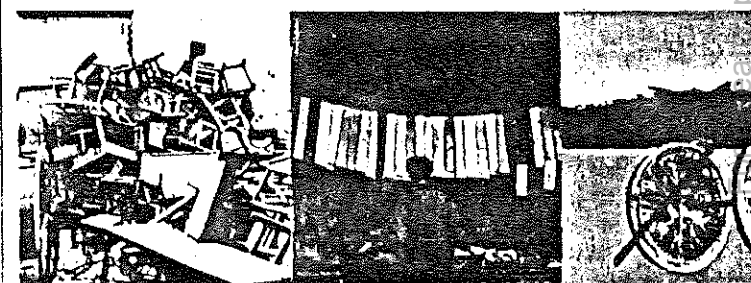
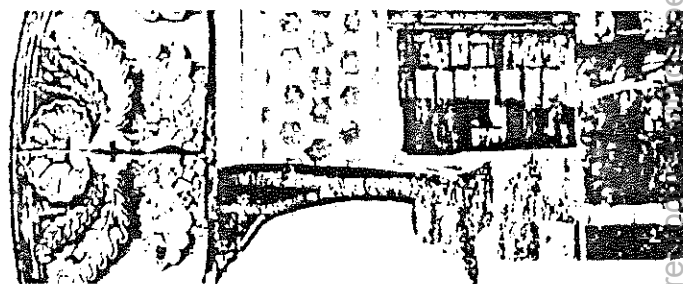
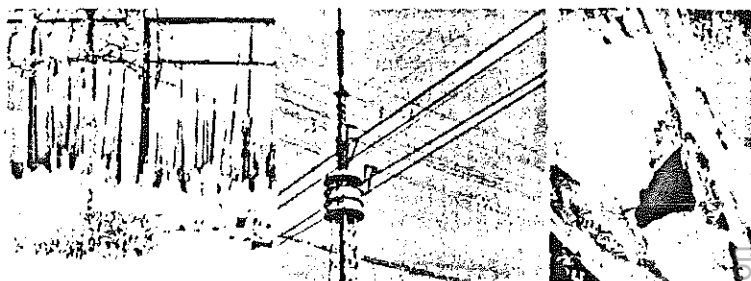


Self-extension: The 100-foot-long photograph of China grew out of Rauschenberg's trip there last summer.

Anhui Artists' Association of Anhui Province to use the resources of the world's oldest paper mill. After China, Rauschenberg flew to Japan, where, in collaboration with a Japanese firm that has perfected a way of silk-screening images and transferring them to clay, he made enormous freestanding ceramics covered with characteristically Rauschenbergian visions. (They will be shown at Castelli alongside the 100-foot photograph.) In the meantime, he has produced the "Kabal American Zephyr," a series of poetically titled sculpture-combines to be shown by Sonnabend Gallery, at 112 Greene Street (the Castelli and Sonnabend shows will be up through January 29). And there are other projects in the works: a set of photographs documenting every major city in the United States, a quarter-mile-long painting under way in Florida, and that ambitious plan to send a 150-piece retrospective of his art around the world on a peacemaking expedition—a sort of children's crusade to thwart world war—beginning with a show that opens in Peking on May 2.

THE SIZE OF THE 100-FOOT PHOTOGRAPH AND THE quarter-mile painting can be seen as a means of literally extending himself farther than he's ever been. If the scale is new to him, the technique of juxtaposing images is not: Rauschenberg has been making combines, in one form or another, for several decades. Now, however, he's blending cultures and technologies into his work: Communist culture, Buddhist culture, prehistorical technology, contemporary ceramics technology (the Japanese factory usually makes kitschy tableware and memorial plaques). With his characteristic instinct for essences, he has singled out the most appropriate cultural site in each of the countries he has visited, the one that says the most about the nature of the people. And lest the exchange be too one-sided, he is leaving a portion of the products in each place—collages in China, ceramics in Japan. To do all this, he is bypassing the official procedures where possible and dealing only with individuals. He has acquired an American staff since 1977—about half a dozen people, spread out between his headquarters on Captiva and his New York City studio—and has just added an executive secretary to begin private fund-raising for the round-the-world project, named ROCI, ostensibly because of its title, Rauschenberg: Overseas Culture Interchange, but actually in honor of his pet turtle of the same name.

If these projects sound Dickensian in scope, there is good reason. The Victorian writer and the twentieth-century artist are about equally prolific: Dickens with tens of thousands of manuscript pages, Rauschenberg with thousands of paintings, prints, combines, graphics, photographs, happenings, and collaborations. There are slack moments in Dickens, juxtaposed with passages so brilliant they take your



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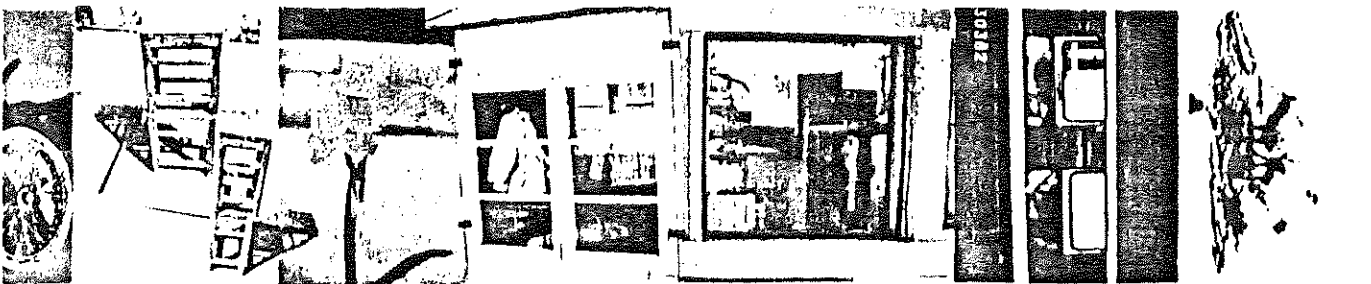
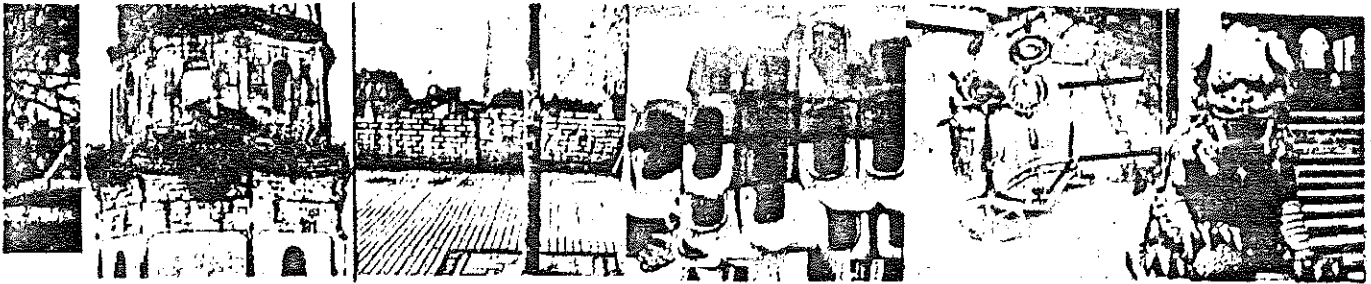
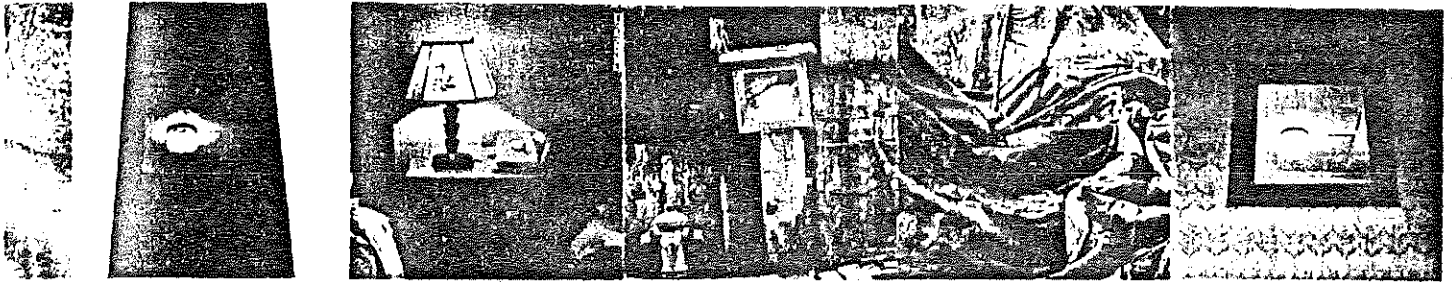
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to sculpture and photos made on his trip to China. . .”

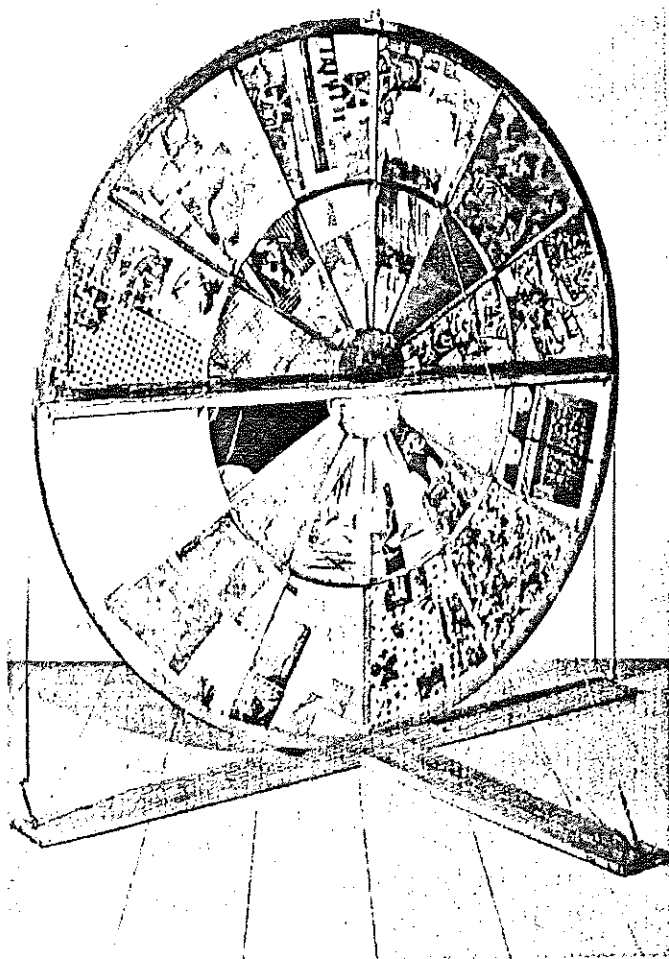


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Dickensian scope: Rauschenberg at ease in the Japanese ceramic factory where the materials for his "Clayworks" series were made.

breath away. There have been slack moments for Rauschenberg too—anybody who works as fast as he does is bound to miss gears occasionally—but when at full throttle he has produced an astonishing body of paintings so brilliant they remain not completely interpreted, not even barely interpreted, two decades after he did them. But most of all, like Dickens, there is the power of Rauschenberg's vision—one so fraught with possibilities that, as art historian Robert Rosenblum has remarked, "every artist after 1960 who challenged the restrictions of painting and sculpture and believed that all of life was open to art is indebted to Rauschenberg—forever."



Eminently avant-garde: From the "American Zephyr" series.

PORT ARTHUR, TEXAS, OCTOBER 22, 1925. Rauschenberg was born in this Texas Gulf town, whose other famous citizen was Janis Joplin. He betrays both the deficiencies and the strengths of growing up in the heartland, in a barren city of black gumbo mud, industrialized to the point that, he recalls, "you could tell which way the wind was blowing by the smell from the factories." So shy that his high-school classmates still write him letters about it, and so sensitive that he dropped out of college because his biology teacher demanded that he dissect a live frog, Rauschenberg couldn't bear to tell his family he had ruined their plans for his career in pharmacy. Fortunately, World War II came along and he could write to tell them he had been drafted into the navy.

He made his first drawing in a latrine to escape detection, then after the war fitfully pursued a career as a professional painter in Paris, doing what he remembers as bad expressionist finger painting. Eventually he returned to the United States, to Black Mountain College, and to the harsh discipline of its most eminent teacher, Josef Albers. "I couldn't have had anybody better as an instructor than Albers," he says, "because he fit right into my most outstanding weakness, which is to be intimidated. I still run around half-cocked, terrified, you know." Albers enforced his color theories with countless Bauhaus-style exercises. "Realizing all these tricks," says Rauschenberg, "my reaction was: In this case it's impossible to have any preference for colors. To prefer one color over another is a show of weakness. So I ended up seeing how far I could push the *idea* of painting." In time, he also decided to see how far he could push Albers. "I did revolt right at the last," Rauschenberg says. "I'm so glad I did, because I don't know how I would have felt if he had just left me in that state of being totally intimidated." (Albers left to teach at Yale.) In rebellion, the young art student "just opened the window, flipped out backwards, and I knew that everybody had to pass by the lake to go to lunch, so I took off all my clothes and lay floating on my back, as my final protest."

Rauschenberg proved equally stubborn when fame finally sought him out in the 1960s and 1970s: Metaphorically, he took off all his clothes and floated out of reach of the people who turn artworks into commodities, by immersing himself in the collaborative experiments he finds so congenial to the Dickensian side of his temperament. Curiously, the activity that led him into the period of productivity he now enjoys was also a collaboration. In 1977, Trisha Brown asked him to design the sets for a dance performance. So, to get 8-by-12-foot photographs for the computer-controlled sliding backdrops of *Glacial Decoy*, he picked up his Hasselblad and

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...The revolutionary, he insists, can be beautiful..."

wandered around Captiva, taking several thousand photographs, which he later pared down and put together, much as he would with the 100-foot photograph of China. "I had to take so many," he says, "because there's no preconception about how they all go together."

He had experimented with photography at Black Mountain, in the days when he, Merce Cunningham, John Cage, Aaron Siskind, Harry Callahan, and the rest of that astonishing assembly were poking into every aesthetic crevice they could find. He was never trained in the use of a camera, but at Black Mountain, he recalls, the word "integrity" was so thick in the air that no one would ever have dreamed of cropping a photograph or faking an image. Rauschenberg's photographs from that period have just been published, along with his more recent camera work, and they show that though his technical skill has improved, his radical habit of seeing has remained unchanged. His series on cities (*New York* and *Boston* have just been published, and *Los Angeles* is next, handsomely boxed in white covers by Universal Limited Art Editions) has already established him as one of this country's most important new photographic talents. Ironically, his son, Christopher, is also a fine photographer who betrays the same radical eye as his father, though the son was the first to use the camera professionally.

Around 1976 or 1977, Rauschenberg felt his life bumped by new feelings and ideas. The experience with Trisha Brown reminded him of the joys of the view through a camera lens. But he had already begun to take his own photographs to use in his paintings, because, he says, "I started having problems using other people's." Rauschenberg, one of the leaders of the movement in the 1970s to improve artists' and photographers' copyright protections, had unwittingly run into trouble himself appropriating photographs from magazines and newspapers. In 1977, he also met Van Brunt, whose calm efficiency helps to focus the artist's intensity, and who became the nucleus of the large staff that has made Rauschenberg's life so productive. Finally, the retrospective in 1976 prodded him to get moving. "I knew the idea of a retrospective bothered me," he recalls. "I got the feeling that I really hadn't done much. It's exactly that: your *retro*-spective. You have to use it one way or another. And it's either got to illustrate your limitations or it's got to free you."

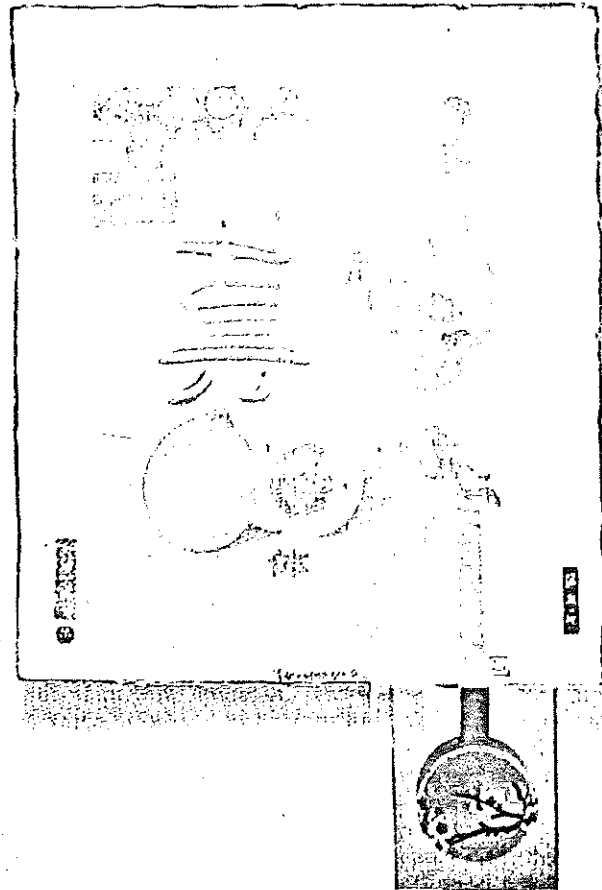
With his personal and professional lives on the same rising curve, Rauschenberg found himself thinking hard. He saw that many of the people he had worked with over several decades had "gotten to be who they were—that's the trap. Developing your audience until they think they know you is another trap."

In other words, when faced with a preconception, whether your own or anyone else's, take off your clothes and float away from it. So that's what he did.

CHINA, JUNE 11 TO JULY 14, 1982. RAUSCHENBERG, Van Brunt, and a sizable crew lugging 30 trunks of art-making supplies descended on the place where the Chinese say paper was invented, in the Yellow Mountains of Anhui Province. Xuan paper, called "1,000-year paper" in China, is made of mulberry fibers that are laboriously bleached in the sunlight according to ancient tradition, and is considered a national treasure. Since Rauschenberg was to command the factory's output for nearly a month, his invitation was a remarkable instance of Chinese sympathy for American art. The location of the paper factory was meant to be as secret as the processes it used, so the Americans worked in a nearby warehouse, assisted by a Chinese crew and kibitzing villagers who visited at all hours of the day and night. (The Chinese apparently adjusted themselves to Rauschenberg's after-hours working habits.) The

most sympathetic advice came from the government-certified professional artists assigned to the project. "My aesthetics was never questioned either in Japan or China," says Rauschenberg.

He asked the factory to do two things it had never done before: to produce a paper so stiff it could stand on its own, and another so thin it was almost transparent. Then he and his staff visited Shanghai poster stores and picked through lovely sentimental Chinese images of maidens, flowers, fruit, and good-luck signs. Rauschenberg and the crew cut them



Freedom of the anti-aesthetic: Truth, a new collage.

out, laid them onto the stiff paper, covered them with the translucent paper, asked a local expert to apply the inked chop marks, and ended up with lyrically beautiful, gossamer collages that manage to convey the spirit of China yet still maintain their Rauschenbergian character. In their graceful translucence they are direct descendants of the "Hoarfrosts" of the 1970s.

When the Americans finished at the paper factory, the Chinese treated them to orchestrated tours, from which Rauschenberg emerged with 80 rolls of film exposed with his Hasselblad. Back in the United States, he assembled a few dozen of those images into a prototype. It is being printed by Graphicstudio II, of the University of South Florida at Tampa. Rauschenberg's photographs of China are, typically, not tourist pictures but slices of mundane reality possessing remarkable sensuality and an uncanny ability to suggest the tone of Chinese life. Stuck into the long parade of images—bamboo groves, bronze demons, bicycle parking lots—are bits of glorious debris (a life long fascination), including a stream of slimy green water that carries bobbing purple eggplants, like

“...The revolutionary, he insists, can be beautiful...”

commas in a sentence that nobody knows how to read.

