

RRFA 01: Robert Rauschenberg papers

Interviews: Higashino [Tōno], Yoshiaki / "Tying Work to Elephants: About the ROCI Project" / ROCI: Japan [exhibition catalogue], 1983-1990

AUG 2 '90 13:32 FROM GRAPHICSTUDIO U.S.F.

PAGE.001

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DEAR BRADLEY:

Here is the translation of the Tono article from the Japan catalogue. The translator does not use the name "Tono" -- instead she uses "Higashino." I don't know if that is his last name or first name or what, but she said that it is the proper translation. Rennert has made corrections by hand on this first copy. They plan to retype the essay with all the corrections included, but for now, here is the initial copy. Let me know if you want a good copy, and I will send it to you after we receive it at our office.

Wendy.....

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Roci

Interview: Tying Work to Elephants
About the ~~Rauschenberg~~ Project

Robert Rauschenberg

Yoshiaki Higashino (* Translator's Note: The surname could also be read as "Tono," but Higashino is the more common reading.)

Introduction

Yoshiaki Higashino

The interview below was done when Rauschenberg came to Japan to make ceramics work in Shigaraki in 1983. This pop art pioneer first came to Japan with John Cage and Merce Cunningham in 1964. At the Sogetsu* Art Center he put on a happening, participated in the Cunningham Group's dance equipment, costumes, and lighting, and had a great impact on the mid 60s Japanese art community. [* T. N.: Most likely reading of this place name.] After that, he suddenly stopped coming to Japan, but in 1983, he stopped by from a trip to China to do paper work. He started his Shigaraki work, and since then has continued come to Japan time after time. The touring project which he'd already started at this period, the ~~Rauschenberg~~ Show, which is in Japan at this time, is the main subject of this interview. There he steps out of his individual position as a super star of the American art world and we see the face of the late-70s second period Rauschenberg where he dissolves himself in the waves of facing differing cultures of various parts of the world. As a way of contributing even a little to the understanding of this show, I am reprinting this interview. (The interview occurred in Tokyo in May of 1983 and appeared in Iwanami Shoten Publishing's Time with Creators*. [* T.N.: Official English title not available.] Also, the interview has been abbreviated.)

Roci

Higashino How was China where you went last year (1983)?

Rauschenberg The tension in China is amazing. From the time I got off the plane until I left the country, there wasn't the tiniest moment in which I didn't feel a slow tension. Maybe I could describe it as the kind of tension of tiny drip by drip continuously coming out of a faucet. In other words, there is no freedom of action as we use the word. We met the Governor, the Vice Minister of Culture and the

Mayor, we were quite lucky. But if you try to do something, even the smallest thing, each action is individually controlled by group. For every ten feet that group moves there is some change (laughs). We were impeccably well behaved, without doing anything extreme. We wanted to stay for some time to do work, and knew that if we did the slightest thing wrong we would be forced to leave the country. What on earth "wrong" was we didn't know, though. We also felt boredom, ennui.

Higashino What was your motive in going to China?

Rauschenberg I had heard about the world's oldest paper mill in Anhui. They say that the paper from there is still the most beautiful. I personally don't know that much about paper quality, my methods of making paper and using it in my works are not traditional, but that paper has a special roughness and flexibility. It is very delicate and it takes ink so well it is surprising.

Higashino There is a lot of your work in the 70s in which you do silkscreen or put hand drawn images on paper that you made yourself, but when did you first start making paper?

Rauschenberg In 1973, in Ambert in the Vichy region of France. I first made paper at a traditional paper mill from the 14th century, but it was two years later when I spent four months in India's Gandhi Ashram ^{AHMEDABAD} ~~Qmaibad~~ doing sculptural work that the big turning point came. [* T.N.: Official place name spelling not available.]

Higashino That's your "Bones and ^{Unions} Adhesion" series from 1975.

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mud, worn cloth, plant seeds, etc. Even among your series of works, in this series you combined many un-Western materials and made something unique.

Rauschenberg Yes, I used not only paper but also bamboo, wood, mud, cloth, anything. I couldn't have made that in another place. That's a result of working to open myself to the limit while in the unique conditions of that place. Also, in India, just by wanting it it was easy to get help from people, which was a big luxury. An old couple sitting on the floor would sew with thread, wrap with bamboo, and cut the stem of kite-like paper, they looked as if they'd been squatting doing that for 200 years (laughs).

They had this Indian mud which is wonderful. Have you ever seen an Indian house made of mud? They make Indian mud by mixing cow dung, mud, straw and things; it doesn't last long, but it's very primitive and beautiful. If I made a pot from it, you wouldn't know it from African pots of three thousand years ago, it's that mysterious a material. The other strange thing is that the people working at the Ashram paper mill, because it's such a poor country, make only a dollar a day. It's a big family. They are third generation from Mahatma Gandhi. They are still untouchables.

Higashino Speaking of mud, you made a singular piece called "Mud Muse." There was a large box with mud in it, and the mud was bubbling in reaction to the surrounding noise and soundtrack. That was called "Art and Technology." It was ironic to have that in an ultra-modern exhibition in Los Angeles, wasn't it?

Rauschenberg Oh, that was in 1971. It was the first time I went around the world with Merce Cunningham, and the mud I saw in

India left a strong impression. Everyone works together to build the mud houses in India, it doesn't bother them that the rain washes them away, there are plenty of hands to help, there's lots of cow dung and grass (laughs). They get the whole family together and build it again. But with my work, because Indian mud is so fragile, I had to make a new compound to make it harder. Also, I made very sculptural, structured pieces using materials exclusively available in India, like Egyptian ornamental braid, transparent glue, paper pulp, bamboo, etc. Mold grew, and in the end some really bizarre mushroom-like things grew and the piece became a real masterpiece!

Higashino That's funny. Watching you transfer an image by silkscreen onto this paper that you've made with your own hands, it looks as if you are more interested in the base for the image than you are in the image itself, which is different from the past. If you think about it, originally, canvas is a substance made of woven threads. Until now, it's been thought that canvas is an empty space on which something should be expressed. But now, not only with you but also among other recent artists such as France's "Surface/Base Group"*, rather than the expression on the picture surface, it seems as if there's starting to be more attention paid to the surface or actual base as a material rather than the way it used to be just a place or ground for an image. [* T.N.: Correct French title not available.]

Rauschenberg That's right, I only used traditional canvases during my middle period when I was printing silkscreens of photos of Kennedy, famous masterpieces, trucks or city scenes. I used thin canvas because I don't like that "permanent" feeling of pictures on

really thick canvas. Using almost transparently thin canvas was good because it almost looked as if the painting was done directly on the wall. It's like the feeling of an amateur Ham radio operator.

In the early 50s, near the beginning, I used the wooden boxes thrown out by fish shops and put cloth rolled in mud in them. There was a fish market on Fulton Street where I lived at the time, those boxes really stunk (laughs). For big works I used Conn* Edison Electric Company's big wooden boxes partly because I didn't have any money to buy canvases, it wasn't just an artistic issue. [* T.N.: Correct company spelling not available.]

The piece called "Bed" is done using pillows, sheets, and a bed cover because I didn't have canvas. Whatever was in reach, I painted on whatever I could get, it became a matter of the early me discovering my own surface and execution. Perhaps the direction I took after that is related to this issue.

Higashino That's right, you only kept traditional canvases in one period. In the 70s, you put cardboard boxes and boards together, draped cloth over pulp hardened boards, and in your 1974 series "White Frost,"* you printed images on thin silk fabric by lithography and simply pinned them to the wall. Your work became like this rather than an "adorned in permanence" canvas stretched on a frame with a stiff surface. [* T.N.: Official English title not available, direct translation.] In other words, rather than a fabricated picture, the expression and the surface melt together within very un-European, soft materials. To put it in an extreme way, more than drawing or printing something on a surface, in other words, you have lost your

HOAR
FROST

interest in the image, and seem to be absorbed in making the surface, paper, or cloth.