How to “read” Rauschenberg’s work has always been a problem. John Cage has said that the painter’s images have no special meaning. Most people who follow his work, however, now feel that his collages present visual or verbal associations (or both) that put “stress . . . upon the resonances between the images . . . rather than upon the images themselves,” in the words of art historian Charles Stuckey.

In a masterpiece of decoding, Stuckey has discovered that the sequence of visual images in Rauschenberg’s 1955 collage-painting *Rebus* spells out, by association, a rebus-puzzle-style sentence: “That reproduces sundry cases of childish and comic coincidences to be read by eyes opened finally to a pattern of abstract problems,” a summation of the artist’s intentions that had remained undeciphered for twenty years. In the same manner, critic Robert Hughes has established that *Monogram*—the famous angora goat with a tire around its middle—is Rauschenberg’s private aside about a sexual affair. The “plugged goat,” as a visual equivalent to a state of desire, thus becomes a highly charged, extremely funny, and wryly self-deprecating observation on the vagaries of lust.

Such interpretations should provide a clue about how to look at the 100-foot photograph. And, sure enough, Rauschenberg has created a long, rambling observation about travel, particularly what it feels like to be a traveler, and what it means to be a traveler in China. We are introduced to his methodology in the first three frames: a close-up of the textures of a weathered tree trunk, a view of distant mountains, and a mountainous landscape carved in stone—in other words, China seen first in close-up, as a series of textures; then China seen in the long view; then China in abstraction. Next comes a plain slab of stone laid sideways, like a long dash leading into the rest of the picture.

The next three images follow the pattern of the first set, but this time their subject seems to be politics. In the short range, or close view, the bricks hang in a precarious balance on string that could break from too much weight. In the long view, however, the pile of melons is a striking comment on China’s lush productivity and fundamental good health. And on reflection, Rauschenberg discovered in his travels that the Chinese themselves were re-evaluating their politics—as the fading portraits of former leaders suggest. In this new China, even Mao, says Rauschenberg, is now considered more important as a poet than as a political leader.

The remainder of the photograph continues the pattern of contrasts between the “inside” of Chinese life and the “outside”—coupled with such abstract panels as the street map of Jingxian, the paper-mill town. Rauschenberg hopes to remind us, however, that he was just a traveler, looking in through the windows that we see in the last few frames. The chickens at the end correspond to the rooster—the cock o’ the walk—that struts through some of Rauschenberg’s most important paintings and probably represents his own clucky, cocky, shy-rebellious self. In this remarkable train of associations from China, the chickens are a coda: “I was here.”

JAPAN, JULY 14 TO AUGUST 9, 1982. RAUSCHENBERG AND his crew stopped off in Japan to try out another new medium: ceramics. The Otsuka-Ohmi factory uses a clay that, Rauschenberg explains, is “guaranteed not to change organically for 3,000 years” and is made by firing the clay body to hardness, then grinding it to powder again. Van Brunt, who shot hundreds of feet of videotape in the factory, has caught Rauschenberg in the act of peeling back a sheet of this clay, which rips almost like paper. “It had to be forced to look like clay, they had refined it so much,” recalls Rauschenberg.

Rauschenberg enlisted the factory staff to help him prepare

photo-silk-screened decals, which were screened onto clear plastic, then slipped onto the partly fired clay. When the mass is again returned to the kiln, the binder melts away and the images are deposited as glazes on the clay surface. Some of Rauschenberg’s ideas amused the Japanese, who were particularly intrigued by his requirement that every part of these composite objects be made of clay. So the hinges are clay, the chains are clay, and the rocks that are attached to the ceramic slabs by clay chains are also of clay. Since all the parts of all the ceramic pieces were put together at the same time, requiring that Rauschenberg know in advance how spontaneous he would have to be, the artist must have set up this situation to test his powers of orchestration.

CAPTIVA ISLAND, DECEMBER 1982. RAUSCHENBERG’S wanderings begin and end on Captiva, in this zephyr-kissed paradise of warm blue waters and silvery shell beaches, of tall palms and feathery evergreens, and pelicans that peel out of the air like fighter pilots heading home for lunch. Rauschenberg visited this place countless times before he finally bought several dozen acres of primal jungle and grape-tree thickets, seventeen years ago. His present mood clearly owes much to Florida. But it may also owe something to Josef Albers.

When Rauschenberg left Black Mountain, Albers’s strict discipline and limited aesthetic were still with him. Shortly afterward, Rauschenberg made a series of all-white paintings. “The idea of the white paintings was to make them so sparse that they had to be done to see if they were anything,” he says. “I did them, and I discovered that I had a couple of creative restrictions that I hadn’t planned on. One was size. Another was shape. If you make something, it has to have a size and a shape.” In other words, it has limits—and limits have always provoked Rauschenberg to action.

Now he has again begun to test his limits, perhaps because he is afraid that in the 1970s he might actually have found some. The 100-foot photograph and the quarter-mile painting “tend to defy any compositional ideas.” The scale alone eats up excesses. “By the time you’ve gone a quarter of a mile, if you have any mind at all, you’ve certainly forgotten what you had in mind when you started.” From Captiva, he is planning the round-the-world exhibit that he intends to send to perhaps 21 non-European countries, including Sri Lanka, Australia, and China. The retrospective is as expansive in scale as any of Rauschenberg’s other current projects, and even more infiltrated with his idealism. If the Chinese government lives up to its promise and brings his work to Peking on May 2, it will be the first time that China’s national museum has ever housed a one-man show.

Is the world ready for such a shaking up? Rauschenberg thinks so, and he may be right. His reception in China was surprisingly warm. At a slide show he gave in Peking, students “floored” him by asking him to tell them about Duchamp. “So I explained that when I first saw Dada I thought I misunderstood it, because it was very beautiful and it was supposed to be revolutionary. I saw Duchamp’s wheel on a stool in the same room with Brancusi, and I didn’t know which I thought was more beautiful.”

The revolutionary can be beautiful—that notion pervades Rauschenberg’s life. “The moral is that if you have a specific goal in your art, like conveying an emotion, if you fail, then the work doesn’t succeed, and if you do succeed, you do so only for a little while.” In his own art, which has aimed itself outward toward the limitless world, rather than inward toward Albers’s solipsistic color exercises, Rauschenberg has discovered the freedom of what he calls the “anti-aesthetic.” “I’m really trying to make everybody do the work themselves,” he chortles. “I’m like a spy in this house of art.” ■

ARTnews

February 1983

\$3.50



Rauschenberg:
'The World
Is My Palette'



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Robert Rauschenberg's State of the Universe Message

Now at the height of his powers,
Rauschenberg considers himself more
journalist than artist. 'If I could say what
I have to say in any other way, I would
do so,' he insists. 'But I only have art'

by MARY LYNN KOTZ

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG OF CAPTIVA, Florida, has emerged still spinning from what may be his most explosively creative year. At 57, he is as weathered and rangy as a Texas oil driller. His energy seems boundless. He is fueled by the excitement he generates among collaborators and audiences wherever he goes, and he responds with amazing creativity. His output is channeled and organized by a staff of eight, in New York and Florida, but the inspiration and direction are his own—stemming not only from artistic impulses but from idealistic and global concerns. "This is my world," he says. "I want to do what I can to help it while I am alive."

On Captiva, a five-mile-long island in the Gulf of Mexico where Rauschenberg touches base, he recently talked about the urgent concerns that inspire his life and his art, and previewed for *ARTnews* the first section of a major work in progress: the *Quarter Mile Piece*, a state-of-the-universe message that is to be the largest painting in the world.

Life on Captiva is casual and refreshingly simple. No neon, no fast-food joints, no neckties. Its tone is set by a federal bird and wildlife sanctuary on Sanibel, the sister island joined to Captiva by a narrow bridge. Nature is valued on the lush, green islands.

Like most Captiva property, Rauschenberg's compound is shielded by tall palms, feathery, pinelike casarina trees, gumbo limbos and sea grapes. His house is on the beach, with big, fierce-looking dogs prowling the porch and private property signs tacked all around. The other houses on his side of the lane also belong to him—one for the studio, one for the office, one for the print shop, with a transfer press named "Grasshopper"—and all of them also provide hous-

ing for his team of assistants and for guests. Rauschenberg likes the feel of the jungle about his 35 acres. He is active in the struggle to hold down commercial development on the island.

Inside, the main house is stark, blinding white. There is a built-in white couch about six inches above the floor, a dining table in a porch alcove overlooking the gulf and no other furniture except for bar stools. A small Jasper Johns painting, black with red dots, hangs on the wall.

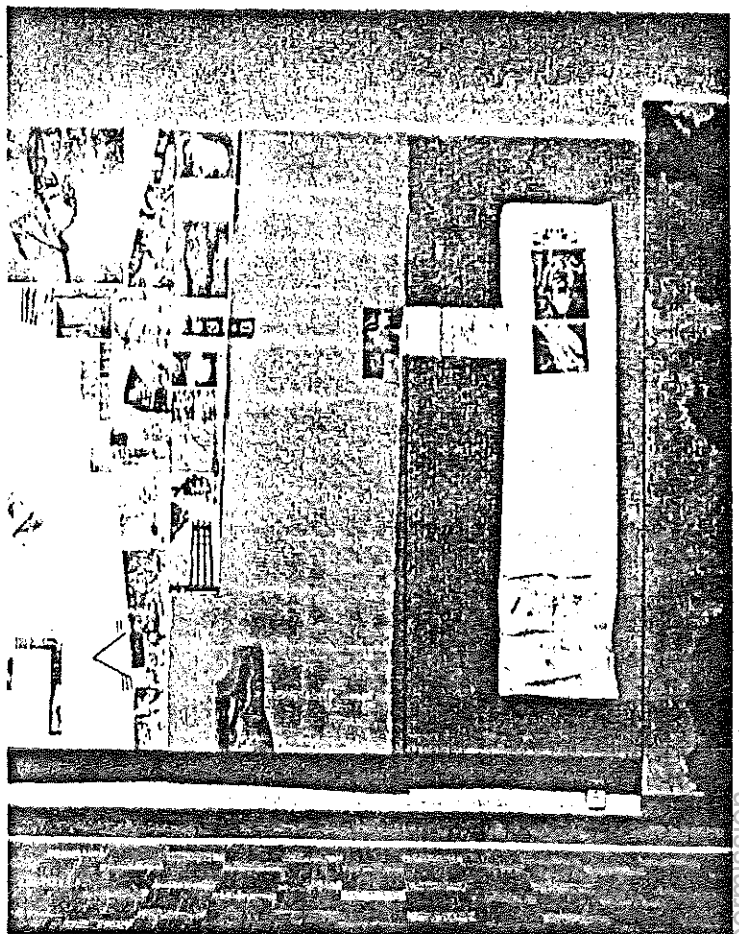
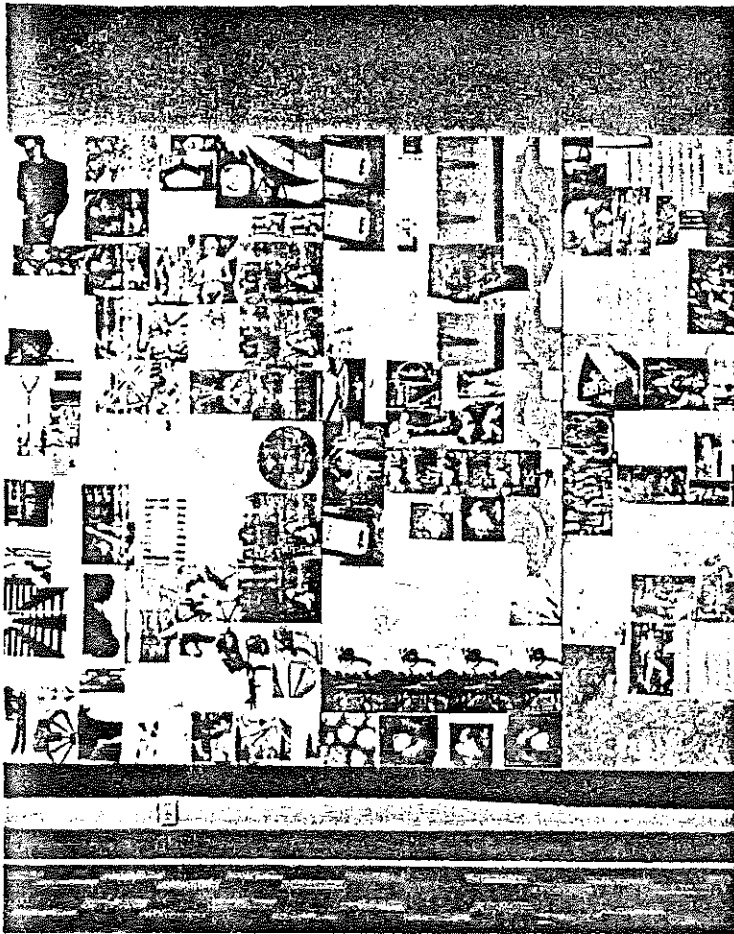
The room's focal point is a work by Rauschenberg himself. It looks something like an aluminum mobile home, about ten feet long and four feet high, and rolls around the room on a bicycle wheel. A door in one end opens to reveal a space shaped like the Flatiron Building, with two walls of graphic art, a mirrored floor and a narrow strip of mirror in the back wall. When you open the door, the face you see is your own. This aluminum box is electrically wired to light up in several shades, some more flattering than others to the face reflected on the back wall. It is called *The House of the Eyetest of the Earth Spider* and is from his new "Kabal American Zephyr" series.

Rauschenberg is standing at the bar that separates the kitchen from the living room, pouring from a bottle of Jack Daniel's Black Label. He offers that, or beer, or Piper-Heidsieck from a bottle cooling in a bucket on the bar. He is tanned, with close-cropped graying curls and expressive brown eyes. He is wearing a plaid open-collared shirt and light pants. Also at the bar is Terry Van Brunt, chief assistant, technician and gatekeeper, a blond, tanned young man who studied acupuncture in Japan for three years. Terry

Mary Lynn Kotz writes frequently for *ARTnews*. Her profile of Georgia O'Keeffe appeared in the December 1977 issue.



Rauschenberg in his Capiva studio with elements from the *Quarise Mile Piece*, a mixed-media work in progress.



Sections of the *Quarter Mile Piece*. Now 190 feet long, it will be the world's largest painting when it is completed in 1984.

wears a white jumpsuit with "Terry" on the left and "Globe Transfer" on the right chest pocket. In the kitchen behind the bar, washing dishes, is Rauschenberg's friend Anne Livet, a former curator at the Fort Worth Art Museum turned management consultant in New York. "I'm the maid," she says.

Before the evening is over, Rauschenberg talks about everything from politics to how to make chili. He says he is pleased that his art "can be used to try to elect a president," referring to the \$400,000 his works raised for Ted Kennedy's unsuccessful bid for the Democratic nomination in 1980. Of Port Arthur, Texas, where he grew up, he says, "What it gave me was an instinct for survival, because I wanted to get away from there so badly." Of Janis Joplin: "She's the only other Port Arthurian to have made it outside. I was with Janis the night before she went down to a high school reunion. I begged her not to go, but she wanted to go back. They yelled foul names at her, spat in her face in the hallways. In Port Arthur, there is no room for the exception." Of his son, Christopher Rauschenberg, the West Coast photographer, of whom he is inordinately proud: "I wanted him to be a *banker*—he was also in the 99th percentile in physics, and I thought, oh boy, we've really got a smart one. But what do I get? A sensitive artist!"

Rauschenberg is warm and enthusiastic, humorous, telling funny, ironic stories of which he is the butt. He seems rather gentle but not at all timid. In some of his stories there is pain, too—a lingering sensitivity to having been the exception while growing up, for example—and a deep feeling for others who suffer pain.

But mostly, we talk about his work.

"In the first place, I'm one of the painters—I don't know

how many there are who will still admit it—who think that painting is communication. It's very important to me," he says. "I don't think I've ever been abstract. I think that my work is a conversation that goes on with people that I don't have the opportunity to meet."

What is he telling us?

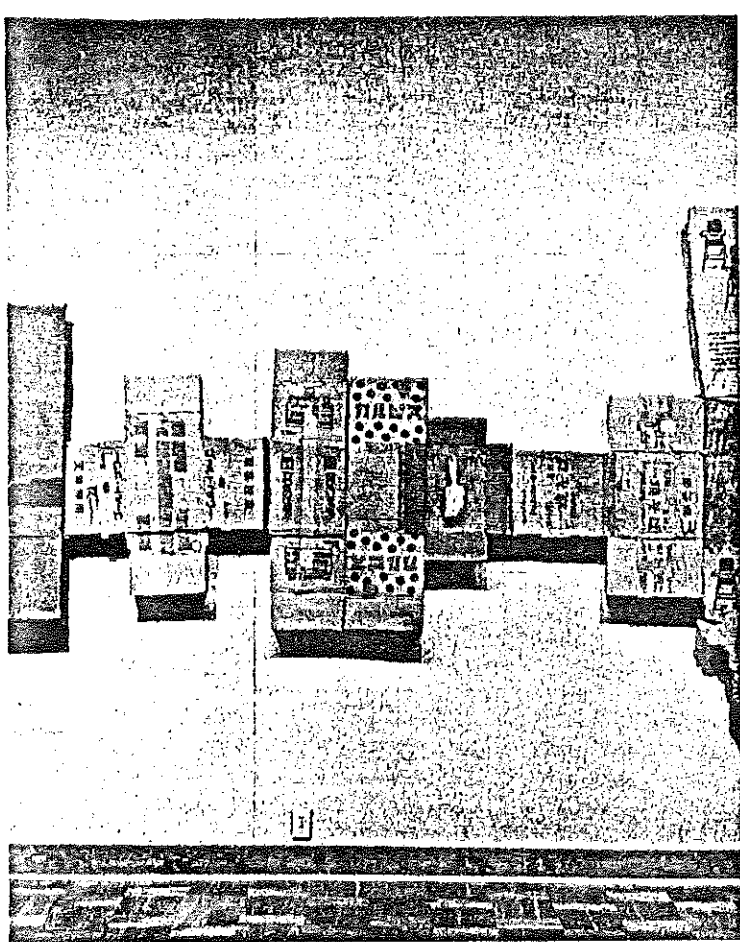
"There is probably just one thing," he answers. He is leaning across the counter, arms crossed. "And that is that you, yourself, are totally responsible. And your awareness is your best protection.

"I've always thought that it was perfectly all right for my work to be misunderstood, if it can enlighten somebody about something else—even if it's their own right to disagree. A lot of people are waiting for the permission to disagree."

We look at his graphics, his "transfer" images of advances in science, of planets, of famous paintings and bits and pieces of the *Wall Street Journal*, people hungry, people war-strafed, people having fun. "World events are my colors," he says. "The world is my palette."

Rauschenberg insists it is world events that select *him*, not the other way around. "Back in 1970, I got so involved with things I call 'grim' and 'realistic' that I needed to get away. So I went out to Malibu, the most peaceful, laid-back, away-from-the-world sort of place. I wanted to do the largest, most realistic, but peaceful, watercolor painting in the world. So I went out there on the beach, started gathering my materials and got into the most serious and journalistic work I have done: 'Currents' and 'Surfaces.' I found I could not escape. So just forget about the world's most peaceful watercolor!"

"Currents" was a series of collages based on the news of



A dynamic mix of words, images and found objects, the *Quarter Mile Piece* has been called "a retrospective of a whole life in art."

the day clipped from various newspapers: "47 Die in Israel-Bound Plane"; "Russia, China Gird for War"; and similar items.

Rauschenberg talks about his work with newspapers-as-art. Yes, it is journalism, and yes, it is making a statement about his view of the world.

"I resent very much the fact that somehow the illusion of the fine life is to be able to sleep through anything. To sleep through war, poverty, the world around us.

"I want to shake people awake. I want people to look at the material and react to it. I want to make them aware of individual responsibility, both for themselves and for the rest of the human race. It has become easy to be complacent about the world. The fact that you paid a quarter for your newspaper almost satisfies your conscience. Because you have read your newspaper, you have done your bit. And so you wrap your conscience in your newspaper just like you wrap your garbage.

"I made that series ['Currents'] as realistically as I could, as austere as possible, in the most direct way I knew how, because, knowing that it was *art*, people had to take a second look, at least, at the facts they were wrapping their garbage in."

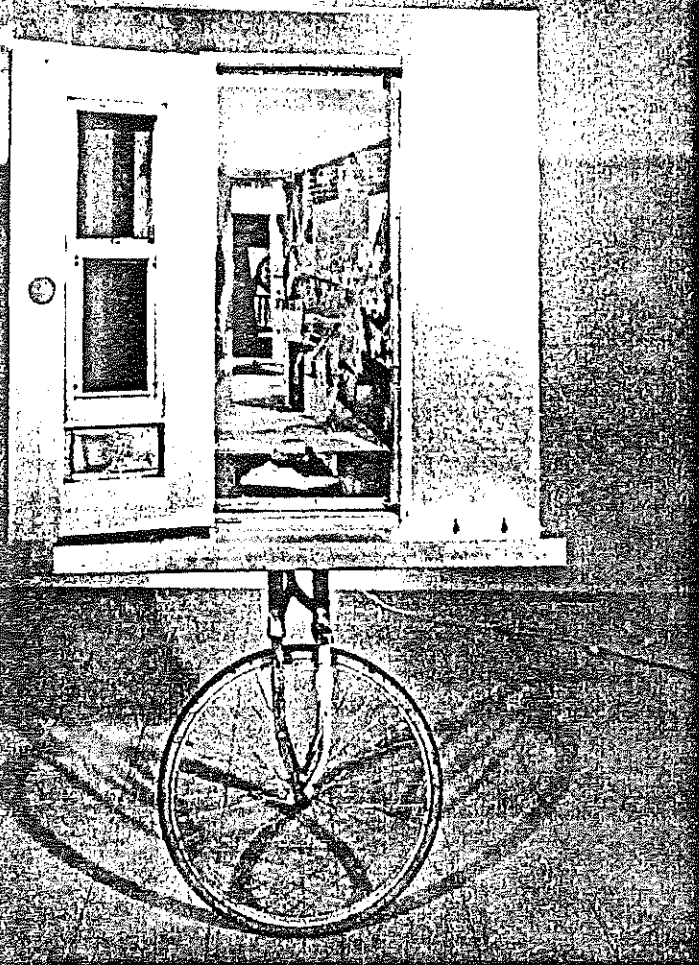
"FOR ABOUT THREE YEARS," SAYS Rauschenberg, "I've had this idea—to get involved in places which haven't had contemporary American art to look at, countries such as China, Russia, Sri Lanka, Egypt. Not only to show the work there, but to *make* work in their setting, to use their materials, to deal with students, to collaborate with the major artist, poet or writer in each country, touching on every aspect of art."

In China last summer, Rauschenberg became the first foreigner to work with craftsmen at the world's oldest paper mill, in Jing Xian, Anhui Province. He made 70 sets of paperworks—491 individual sheets—collectively known as "Seven Characters." Each work consists of 30 layers of Xuan paper, a layer of silk, a montage of printed images cut from Chinese posters, a Chinese character made of molded paper pulp and a top layer of paper. "Seven Characters" was published last year by Gemini G.E.L., and a selection was shown in December and January at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Another result of the Chinese experience was a 100-foot photographic composition, *Chinese Summerhall*, made from his own photos of the land and people.

In Japan Rauschenberg used an ancient formula to create a series of high-temperature-fired ceramic pieces, which included *Dirt Shrine*, a ceramic "bamboo" ladder. He also designed an amusing series of tile "Recreational Clayworks." Some of these pieces, along with some of the Chinese paperworks, were shown in January at two SoHo galleries, Castelli and Sonnabend.

In reaching out to people of other countries through art, Rauschenberg admits to being a bit of a missionary, not entirely unlike the minister he once hoped to become back in Port Arthur. Last summer's interchanges with the Chinese excited him to the possibilities of closer communication among peoples of the earth.

"The experience was extraordinary," he says. "I think they found it as enlightening as I did. If you've lived in the twilight," he puts it as delicately as a Chinese poet, "you would find great creativity in the glow." He cites his new friendship with Yuan Yunsheng, "a brilliant artist," whose



A door in one end of *House of the Eyeless of the Earth Spider* opens to reveal a space walled with paintings and mirrors.

mural in the new airport in Beijing of all the tribes that make up China has caused an uproar. Rauschenberg has been invited back to China this year to show 150 works at the National Gallery in Beijing—the first time the People's Republic will have given a foreigner a one-man show.

The artist has been busy in the United States and in Europe as well. Ten pieces from his "Kabal American Zephyr" series, a recently completed group of large two- and three-dimensional works, were shown at the Flow Ace gallery in Paris, and the whole series was exhibited in New York in January at Castelli and Sonnabend. "Photems," an exhibition of his photographs, opened at the Pompidou Center before traveling to Stockholm, Copenhagen and Florence. Another show of his photographs, "In + Out City Limits: 6 Cities 40," has been shown in the United States. Having entered the arts as a photographer, Rauschenberg says he still "would like to photograph the entire country, inch by inch." Most of the black and white photos in the show—scenes of Boston, Charleston, Baltimore, Los Angeles, Fort Myers and New York—were made during leisurely jaunts in a 1936 Ford Phaeton open touring car in 1980 and 1981. Rauschenberg published a book of these images last year. He is also designing the sets for a collaborative theater work with dancer Trisha Brown and performance artist Laurie Anderson.

Rauschenberg the engaged citizen has been as active as Rauschenberg the artist. He hosted a dinner for 300 to support P.S. 1, the Institute for Art and Urban Resources, in New York; worked for CHANGE, Inc., a fund for artists in distress and a cause very close to his heart, lobbied for artists' rights legislation; and donated prints to raise money for

the successful reelection campaign of Senator Howard Metzenbaum (D.-Ohio).

His activity in the world of politics is very important to Rauschenberg. "To me, politics means people, a sense of justice, social concerns," he says. He sees art as one way to wield influence on social conscience, by communicating his strong feelings about peace, freedom, compassion for humanity. He thinks that artists have as much right as anyone else to become involved with political and social issues.

Rauschenberg might have become that Texas oil driller, or country preacher, if the Navy, the G.I. Bill and Black Mountain College in North Carolina had not opened his eyes to the possibilities of his talent. Now, after 30 years spent developing that talent, he considers himself more journalist than artist: a reporter-commentator on the ironies, foibles, horrors—and the beauty—of the world we inhabit. He would like for us to take responsibility for it, our world, and for each other.

"My reputation has been as the latest 'avant-garde' or 'enfant terrible,' things like that," he says. "But those remarks only relate back, retrospectively, into the art world. I have a sense that the art world is almost bored with the fact that you care about politics, as opposed to 'how cool can you get in the gallery.'"

"But I don't mind. I never wanted to be an 'artist.' (He supplies the quotation marks with his fingers.) There wasn't even a choice. I just spontaneously, or organically, found out that the best way I could communicate with anybody was visually. And then that same sensibility grew into sound and movement.

"If I could write, or say what I have to say in any other way, then I would do so. But I only have art."

RAUSCHENBERG'S MOST AMBITIOUS UNDERTAKING, the *Quarter Mile Piece*, also known as *Two Furlongs*, is scheduled to be finished in 1984.

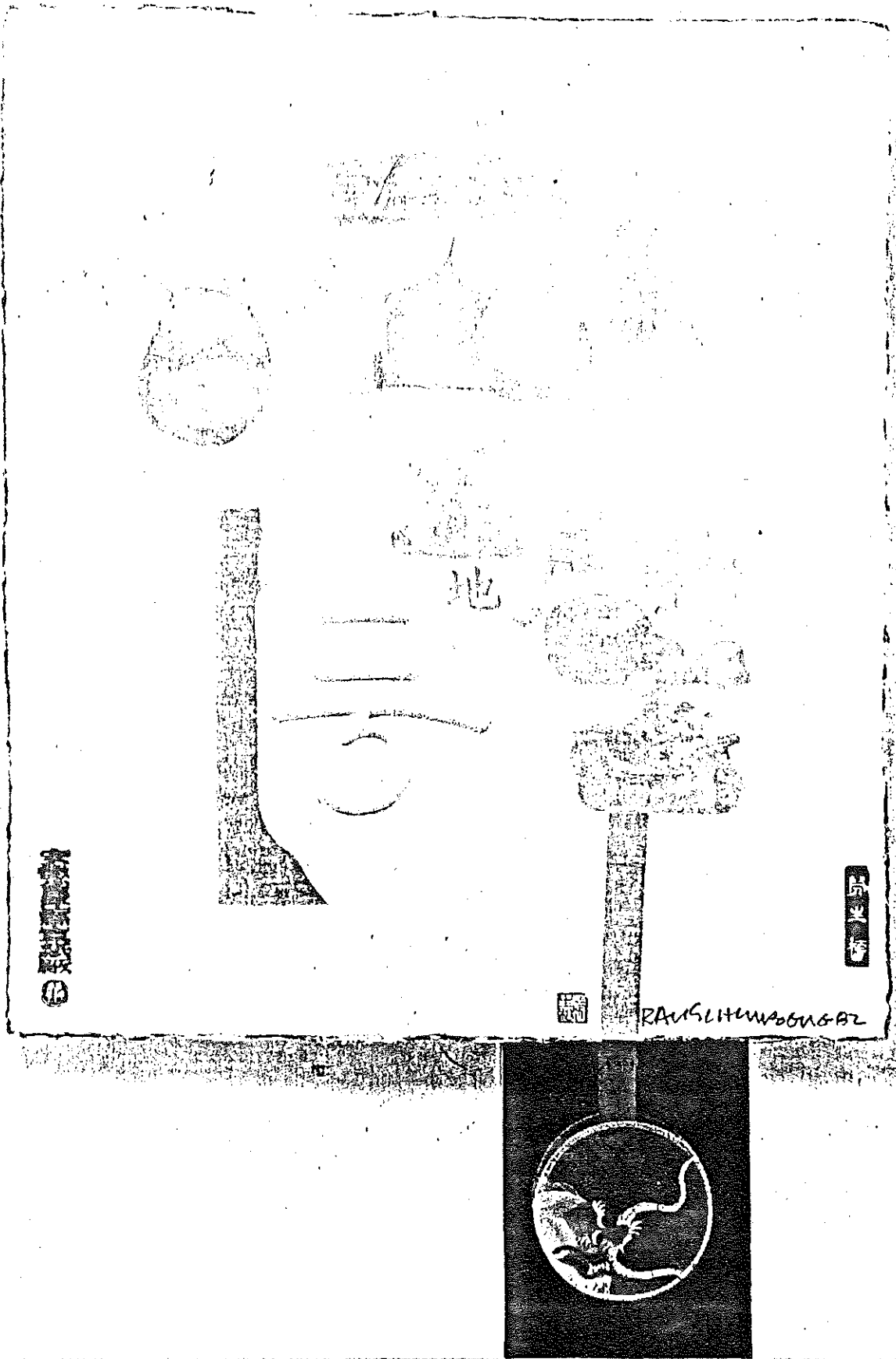
"It's a retrospective of a whole life in art," says James Cain, chairman of the fine arts department of Edison Community College in Fort Myers, where the first 190-foot segment of the *Quarter Mile Piece* was exhibited in 1982, mainly so that Rauschenberg could "see how it worked." It won't be shown again until the other 1,130 feet are ready. "Perhaps at the Los Angeles Olympics," says the artist.

The finished part of the *Quarter Mile Piece* is continuous, wall-to-wall Rauschenberg, 190 feet of joined panels of various heights that cover all four walls of a huge room at the college. With three orange trees in the middle of the room, and a cacophony of sounds pouring out of ceiling speakers (the surf from one, the streets of Cairo from another), it is a universe unto itself.

Rauschenberg worked on the *Quarter Mile Piece* off and on for a year and a half. The panels were hung in the order in which they were completed.

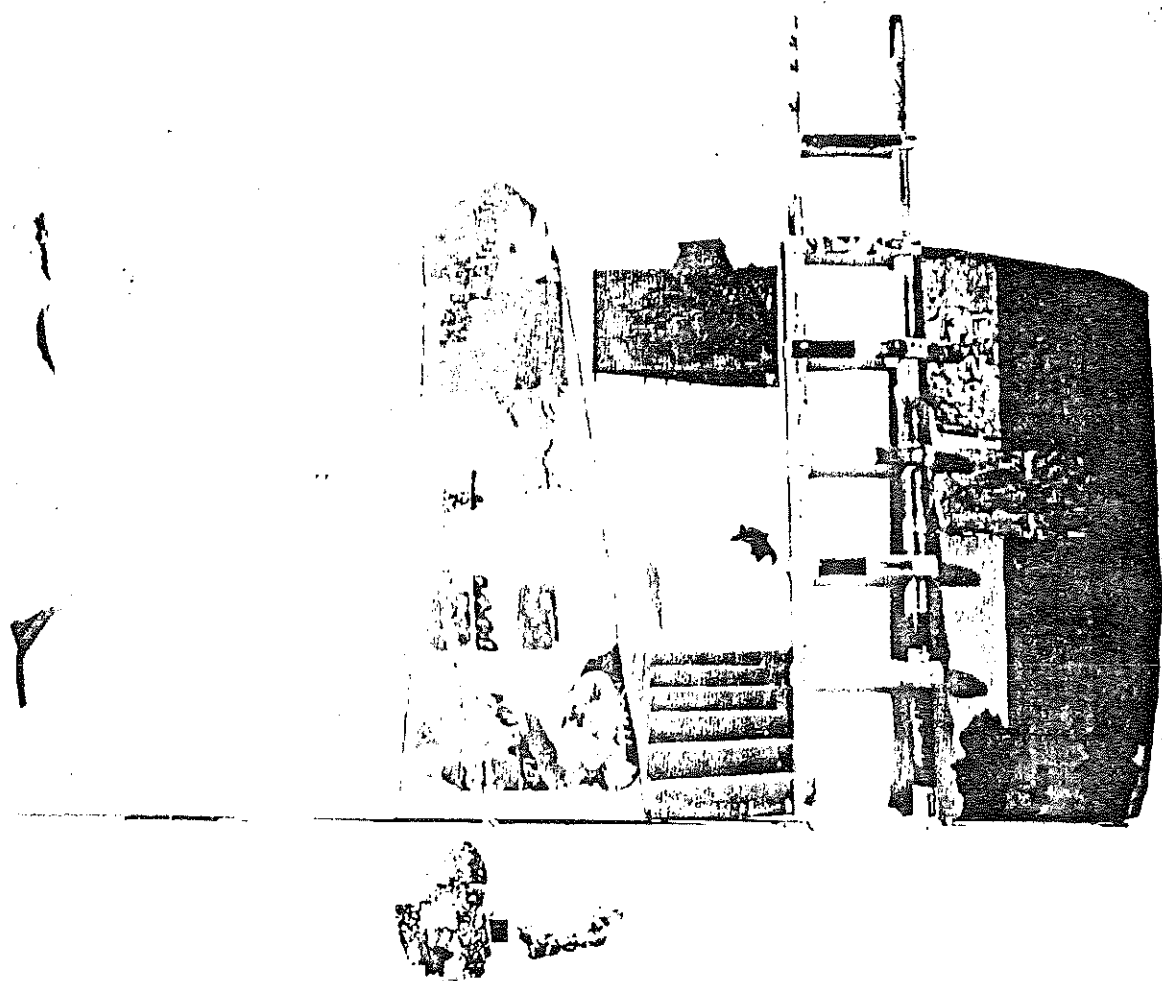
"I'd never seen them all together until the show was hung," says the artist. "I got off a plane and walked in here the evening before it opened and saw the piece for the first time. There was about three feet of wall left over. And so I went home and stayed up all night painting that canvas." The last panel is orange and gray, with a small squashed cardboard box attached at the upper right.

The *Quarter Mile Piece* presents a tumult of words and images transferred from magazines, ads and all sorts of printed matter: steering wheels, pregnant pigs snuffing out



Howl, one of 491 paperworks Rauschenberg made last year in China, incorporates a Chinese character in molded paper pulp.

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RRFA10. Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Archives



Rauschenberg likes to collaborate with craftsmen in other countries. *Dirt Shrine* is one of a group of large ceramic works made in Japan.

truffles, egrets kissing, an earnest Jimmy Carter peering out of a montage of presidents, athletes and musicians, scenes of war and disaster, red roses and a ripe pair of buttocks printed both ways, like fleshy quotation marks repeated again and again. There are snatches and swatches of fabric, and found (or borrowed) objects, including a sheet, patched, stitched and painted over. It belonged to Rauschenberg's neighbor, the frugal artist Maybelle Stamper, who did the patching herself. The images rush headlong into each other, reflecting the chaos, the irony and the natural beauty of the world, but everything is held together by painted stripes, dots, patterned backgrounds and overlays.

"My images come from everywhere," says Rauschenberg. "I support the post office. Subscribe to everything: magazines, newspapers, catalogues, ads. I pick up everything I can get my hands on." He has a vast collection of fabric scraps, boards, wheels, motors, flotsam and jetsam. "I want as rich a palette as possible," he says, "so I can indulge, as eccentrically as I please—and be perfectly right, being as how it's my work."

Some of the messages in *Quarter Mile Piece* are autobiographical. One canvas echoes the white paintings of the 1950s. A brick platform, suggesting a portion of a wall, juts out from another panel, like a memory of the first combine paintings. There is a lone image of a cowboy boot, symbol of a Texas childhood, and a Florida alligator.

There are also panels of serene color: a celadon-painted sea, in which images appear in "windows," and a length of

mauve, violet and pink silk with only the image of an alligator overprinted at the bottom.

There is a horizontal totemic construction of flattened cardboard boxes with objects attached to them, including a paintbrush thick with yellow paint. But the visual climax of the piece is a battered old rattan chaise that juts out into the room, encased in a Plexiglas pyramid.

As in the "Kabal" series, there are many images of the planet Saturn. "The space effort is one of the only endeavors to which we have committed ourselves that is still peaceful," Rauschenberg says. "Explorations in outer space are so mind-boggling, and so many things come out of it that we can use, and learn from, here on earth." He has been to Cape Canaveral blast-offs many times. His print *Hotshot*, made of silver foil and gold leaf, with his own photo images of the space shuttle, hangs in the astronauts' "suit-up" room, and six other prints from the edition are scheduled to take a space trip in the shuttle itself.

A veteran of World War II, Rauschenberg, like most artists, is deeply pained by the idea of war. "I can't figure out why we can't have national obsessions that aren't based on destruction. Rather than investing in war, let [our obsessions] be based on investigation, on curiosity, and still have our best scientific minds at work on it!"

WE ARE TALKING ABOUT SPECIAL places on earth where the ambience is just right for you, where there are "good spirits." Rau-



A montage composed largely of Rauschenberg's photographs taken in China includes a shot of the artist himself, camera in hand.

schenberg suddenly says, "I have such a place, where I go when I need to be absolutely alone and surrounded by peaceful thoughts. Not everybody gets to go there. Want to see it?"

We pile into my car and drive past a "No Trespassing" sign to the other side of Captiva, through a jungle, past an old frame summerhouse, a perfect set for *Key Largo*. Terry jumps out and runs down a lane toward the bay to turn on the lights. There, out in the water, standing on stilts and connected by its own private drawbridgelike dock, is a modest white frame cottage with a tin roof. It stands so far out into the water that it looks like a houseboat floating in the predawn blackness. It is a simple house, very quiet, with one bedroom, bed on the floor Japanese-style. A central room contains a natural wood table; on the right is a kitchen with a freestanding fireplace. The house is immaculate, with shiny pine floors and many-paned windows. We hear the lapping of water underneath us, nothing more.