Rauschenberg You can see the content of a work in the action of making the materials for expressing something. In other words, the subject is born from a physical process, it's not just adding an idea after selecting materials. It's even so with "White Frost." It was very hot in India, but I didn't want to work in an air conditioned studio, because all of the wonderful Indian friends who helped me did their work in fierce heat. Dripping with sweat, the words "White Frost" floated into my mind when I saw the frost in the refrigerator. When I printed an image on silk, when I blew some solvent on it, things went very well with the natural silk, but the image wouldn't stick with the synthetic fibers. It's easy to see that natural materials breathe.

HOARFROST

HOARFROST

This also had an influence on my work methods. I've been to various parts of the world to work countless times, but I was always doing the same thing over. I'd ride the plane, arrive at the airport, ride a taxi, go to a museum or gallery, and do work there, sometimes sleeping there, have the exhibition, then get in maybe the same taxi (laughs), and leave from the airport. I got sick of that.

There was the time in Israel when I made the "Cardboard Series." I'd already been thinking of quitting this repetition, and set a trap for myself. I used sand with cardboard, and decided to get the sand from various parts of the desert, so I travelled. Because of this I saw scenery and things and had a variety of experiences. If I hadn't done that I would have been stuck in the museum. That's what I

meant by a trap. If one has a split personality, one can set a trap for oneself (laughs).

Higashino That's a bourgeois, avant-garde tragedy, isn't it (laughs). You've gone to Israel, India, China, and ... well, Japan is different, but, you've gone and worked right into the middle of cultures with traditions and realities different from those of Europe and America. An avant-garde artist from a capitalist, developed country finds breakthroughs in his own expression and materials in a different culture, a different civilization's reality. This is wonderful, but after all, your finished works go to European, American, Japanese and other developed countries' international modern art world salons, they're praised, evaluated only as a new development for Rauschenberg, bought, and simply end up in a museum collection. Isn't there a contradiction there?

Rauschenberg That's it, that's always a problem. Art should always appeal to a human sense of unease. It's as you say, it's decadence to have it only become a subject of conversation at avant-garde salons. But for example, in Israel, the exact same view and style from ancient times dominates art. To them, art is something which uses jewels and gold, and for me to make my pieces using cardboard was a major culture shock for them. For Israelis, dark memories of war and the hardships of reality are always shadowing them. And yet their art is nothing but conventional traditional work. There was just one woman artist who painted railroad tracks which were badly curved from war, her work was very interesting, but no one thought of her as anything but an insignificant painter. So the works I made in Israel won't be understood by Israelis unless they try to endure

and discover them, it's like thrusting something new in someone's face. There was certainly a group which was converted very quickly, though.

ROCI Higashino You're making grand plans for what you're calling the "~~Rocky~~ Project," aren't you? I've heard that ~~Rocky~~ is the name of a turtle you keep, it's something about being patient, and taking time to come to a realization, like a turtle. I've heard that you're planning not only to take your exhibition of the "~~Rocky~~ Project" to countries familiar with modern art, but also to tour regions of different cultures like Africa, the Middle East, South America, and China, to create a collision of cultures. *ROCI*

Rauschenberg For example, in Japan we could exhibit the show immediately, but how about Sri Lanka or Morocco? We'd have the show in tents, tie the work to elephants (laughs), look for universities in smaller regions, there would probably be all sorts of problems that we can't even imagine. The concept originated from wanting to try taking my work into regions that have that kind of stance toward accepting my kind of work.

Higashino What kind of work will you take?

Rauschenberg First of all, I don't want to do a retrospective show. Especially the early works, I was poor and sold them all so I don't have them at hand, and I'd have to borrow them from collectors, but I don't like bowing my head to collectors. If they lend to the Metropolitan Museum or the ~~Pompidou~~ Center it raises their reputation, and they're happy to lend them because the price goes up, but if it's a small town in Texas they don't want to lend the work, they don't even care. I have had so many of these experiences, and I *Pompidou*

was thinking all along, and at some point started taking specific works and not selling them so I'd have them at hand.

From the 1971 cardboard series we were just talking about up until the work I made yesterday, I have a very large collection of my own. I can construct a show from items selected from that without going to the trouble of borrowing from people, insurance, etc.

Higashino The grief of popularity (laughs).

Rauschenberg I don't want to just show an exhibit. I want to make and add works from materials and images of the place the exhibit is being shown at, take videos of each place, and show those in other countries. For example, when the "~~Rocky~~ Project" goes to Mexico, I want to show videos of the lifestyle and the conditions of the exhibit in Egypt. I've been thinking about this since the time of EAT, to try an exchange via video, connecting by video those who have cows but don't know how to make cheese with those who can make cheese but don't have milk.

Roci

Societies which aren't sophisticated like Japan or America know absolutely nothing about other parts of the world. I was surprised in China to find that people who have lived in China their whole lives have to get permission just to travel fifteen miles, and this has been going on for centuries. They don't even know everything about their own country. If I use my exhibit to show videos of South America, what would it be like?

Higashino You won't go to Moscow?

Rauschenberg It's a very complicated problem there, we're still in the midst of negotiations and haven't properly applied. Originally, Moscow's official answer was "While Reagan is president we can't

have your exhibit." It was a very clear-cut answer (laughs). It seems there's nothing that can be done about it. Beijing is also getting more difficult, but in China I insisted that this project is an event set up between individuals, not between nations.

This is the kind of relationship countries like China need now. They didn't try to hide reality too much. Other than one time when I was stopped by a spy who is always in the town, I was allowed to take photos of anything I wanted.

Higashino The combination of China and Rauschenberg is stimulating. The combination of a giant nation of Asian Socialist realism and American avant-garde. Indeed, if you add Japan in there, it feels a bit like Rauschenberg has created a Security Treaty between Japan, China, and the United States (laughs).

Rauschenberg I think it was good when I first went to China to study how to make paper, because it was one kind of diagonal, indirect relation. But it was also a matter of perfect timing. The rules have become strict again lately, but when I was there, there was an atmosphere of saying that artistic works don't have a need for political slogans on them. When they showed us really beautiful old woodblock prints and silk paintings and had a show of contemporary artists, they say that almost all of the artists were allowed to participate. They also painted over the slogans that were written on the walls, though I couldn't read them, and they used white paint to cover the slogans from the Cultural Revolution written in reddish purple paint. It became beautiful like ancient Etruscan* art (laughs).
[* T.N.: Most likely meaning of reference.] They wouldn't let me take a picture of them painting over it. There's one more thing, this was a

few weeks after we left China. I read it in the paper, it said that there was a re-registration of party members. During the Cultural Revolution, scholars, artists, teachers, and engineers were sent to farms and some of them died there. For a long time, the people that were running the country, especially in the countryside, were illiterates, so now all party members are re-registering, it seems. They have to reform so many things that it's numbing. I have a very strong sympathy with that aspect of China, therefore, I as a single alien, wanted to go in and boldly show various expressions, ideas, and energy. Being a foreigner is a plus, no one can criticize or ban me. Everyone has a chance to experience my work.

Higashino What's the condition of China's young artists? I read somewhere that a young Chinese guy asked you about Duchamp.

Rauschenberg Yes, I was very surprised by that. Normally I don't give lectures, but the present situation in China is so terrible, that I talked about what's been happening in the American and French art worlds while showing prints that I'd brought. Many great masters as well as young artists came, and someone asked about Duchamp. That reminds me, when I showed a picture of a cow, they knew it was Picasso, but when I told them that pop artist Roy Lichtenstein had used Picasso's picture as a model to make the work, they went crazy. I showed them works ranging from Realism to austere abstracts, and was especially asked about Dada. I made an opening remark saying that I myself had not actually seen Dada and that that it may be better considered a literary movement, by the time I first saw Duchamp, he was already considered a classic like Picasso and Brancusi. Dada's meaning is in the time when they were trying to

destroy the Academy, and I talked about how it was born of a similar movement to rebel against something.

Pontus Hulten

Pompidu Higashino I heard this from the ~~Rauschenberg~~ *Hulten**, once director of the ~~Pompidu~~ Center. [* T.N. Official spelling not available.] He said he was walking and looking at young artists in Beijing, he saw a great artist painting a picture in monochrome, red. When he asked if he knew the French monochromist Yves Klein, the artist grinned and answered that the work was a realism piece depicting one part of a red flag (laughs). Anyway, having interest in Duchamp in China is something, isn't it.

Rauschenberg I was surprised, too. I hear there are people sneaking in with books of paintings and other books. Anyway, the enthusiasm of their curiosity... Without curiosity about the world individual existence is impossible, without curiosity the world is featureless.

Higashino Yes, curiosity is what rebellion against oneself is born from.

Rauschenberg In fields other than art, curiosity has come to be used as a weapon. Art is the last really vital occupation because, moreover, the world has sincerity, individual strength and will. Before, I thought sports also had that, but seeing the trouble at the latest Olympics, it's unfortunate, but the athletes are being used as tools for politicians. That's also why they participate in the Los Angeles Olympics but back out on plans for art events. My art was always directed towards communication more than self expression.

The work I make in each specific country can be nothing else than a mixture of my American energy and each country's reality. I

want to use my energy to translate those countries' special cultures and things internal to that reality so that I can see them with my own eyes. The people of those countries should be able to grasp a new method of seeing the world around them.

Higashino Do you really believe that you will be able to create communication there?

Rauschenberg Of course. Especially when we were making ceramic boards in Shigaraki for example, I worked together with on-site experts from the Otsuka Oni Company, and we experimented with absurd things together, doing things they'd never even thought of so far in their work with ceramics. That's where the hierarchy disappears, when a superior confers with a novice, sometimes a novice comes up with an amazing idea. In this kind of place, there was already communication.

Higashino To speak of your work, the idea of combination painting is the base. In other words, you take photos from magazines, your own photos, everyday objects — these may be world topics, everyday things of no great importance, or even trash, but you take those and like a page of a newspaper, combine in a sense items with unrelated relatedness on a surface. This is the world's ambiguity, or its diversity...

Rauschenberg That includes simultaneity and contradictoriness.

Higashino Yes, I think your pictures reflect the outer layer of that world's ambiguity and diversity. How do you select the images and objects you are going to combine on a picture surface? Is it by the interestingness of the images, language based, or instinctual?

Rauschenberg It's instinct. Yet at the same time, sometimes selection is counterattacked by reality or things. Ambiguity is a good word. Things just laying around also have traces of catastrophic experiences left on them. You look at that and think what is that, and then what isn't it? You have to think twice. I don't think about harmony and modeling in my work. If an image or object on the surface looks without a doubt like it should be in that location, I don't use it. Also, if a piece's color combination looks too good, I purposely go in and ruin it.

Higashino It's like a newspaper in that mutually irrelevant articles and photographs are lined up side by side. My ten year old daughter doesn't like newspapers. They're full of bad news like murders and disasters. They only print good news when there isn't any bad news. That's what she says she doesn't like. Newspaper pages are always the same, so when there's a lot of news, big issues only get a little coverage. My daughter insists that when there's no news, they should leave the paper white. When there's a newspaper holiday, she says "Oh, nothing happened," and acts relieved (laughs).

Rauschenberg You shouldn't show her my article that ran in Newsweek last week (laughs). When there's composition in my work, I don't use relativeness as a reason, but rather to emphasize that facts exist without relation. By doing that, when you see that work for example, you'll come up with some kind of relationship in your mind, right? That should be completely different from the relationship that someone else comes up with in their mind. These various differing reactions are what lengthen the life of a work. With newspapers, once you've read them, that's the end. However, when

reading my work, information is abstracted and disharmonized, and sometimes you see things you wouldn't have imagined the day before. And someday, there may come a time when you understand everything about an ambiguous picture. If that happens, fine art becomes merely a symbol. To lengthen the time before that happens as much as possible, I want to keep pictures very complex or very simple, though they're the same thing.

Higashino When I saw the ceramic board Mud Shrine you made at Shigaraki this time, I really understood the sumo doll you printed on the ceramic board, but the strange Roman ruins type image was mysterious. Then I heard that it was nothing but a photograph of steps rotated 90°. With your way of combining things, one person or one country sees a work as very exotic, while others see it differently, as something everyday. A picture is actually not

homogeneous and uniform, depending on the person who looks at it, the receding parts and projecting parts are each seen as interwoven.

Rauschenberg But another answer is born from the connection between exotic and kitsch. In logic, we are taught that bananas can't be added to apples, but here we can do that! (Laughs.)

Higashino I understand well that you want to make your work ambiguous in the way that the world is diverse.

Rauschenberg That's right, in a provocative way. My work is also definitely not simply my own memory chain. Of the photographic work I'm doing now there's a piece called "In and Out City Limits." I go to a city, spend a few days there, and take thousands of photos. I'm not there to get to know the city well or to comment on it or criticize it, I simply want to experience the city by moving from the

city's shadows to the light. Then I go back to New York and select eighty photos, then I go back to that city and do a photo exhibit with those photos. When I do that, the reaction of the people who come to see it is graphic. Things they are used to seeing, things that are always in front of their eyes but they don't see, things they've never seen, an obscure place that only they know — with each of these they rediscover their own city. I go to the next city and do the same thing. I'm planning to make these photos into a book and publish it soon.

Higashino One more thing, I heard that you have plans for a big project called "1/4 Mile." 1/4 mile, a length of 400 meters...

Rauschenberg This is also, in a sense, another device for experiment, a way to try to make my own work an adventure. It's impossible to conceive of "1/4 Mile" from end to end. By putting a certain amount of time into certain works, somewhere my own aesthetic will end up tightening up, but here's where there's no way to have presuppositions or preconceptions. It's like when I did the ceramic board in Japan, I was surrounded by ceramic experts, at first I was intimidated since I was empty handed and ignorant.

But actually, ignorance sometimes helps make exceptional work. There are too many artists who know precisely what they're doing. Those are the scariest artists. Anyway, when this work is finished, I probably won't even remember what the work was like for me when it started.

Higashino After all, in this large work you'll be combining various places of the world, human images, and objects, right?

Rauschenberg That's right. I've just started, and I also went to China and Japan, so I don't know what's going to happen. Also, this

work won't be shown as one solid piece in one place, there's not really a way to exhibit it, I plan to have it spread out in separate parts in various places. For example, starting from 381 Broadway and ending uptown, or by not being able to see the end without going to another city. Viewers will be given a map and travel, moving from place to place. That movement will become one part of the work, so actually it will be a piece that is much longer than 1/4 mile. And by the time you get to the end, you'll forget what was at the beginning, so you could see the work time after time (laughs).

Captions:

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"Untitled" (White Frost) 1974

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"Tanshin" (out of seven Chinese characters) 1982

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"Mud Shrine" 1982

Interview: Tying Work to Elephants
About the ROCI Project

Robert Rauschenberg
Yoshiaki Tono

Introduction

Yoshiaki Tono

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Tono Speaking of mud, you made a singular piece called "Mud Muse." There was a large box with mud in it, and the mud was bubbling in reaction to the surrounding noise and soundtrack. That was called "Art and Technology." It was ironic to have that in an ultra-modern exhibition in Los Angeles, wasn't it?