Rauschenberg tells about the house, how it belonged to the late J. N. (Ding) Darling, a famous political cartoonist whose lifelong crusade for nature conservation brought a bird sanctuary to Sanibel-Captiva, and wildlife and wilderness legislation to forests and marshland across America. He pulls down a little hinged board from the wall—Ding Darling's desk, where he drew his cartoons. Rauschenberg talks about how important nature conservation was to Ding Darling, and is to him, Rauschenberg. "I rescued this place," he says. "They were going to tear it down."

He talks on, about how special this spot is, about what good spirits abound here, about how very few people have stayed here.

"I'm not going to share it with just anybody," he says. "You have to really appreciate it.

"I'm Indian, you see," he says. "A quarter Cherokee, and I have a special feel for places. This American Indian leader came to visit, and I thought he would feel the same way about this place. And so I filled it with flowers, stocked the refrigerator—found wonderful herbs and natural gourmet food and wine. Well! This 100 percent American Indian gets out here, looks around and says, 'Where's the telephone?'"

Rauschenberg gets all wound up with mock outrage. "The telephone! That's the last time I invited anybody out to stay in *my* fish house."

As we pick up to leave, we start talking about the creative impulse. He is awed by it, and he doesn't know where it comes from, nor how. It has for him an almost mystical quality, like his feeling at the fish house.

"It's like a crystal," he says. "Clear and hard inside, and light hits it from somewhere. From where? Somewhere in outer space, maybe, that we haven't explored yet. And what comes out is just a reflection of that light, from the unknown source."

The stars are as bright as crystals as we step across the dock, back to land. "Maybe it comes from out there," he says, pointing.

Robert Rauschenberg

P.O. Box 54, Captiva, Florida 33924

ATTENTION: DON SAFF
 FROM: TERRY VAN BRUNT

USF - GRAPHICS STUDIO

Bob has not seen either of the following yet, and I have been wondering: A-If response should be made B-Who should write it. Bob doesn't really believe he should correct. Barbara Rose does have this book coming out that we have great input in editing.

I hate the Doris Saatchi article in May Vanity Fair (#2-3-4)

#1---Horizon April 87 Did you see the Charles Kurwalt

Sunday show on the Russian show? Fujiko told me

it is going to the Setagaya fully paid for by ATT...

I think we can actually use this show to our advantage

,,,I guess we will have to.

#2---facts, wrong. Tone, disgusting

#3---They never mention Bob R. comment, something like..

"You could send flowers or even say thanks". Of

course this may be the moment RR started on artists rights.

I can't go on now. See you tomorrow..

#4---Oh sure. RR new year show, two dealers, three galleries,,

Generally, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, stop, Terry...

Lets think as three tomorrow, and I think you should stay at the weeks house.

Terry

HORIZON

1

Ambassadors of Art

Communication was the conduit that brought us together in New York to launch the extraordinary new exhibition of works by the Wyeths. Each partner in the project represents an essential link in the channel which will extend all around the world. "American Vision" was selected as the first exhibition to travel to the Soviet Union as part of the 1985 Geneva Summit cultural exchange agreement. The corporate sponsor, AT&T, is, of course, dedicated to improving the process by which we all communicate every day. And the wonderful paintings by N. C., Andrew, and Jamie Wyeth will deliver a profound statement to the world about our American heritage and our landscape.

AT&T's role in the exhibition extends much further than that of benefactor. During the celebratory luncheon last month at the corporate headquarters, Jamie Wyeth explained that it was AT&T's "seriousness of interest" that inspired the family of painters to agree to the three-generation retrospective. Corporate vice-president James Brunson was singled out by Brandywine Museum director James Duff as the source of the idea for the show—a cultural event which will have a profound impact on audiences in the Soviet Union, Japan, Italy, England, and the United States.

Jamie Wyeth also gave special credit to his grandfather, N. C. Wyeth, whose works form the starting point of the "American Vision" exhibition. He told the group of diplomats, curators, corporate executives, and journalists that N. C. said painters are really actors who, through their work, carry out the drama of their imagination. He went on to say that each of the Wyeths has used his own locations to paint the human drama of the world as he sees it. The people of Leningrad, Moscow, Tokyo, Milan, Cambridge, as well as American cities on the schedule will experience that firsthand during the exhibition's two-year tour.

The arts are an effective bridge between cultures, and the Wyeths are great ambassadors of our American landscape. Thanks to this important collaboration, a very special message will travel the world along with their splendid paintings.

Tom Walters, director of the Lee County (Florida) Alliance of the Arts, has received the 1986 Dawson Management Award from the Association of College, University, and Community Arts Administrators (ACUCCA). Tom was honored for his work in developing *Spectrum*, HORIZON's regional guide which serves a five-county area along Florida's Southwest coast. ACUCCA recognized Tom Walters for innovation in programming, audience development, fundraising, marketing, and management ideas. These activities also form the foundation of our entire regional arts guide program, established in 1986.

It gives all of us at HORIZON great pleasure to work with Tom Walters and to congratulate him upon receiving this prestigious award. His great vision and his commitment to the arts provide a valuable resource for the people of Southwest Florida and throughout the U.S.

James Bidd
Robert Bil
Clemen E.
at the Di
Jim Cornf
Viscount D
Agnes de l
Geoffrey H
Katie Kelly
Stanley Kn
Sue Mengt
Hope Ridr
Paula Nels
Lcomuz
Joseph Vet
Brooky
Milan Sitr
Mort Walk

e, and de Kooning, the rise and rise
Johns and Rauschenberg, the debut of
art, Happenings, increased attention
the media, and a newly moneyed,
re-seeking, visually switched-on
of collectors.

Brooklyn Museum's Horace Solomon
members: "In 1962 I walked into Cas-
s gallery during the first Lichten-
show. I thought it was the most
ing thing I had ever seen. I had nev-
ought art before and bought one
ing for \$1,000. I just got carried
and kept going back and buying
. After that, I quit the golf club
e I had been spending all my spare,
" Contemporary artworks became
desirable than a third car, a second
coat, and a lower handicap.

el Redner and Ruby Sokolnikoff—
ter known to *Women's Wear Daily*
aders, presidential advisers, and
ean aristocrats as Spike and Bob
—were married in 1944. Funded
fleet of taxicabs, they moved into
ation-packed center of Manhattan's
oning art world. In 1961 Bob fell,
own words, "head over heels in
with Pop art. Talking about the
hortly before his death in 1986, he
into the distance like a man recall-
long-lost love. "Collecting be-
obsessive with me; it was the most
rful kind of collecting, where you
caution to the winds. . . . It's like
an—you don't think." Notice the
e in tenses. He laughed and added,
ed money all over town. I bought
madman. I didn't go to work, I
ang around the galleries. It took
ars for my wife to understand."

first work he bought was a \$200
to," gaining a reputation in his
as a collector of Post-Impression-
le soon realized that it was not

"darling" was a young artist named Jas-
per Johns. They bought every Johns they
could, and when *Out the Window* came
their way in 1960, Ethel Scull remem-
bers that it was "the first time we had
the right, the very first time, to go up to
his loft and pick out pictures from his
new show before anyone else saw them.
I wanted to buy three
pictures." Leo Castelli,
Johns's dealer, told
Ethel that buying three
was vulgar. "So I said I
don't care what happens,
it's gonna be two, I was
so strong about it, it's
gotta be two. I was not
going to be regulated to one picture."

"We all possess art in different ways,"
says critic Roberta Smith. "Collecting is
the most essential and the most maligned
way." Spike and Bob were maligned
mostly because they always refused to be
"regulated." Their motto was "I want it,
I want it all, and I want it now," as it is
the motto of every great collector, but
they didn't make any pretenses about it.

By 1966 the Sculls had assembled a
great collection, and Tom Wolfe wrote a
long piece in the *World Journal Tribune*
calling them "one of the great social
success stories of New York since World
War II." Having *The Right Art* was con-
firmed in print as a better entrée into soci-
ety than doing things *The Right Way*. "I
felt at that time," recalls dealer Castelli,
"and I still feel, that for someone who has
a lot of money and wants to participate in
the big world the best thing they could do
is to set up a great collection."

Leo Castelli would know. For the
thirty years since he first opened a gal-
lery in his East Seventy-seventh Street
apartment, he has been the most influen-
tial source of important postwar Ameri-
can art in the world. An Italian who was

been waiting for him to die for years.

A wife-and-husband team who didn't
need Leo's advice on social advance-
ment were the Tremaines, Emily and
Burton. In 1958 a friend told them about
a show of work by Johns at Castelli's
gallery. Castelli sent them to Johns's
studio and suggested that as Robert

#2

**Their motto was "I want it,
I want it all, and I want it now."**

Rauschenberg was in the same building,
they look at his work as well. On their
arrival it was Rauschenberg who greeted
them, expressing gratitude that they had
come such a long way to see him and his
friend Johns. The Tremaines happily
chose two Johns paintings. Then, feel-
ing it was only polite to buy a Rauschen-
berg too, they climbed one more flight
of stairs to his studio. The first work
they saw was a scruffy stuffed goat with
a black rubber tire around his belly.
Then they found themselves looking at a
metal-and-wood construction balanced
on a pillow and crowned by a stuffed
chicken. The Tremaines were not back-
ward in their appreciation of the "odd-
looking" new art of the time. They
bought Stella when he was being dis-
missed by an influential critic as "the
pin stripe boy"; they bought Lichten-
stein, Carl Andre, and Warhol early.
But in 1958, works consisting of old bits
of wire mesh, rubber tires, and dead ani-
mals were just a little too much for
them. "Then," says Mrs. Tremaine,
"we saw a simple wood construction
sitting on the floor to one side and said
we'd have that one. We were so grate-

Art continued

ful to find something that wasn't stuffed that we rushed out without even asking the price."

"It was Emily who was the biggest competition," says Ethel, "and she would tease me and accuse me of getting up at six o'clock in the morning to get to Jasper before anybody else. I always told her, 'Emily, I guarantee you I don't get up at six o'clock. I've got three children to hustle off to school, and by the time I get out I manage to buy Jasper's work because of my great friendship...'"

Bob Rauschenberg was a friend too. Barnett Newman, may he rest in peace, was a man I worshipped... James Rosenquist and Robert Morris, Walter de Maria—all of these people were friends, and they were invited out as guests to my house in East Hampton. I entertained a lot, and always when I entertained, the artists were there... in my apartment at 1010 Fifth Avenue—I had an eleven-room apartment, it was large—and the paintings would hang there, and Andy Warhol used to come by and drop off flowers signed 'Andy Pie' for me."

One artist, apparently, was not Ethel's friend. "Mark Rothko and I were introduced to each other in East Hampton, where all of them convened for the summer. You know, Jim Dine, Pearlstein, Bill de Kooning—everybody you could name was on that beach. I went to a party and I told him what a great pleasure it was to meet him and—he was so rude—he said, 'That's no big deal... a lot of people are glad to meet me.' So I said to myself, I own a Rothko and he's so mean to me. I asked him if I could come to his loft and see his pictures and he said, 'I don't let just anybody up to my loft.' And I said, 'Well, I'm not just anybody. I'm collecting art and I love your work and I would love to see it.' And he said, 'No, you can't come up.'"

So Ethel didn't invite Rothko to any of her lavish parties. The Marquess of Dufferin and Ava was invited; so were the Duke of Windsor and the young Pop artists. "Lichtenstein, Warhol, Rosenquist, George Segal, Oldenburg too was always there, and they adored meeting one another," she remembers. "Frank Stella came, of course, he loved com-

didn't take vacations like other families. "We took our family trips to the back room of the Green Gallery," he says. There was a fountain-pen piece for his Bar Mitzvah from Jasper Johns, a matchbook with a drawing inside the cover "For Johnny" from Kline, baseball games at Shea Stadium with Barnett Newman—"He loved baseball"—big parties like the one at the World's Fair when "even Claes Oldenburg rented a tuxedo to come." Jonathan remembers why a Barnett Newman work now bears traces of an oily substance that isn't paint. "We used to stand behind our chairs at the dinner table waiting for my parents to come in to eat, and one night my younger brother Adam and I were arguing about something and he flicked a pat of butter at me with his knife. I ducked and it landed on the painting on the wall behind me. I just managed to scrape it off before my parents walked into the room."

The bubble burst in 1973. Scull needed money and decided to sell off some paintings. While the house was being redecorated he had them put into storage—Sotheby's storage for goods to be sold at auction.

The unmaking of such a famous collection was as unsettling as its accumulation had been. It was the first large-scale test of the market for Pop art as well. There is a film, commissioned by Bob Scull, of the events leading up to the sale and the sale itself. In it, Ethel and Bob are interviewed by NBC in front of Warhol's 1963 multiple portrait of Ethel—now in the Whitney Museum. Bob is interviewed by CBS standing in front of a Tom Wesselmann at Sotheby's. Ethel, the East Side matron, goes to Kenneth the hairdresser. Bob, the matey boss, sits in his taxi-company office. They are the stars of their own production, the first "star" collectors.

It had gone virtually unnoticed three years before when Scull had sent six works to a Sotheby's sale, none over ten years old. An Oldenburg and a Lichtenstein went to a German dealer, and most were sold for under their estimates. Johns's *Two Flags* failed to reach its

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#3
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 works to a Sotheby's sale, none over ten
 years old. An Oldenburg and a Lichten-
 stein went to a German dealer, and most
 were sold for under their estimates.
 Johns's *Two Flags* failed to reach its
 reserve figure: bidding stopped at
 \$105,000. In the 1986 Scull sale the
 same painting would make \$1.7 million.

"At the same time," remembers Dick
 Bellamy, "as Scull was deriving an in-
 tellectual enrichment, if you will, from
 becoming associated with the artists and

...acquisition is in-
 volvement," says Bob Scull in the film.
 "Of course, owning a nice share of IBM
 is involvement too, but with art you're
 into something else, a different kind of
 high." When Bob, Ethel, and Jonathan
 are filmed leaving their apartment on the
 night of the sale, they look miserable.
 Bob shrugs his shoulders as he holds the
 door for his wife and son. "It's useless
 if you can't enjoy it," he says.

The total on the evening was a rec-
 ord \$2,242,900. That kind of money
 showed art as a high-return commodity,
 and it changed the market overnight.
 Collectors who were buying for love
 were joined by collectors who would
 buy for profit and fame. On the sound
 track, Ethel's voice rises above the hub-
 bub around Bob after the sale: "I'm

Mrs. Scull, so don't push me." Most
 reaction was as confused as Rauschen-
 berg's. After two of his paintings had
 sold for \$90,000 and \$85,000, he pushes
 Bob Scull hard in the shoulder. "That
 was some markup. [Scull had bought
 them for \$2,500 and \$900.] I've been
 working my ass off for you to make that
 profit." "How about yours," replies
 Scull, "on what you're going to sell
 now? I've been working for you too."
 "You buy the next one, O.K.?" says
 Rauschenberg. "At these prices." Re-
 cently Roy Lichtenstein commented on
 Rauschenberg's reactions: "What did he
 hope, that the paintings had gone down
 in value?"

"I didn't know what it all meant,"
 recalls Dick Bellamy. "It was probably
 one of my drinking periods."

Inevitably, the hangover ensued. The
 1973 Scull sale was followed by the only
 serious recession that the contemporary-
 art market has known. Bob and Ethel part-
 ed. He dropped out of sight, she started
 her long fight for a share of the collection.

Scull's love affair was over.

In June 1980 the *Village Voice* inter-
 viewed several leading dealers about the
 "slump" in the art market. None
 seemed to feel the supposed pinch. "Art
 is an extremely liquid asset, not unlike
 gold," said Mary Boone.

Six months later Calvin Tomkins an-
 nounced in *The New Yorker* that the art
 market, "oblivious of recession or
 recovery... goes right on booming."
 His piece came after a rash of art-money
 headlines, including the Tremaines' sale

Art

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#4

ord), followed a month later by a gift of modern art worth \$4 million to Yale, then another gift worth \$12 million to the Met. It was also news when there was no money involved. "School Rejects a 'Free' Oldenburg," said the front page of the *New York Times*. In April 1981, Leo Castelli joined forces with a young dealer named Mary Boone in an unprecedented two-gallery one-man show of works by Julian Schnabel. The *Saturday Review* ran a series called "Great Private Collections."

"People who never collected before are collecting," says Ethel Scull now, "but I don't think they're collecting art because they love it. That's my one objection to the whole hype. They're doctors and dentists and God knows what people. From out of the woodwork they're coming..."

Jeffrey Deitch, a Citicorp vice president in charge of "sophisticated financial services" for private art-collecting clients, has analyzed today's art market. "Up to \$20,000, collecting is a casual activity; at about \$16,000, people may take two. After that, there is a shake-out." Deitch has so many clients that one member of his department does nothing but insure and ship works the bank is holding as collateral. His service is unique, for the moment.

Art consultants, by contrast, are popping up all over the place, prompting Jeffrey Deitch's observation that art consultancy is replacing interior decoration as a popular mid-life career. One successful art maven graduates about fifty "collectors" a year from courses with titles like "Collecting the Unaffiliated Artist," in which eager neophytes are led in raids on the studios of young "undiscovered" artists. Among her alumnae are friends Lois and Blanche from a New Jersey suburb, who spend about \$25,000 a year of their clothes allowances on art. To meet the demand, artists must now work on an almost industrial scale. High culture is adapting its output to the consumer society.

On the second night of the 1986 Scull sale, devoted entirely to 44 of the 133 works from Robert Scull's estate, there were fewer people, but the

KOUROS Formule Sport

Kouros Formule Sport puts you in motion with the Race's Edge, a remote-control

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ADVANCING ART

After 20 years of trailblazing print work, GraphicStudio has finally found fame, and a little fortune. By Susan Edwards

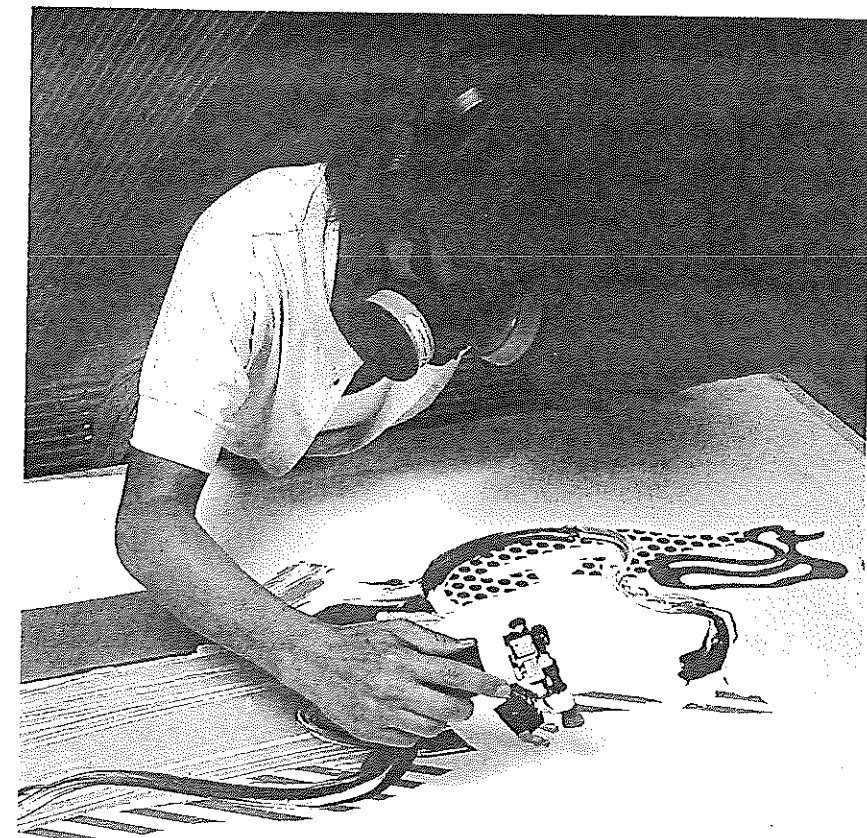
A cello adorned by a Chinese brush reposes grandly in a chromed washtub. Two huge pictures appear to be photos of the faces of two women, but up-close scrutiny reveals them to have been created entirely by thousands of thumbprints. These, and dozens of other strangely stirring and dynamic works of art, are part of the history being made in a building at the north end of the University of South Florida campus.