Rauschenberg Oh, that was in 1971. It was the first time I went around the world with Merce Cunningham, and the mud I saw in

India left a strong impression. Everyone works together to build the mud houses in India, it doesn't bother them that the rain washes them away, there are plenty of hands to help, there's lots of cow dung and grass (laughs). They get the whole family together and build it again. But with my work, because Indian mud is so fragile, I had to make a new compound to make it harder. Also, I made very sculptural, structured pieces using materials exclusively available in India, like Egyptian ornamental braid, transparent glue, paper pulp, bamboo, etc. Mold grew, and in the end some really bizarre mushroom-like things grew and the piece became a real masterpiece!

Tono That's funny. Watching you transfer an image by silkscreen onto this paper that you've made with your own hands, it looks as if you are more interested in the base for the image than you are in the image itself, which is different from the past. If you think about it, originally, canvas is a substance made of woven threads. Until now, it's been thought that canvas is an empty space on which something should be expressed. But now, not only with you but also among other recent artists such as France's "Surface/Base Group"*, rather than the expression on the picture surface, it seems as if there's starting to be more attention paid to the surface or actual base as a material rather than the way it used to be just a place or ground for an image. [* T.N.: Correct French title not available.]

Rauschenberg That's right, I only used traditional canvases during my middle period when I was printing silkscreens of photos of Kennedy, famous masterpieces, trucks or city scenes. I used thin canvas because I don't like that "permanent" feeling of pictures on really thick canvas. Using almost transparently thin canvas was good

because it almost looked as if the painting was done directly on the wall. It's like the feeling of an amateur Ham radio operator.

In the early 50s, near the beginning, I used the wooden boxes thrown out by fish shops and put cloth rolled in mud in them. There was a fish market on Fulton Street where I lived at the time, those boxes really stunk (laughs). For big works I used Conn Edison Electric Company's big wooden boxes partly because I didn't have any money to buy canvases, it wasn't just an artistic issue.

The piece called "Bed" is done using pillows, sheets, and a bed cover because I didn't have canvas. Whatever was in reach, I painted on whatever I could get, it became a matter of the early me discovering my own surface and execution. Perhaps the direction I took after that is related to this issue.

Tono That's right, you only kept traditional canvases in one period. In the 70s, you put cardboard boxes and boards together, draped cloth over pulp hardened boards, and in your 1974 series "Hoarfrost," you printed images on thin silk fabric by lithography and simply pinned them to the wall. Your work became like this rather than an "adorned in permanence" canvas stretched on a frame with a stiff surface. In other words, rather than a fabricated picture, the expression and the surface melt together within very un-European, soft materials. To put it in an extreme way, more than drawing or printing something on a surface, in other words, you have lost your interest in the image, and seem to be absorbed in making the surface, paper, or cloth.

Rauschenberg You can see the content of a work in the action of making the materials for expressing something. In other words, the

subject is born from a physical process, it's not just adding an idea after selecting materials. It's even so with "Hoarfrost." It was very hot in India, but I didn't want to work in an air conditioned studio, because all of the wonderful Indian friends who helped me did their work in fierce heat. Dripping with sweat, the words "Hoarfrost" floated into my mind when I saw the frost in the refrigerator. When I printed an image on silk, when I blew some solvent on it, things went very well with the natural silk, but the image wouldn't stick with the synthetic fibers. It's easy to see that natural materials breathe.

This also had an influence on my work methods. I've been to various parts of the world to work countless times, but I was always doing the same thing over. I'd ride the plane, arrive at the airport, ride a taxi, go to a museum or gallery, and do work there, sometimes sleeping there, have the exhibition, then get in maybe the same taxi (laughs), and leave from the airport. I got sick of that.

There was the time in Israel when I made the "Cardboard Series." I'd already been thinking of quitting this repetition, and set a trap for myself. I used sand with cardboard, and decided to get the sand from various parts of the desert, so I travelled. Because of this I saw scenery and things and had a variety of experiences. If I hadn't done that I would have been stuck in the museum. That's what I meant by a trap. If one has a split personality, one can set a trap for oneself (laughs).

Tono That's a bourgeois, avant-garde tragedy, isn't it (laughs).

You've gone to Israel, India, China, and ... well, Japan is different, but, you've gone and worked right into the middle of cultures with

traditions and realities different from those of Europe and America. An avant-garde artist from a capitalist, developed country finds breakthroughs in his own expression and materials in a different culture, a different civilization's reality. This is wonderful, but after all, your finished works go to European, American, Japanese and other developed countries' international modern art world salons, they're praised, evaluated only as a new development for Rauschenberg, bought, and simply end up in a museum collection. Isn't there a contradiction there?

Rauschenberg That's it, that's always a problem. Art should always appeal to a human sense of unease. It's as you say, it's decadence to have it only become a subject of conversation at avant-garde salons. But for example, in Israel, the exact same view and style from ancient times dominates art. To them, art is something which uses jewels and gold, and for me to make my pieces using cardboard was a major culture shock for them. For Israelis, dark memories of war and the hardships of reality are always shadowing them. And yet their art is nothing but conventional traditional work. There was just one woman artist who painted railroad tracks which were badly curved from war, her work was very interesting, but no one thought of her as anything but an insignificant painter. So the works I made in Israel won't be understood by Israelis unless they try to endure and discover them, it's like thrusting something new in someone's face. There was certainly a group which was converted very quickly, though.

Tono You're making grand plans for what you're calling the "ROCI Project," aren't you? I've heard that ROCI is the name of a turtle you

keep, it's something about being patient, and taking time to come to a realization, like a turtle. I've heard that you're planning not only to take your exhibition of the "ROCI Project" to countries familiar with modern art, but also to tour regions of different cultures like Africa, the Middle East, South America, and China, to create a collision of cultures.

Rauschenberg For example, in Japan we could exhibit the show immediately, but how about Sri Lanka or Morocco? We'd have the show in tents, tie the work to elephants (laughs), look for universities in smaller regions, there would probably be all sorts of problems that we can't even imagine. The concept originated from wanting to try taking my work into regions that have that kind of stance toward accepting my kind of work.

Tono What kind of work will you take?

Rauschenberg First of all, I don't want to do a retrospective show. Especially the early works, I was poor and sold them all so I don't have them at hand, and I'd have to borrow them from collectors, but I don't like bowing my head to collectors. If they lend to the Metropolitan Museum or the Pompidou Center it raises their reputation, and they're happy to lend them because the price goes up, but if it's a small town in Texas they don't want to lend the work, they don't even care. I have had so many of these experiences, and I was thinking all along, and at some point started taking specific works and not selling them so I'd have them at hand.

From the 1971 cardboard series we were just talking about up until the work I made yesterday, I have a very large collection of my

own. I can construct a show from items selected from that without going to the trouble of borrowing from people, insurance, etc.

Tono The grief of popularity (laughs).

Rauschenberg I don't want to just show an exhibit. I want to make and add works from materials and images of the place the exhibit is being shown at, take videos of each place, and show those in other countries. For example, when the "ROCI Project" goes to Mexico, I want to show videos of the lifestyle and the conditions of the exhibit in Egypt. I've been thinking about this since the time of EAT, to try an exchange via video, connecting by video those who have cows but don't know how to make cheese with those who can make cheese but don't have milk.

Societies which aren't sophisticated like Japan or America know absolutely nothing about other parts of the world. I was surprised in China to find that people who have lived in China their whole lives have to get permission just to travel fifteen miles, and this has been going on for centuries. They don't even know everything about their own country. If I use my exhibit to show videos of South America, what would it be like?

Tono You won't go to Moscow?

Rauschenberg It's a very complicated problem there, we're still in the midst of negotiations and haven't properly applied. Originally, Moscow's official answer was "While Reagan is president we can't have your exhibit." It was a very clear-cut answer (laughs). It seems there's nothing that can be done about it. Beijing is also getting more difficult, but in China I insisted that this project is an event set up between individuals, not between nations.

This is the kind of relationship countries like China need now. They didn't try to hide reality too much. Other than one time when I was stopped by a spy who is always in the town, I was allowed to take photos of anything I wanted.

Tono The combination of China and Rauschenberg is stimulating. The combination of a giant nation of Asian Socialist realism and American avant-garde. Indeed, if you add Japan in there, it feels a bit like Rauschenberg has created a Security Treaty between Japan, China, and the United States (laughs).

Rauschenberg I think it was good when I first went to China to study how to make paper, because it was one kind of diagonal, indirect relation. But it was also a matter of perfect timing. The rules have become strict again lately, but when I was there, there was an atmosphere of saying that artistic works don't have a need for political slogans on them. When they showed us really beautiful old woodblock prints and silk paintings and had a show of contemporary artists, they say that almost all of the artists were allowed to participate. They also painted over the slogans that were written on the walls, though I couldn't read them, and they used white paint to cover the slogans from the Cultural Revolution written in reddish purple paint. It became beautiful like ancient Etruscan* art (laughs). [* T.N.: Most likely meaning of reference.] They wouldn't let me take a picture of them painting over it. There's one more thing, this was a few weeks after we left China. I read it in the paper, it said that there was a re-registration of party members. During the Cultural Revolution, scholars, artists, teachers, and engineers were sent to farms and some of them died there. For a long time, the people that

were running the country, especially in the countryside, were illiterates, so now all party members are re-registering, it seems. They have to reform so many things that it's numbing. I have a very strong sympathy with that aspect of China, therefore, I as a single alien, wanted to go in and boldly show various expressions, ideas, and energy. Being a foreigner is a plus, no one can criticize or ban me. Everyone has a chance to experience my work.

Tono What's the condition of China's young artists? I read somewhere that a young Chinese guy asked you about Duchamp.

Rauschenberg Yes, I was very surprised by that. Normally I don't give lectures, but the present situation in China is so terrible, that I talked about what's been happening in the American and French art worlds while showing prints that I'd brought. Many great masters as well as young artists came, and someone asked about Duchamp. That reminds me, when I showed a picture of a cow, they knew it was Picasso, but when I told them that pop artist Roy Lichtenstein had used Picasso's picture as a model to make the work, they went crazy. I showed them works ranging from Realism to austere abstracts, and was especially asked about Dada. I made an opening remark saying that I myself had not actually seen Dada and that that it may be better considered a literary movement, by the time I first saw Duchamp, he was already considered a classic like Picasso and Brancusi. Dada's meaning is in the time when they were trying to destroy the Academy, and I talked about how it was born of a similar movement to rebel against something.

Tono I heard this from the Pontus Hulten, once director of the Pompidou Center. He said he was walking and looking at young

artists in Beijing, he saw a great artist painting a picture in monochrome, red. When he asked if he knew the French monochromist Yves Klein, the artist grinned and answered that the work was a realism piece depicting one part of a red flag (laughs). Anyway, having interest in Duchamp in China is something, isn't it.

Rauschenberg I was surprised, too. I hear there are people sneaking in with books of paintings and other books. Anyway, the enthusiasm of their curiosity... Without curiosity about the world individual existence is impossible, without curiosity the world is featureless.

Tono Yes, curiosity is what rebellion against oneself is born from.

Rauschenberg In fields other than art, curiosity has come to be used as a weapon. Art is the last really vital occupation because, moreover, the world has sincerity, individual strength and will. Before, I thought sports also had that, but seeing the trouble at the latest Olympics, it's unfortunate, but the athletes are being used as tools for politicians. That's also why they participate in the Los Angeles Olympics but back out on plans for art events. My art was always directed towards communication more than self expression.

The work I make in each specific country can be nothing else than a mixture of my American energy and each country's reality. I want to use my energy to translate those countries' special cultures and things internal to that reality so that I can see them with my own eyes. The people of those countries should be able to grasp a new method of seeing the world around them.

Tono Do you really believe that you will be able to create communication there?

Rauschenberg Of course. Especially when we were making ceramic boards in Shigaraki for example, I worked together with on-site experts from the Otsuka Omi Company, and we experimented with absurd things together, doing things they'd never even thought of so far in their work with ceramics. That's where the hierarchy disappears, when a superior confers with a novice, sometimes a novice comes up with an amazing idea. In this kind of place, there was already communication.

Tono To speak of your work, the idea of combination painting is the base. In other words, you take photos from magazines, your own photos, everyday objects — these may be world topics, everyday things of no great importance, or even trash, but you take those and like a page of a newspaper, combine in a sense items with unrelated relatedness on a surface. This is the world's ambiguity, or its diversity...

Rauschenberg That includes simultaneity and contradictoriness.

Tono Yes, I think your pictures reflect the outer layer of that world's ambiguity and diversity. How do you select the images and objects you are going to combine on a picture surface? Is it by the interestingness of the images, language based, or instinctual?

Rauschenberg It's instinct. Yet at the same time, sometimes selection is counterattacked by reality or things. Ambiguity is a good word. Things just laying around also have traces of catastrophic experiences left on them. You look at that and think what is that, and then what isn't it? You have to think twice. I don't think about harmony and modeling in my work. If an image or object on the surface looks without a doubt like it should be in that location, I

don't use it. Also, if a piece's color combination looks too good, I purposely go in and ruin it.

Tono It's like a newspaper in that mutually irrelevant articles and photographs are lined up side by side. My ten year old daughter doesn't like newspapers. They're full of bad news like murders and disasters. They only print good news when there isn't any bad news. That's what she says she doesn't like. Newspaper pages are always the same, so when there's a lot of news, big issues only get a little coverage. My daughter insists that when there's no news, they should leave the paper white. When there's a newspaper holiday, she says "Oh, nothing happened," and acts relieved (laughs).

Rauschenberg You shouldn't show her my article that ran in Newsweek last week (laughs). When there's composition in my work, I don't use relativity as a reason, but rather to emphasize that facts exist without relation. By doing that, when you see that work for example, you'll come up with some kind of relationship in your mind, right? That should be completely different from the relationship that someone else comes up with in their mind. These various differing reactions are what lengthen the life of a work. With newspapers, once you've read them, that's the end. However, when reading my work, information is abstracted and disharmonized, and sometimes you see things you wouldn't have imagined the day before. And someday, there may come a time when you understand everything about an ambiguous picture. If that happens, fine art becomes merely a symbol. To lengthen the time before that happens as much as possible, I want to keep pictures very complex or very simple, though they're the same thing.

Tono When I saw the ceramic board Mud Shrine you made at Shigaraki this time, I really understood the sumo doll you printed on the ceramic board, but the strange Roman ruins type image was mysterious. Then I heard that it was nothing but a photograph of steps rotated 90°. With your way of combining things, one person or one country sees a work as very exotic, while others see it differently, as something everyday. A picture is actually not homogeneous and uniform, depending on the person who looks at it, the receding parts and projecting parts are each seen as interwoven.

Rauschenberg But another answer is born from the connection between exotic and kitsch. In logic, we are taught that bananas can't be added to apples, but here we can do that! (Laughs.)

Tono I understand well that you want to make your work ambiguous in the way that the world is diverse.

Rauschenberg That's right, in a provocative way. My work is also definitely not simply my own memory chain. Of the photographic work I'm doing now there's a piece called "In and Out City Limits." I go to a city, spend a few days there, and take thousands of photos. I'm not there to get to know the city well or to comment on it or criticize it, I simply want to experience the city by moving from the city's shadows to the light. Then I go back to New York and select eighty photos, then I go back to that city and do a photo exhibit with those photos. When I do that, the reaction of the people who come to see it is graphic. Things they are used to seeing, things that are always in front of their eyes but they don't see, things they've never seen, an obscure place that only they know — with each of these they

rediscover their own city. I go to the next city and do the same thing. I'm planning to make these photos into a book and publish it soon.

Tono One more thing. I heard that you have plans for a big project called "1/4 Mile." 1/4 mile, a length of 400 meters...