Here, at a place called GraphicStudio, master printers and their apprentices are devising new techniques that enable some of the nation's foremost artists to expand the size, scope, and complexity of their work. This marriage of arcane craft and technological trailblazing is producing artwork that would have been impossible a few years ago.

In fact, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., considers the activities of the 20-year-old GraphicStudio so important that, in 1985, it established a special archive for the works of art created there. The collection will serve as a comprehensive chronicle of the creation of works by major artists at GraphicStudio from conception through production. Currently, there are almost 350 works in this teaching collection, which archives papers, proofs, artist statements, videotapes, letters, notes, drawings, preliminary prints, and research. "You can get an idea of how the artist's idea grows, how he's thinking about his work, and you can see the changes occur," says Charles Ritchie, assistant curator at the National Gallery. "People do come and study the prints and look at groups of works together."

The State of Florida, too, has recognized the importance of GraphicStudio by designating it as a Local Vital Cultural Resource. Such a designation takes GraphicStudio out of competition for grant dollars from the Florida Arts Council and provides it with an assured \$100,000 a year.

Although GraphicStudio is in the business of art at the University of South Florida, it's not a part of the art department. Rather, it's considered a research facility



Wendy Elias uses pioneering waxing technique.

and is an independent entity under the auspices of the university's vice president of research, George Newkome.

"It's a very unique institution, relative to the operations of most universities," says Newkome. "Its activity, because it involves so many of the world's art experts, reflects greatly on our graduate and undergraduate programs," he continues. "We're lucky to have it, though I'm not sure lucky is the right word. We're very pleased to have it, and it's something we are going to nurture."

At least one of each of the projects published at GraphicStudio goes to the USF Art Museum, a fact that makes Professor Margaret Miller, the museum's director, almost ecstatic. "We have around 400 GraphicStudio-produced prints dating from

1968. That includes litho[graphs], etchings, woodcuts, and sculpture multiples. This collection has had a dramatic impact on our prestige, and gives us a tremendous edge when it comes to borrowing or loaning artworks," says Miller.

A single example of GraphicStudio's effect on the museum's status is Roy Lichtenstein's sculpture "The Bronze Chair," worth \$250,000. "My entire state-provided budget for programming each year is only \$41,000," says Miller. "We could never afford to obtain something like that without GraphicStudio."

The architect of all this excitement, the founder and director of GraphicStudio, is Don Saff, a beefy, affable, and demanding artist/professor/author with a mop of curly

black hair now beginning to gray.

"Don is an important person in the print world," says shop manager Susie Hennessy, who was with him at the start of GraphicStudio in 1968 and has stayed on. "He's stimulating; he has a charismatic personality; artists enjoy spending time with him. He's an art historian, too, and he's always writing. He wrote an important text with Deli [Sacilotto, GraphicStudio's technical director] titled *The History of Printmaking*. He's had a lot of impact on many lives in both the academic and art worlds," she says.

Nonetheless, while GraphicStudio has always been successful in its work with artists, funding problems have closed its doors once and threatened to do so several times.

The studio opened with five employees in 1968 as a non-profit, experimental workshop that sought to offer visual artists the chance to create works of art drawing on the skills and techniques of master printers and artisans in a non-commercial setting. "The goal was to expand the technical framework of art in the 20th Century," says Don Saff. "But more importantly it was to expand the conceptual framework.

"Artists had had little opportunity to learn printmaking at that time," he continues. "It was mostly the province of printmakers who were the custodians of esoteric techniques."

The facility drew artists of national and international reputation to Tampa. The atmosphere of collaboration and the stimulation of major artists coming together to share ideas gave rise to new concepts in printmaking. James Rosenquist, Robert Rauschenberg, Jim Dine, and Philip Pearlstein, to name a few, came to work at GraphicStudio where, freed of the constraints of technique, they could concentrate on the content of their work.

Several artists who came here to work found the environment so appealing that they moved to the area, including Jim Rosenquist and Robert Rauschenberg. (Sandro Chia, who has two bases in upstate New York and another in Italy, is also thinking of moving to Tampa.) They also began to spread the word to other artists. "Things escalated tremendously," recalls Saff. "Everything went up except the budget allocation," he says ruefully.

Deep budget cuts in 1974 forced the closing of GraphicStudio in 1976, though it was internationally recognized as one of the best print shops in the world.

"It was harder to close down than it had been to open because of obligations to artists, subscribers, and exhibitions," says Saff. "And the loss in terms of experimentation and the value of the program was incalculable."

But GraphicStudio had become so well-known in the art world that the university funded its resurrection in 1981. It reopened with expanded capabilities and has since accomplished more advances in the field. In 1985, the university provost asked Saff, who had joined the USF art faculty after the studio closed, to resume the GraphicStudio directorship.

Among the newer techniques developed is one that Saff calls "heliorelief," which lends speed and accuracy to woodblock printing by transferring a photographic image to a woodblock and cutting it without gouges or knives. Results of this technique, says Saff, soon will be showing up in the work of Dine, Pearlstein, and Chia. Also in the works is a new printing process called "wax type," which staffers have been developing for use by Roy Lichtenstein.

GraphicStudio's pioneering is not limited to technical work, however—international cultural exchange is next on the agenda. In February, staffers went to Moscow to instruct U.S.S.R. artists in the new processes developed here, and to complete negotiation and selection procedures for publishing a Russian artist at GraphicStudio.

Saff and his staff also are handling the Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange (ROCI), a traveling exhibition begun in 1985 with stops in Cuba, Mexico, South America, Japan, China, and the U.S.S.R., among others.

"[Rauschenberg] goes to each of the countries and does work based on the imagery and heritage of that country, and that becomes part of the exhibition," explains Saff. "So the exhibition is constantly changing, and each successive country adds its work to the show. It's an artistic, diplomatic exchange through the eyes, hands, and heart of Rauschenberg," he tells his visitor.

GraphicStudio's contribution to USF is not limited to earning world-wide prestige and credibility. Deli Sacilotto teaches at least one course each year about the history of printmaking and of the studio itself. The course not only provides technical information, but exposes participants to the ideas of the artists as well. Students can then apply to apprentice with the master printers in the studio.

"This place is the confluence of some of the most important artists in the world, who come here to produce work," asserts Saff. "This isn't happening at Harvard or Yale or Princeton, although they long for it to happen there." He says several institutions of that caliber have visited GraphicStudio to see what makes it work.

The students who have studied at GraphicStudio remain loyal, too. Many are

among the staff of 28 printers, fabricators, curatorial people, managers, documenters, and educators. USF graduate Richard Karnatz is working on a Lichtenstein project. Vincent Ahearn, another USF grad, works in curating. Director of Photography George Holzer, at the studio from the beginning, is a USF alumnus, as is Hennessy, who is in charge of all studio production. Eric Vontillius, a print technologist, is another. He came to USF because of its strong fine arts program, found GraphicStudio, and stayed on to work there.

Others, such as Mark Stock, worked at the studio for awhile, then struck off on their own to work independently. Stock is now a California printer/painter of growing prominence. Others have gone into teaching and later have recommended students to the university and the studio.

That kind of support has led to physical growth, as well as technical and artistic development. Last May, GraphicStudio expanded into a new, rented facility—a 12,000-square-foot outpost at 11602 N. 51st Street—just off the south edge of the USF campus. Until it moved into its new home, it had been jammed into the cramped, 2,300-square-foot, old observatory on the USF golf course. That building remains part of the studio, and is used primarily for sculpture because it has a large room with a retractable roof.

Newkome says USF has made a firm commitment to GraphicStudio, and foresees no change to that in the immediate future. There is talk even of someday moving the studio into an on-campus facility built especially for it, though he cautions that is not part of the USF five-year development plan, nor is GraphicStudio on the school's PECO (Public Education Capital Outlay) list.

But for the first time in almost 20 years, Saff seems to feel optimistic about GraphicStudio's future. He still has money headaches and would like to see funding levels much higher, but state and national recognition of its distinguished achievements and more cooperation from the university, have assured its continuation.

Meanwhile, Saff is devoting himself and his resources completely to the present and letting the future take care of itself. "It's important not to know what the future is," he says. "Because if you don't know what the future is, you can go in any possible direction. I think that's the strength of GraphicStudio. We don't plan the future. We let the future invent us."

SUSAN EDWARDS, program director of the Arts Council of Tampa/Hillsborough County, has written for numerous local publications and is editor of *Arts News*.

RRFA10. Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Archives

to the whole retail center, Adler says, will be a 2,500-square-foot bookstore.

One of Adler's most ambitious plans is the construction of a whole house or an "office of the future" within the museum. "I have a brilliant architect in Weinstein," he says. "I realized years ago that I would never do a show of models and drawings of buildings if it could be avoided. The public really doesn't understand them. Architecture is sculpture for human activity and function. So we'll present the buildings whole, and relate design items and their functions to the buildings."

The permanent collection of the museum will focus primarily (but not exclusively) on California artists, and will include works from different periods, so that viewers will see something of the development of the artist's career. Adler also plans to feature local artists, particularly those living and working in downtown San Diego.

Adler says he doesn't like to talk about the past—the ten years at LJMCA—but memories break into his conversation. He refers to major accomplishments, such as acquiring LJMCA's noteworthy permanent collection of American art of the '60s, but he also has bitter comments about his struggles with staff members, his board of directors and the press. Early in 1983, two local newspapers reported that Adler played cruel practical jokes on staff members and that he was not fully accountable in his administration of the museum. His refusal to join the American Association of Museums was further ammunition for his detractors. What Adler may have seen as ambition and unwillingness to compromise others saw as intolerance, a dictatorial management style and lack of self-control.

Adler admits that his weakness is a lack of patience, but he believes that his strength is his ability to conceive of ideas for good exhibitions and to find the right people to carry them out. The center's board of directors and staff, including John Taylor, have been chosen in part for their compatibility with Adler's style of drive and obsession. And the self-proclaimed "city kid" seems to be in his element. "Here I feel alive," he says. "When I'm in a city, I want to feel the excitement and live it. Now I've got it back." —Elise Miller

ROCKY ROAD TO PEACE AND UNDERSTANDING

AT THE United Nations recently, artist Robert Rauschenberg announced plans for a five-year world tour, a kind of one-man diplomatic mission to 22 countries. The Rauschenberg Overseas Cultural Interchange (ROCI—pronounced "rocky") will open at the Rufino Tamayo Museum in Mexico City in April with an exhibition of 150 Rauschenberg works from the last 20 years. While in Mexico, the artist will collect indigenous materials and work with Mexican artists, writers and craftsmen to create new pieces to augment the show, so that when it opens at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Santiago, Chile, in July it will have a distinctly Mexican flavor. In every country, Rauschenberg will collect more material and make new works. After traveling next to Venezuela, the exhibition (presumably by this time about half Hispanic, half North American) will leave South America for Beijing, China. (At each stop, Rauschenberg will make a documentary videotape and produce a catalogue, in the language of the country, explaining what ROCI is all about.) Eventually, the original show will have been entirely superseded by a collection something like a traveler's charm bracelet. Rauschenberg describes it as "a total celebration of the differences and similarities of as much of the world [as] we will be allowed to touch."

Rauschenberg, who has long felt that "a one-to-one contact through art contains potent peaceful powers," said that he had been working on ROCI for more than eight years. Its scope nonetheless remained unclear. As of the end of 1984, only six of the proposed 22 host nations had firmly accepted and scheduled ROCI's visit, and just five others were "in the process of involvement." But "22 is Mr. Rauschenberg's lucky number," explains Brenda Woodard, one of ROCI's organizers in Florida, the artist's home state, so visiting

22 nations remains ROCI's goal.

Woodard admitted that ROCI was temporarily "in limbo with funding." Rauschenberg is neither soliciting nor accepting government funds, and a major setback occurred two days before the press conference when a backer withdrew a substantial contribution to the project's \$6 million budget. ROCI receives other individual and corporate support, and the University of South Florida donates office space and Woodard's salary. Much of the planning and scheduling of the shows falls to Rauschenberg's personal staff of assistants, and the transportation costs for each exhibition are covered by Schenkers International Forwarders, Inc. Additional donations to make up half the cost of each show will be solicited within host countries.

More than 150 diplomats and such art-world ambassadors as J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, showed up for the reception at the U.N. Punctuating the cocktail-party chatter was the constant query, "Do you know what this is all about?"

After an introduction by Donald Saff, professor of fine arts at the University of South Florida and ROCI's curator and artistic director, Rauschenberg cheerfully and offhandedly delivered a rambling and at times inaudible speech. He started by reading a message from Jacob Javits, the former senator from New York, whose wife, Marion, was at the reception. "Javits says, 'The art of Rauschenberg is universal and is the universal ideal that can save the world from destruction.'" The artist paused. "And he's willing to sign this." The joke drew laughter from Marion Javits and others but appeared to puzzle many of the dignitaries. Next Rauschenberg said that ROCI was named after his pet turtle. A man in a dark suit relayed this to the person standing next to him, "He says he named it after his daughter." Rauschenberg mentioned various countries on ROCI's list ("China is the great thing!") but soon abbreviated his speech and haltingly ad-libbed, "The love of everybody . . . against each other body . . . is important. And it can only happen with art."

The disarray of ROCI's debut may have given a misleading picture of its chances for success. Much of the machinery for the traveling exhibition is in place, and Rauschenberg has committed the next five years to the project, forgoing solo shows in the United States to devote his time to his ideal. And, as he wrote in the last paragraph of what was to have been his speech, "Art is educational, is in all languages at once, provocative and enlightening even when first not understood."

—Margaret Moorman



Rauschenberg (left) presents a print to U. N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar to celebrate ROCI's debut.

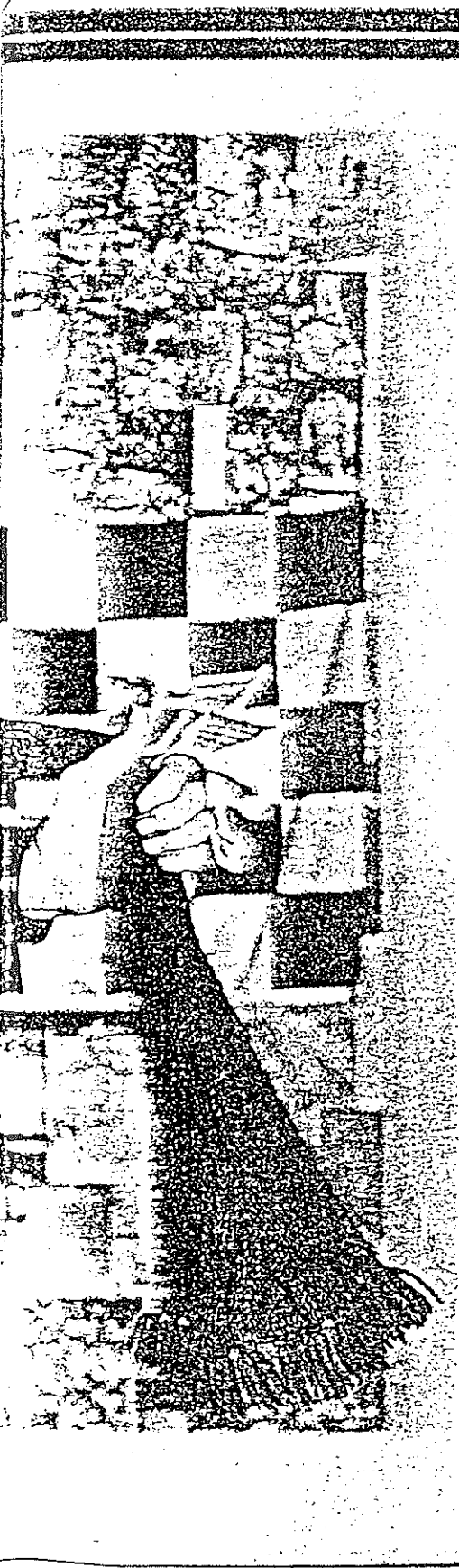
**PAINTER ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG
TAKES A TRIP TO CHINA AND POPS BACK
WITH NEW SHOWS AND NEW VITALITY**

ARTS



Celebrating the new year, and bursting with energy, Rauschenberg unwinds in a SoHo gallery before a recent flag-bedecked

without p
RRFA 12. Robert Rauschenberg



collage construction.

Scheduling an art opening on New Year's Eve is an act of social heresy, but as 1982 was winding down, the scene in Manhattan's SoHo district was just cranking up. Into three galleries crowded 1,500 guests, including such vanguards of the avant-garde as choreographers Twyla Tharp and Merce Cunningham and composer Philip Glass, as well as rock musicians David Byrne and Steve Miller. Host of the evening was master of modern art Robert Rauschenberg, 57, whose party list is as eclectic and unconventional as his work. "I thought our opening would remind people how interesting and lively art can be," he says.

Rauschenberg has plenty of reasons to celebrate the new year. After floundering in the '70s ("I felt completely out of touch," he admits), the all-American bad boy of art is flourishing. The Museum of Modern Art is exhibiting selections from the collage series, *7 Characters*, he made in China last summer. SoHo's Leo Castelli Gallery has installed a new Rauschenberg extravaganza: a 100-foot-long photographic print composed of color snapshots from his China trip. Also on display are large-scale ceramic pieces the artist made on a side trip to Japan.

Rauschenberg's new exuberance for work is welcome relief from the artistic suffocation he felt in the last decade. "It's taken me a few years to do something other than criticize everybody else's attitudes." As for himself, the paladin of modernism has always drawn inspiration from such unlikely sources as magazine ads and garbage dumps. "I always worked with my head hanging out the window," he explains.

Last June he decided to take a flier and set off for China, setting up a warehouse studio at a remote paper mill, reputedly the world's oldest. But with trepidation. "I like to perform on location," he says, "but China frightened me. It's one thing to go to New Jersey to make a fool of myself. It's another to go all the way to China."

In fact, all went well. At his request, the paper mill produced an unusually stiff paper sheet of mulberry fibers onto which the artist assembled an assortment of images he picked out in Shanghai poster shops. Covered with a specially created translucent paper,



The 30½-inch-high China collage combines pop images (type machine, flower, pig, tank) with the character for howl.

the collages are a distinctive cultural exchange—a marriage of Chinese iconography and Rauschenberg whimsy.

On the second leg of his journey, he improvised at a Japanese ceramics factory, which claims that its clay will not change for 3,000 years. The "Clayworks" series features images transferred as glazes onto the clay surface. Rauschenberg insisted each piece, including accessories such as chains, be made of clay. "I have to invent devices to stay fertile," he says.

"I sometimes feel my life is getting on and off planes," Rauschenberg says. Divorced in 1953, he nonetheless flew back from Japan to attend a photographic exhibit by his son, Christopher, 31, in Portland, Ore. In the spring he launches a 150-piece retrospective on its three-year, worldwide tour, including Peking. Other projects include a quarter-mile-long painting that he is working on at his retreat on Florida's Captiva Island, with a half-dozen assistants headed by photographer Terry Van Brunt. For variety, he is creating the cover of the next Talking Heads album. But the man who astonishes the art world doesn't surprise himself. Says he, "What I'm up to is a natural development of when I declared the whole world a potential palette."