Rauschenberg This is also, in a sense, another device for experiment, a way to try to make my own work an adventure. It's impossible to conceive of "1/4 Mile" from end to end. By putting a certain amount of time into certain works, somewhere my own aesthetic will end up tightening up, but here's where there's no way to have presuppositions or preconceptions. It's like when I did the ceramic board in Japan, I was surrounded by ceramic experts, at first I was intimidated since I was empty handed and ignorant.

But actually, ignorance sometimes helps make exceptional work. There are too many artists who know precisely what they're doing. Those are the scariest artists. Anyway, when this work is finished, I probably won't even remember what the work was like for me when it started.

Tono After all, in this large work you'll be combining various places of the world, human images, and objects, right?

Rauschenberg That's right. I've just started, and I also went to China and Japan, so I don't know what's going to happen. Also, this work won't be shown as one solid piece in one place, there's not really a way to exhibit it, I plan to have it spread out in separate parts in various places. For example, starting from 381 Broadway and ending uptown, or by not being able to see the end without going to another city. Viewers will be given a map and travel, moving from piece to piece. That movement will become one part of the work, so

actually it will be a piece that is much longer than 1/4 mile. And by the time you get to the end, you'll forget what was at the beginning, so you could see the work time after time (laughs).

Captions:

p. 2

"Untitled" (Hoarfrost) 1974

p. 4

"Tanshin" (out of seven Chinese characters) 1982

p.5

"Mud Shrine" 1982

ESSAY #1

ロバート・ラウシェンバーグの芸術が世界の22ヶ国を巡回するが、これはその6番目の展覧会である。ラウシェンバーグの芸術が表現しているのは、継承し、発展していく、世界的な協調精神の第一段階である。そこから出現するイメージは、各国の文化の独自性を明確にし、芸術を通じてあらゆる人生を可能とする表現となる上の、重要な要素になっている。

私たち一人一人をかけがえのないものとしている万物への尊敬の念こそ、ラウシェンバーグの芸術的な狙いの核心に迫るものである。世界的規模を持つ彼の共同制作は、長年におたる制作方法の自然な拡がりを示している。

ここに展示される作品の哲学的な萌芽は、ラウシェンバーグの最も早い時期の作品の中に見出される。1951年に描かれた、一切が白ならばに、一切が黒の絵画は、芸術作品の客観性の観念と、個々の創造的体験の主観性とを、文化の基本単位として確立し、常に主張し続けている。

芸術と文化が価値を得るのは、歴史が定める方法や文化人の発言によって正当化される儀式によるほかにないのだ、という考え方があつた。しかし、ラウシェンバーグは壮大にして勇敢な身振りで、この考え方を一蹴してしまつた。これらの作品は制作された当時は十分な理解を得られなかつた。しかし現在は、文字通りに、また比喩的にも、タブラ・ラーサ（白紙）として存在している。ここに西欧芸術の物語が、永遠に書き込まれてゆくであろう。それはすべての芸術家が自由に考え、結びつけて、新しい構文法を探り……創造的となることに許可を与えてゆく物語である。

ラウシェンバーグは芸術の外観と、その制作方法とを変えてしまった。彼は芸術に斬新な方法で接近し、絵画を壁から取り外して、新しい開かれた次元に置き直した。画面は世界に伸び拡がり、

膨張して、あらゆる次元において描かれるのである。ラウシェンバーグは絵画や彫刻に関する伝統的な定義を捨てて、新しい芸術作品の概念をもたらした。また芸術作品を作り出す材料の妥当性に関して、革命的なアイデアを提供した。そして、芸術の価値は芸術の材料の固有な価値にあるのではなく、意味を導き出すもつと大きなプロセスにおいて、材料の機能を明らかにすることにある、ということを示した。

彼は独力で、ドローイング、プリント、そして紙そのものの機能的な役割に対する、私たちの受けとめ方を変えてしまつた。また、あらゆる芸術に広い関心を持ち、これが共同制作活動となつて、劇場やダンスや音楽の観念を、大きく前進させたのである。

意味を封じ込め、普遍的な意識を分割する、図像学的方法にとらわれない今回の展覧会の作品は、精神を解放する。これらの作品では、表面の緊張が言葉によらずに該解され、本質的に異なる文化を確認できるのだ。作品は水路の役を果し、そこには国家の枠を超越した価値と質とを持つ小川が流れている。小川は人類の目的を統一し、人生の意義に対して、威厳、高潔、完全性、激しさを与えている。ラウシェンバーグは、世界の見方を教えてはいない。彼が展開したのは、世界自体に世界を提示するユニークな方法である。彼は人生に注釈を加えない。そのかわりに、生きる機会を提供している。この機会を促えることによつて、私たちも活動的な共同制作者とならねばならないのだ。その際には、世界をゆがめる先入観を持たずに、現に存在するものを認識し、卒直に反応する、自由な参加者として立ち上るべきである。

ドナルド・J・サフ
フロリダ州タンパ

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ごあいさつ

ESSAY #2

ラウシェンバーグはいまでもなくジャクソン・ポロック・ポーツ・アートの大先達です。その影響力は美術界ばかりでなく、芸術全般に及び、さらには世界の文化、風俗、あるいは社会生活にまで、広く深く達しています。現代美術界の尖端に立つ前衛作家として、一般庶民の日常生活に深くかかわることは当然のことですが、彼の場合単に庶民の日常生活からモナーやテーラーを採取するばかりでなく、現代社会の抱えているさまざまな問題点、矛盾や醜さ、明るさや暗さ、悪徳や善意などもふくめた複雑な相貌を、言葉によらず、イメージによる表現をもって、いわば象徴的に集約化し、かつ視覚化して、その本質を提示しています。こうして彼の作品に提示されたさまざまな問題点は、現代社会さながらに多義的であり、接する人々それぞれに応じて多様な感じ方や解釈の仕方を生み出さずにはありません。しかし彼の芸術活動の結果として提示されたそれらは、言語表現の限界をはるかに超越して、感性を介した認識の強さ、重さ、手応えを先分に発露しています。彼の前衛作家としての外界への対応の仕方は、身の廻りりの日常を手づかみにして、社会・経済・政治外交、もしくは哲学的な思想にまで達しています。彼こそ、真の現代の前衛作家といふにふさわしい芸術家であると信じます。

そうした40年にも及ぶラウシェンバーグの前衛的な作家活動の総決算ともいふべきものが、このロッキーマ展です。これは、アメリカの元副連大使カークパトリック女史の支援を得て開始された、誠にも勇気ある壮大な芸術的プロジェクトで、それがそのまま一人の個人作家による芸術を通じての真の国際交流を目指すものとなっています。このロッキーマ展の特色は、とかく従来の国際的な現

代美術界が欧米先進国主導型で展開されてきたことに対する深い反省や批判をふくんでおり、それによって、地球上の人類が現在当面している各種の難問に、作家自身が、むしろこれまで等閑視されてきたアジア・アフリカ・アラブ世界など、第三世界の状況を主として、真正面から生身でかかわろうとしています。1985年4月メキシコから始まって1990年に彼の母国アメリカの首都ワシントンワシントン・ナショナル・ギャラリーで総括展を開催するまで、5年間、22カ国に及ぶ類例のない大規模な個人プロジェクトです。

現代美術がとかく一般庶民の日常生活から遊離しがちな日本における本展は、特に非ヨーロッパ社会の先導的な立場にあるべき筈のわが国での開催という意味で、とりわけ重要な意義を持つていえると思います。この意義ある展覧会が当美術館において開催できますことは、主催者として何か宿命的な感じがいたしますと同時に、大変光栄に存じます。

本展の開催をご承引いただいたロバート・ラウシェンバーグ氏を始めロッキーマ展関係者の皆様、日本展開催のために文字通り献身的なご尽力をいただいた中谷英二子氏、本展出品作品の国内輸送及び保管に格別のご協力をいただいた渡辺興平氏、さらにセラミック作品の展示についてご協力いただいた大塚オーミ陶業株式会社、その他さまざまな形でご援助いただいた多数の方々には衷心から深く感謝申し上げます。

1986年11月

世田谷美術館

朝日新聞社

ESSAY #3

対談：象に作品をくりつけたり……

——ロッキー・プロジェクトを巡って

ロバート・ラウシェンバーグ
東野芳明

まえせつ

——東野芳明

以下の対談は、ラウシェンバーグが1983年、信楽でセラミックの作品を作るために来日した際に行ったものである。このポップ・アートの先駆者は1964年にジョン・ケージ、マース・カニングハムらとはじめて来日して、当時の草月アート・センターでハブニングを開催したり、カニングハム・グループのダンスの装置や衣裳や照明に参加して、60年代中葉の日本の芸術界に大きなインパクトを与えた。その後、ぼったりと来日しなくなったが1983年に中国でペーパーワークを試みた帰りに立ち寄ってから、信楽の仕事をはじめ、立て続けに日本に何度も来るようになった。今回日本でも実現したロッキー展の巡廻プロジェクトは、すでにこの頃が発して、この対談でも、このプロジェクトが話題の中心になっている。そこには、アメリカ美術界のスーパー・スターという個人的立場を脱して、世界各地のせめぎ合う異なった文化の流動の中に、自らを解体しようという、70年代後半からの、第2期のラウシェンバーグの顔がある。本展の理解にいきさかでも貢献すると思い、この対談を再録して頂いた。(対談は1983年5月に東京で行なわれ、岩波書店刊の拙著「作り手たちとの時間」に収録してある。なお、一部を省略したことをお断りしておきます。)

東野 昨年(1983)行ったという中国はどうでした。

ラウシェンバーグ 中国での緊張感というのはすごい。飛行機を降りてから出国するまで、一瞬たりとも、あの、じつにゆっくりとした緊張を感じないことはなかった。水道の蛇口から、ほんの少しだけ水がぼたぼたと出つづけているときに感ずる緊張感、とでもいうかな。つまり中国はわれわれがいう意味での行動の自由がない。ぼくらは知事や文化副大臣とか市長にも会ったし、ずい分とめくまれていた。けれど、なにかやろうとすると、ほんのささいなことのひとつひとつが、それぞれ、別々のグループに管轄されていて、そのグループが、10フィート動くたびに変わるんだ(笑)。ぼくらはきわめて品行方正だったし、過激な振舞いはいっさいなし。滞在して仕事をしたかったし、ちょっとでも悪いことをしたら国外退去、ということは分かっていたからね。もつとも、一体全体、何が「悪い」ことなのか分からなかったけど。それと、あの、ゆったりとした倦怠感もちょっとしたものだった。

東野 中国に行った動機はなんだったんですか。

ラウシェンバーグ 世界最古という安徽の紙漉工場の話を開いたのがきっかけ。あそこの紙はいまでもいちばん美しい紙だというね。ぼく自身は紙の質のことはよく分かはないし、ぼくが紙を作ったり作品に使うやり方は、伝統的なやり方ではないけど、ともかく、その紙の目が粗くて腰の柔らかいこと、インクののり具合が驚くほどデリケートなんだ。

東野 70年代の君の作品には、自分で作った紙の上にシルクスクリーンや手描きでイメージを置いたものが多いけど、最初はどこで紙をやったの。

ラウシェンバーグ 1973年、フランスのヴィシー地方のアンペール。14世紀からの伝統のある紙漉工場で作ったのがはじめてだったけど、その2年あとで、インドのガンディ・アシュラムのオムニバッドで4ヵ月、彫刻的な仕事をしたときが大きな転換だった。

東野 75年の「骨と整合」というシリーズですね。あれは、紙のパルプに布だの竹だのを編んでプレスしたり、パルプやインド泥やぼろ布や植物の種なんかを固めたものを使った構成的なマルチプル作品で、君の作品系列でも非西歐的な素材を生まにコンバインした異色のものだった。

ラウシェンバーグ そう、紙だけでなく、竹、木、泥、布、なんでも使ったし、あれは他の土地では作れなかった。あの土地独特の条件に出来る限り自分を開いておこうと努めた結果です。それにインドでは、欲しいだけ、人々の小さな手を借りることが出来たというのは、大へんなぜい沢だった。床に坐った老婦人たちが糸で縫ったり、竹で包んだり、風みたいな紙の心棒を切ってくれる。それが、200年も昔からうずくまったままやっているように見えてくるんだ(笑)。

インド泥というのがあってね、これがすばらしい。泥で作ったインドの家を見たことがあるかい？ インド泥は牛なんかの糞や泥や変糞やなんかを混ぜて作るんで、永持ちはずい長いんだが、すごくプリミティブで美しい。これで器を作ったら三千年前のアフリカの壺といたって分かりやしない、それぐらい不思議な材料だね。それに不思議なのは、アシュラムの紙漉工場働いている

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高橋 (三平) 1971年

連中は、たいへん貧しい国だから、一日に1ドルしか稼げない。大家族でね。彼らはマハトマ・ガンジーのたしか三代目の世代で、まだ不可触賤民なんです。

東野 泥といえば、君は、「泥女神」という奇妙な作品を作ったでしょう。泥を入れた大きな箱があつて、まわりの騒音やサウンドトラックの音に反応して泥が泡を立てる。あれが「アート・アンド・テクノロジー」という、ロスアンゼルスでの超現代的な展覧会に出品されたのは皮肉だったな。

ラウシェンバーグ ああ、あれは1971年だから、はじめてマース・カニングハムのダンスと世界一周したときにインドで見た泥が印象に残っていたんだ。泥の家というのはインド泥でみんなで作る家だね、雨で溶けてしまっても気にしない、人手はあるし、草も草もいっぱいあるから(笑)、家中で集まって建て直す。ただぼくの作品の場合は、インド泥はすごくもろいんで、固くするために、新しい調合をしなければならなかった。それに、エジプト製飾り紐だとか透明な糊とか紙のバルブとか竹とか、もっぱらインドの現地での素材を使って彫刻的な構成の作品を作ったわけだけど、かびが生えだし、しまいは奇妙なきのこみたいなのができて、傑作だった。

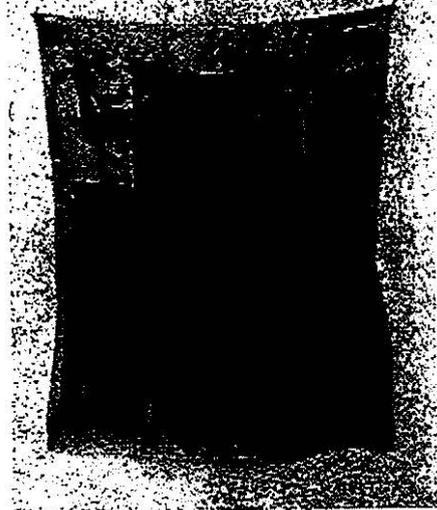
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東野 面白いね。君が自分の手で紙なんかを作って、その上にシルクスクリーンでイメージを転写しているのを見ると、以前とちがって、イメージそのものよりも、イメージをのせる支持体の方に興味を持ち出しているように見える。考えてみれば、キャンヴァスにしても、本来は、麻の布という、糸を織った物質なわけです。いままでは、キャンヴァスはなにかをその上に表現すべき空白の場と考えられてきたわけですが、君だけではなく、最近の美術が、たとえばフランスの「表面/支持体」グループにしても、画面上の表現よりも、かつては場であり地であった表面や支持体自体が物質としてすでに表現をもっていることに注目しはじめているように思える。