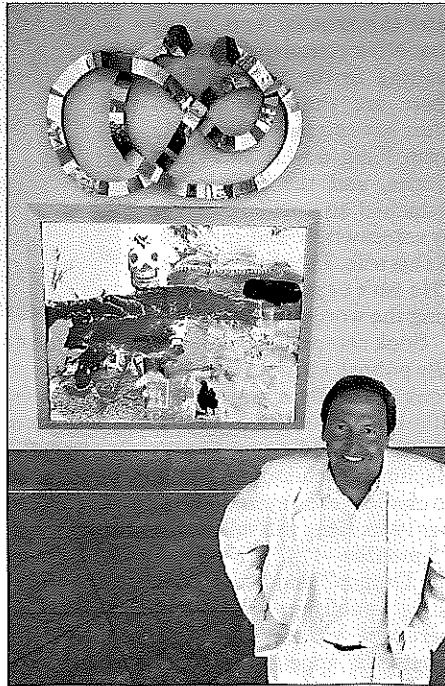
BARBARA ROWES

NEWSMAKERS

NEWSWEEK/JUNE 10, 1985 •

The project's name is a mouthful (the Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange, or R.O.C.I. for short), but the concept is simple enough: a traveling exhibition of one man's art that will grow as he adds works inspired by the countries he visits. The idea, says artist **Robert Rauschenberg**, 59, is to "promote world peace and understanding through art." Rauschenberg kicked off his five-year, 22-country odyssey by unveiling "Altar Peace," a half-painting, half-sculpture that he created in Mexico, his first stop. "After 59 years, you have to move toward new experiences," says Rauschenberg. "They don't pop up around the corner the way they used to." The project will culminate in 1988-89 with an exhibition at Washington's National Gallery of all the pieces created on the tour.

GEORGE HACKETT



Rauschenberg: A traveling one-man show

To DON,
Today's New York magazine
and
Review from
Art in Amer.

(Of the reviewer only knew
the depth of the "concept"
business....)

FROM:

NEW YORK

Jan. 18, 1988

RAUSCHENBERG LEAVING CASTELLI

Robert Rauschenberg is leaving the Leo Castelli Gallery after 30 years. The 62-year-old artist has signed an exclusive one-year contract with the Knoedler gallery.

A source close to Rauschenberg says the artist was persuaded to switch galleries by Occidental Petroleum's

LOCAL-NEWS NEWS...EXCHANGING WORDS.



ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

Armand Hammer, an owner Knoedler. Hammer told Rauschenberg that he would help finance the artist's round-the-world tour for international peace, says the source. During his travels, Rauschenberg has produced a series of photo collages.

"Hammer also told Rauschenberg he could get him into the Soviet Union," says the source. A Hammer spokesman said no financial deal had been made.

A spokesman for Knoedler confirmed the move, but Castelli had no comment. Rauschenberg didn't return calls for comment.

From:

Art In America

REVIEW OF BOOKS

Jan. 1988

ARTISTS' TALK

Rauschenberg, interviewed by Barbara Rose, New York, Vintage Books, 1987; 169 pp., \$9.95.
 Clemente, interviewed by Rainer Crone and Georgia Marsh, New York, Vintage Books, 1987; 83 pp., \$9.95.
 Salle, interviewed by Peter Schjeldahl, New York, Vintage Books, 1987; 101 pp., \$9.95.
 Fischl, interviewed by Donald Kuspit, New York, Vintage Books, 1987; 93 pp., \$9.95.

As art criticism, the interview is a problematic form. Instead of a critic in control of a subject, the inverse is usually true. More often than not, the interviewee is richer, more famous and more professionally powerful than the author (who is usually grateful for being granted an audience with a bona fide celebrity). While it is probably too harsh to label the interview a genre for writers with nothing to write, it's not unfair to say that interviews should be approached with much more caution than the ordinary single-voiced essay—especially when the interviewee is young enough still to be bucking for art-historical enshrinement.

Nevertheless, the market potential for interviews of Top 40 artists, each packaged as an inexpensive paperback, is so mouth-watering that it's a wonder no one has thought of it before. Dam water, because Vintage has already brought out its first four: elder statesman Robert Rauschenberg (queried by Barbara Rose) and three current faves (Francesco Clemente, David Salle and Eric Fischl—interviewed, respectively, by Rainer Crone and Georgia Marsh, Peter Schjeldahl, and Donald Kuspit). The series is edited by Elizabeth Avedon, and each slim volume is embellished by a glowering-glamorous photograph of the artist by the editor's uncle, Richard, and a few instructive color reproductions.

In quantity at least, the interviews are a little thin; they read as close-to-verbatim transcriptions of one or two taped conversations padded, say 25 percent, with standard résumé material (including irritatingly non-alphabetized bibliographies—to find what a given critic has written about the artist, one must search through the whole list of entries).

At 62, Robert Rauschenberg has many a story to tell: getting out of Port Arthur, Texas; getting through a sailor's stint in World War II; getting by during his early knock-around days in New York; and getting along fine as a renowned artist-diplomat-philanthropist. His interlocutor opines: "Rauschenberg, in short, is simply *too much* for many people. He has too much energy, he is too wide-ranging in his activities, and too ambitious in his conception of the role of art in the world. He is, above all, *too unpredictable*. He does not fit in with marketing strategies. He makes too much art and gives *too much* of it away."

Rauschenberg's length (of career) and breadth (of interests) lend him a conversational candor which offsets Stone's constant flattery (he may deserve it, but we deserve less Barbara Walters and more Barbara Jordan), and he comes forth

with a few good lines. "It was a long drive," says Rauschenberg when asked how he arrived on Captiva Island, "but a short story." And on fame: "Success is a dull pencil."

Critical responsibility demands, however, that even as great and good-hearted an artist as Rauschenberg not always be taken at his word. He asserts, for example, that "art shouldn't have a concept. That's the only concept I've ever been consistent with." But a few pages later he says,

Another day, up on Broadway, I was bored and started thinking that a black painting should continue. It was built into its concept. The big one that I had done was five panels. I think it's four panels now, but the concept was that I could always add to it.

No mere semantic quibbling, the question of what Rauschenberg means, or doesn't mean, by "concept" touches on his whole oeuvre: does it have an underlying program, or is Rauschenberg simply the best urban *bricoleur* ever? Rose ought to have pursued the point. In the end, we learn that the artist is an unpretentious anecdotalist whose Rauschenberg Overseas Cultural Interchange (ROCI, appropriately pronounced "Rocky") has correspondents from Cuba to Kuala Lumpur, but precious little about what, for instance, really sets Rauschenberg's work apart from the flood of Pop-oriented art which overran the formalist dikes in the late 1950s and early '60s.

Francesco Clemente is exotically better read than his American counterparts (who among us knows firsthand that Suetonius is an antidote to history as written by Tacitus?), so we're inclined to forgive him his penchant for hyperbole (within the space of two paragraphs, he employs "utmost," "completely," "enormous," "greatest" and "tremendous"—all attached to nothing very significant). He may be merely taking his cue from his interviewers, who attribute to him the highest artistic profundity:

Clemente has something original to contribute: *figure-words*, Novalis would call it, pictorial discoveries from a preconscious, prelinguistic world, releasing associations in the observer through the power of their expressiveness. This pictorial means is one we are most familiar with through fairy tales, myths and dreams—meanings of possible, conceivable worlds. His pictures question a reality that only exists by approximation, and whose existence we intimate through the power of our own desires.

Put more prosaically, Clemente has managed a postmodernist rebuttal of 20th-century modernism's use of the art context to legitimize the employment of non-art materials. "The project I had, maybe," he says,

was to adapt fine art materials to the approach taken by the work of people like Bruce Nauman or Boetti. It seems fine art materials are what we really have in Italy. I mean, Italy is not this collection of dilapidated factories; it's a wonderful deposit of marvelous paintings and drawings.

Since Clemente's figuration is actually a diluted continuation of Surrealism's emblematic meeting of a sewing machine and an umbrella on

a dissecting table, the only thing preventing from slipping into decadent decor is a fori politics. Clemente resents the avant-garde's 1968 attempt to rule out the art object altogether; he also refuses to accept the argument of the postmodernists who claim that leftist politics is the only viable reason to employ figuration. As his actual stance, Clemente is simultaneously grandiose and vague:

If people could think of works of art and atomic and social structures as having the same degree of reality in them, we would make a tremendous forward in terms of living. This is what Beuys talking about when he was involved in politics and elected to office. Why would he say "I am a soul" when he was going to an election? Not that sculpture as real as an election, but elections are as real as sculpture.

Eventually, Clemente emerges as something reactionary. The books he has made, he says,

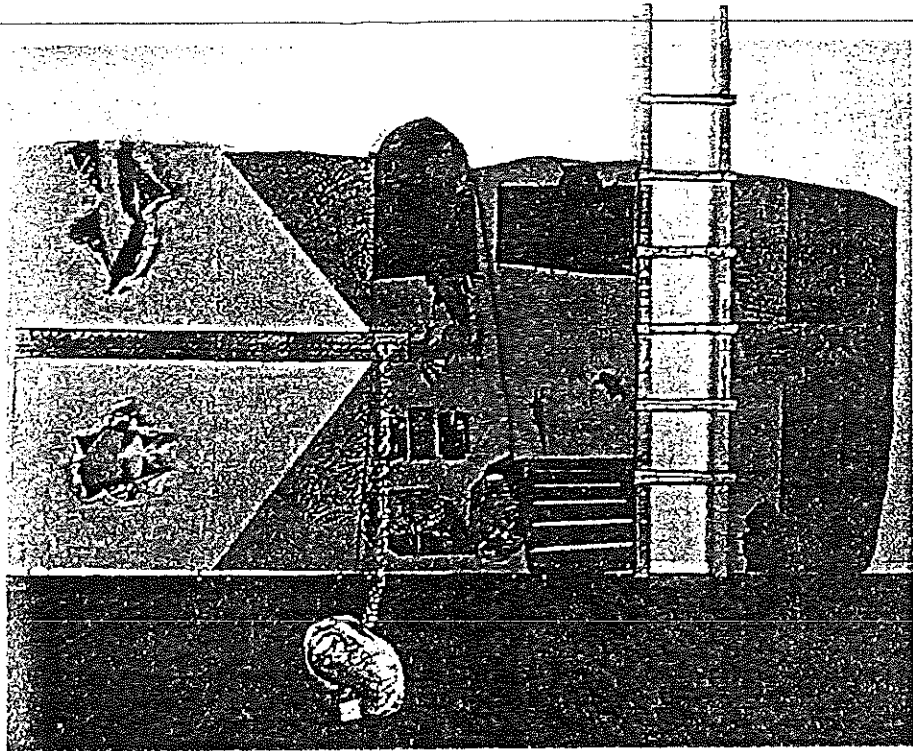
have to do with an image I have always had of W. Benjamin getting to the border; he couldn't get across so he killed himself. Whereas Max Ernst shows these collages, and they let him go. It has to do that. I always thought I wanted something I could carry in my pocket to get through the border.

Imagine: the purpose of art is to bamboozle fascists into thinking you're harmless enough to let go!

The best interview of the four is Peter Schjeldahl's of David Salle—a fact which owes more to the interviewer's heartfelt questions and organization of the answers than it does to his (I think inflated) estimation of the artist. To Schjeldahl, Salle's paintings boast "aesthetic skepticism, figuralism and theatricality, the elements of a wide contemporary baroque"; he concludes "[Salle's] standing as a major artist, like his not, is secure." (How often during their car were Bouguereau or Gérôme or Bernard Buffet lathered with that foam?) Schjeldahl's opinion is only strengthened by opposition: "My conviction of his significance hardened in the face of review and often vicious attacks from every conceivable quarter."

Salle's initial artistic insight—that egalitarian notions are more profitable when confined to the interior of pictures—came from his teacher, the California Institute of the Arts, the Central artist John Baldessari. "He preferred things over other things," Salle says, "but his point to his presence as a teacher was that in a big world, there was room for lots of things. Everything was potentially interesting. And the other hand, the corollary message was nothing was all that great either. Art was what people did."

It is a short and predictable step from an unhierarchical "just what people did" paintings as an almost random just-what's-on-the-canvas, and Salle's contribution to postmodernism is simply taking that step. What Salle apart from the hordes of 1980s salad figurative painters is his pervading luridness not only of subject (the notorious pornographic snippets), but of color, surface and stroke.



Dirt Shrine: South, 1982, a ceramic with typical Rauschenbergian imagery fired into the glaze

The Arcadian as Utopian

Rauschenberg's rhapsodic energies fill four Manhattan shows

At 57, Robert Rauschenberg is back; but then, the rumors that he had gone away were greatly exaggerated. It is almost 30 years since his "combine" paintings—rebus-like assemblies of every imaginable waste object, from beach tar to stuffed chickens, from electric fans to auto tires, slathered in abstract expressionist paint drips—burst upon the American art world. Nearly two decades, a lifetime for some artists, have elapsed since his first prize at the Venice Biennale (back when the Biennale mattered) heralded the "imperial" entry of American art into Europe. The unwanted reward of a career like Rauschenberg's is premature old-masterhood, followed by a cooling in the audience. This happened in the late '70s, when a lull was felt in his work.

But for an artist of Rauschenberg's large and rhapsodic energies, no pause lasts very long. There are now, by the latest count, four Rauschenberg shows running in Manhattan. Sculpture, combines and a 100-ft.-long photomontage based on a recent trip to China are being shown in three spaces run by Leo Castelli and Ileana Sonnabend downtown in SoHo; uptown, at the Museum of Modern Art, a set of collages from the China journey is on display. They are all pendants to a larger project, the Rauschenberg Overseas Cultural Interchange (ROCI), whereby he intends to travel and exhibit a changing nucleus of works in some 20 countries, while working on new projects

with local artists and craftsmen. The initial incarnation of the ROCI show is planned as a 150-piece retrospective that will include some of the 491 collages he made at the world's oldest paper mill, still operating in Anhui province.

It is clear from the New York shows that out of this pharaonic enterprise, Rauschenberg has been producing some of the best work of his career. Some of it involves materials quite new in his oeuvre, most notably clay. The star piece in the show at Castelli is *Dirt Shrine: South, 1982*, a pseudo combine in which all the disparate elements (tire track, painted chain, stone, bamboo ladder) were made from fired ceramic in Japan. The characteristic montage of Rauschenbergian imagery—a sumo wrestler holding a tiny alligator, schools of fish, a dump truck, and

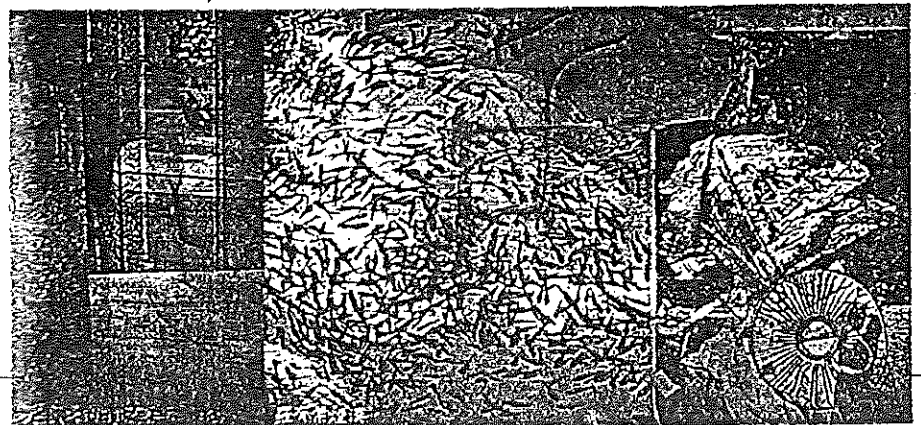
other elliptical images of ancient and modern Japan, mostly derived from photographs—is fired into the glaze. The result, a hybrid of traditional and new technologies, looks both archaic and slick.

He has also produced, in the spirit of old-master quotation that ran through his silk-screened work in the early 1960s, a suite of variations on well-known paintings: Botticelli's *Venus*, that hardy standby of the Pop sensibility the *Mona Lisa*, and Gustave Courbet's rosy, meaty image of two lesbians—one of them Whistler's mistress—sprawled in amorous sleep. At times, as in *All Abordello Doze 3, 1982*, the degree of interference by overprinting, cutting and juxtaposition almost buries the motif in a landslide of variations, and yet Rauschenberg's close, laconic grasp of form saves the effect from chaos. The montage of alien images, clamoring for attention, cancels the peculiar voyeuristic steaminess of Courbet's original.

The insouciant constructions at Sonnabend are mainly plywood structures of boxy shape, printed with a gauzy farrago of images that have been veiled in over-painting or muslin and endowed with a delectable shimmer of well-being. These works demonstrate that Rauschenberg is at heart an arcadian, obsessed with emblems of uncorrupted nature and their parallels in culture.

When some darker or more aggressive image is thrust into this sunny matrix, it gains the force of contrast. Occasionally, Rauschenberg has to invoke the violence he fears. In the Sonnabend show, it is done with a piece entitled *The Lurid Attack of the Monsters from the Postal News Aug. 1875, 1982*. It consists of a long narrow box, printed and overlaid with the usual strings of gauzy metaphors. Along its top are four rusty arches that turn out to be old crosscut-saw blades, bowed upward, thrusting their iron teeth at you; they look as though they might whang loose at any moment and do real damage to incautious onlookers. The whole affair is mounted, like some weird military machine, on a little pair of wheels; these are the point of balance, and only an ounce or two of pressure is needed to make the thing tilt; it is as carefully balanced as a

All Abordello Doze 3, 1982: variations saved from chaos by a close, laconic grasp of form



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model glider. Absurdity, threat, delicacy and extreme tension are packed into the image in a way that is Rauschenberg's and Rauschenberg's alone.

It goes without saying that Rauschenberg's work is full of messages to the art world; it always has been. Its present phase does not come across as a challenge to "established taste," for the simple reason that in current art no such thing exists. In any case, Rauschenberg's subtle, outward-facing temperament rejected the expressionist posture a long time ago. Nowhere in these shows does one get a whiff of the exacerbated self. Instead, his work presents, over and over again, the poetic rigor that comes from collaboration. Rauschenberg has always liked to work with other people, shifting the artist's monologue into a conversation. The works he did with the Chinese papermakers and the Japanese ceramicists display a further development of this: a labile, cunning relationship with older crafts, a kind of flexibility that enables him to alter-



Truth, 1982, one of the collages made in China
A cunning relationship with older crafts.

nate between mastery and studenthood. Rauschenberg's acts of appropriation have an innocent cast, being gestures of homage. Look, the work declares in a most unchildlike way, in the world we have this, and this, and this; now let art try putting this next to *that*, and see what changes. This *bricolage* is a game with a serious subject: freedom. What it changes, if anything, will not be the world itself, and anyone who supposes that Rauschenberg's ROCI project will cause nations to shelve their mutual distrust will be left, to put it mildly, waiting. But art is a form of fiction—projected, in Rauschenberg's case, upon history—and utopian fancy is one of its modes. In the ROCI project one may eventually see the flowering of Rauschenberg's mature identity: the arcadian as utopian, spinning a poetry of affirmation out of an opaque and hideously conflicted time.

—By Robert Hughes

BOOKS

So Chic, So Glossy

Art history on the run

I know I've succeeded when my work is talked about as though it were a movie that had just been seen," says the artist Eric Fischl. His strange, voyeuristic paintings of suburban family life provoke a lot of conversation—as do surprising works by several other celebrated contemporary artists. But how can you keep up with what's hot and what's not now that art talk is as fashionable as cinematic chatter? One determinedly trendy guide is the Vintage Contemporary Artists series, which offers a little bit of art in a glossy package.

Designer Elizabeth Avedon dreamed up the series and chose hip subjects for the first four books: Fischl, David Salle, Francesco Clemente and Robert Rauschenberg. She got her father-in-law, Richard Avedon, to shoot the artists for the covers. And she decided to keep things brief. Unlike hefty art tomes that can break your budget (or your foot, if you drop them), these slender paperbacks are economical—\$9.95 each—if skimpy on pictures, with only eight pages of black-and-white illustrations and four pages of color apiece.

The texts, each a long interview with the artist conducted by a critic, can get pretty windy. Elder statesman Rauschenberg, at 60, is the most fun to read. From the deck of his weatherbeaten cottage on Captiva Island, Fla., he recalls New York of the 1950s, when few artists were either rich or famous. Rauschenberg remembers when he and avant-garde composer John Cage sold some books one day to buy lunch—a shared kosher pickle and beers. He painted his famous "Bed" (1955) on a quilt because he'd run out of other things to paint on. But his interlocutor, critic Barbara Rose, is too friendly. Rauschenberg barely mentions Jasper Johns, a close friend in the early days, and she never asks about their falling out.

Of the young bucks, Fischl, 39, is the most forthright, chatty and occasionally humorous. He describes how his paintings are made ("my backgrounds come from magazine photos") and delves into the Freudian aspects of his primal scenes. "I wanted to shock the audience," he admits. Salle, 35, the brooding intellectual, is far more obtuse, though sometimes inadvertently revealing. He somehow doesn't un-

CLEMENTE CLEMENTE



Forthright, chatty and downright humorous: Front and back jacket for Clemente book

derstand why his paintings—often shadowy images of half-dressed, contorted women—offend feminists.

Inevitably, there's a lot of art babble on these pages. Clemente, 35, who divides his time between New York, his native Italy and India, gets caught between his too-meticulous English and Eastern mysticism. He can be as lyrically baffling as his beautiful art work or he can sound just plain buggy. But at least he's earnest: "If people could think of works of art and atomic bombs and social structures as having the same degree of reality in them, we would make a tremendous step forward in terms of living." That's a nice thought, but like most of the words in these books, it just reminds you of what a single picture is worth.

CATHLEEN MCGUIGAN

An Exceptional Trip

The sojourn began on little more than a whim: after two years as a graduate student in economics at China's Nanjing University, Vikram Seth decided to save money and hitchhike home to New Delhi via Tibet. True, it would be a grueling and perilous two-month trip of about 1,200 miles, but Seth was banking on the rewards of taking the road less traveled. His gamble paid off. Starting from Heaven Lake, nestled in the desert of the northwestern province of Xinjiang, he wound across the snow-capped Himalayas, then trekked by foot through mossy bamboo forests near Ne-

pal—and managed to glimpse a remote corner of China that few foreigners have seen.

Seth's keen perceptions and graceful prose make *From Heaven Lake* (192 pages, Vintage, \$5.95) an exceptional travelogue. He deftly evokes China's maddening bureaucracy and the tensions between the Chinese and ethnic minorities. In the few cities he passes through, Seth notes the socialist drabness of "standard shop cuboids," and describes poor cobblers and tailors sitting on the streets, "looking desultorily at the dust whirling about in a sudden wind."

Most importantly, he etches poignant portraits of the people he encounters—Chinese, Muslims and Tibetans alike. There's the soldier who graciously gives him a lift on his bicycle; comradely Sui, a chain-smoking truckdriver with an obsession for fishing; and Norbu, a young Tibetan in Lhasa who tells how his family was persecuted during the Cultural Revolution. Time and again, Seth is struck by their kindness—all the more remarkable, he notes, "from a people into whom a suspicion of foreigners has long been instilled."

For all the kindnesses, Seth's journey is filled with hard beds, bumpy roads and spartan meals of bean curd and rice. By the time he finally arrives in bustling Katmandu, the mundane pleasures of "civilization"—Coca-Cola, Tobler marzipan and Reader's Digest—have taken on a wonderful new meaning. But Seth also has the less tangible joys that are the ultimate reward of the adventurous traveler: a trove of warm memories and the feeling, he says, of being "more at home in the world."

PAULA CHIN

When a Swedish magnate named Hans Thulin bought Robert Rauschenberg's *Rebus*, a landmark "combine" painting of the Fifties, at Sotheby's last November for upwards of six million dollars, the audience murmured appreciatively at the record Rauschenberg price—at the time, the highest figure on public record for a postwar American painting. (A record that was soon eclipsed that evening after a bidding duel between Thulin and Samuel I. Newhouse, Jr., the Condé Nast publishing baron, who finally snared Jasper Johns's *False Start* for a mind-boggling \$17.05 million.) Rauschenberg, however, emerged from the auction wars (and from a continuing rivalry with his old crony Johns) with his reputation as an avant-garde hero unscathed despite the continuing escalation of prices in the booming late-Eighties art market.

Some doubts concerning both Rauschenberg's standing in the art market and his relevance to current artistic practice were raised three years ago when Frederick Weisman, the West Coast collector, in an apparent fit of pique, abruptly unloaded a number of recently acquired Rauschenberg paintings at another Sotheby's sale. According to Rauschenberg, this unprecedented slight from a highly visible player followed a misunderstanding over

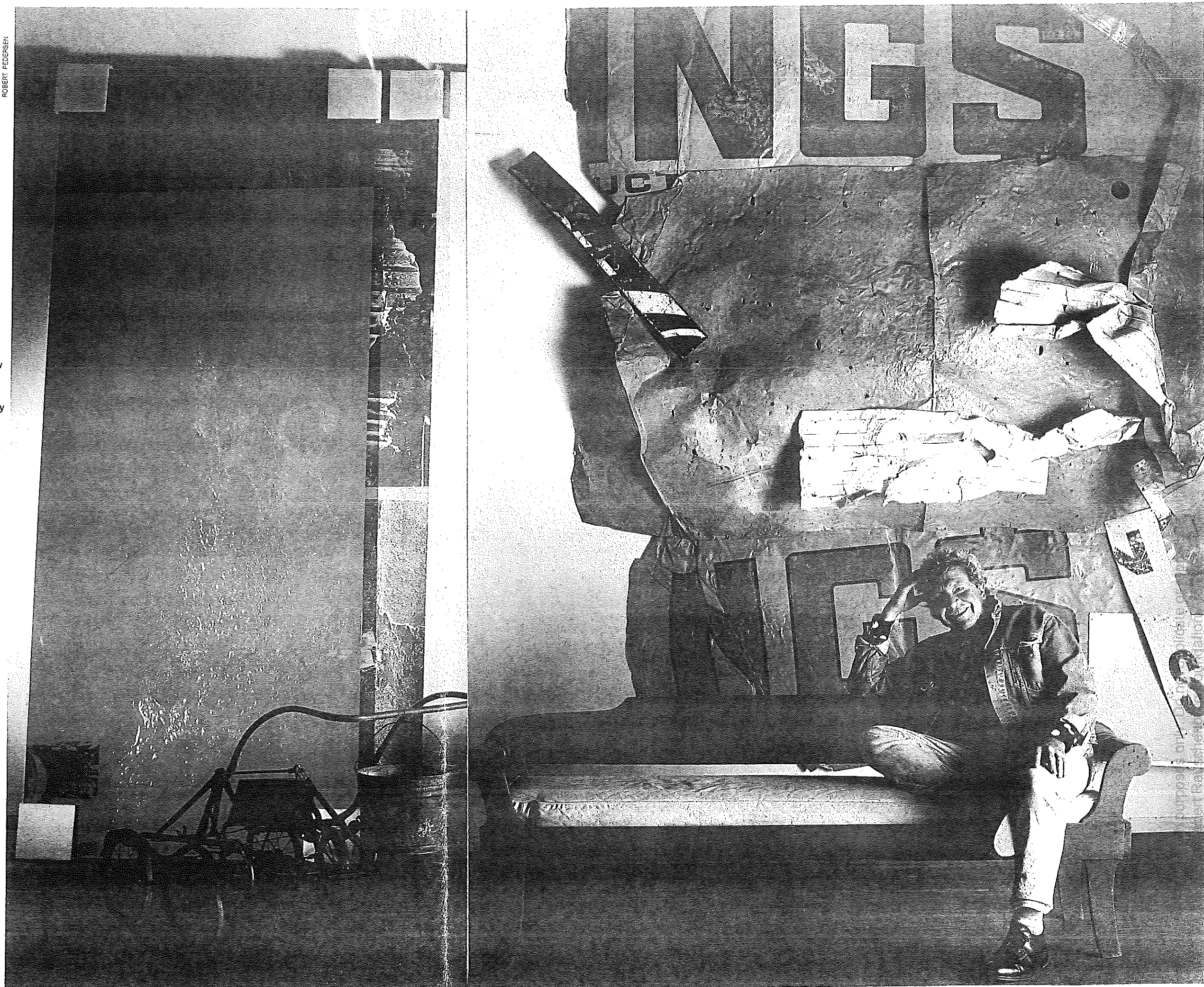
The artist in his New York studio: "I think of my activity more as reporting than as something for an elite."

ROBERT FEDERSEN

ARTIST, TRAMP

SAM HUNTER

**ROBERT
RAUSCHENBERG'S
CULTURAL
EXCHANGE: A
TRAVELING
INTERNATIONAL
ART PROJECT**



Weisman's failure to provide promised financial backing for Rauschenberg's favorite personal charity: his traveling international art program, known as ROCI, an acronym for Rauschenberg's Overseas Cultural Interchange. (In his moments of frustration, financial and otherwise, over this demanding project, the artist also calls it his "Rocky Road Tour" and "Gullible's Travels.") But ROCI is the heart of his artistic expression today, as well as the operational base of his continuing ventures in social activism. Since he now spends most of his time in Florida at his principal home and studio, on the island of Captiva, ROCI has become his main line of communication to the greater world.

Engaged in conversation at his New York headquarters between the auction and the opening of his fall New York

one-man show, Rauschenberg needs little encouragement to talk about ROCI. When he is in New York, he occupies what was the former St. Joseph's Mission of the Immaculate Virgin, an abandoned orphanage near the East Village that he bought in the Sixties. It is a huge, drafty building on five floors with two basements, and includes a vast four-story-high chapel. Most of the rooms at the time of our meeting are functionally divided between temporarily installed mattresses and competing works of art and video equipment, as well as the Rauschenberg historical archive. The studios are shared by a team of half a dozen assistants who have come up from Florida to help with his show and to attend the opening. Recruited from a younger generation, they are particularly eager to get a glimpse of

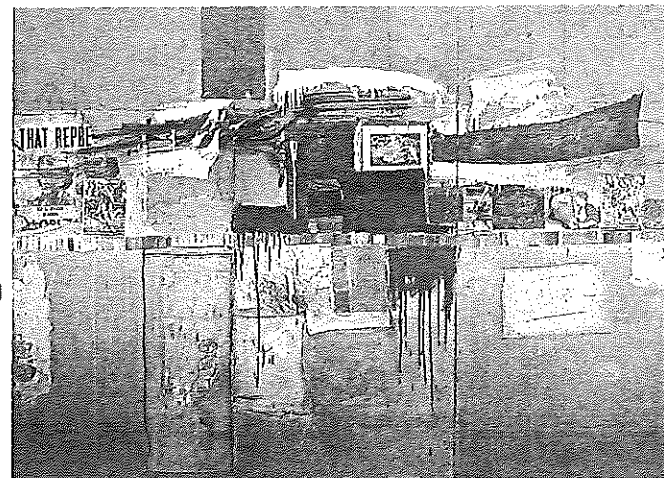
Rauschenberg's two legendary combines from the Fifties in the auction rooms, *Winter Pool* (which Newhouse added to his Sotheby's spoils) and *Rebus*.

ROCI's aim, Rauschenberg says, "is getting to know the culture, working with local painters, writers, poets, and artisans, and achieving familiarity with the character of the region." ROCI, Rauschenberg recalls, was launched in the spring of 1985 at the Tamayo Museum in Mexico City with a show of some 250 of the artist's recent works. Since then, the constantly evolving exhibition has traveled to several countries, including China, Chile, Venezuela, Japan, Cuba, and the U.S.S.R., where the show was installed at the Central Artists' House in Moscow. This summer, the exhibition is scheduled for a dual and simultaneous viewing in East and West Berlin, the first such ensemble by an individual artist to bring cultural unity to a divided nation. The ROCI tours have been largely financed by the artist, so far to the tune of "\$3 or \$4 million," he avers, with additional support coming from his more compassionate and steadfast collectors. Over its projected five-year schedule, the ven-

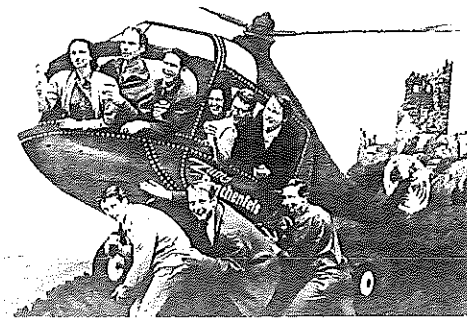
ture will be one of gargantuan proportions, more than a match even for Rauschenberg's omnivorous appetite for "life and the world," as he puts it. Before it is over, it will probably cost \$10 million, most of which will be raised from private sources and by selling off some of his valuable early works.

As the collection travels, it changes: New works reflecting the cultures of the countries he visits will be added as old works are subtracted from the exhibition. Constantly self-renewing, the show "will grow on itself like a mold," he says, with the kind of cheerful ingenuousness that has endeared him equally to avant-garde friend and establishment foe, high-level government official, and the man in the street.

One of the dozen or more new works that will be created at each stop is to be donated by the artist to the National Gallery of Art in Washington. At the end of the world tour (presumably 1990), an exhibition is planned at that conservative institution, which has been persuaded to embrace Rauschenberg's campaign for using avant-garde art to promote international understanding. This evangelical concept of devising a personal mission to promote peace and understanding through art came to Rauschenberg during a trip to China with Trisha Brown's dance troupe, for which he has created sets and costumes. "One of the most distressing things I found there," he says, "was the lack of information about the rest of the world." Although the logistics and funding sorely test the patience and ingenuity of Rauschenberg and his small band of ROCI converts and assistants, he resists official government sponsorship: "The places we are going to are so sensitive, and we are



Right: *Rebus* (1955); below: (on top), second and third from left, Cunningham and Cage; (bottom), Steve Paxton,



Karlheinz Stockhausen, Rauschenberg in 1964.

trying to be as apolitical as possible. That is because art is one of the purest forms of communication. I used to say that art and sports were the only things free from politics. Now, sports is entirely political."

At 63, Rauschenberg has reached an age at which many artists turn inward and remove themselves from the world's hurly-burly and from the burden of seeking international reconciliation through the dubious efficacy of art. But Rauschenberg has never been known for introspection or diffidence, unlike Johns. While Rauschenberg's art has opened out to the world to assimilate a multiplicity of unrelated objects and images, Johns's reputation has been built on a hermetic style that made introspection and an unrelenting self-scrutiny by-words of American art. With his aptitude for succinct definition, Johns perhaps best captured the temperamental differences between the two larger-than-life heroes of post-war American art whose divergent careers have so often been linked. Speaking of their early collaborations and relationship, Johns said: "To me

he seemed amazingly naive, but he functioned in ways I couldn't. Bob assumed that other people would support what he did; I assumed I would have to do mine in spite of other people."

Rauschenberg has, indeed, always reached out to the world in his work. In 1961, he even said that "there is no reason not to consider the world as one gigantic painting," and in support of that position, at the opening of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's contemporary wing two years ago, he exhibited an enormous installation representing a portion of a "quarter mile" painting. Basically, it was a run-on travel diary, skewed and adrift in space amid a myriad of shifting images, textures, and materials, documenting his hectic globe-trotting activities in the cause of multinational understanding. Although he creates, organizes, and otherwise personally sustains his international exhibitions mainly as a gesture of goodwill, the instinct for improving the world is also lodged deep in his psyche. When he is asked how an aging artist of 63—notwithstanding one with an amazingly boyish Peter Pan élan and zest for adventure—can tolerate so much traveling and official good fellowship, his answer is characteristically candid. "It must be my appetite. The worst thing that could happen to me would be to find out what the answer is. Like Gertrude Stein said on her deathbed when they

asked her what the answer? I have to keep the question changing. The only way to do that is with an open mind."

Rauschenberg's early history and the assimilative character of his revolutionary art of the Fifties underscore his insistence on open-mindedness and a unique generosity of spirit, frequently mixed with inspired whimsy. A native of Texas, he became interested in art as a vocation at the age of 17, in 1942, and subsequently spent five years working through various art schools and a series of very different approaches to painting in order to define his own interests. Essential to this phase of his development were two periods of study at Black Mountain College, in 1948-49 and 1952, where he worked under Josef Albers (who later hated his student's art) and came into contact with the fertile ideas of John Cage and Merce Cunningham.

Rejecting Albers's formal, methodical instruction and his concept of expression as the personal will of the artist, Rauschenberg turned to the ideas of openness and extreme freedom advanced by Cage and Cunningham, fashioning his own breakthrough under their influence. Cage, in particular, provided him with the model for his major themes of "multiplicity, variety, and inclusion," as he himself later articulated them.

Rauschenberg's period of radical experimentation began with a "concerted action," which Cage performed with the help of Cunningham pianist David Tudor and poet Charles Olson at Black Mountain College in 1952. Rauschenberg contributed a slide show and hung his paintings as background for a performance that represented an early American attempt at the

theatrical synthesis of the arts. It was arguably the major prototype for the "happenings" developed by Allan Kaprow, Claes Oldenburg, Jim Dine, and others, around 1959. These informally staged events broke down historical genres in art, bridging the barriers between art and life and making possible, among other things, the introduction of objects, emblems, and content from popular culture in painting and sculpture. They also paved the way for the eruption of American Pop Art in the early Sixties.

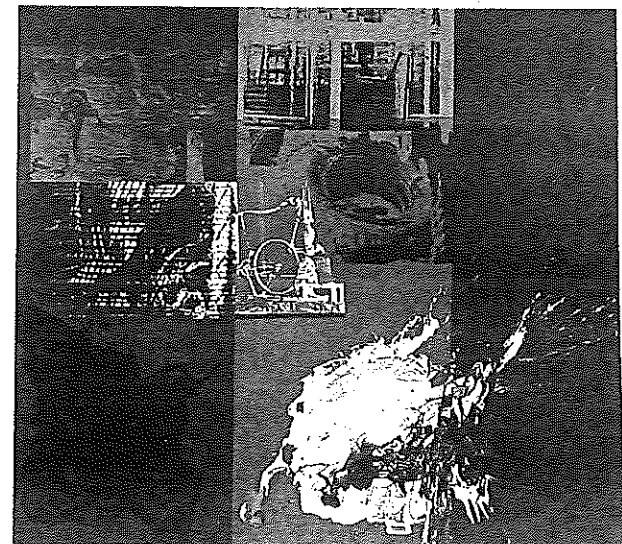
In a letter written by Rauschenberg to the art dealer Betty Parsons at the time he was collaborating in Cage's staged musical event, the young artist prophetically described his paintings made at Black Mountain College that summer as nonart, "because they take you to a place in painting art has not been." Then, in environmental terms reminiscent of Cage's aesthetic, he denied that he was their creator. "Today," he wrote, "is the creator," a Zen-inspired sentiment opposing the egocentricity that has sustained his artistic philosophy through the years.

Reflecting on his early period, Rauschenberg says: "The strongest thing about my work is the fact that I chose to embrace the ordinary. My contemporaries were already making their monuments. I believe that if you don't move, you're going to step on someone's toe. If you stand still too long, you'll get in their way. So I'm not terrified of changing."

Around 1953 Rauschenberg shocked the establishment Action painters when he began his first artistic transformation, in a heretical series of works that incorporated derelict object fragments and throwaway material with pigment, in the belief that anything could go into art—even



Clockwise from top: *Anystore Rumble* ("Urban Bourbon" series); *Artesian Gusher* ("Urban Bourbon" series); the artist in Moscow.



garbage. What was more, he realized that by breaking down old forms of painting into shards of barely recognizable reality, the artist could make an exhilarating new statement about his own prophetic powers to remake the world. Anticipating the imagery and irreverence of Pop Art, Rauschenberg began to add Coke bottles, comic strips, and other readily available found materials from urban America to his canvases, which he now called combines. As he put it, in a 1959 catalog statement for a Museum of Modern Art group show, "A pair of socks is no less suitable to make a painting than wood, nails, oil, and fabric." His logic was unassailable—but it took a few years for the heresy to catch on with the Pop artists, and they then turned it against itself, celebrating a more accepting mass-media spirit with a repertory of slick and freshly minted commercial images.

The now famously expensive *Rebus* is one of the very best examples of Rauschenberg's remarkable combine constructions. By blatantly us-

ing nontraditional and found materials, the work questions the old hierarchy of distinctions between the fine arts and waste drawn from the city's junk heap. Living up to its title, the motley assortment of images includes a collage of images: election poster, two running athletes, a comic-strip remnant, a tacky reproduction of Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, a pinup from a girlie magazine, a Dürer self-portrait—as well as juicy passages of spontaneous painting, sewn cloth, and miscellaneous graffiti. Rauschenberg skillfully submerges these disjunctive images and alien materials in a rush of gestural brushstrokes reminiscent of an explosive de Kooning masterpiece, yet allows the fragments to remain identifiable. At the same time, the alien materials are laden with nostalgia, even as they allude obliquely to the cycle of the object's life from manufacture and function to decay and waste, suggesting the American obsession with planned obsolescence.

From the moment he entered the New York art scene in the Fifties and began to exhibit his work, Rauschenberg began stretching aesthetic boundaries, embracing everyday objects in his work and devouring the world around him. He wanted to preserve an open situation and to surprise himself, as well as confound the viewer. His re-

sourcefulness was boundless but also born of necessity. In 1955, finding himself short of canvas, he incorporated in an unfinished work the pillow, sheet, and a patchwork quilt from his own cot, over which he generously poured and applied paint with a brush, in the de rigueur de Kooning manner. He then hung the mixed-media work straight up on the wall, simulating a conventional stretched canvas, in flagrant contradiction to the bedding's original function, and thereby brought forth one of his most provocative assemblages. At his 1959 show at MOMA, organized by Dorothy Miller, he made the often-quoted statement about his collaborative spirit and artistic transactions with an untidy environment: "Painting relates to both art and life. Neither can be made. I try to act in the gap between the two."

Bed still hangs in Leo Castelli's New York apartment, in the library; Jasper Johns's equally famous, early *Target with Casts* hangs in a nearby room. Widely exhibited and reproduced, *Bed* helped earn the artist his reputation, which still persists today, as an enfant terrible. An even greater provocation was *Monogram*, made in 1959, a stuffed angora goat with a rubber tire around its middle. *Time* magazine art critic Robert Hughes called it a supreme example of the ironic lechery in Rauschenberg's work, and quoted William Blake's line that the lust of the goat is the bounty of God. Rauschenberg's combines gained him immediate recognition both in America and in Europe, and he began to have regular exhibitions after 1957 at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York and was given his first important retrospective exhibition by Alan Solomon at the Jewish Museum in 1963. In Europe there were annual exhibitions at the Sonnabend Gallery in Paris in

the Sixties. Dramatic evidence of his growing international stature came when he was awarded the coveted grand prize at the Venice Biennale in 1964. The jury's decision was hotly argued and controversial but much acclaimed by the younger generation of artists both in the United States and abroad, despite general outrage in the European press. The Vatican's *L'Osservatore Romano* perceived it as "the total and general defeat of culture." At the other political extreme, the Paris left-wing *Combat* called the award "an affront to the dignity of artistic creation." Despite these vitriolic responses, after years of having even serious art people (including other artists) dismiss his work as a joke, Rauschenberg had finally begun to reach and impress the influential tastemakers.

Even as his radical combines began to receive international attention, however, Rauschenberg began to experiment with techniques that took him back to a more traditional, flat surface. This development first emerged in his delicately shaded and hatched drawings, in which he worked with a technique of "rubbing" to transfer photographic images onto another sheet of paper, instead of attaching the actual photographs to the surface of a work. He soon began to use photographic images even more freely in larger scale, making photo silk screens that were then transferred onto his canvases with both commercial inks and oil paint. In 1962, probably influenced by Warhol, Rauschenberg began using photo silk screens taken from published photographs in the daily press and in illustrated magazines. Gradually these images of persons, events, accidents, and disasters in the world replaced the attached objects and materials of the combines and became the narrative and

ABOVE: COURTESY BMW NORTH AMERICA; BELOW: M. KNOEDLER & CO., INC., NEW YORK



MURRY SILL

The artist in his Florida studio. Painting and tennis are his "relaxing" agenda.

iconic substance of his work. *Crocus* is one of the first and best of the silk-screen paintings derived from found images and photographs the artist made from his New York studio window. (Rauschenberg is a skillful photographer, having studied with masters Aaron Siskind and Harry Callahan at Black Mountain College; he later accompanied Cartier-Bresson on shoots.) The multiple interpenetrating images (and cultural references) of his photographs include Velázquez's *Rokeby Venus*, from the National Gallery in London; a large military truck; a bouncing football (circled in white); and a flight of magnified mosquitoes. He titled the painting *Crocus* because, he says, the drippy white X, painted freely at the canvas's center, "emerges from a gray area in a rather dark painting, like a new season." As his style evolved, Rauschenberg utilized more and more silk-screened imagery taken directly from current photojournalism, which in the Sixties had begun to transform the art experience radically. New spatial and communication ideas infiltrated art through the process-oriented media of films, television, exhibitions, and other events that opened up unexpected creative opportunities and changed the forms of traditional painting. Rauschenberg was perhaps the first artist to test the new technical and aesthetic frontiers, now so familiar, in response to the com-

munications dynamism of the contemporary electronic age.

In recent years, he has not been as focused on the usual routine of one-man painting shows in private galleries. "I used to say this a good deal, and I try not to say it that much anymore: I think of my activity more in relation to reporting than I do as something for an isolated elite." His private exhibitions have become, in a sense, the spawn of his major ROCI work in progress and international wanderlust. "In fact," he says, "my only vacations from ROCI are the weeks when John [Peet, one of four painting assistants] and I can squeeze out some free time. It's exercise, too—he does tennis to me, and I do art to him." Peet, who was an undergraduate tennis star and pro player on the Florida circuit, agrees: "Our idea of vacation is simply being in Florida, and being able to work, paint, and relax."

Rauschenberg has been such an infrequent presence in New York (despite his almost annual showing in one-man and group exhibitions) that his work has virtually dropped out of the debates of the day about directions in contemporary art. His last exhibition to have a major impact was the retrospective organized by Walter Hopps in 1976, at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., and later shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. After a two-year hiatus from his customary pattern of annual one-man shows at the Castelli Gallery in SoHo, Rauschenberg opened a one-man show last November at a surprising uptown venue, Knoedler, on East 70th Street.

At the moment, no one is very comfortable discussing the new gallery association, undoubtedly out of consideration for Leo Castelli's sensi-

bilities, but a break has certainly taken place, after 30 years of continuing exhibition activity and collaboration. It was undoubtedly brought on by Rauschenberg's commitment to ROCI, and the willingness of Armand Hammer, chairman of the board at Knoedler, to intervene with the Russians and to help put ROCI on the road on condition that Rauschenberg sign on with his gallery.

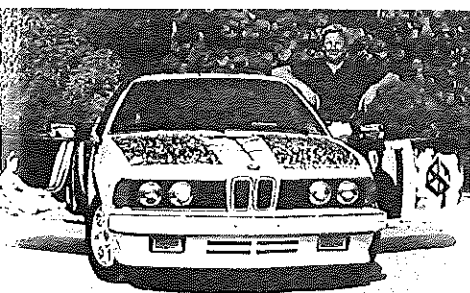
The new show of mirror-polished aluminum constructions and paintings was impressive and visually dazzling, if not groundbreaking; in any case, it had completely sold out by the time of the festive opening, confirming the welcome news from Sotheby's that a major Rauschenberg reappraisal was underway. The crowded opening attracted the usual array of the dedicated avant-garde, curious café-society types, collectors, and freeloaders as well as the large and protective Rauschenberg entourage from the East Village and Captiva. They were easily identified by the miniature combines in their buttonholes, echoing the "gluts" of compressed and embossed metallic fragments ensconced majestically on the gallery walls.

The work contained familiar and unfamiliar urban imagery mixed with crushed or whole object fragments and explosive paint passages of considerable brilliance. Like Dada, but with a smoother, flowing congruence of disjunctive parts and with no particular political ax to grind, Rauschenberg is still dedicated to freeing art from codified notions of what each medium is supposed to be, by destroying the boundary between genres. He entitled his new combines "Shiners," "Gluts," and "Urban Bourbons," names that suggest the multiplying mir-

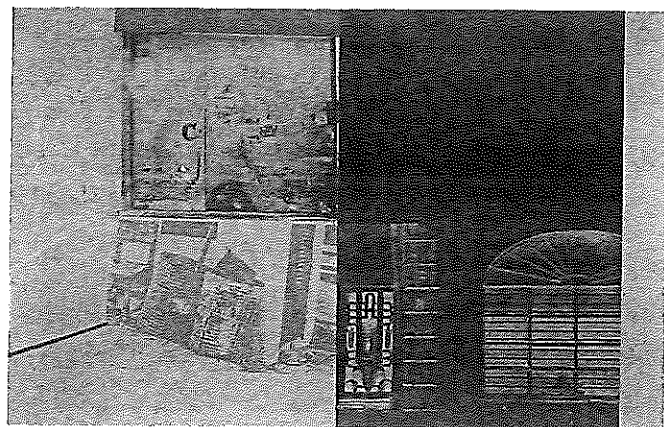
rored effect, material densities, and deliberate painterly obscurities of the optically active array of paintings. As usual, they seem to have caught Rauschenberg in midpassage, moving into a new, more glamorous space-age environment. His colors are brighter, sharper, and high-keyed, as if his normally euphoric mood had been pitched up a couple of notches, perhaps in response to the brilliant Florida light. The paintings also feel like life in the fast lane in late 20th-century America, with their distracting sign fragments, imaged highways and byways, the collisions and refractions playing to our accustomed condition of information overload.

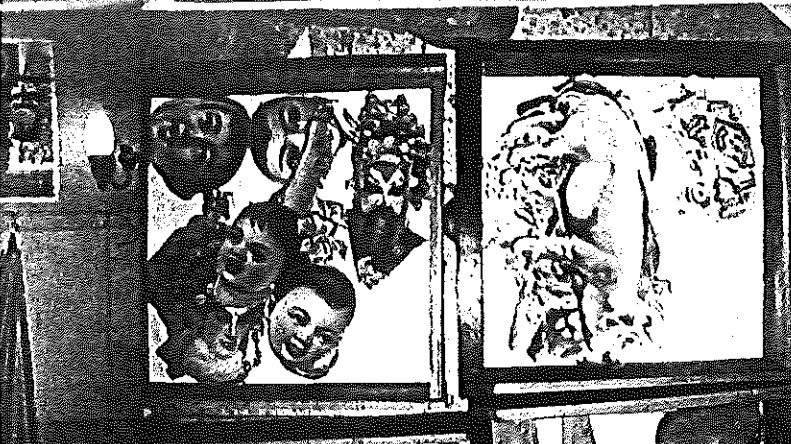
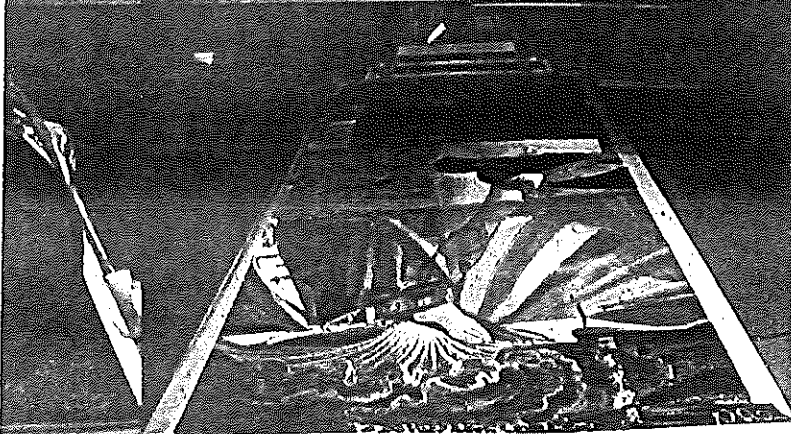
The synoptic, flashing juxtapositions of silk-screened imagery nostalgically recall the visual strategems of the Sixties; the collage techniques and unexpected material contrasts here and there, deliberately untidy contours, and lavish paint smears yards long remind us that his combines continue to bridge the gap between Action Painting and Pop Art as well as the more famous "gap" he enshrined "between art and life." The Zen-influenced ideas of John Cage, the anarchism of historical Dada and Surrealism, augmented by the continuing presence of Marcel Duchamp, are far less obtrusive in Rauschenberg's more controlled contemporary ensembles. However, these potent influences remain ineradicable elements in the ongoing creative adventure of American art today, thanks in large measure to Rauschenberg's singular and powerful transformations.

Sam Hunter is an art critic and historian whose book on Larry Rivers will be published this year by Rizzoli.



Above: Rauschenberg with car commissioned by BMW; right: *Catwalk* ("Urban Bourbon" series).





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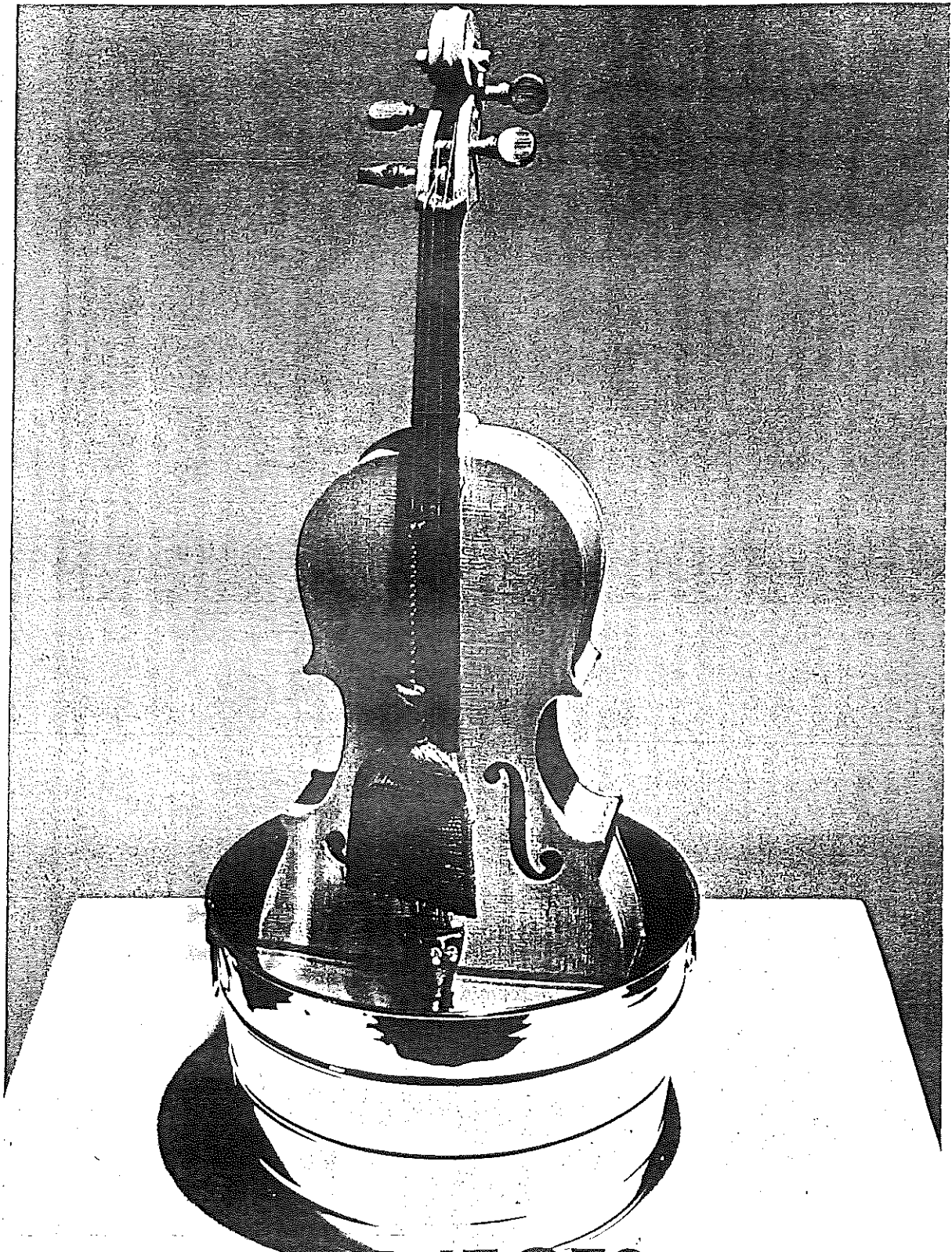
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Square Bamboo/Neon Lights/Brass Fittings
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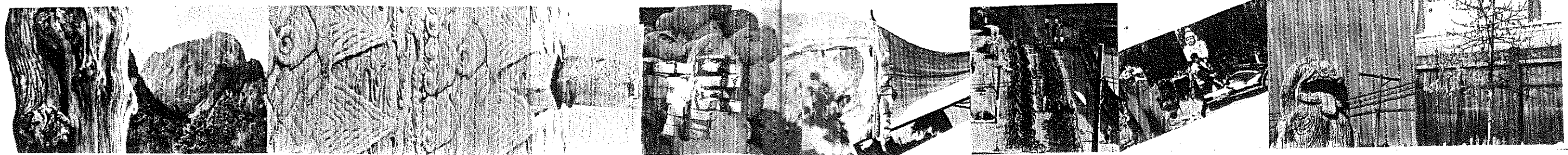
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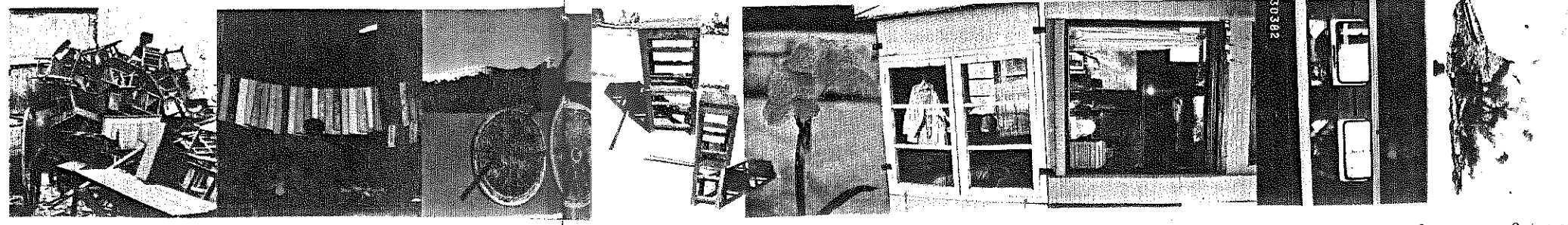
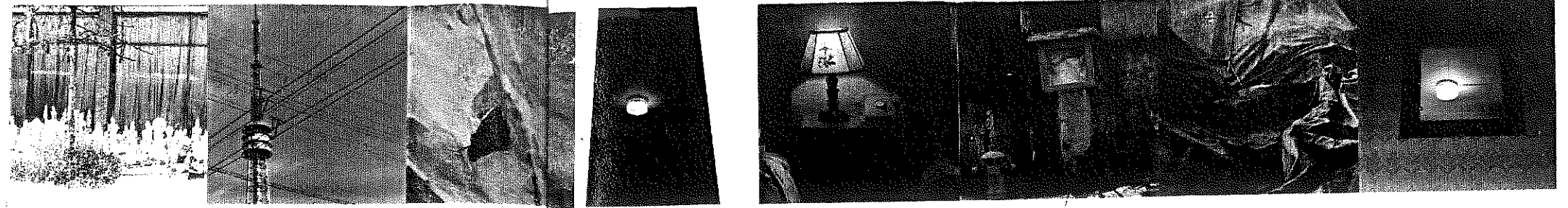
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“...The latest work ranges from ceramics and collage sculpture and photos made on his trip to China...”



Self-extension: The 100-foot-long photograph of China grew out of Rauschenberg's trip there last summer.



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