ラウシェンバーグ そうだなあ、ぼくが伝統的なキャンヴァスを使ったのは中間の時期、シルクスクリーンでケネディや名画やトラックや都市の風景なんかの写真をキャンヴァスに刷った時期だけだ。そのキャンヴァスも薄い布を使ったのは、あの厚手のキャンヴァスの絵の、「永遠めかした感じがいやだったからで、すけて見えるくらいの薄いキャンヴァスを使うと、壁に直接描いたように見えたのがよかった。ラジオのアマチュアのハムみたいな感じがね。

50年代の前半、ほとんど最初の頃は、魚屋の持てた木の箱を使って、中に泥をくるんだ布をいれたりした。あの頃住んでいたフルトン・ストリートは魚市場の近くでね、その箱がじつに臭いんだ(笑)。大きい作品では、コン・エディソン電気会社の大きな木箱を使ったし、金がなくてキャンヴァスが買えなかったからでもあって、けっして美学上の問題じゃない。

あの「ベッド」という作品も、キャンヴァスがなくて、枕やシーツやベッドカバーを使って描いたものなんだ。手当たり次第、拾えるものの上に描いたわけで、初期のぼくは自分の表面を、支



持体を、発明したことになる。たぶん、ぼくのそれ以後の方向はこのことに関係があるな。

東野 たしかに、君は慣習的なキャンヴァスを一時期保っただけで、70年代になると、ダンボールの箱や板をパンチでとめたり、バルブを囲めた板から布をたらしたり、「白箱」という74年のシリーズでは、薄い絹の布にリトでイメージをすりこんで、ただ壁にピンでとめたり、という風になってきて、木枠に張られた、固い表面の、「永遠めかした」キャンヴァスではなくなっている。つまり、虚構としての画面ではなくて、表現と表面とが、非ヨーロッパ的な柔らかい素材のなかで溶けあっている。極端にいうと、君は、表面に何かを描いたり、刷りこんだりするよりも、つまり、イメージには興味なくなってしまうと、その表面の紙とか布とかを作る方に熟中しているようにさえ見えている。

ラウシェンバーグ 何かを表現するための素材を作るという行為の中に、内容が見えてくる。つまり、主題というものは、じつじつと、物理的なプロセスから生まれるものであって、素材を選んで、それにアイデアをただ加えてゆくのではない。「白箱」にしてもそうだ。インドではものすごく暑かったけれども、空調のきいたアトリエで仕事をするのはいやだった。手伝ってくれたすばらしいインドの友人たちはみんな猛烈な暑さの中で仕事をしていたからね。汗でべとべとになって、それで冷蔵庫の霜を見て「白霜」という言葉が浮かんだんだが、絹にイメージを刷って、溶剤を吹きつけてみて、自然の絹だとよくいくんだが、合成の繊維ではイメージが定着しない。自然な素材が息づいてくるのが目に見えてわかるんだ。

これは、仕事のやり方にも影響があった。ぼくは何度も世界各地で仕事をしていたけれど、いつもいつも同じことの繰返しだった。飛行機にのって、空港に着いて、タクシーにのって、美術館とか画廊へ行って、そこで仕事をして、時にはそこで眠って、展覧会をやって、また、たぶん同じタクシーにのって(笑)、空港から飛び立つ。もう、それにはうんざりしきってきだね。

イスラエルで「ダンボール・シリーズ」を作ったとき、もうあの繰返しはやめようと思って、自分に異をかけてみた。ダンボールに砂を使ったけど、その砂を砂漠のいろんな場所から採ってくることにして、旅行をしたわけ。そのおかげで、風景や物を見たいろいろな経験ができた。そうじゃなかったら美術館にとじこめられたさきになっていたらうな。「異」といったのはそういう意味で、分裂病でさえあれば、自分に異がかけられる(笑)。

東野 それは、ブルジョア・アヴァンギャルドの悲劇だね(笑)。

イスラエルとかインドとか中国とかへ行って、まあ日本は別だろ
うけど、ヨーロッパやアメリカの文化とはちがう文化の伝統や現
実のただ中で仕事をする——資本主義先進国の前衛作家が、異文
化、異文明の現実から自分の新しい表現や素材の突破口を見つけ
ようとする——それはすばらしいことなんだが、結局、そうして
出来た君の作品は、ヨーロッパ、アメリカ、日本といった先進国
の国際現代美術界のサロンで、ほめそやされ、ラウシェンバーグ
の新しい展開としてだけ評価され、買われ、美術館のコレクショ
ンに入るだけになる。そういうことに矛盾を感じませんか。
ラウシェンバーグ それなんだ、それがいつも問題なんだ。芸術
というものは、いつも、人間の不安に訴えかけるべきなんだ。そ
れが、君のいう通り、ブルジョア・アヴァンギャルドのサロンで
だけ話題になるのはデカダンスにちがいない。しかしね、たとえ
ばイスラエルはイスラエルで、芸術に対しては、昔からちっとも
変わらない偏見とスタイルがはびこっている。彼らには、美術と
いえば、宝石とか金とかを使っただけでね、ダンボールを使って
はくが作品を作るので、大へんなカルチュア・ショックを与えた
ことになる。イスラエル人には、戦争の暗い記憶や現実の苦しみ
がいつもつきまとっている。そのくせ、美術という、きまりき
った伝統のものだけ。ひとりだけ、戦争でちのすごくひん曲った鉄
道線路を描いた女性の画家がいて、とても面白かったんだけど、
だれも彼女を下らない画家としか思っていなかった。だから、ほ
くがイスラエルで作った作品は、イスラエル人が耐えて発見しな
ければ見えてこない、何か新しいものをつきつけたことになる。
一部の連中は、それにじつに敏速に改宗されたこともたしかだ。

* * *

東野 君は「ロッキー・プロジェクト」という壮大な計画を立て
ているね。ロッキーというのは君が飼っている亀の名前だそうで、
亀のように忍耐強く、時間をかけて実現しようということらしい
けど、「ロッキー・プロジェクト」は、君の作品展をいわゆる現代
美術通の国だけでなく、アフリカ、中近東、南米、中国といった
異文化の地域へ巡回して、二つの文化の衝突を起こすための計画
と聞いているけど……。

ラウシェンバーグ たとえばね、日本ならすぐに展示ができるけ
れど、スリランカやモロッコならどうなるか。テント掛けで展覧
会をやったり、象に作品をくくりつけたり(笑)、小さな地方の大
学を探したり、予想のつかない面白い問題がでてくると思うんだ。
ほくのような作品の受け入れ体制のない土地に作品をぶつけてみ
ようということが発想の元にある。

東野 作品としては、どんなものを持ってゆくのか？

ラウシェンバーグ まず、あの同額展という奴はやりたくない。
とくに初期の作品は、貧乏してたから、みんな売ってしまって手
許にないんで、コレクターから借りなきゃならぬんだが、コレク
ターという奴に頭を下げるのがいやでね。彼らはメトロポリタ
ン美術館とかポンピドー・センターなら箱がつくし、値も上がる
ので喜んで貸すが、テキサスの小さな町だったら貸そうともしな
いし、ハナもひっかけない。こういう思いをさんざんしてきたん
で、ずっと考えてきて、ある時期から、作品の中から特定のもの

は売らないで手元においた。

だいたい、さっきいった71年のダンボール・シリーズから、そ
うね、昨日の作品まで、たっぷりと自分のコレクションにしてあ
る。ひとから借りるとか保険とかの煩わしさなしに、そこから選
んで展覧会が構成できる。

東野 売れっ子の悲哀だね(笑)。

ラウシェンバーグ 展覧会を見せるだけでなく展覧会をやる場
所、場所で、その場所の素材やイメージから作品を作って加えよ
うと思っているし、各地のビデオを撮って、それをほかの国で
見せることも考えている。たとえばメキシコに「ロッキー・プロ
ジェクト」が行ったときも、エジプトでの生活や展覧会の様子の
ビデオを見せるといった具合にね。これはEATの頃から考え
ていた、ビデオによる交換の試みで、牛を持っていてもチーズ
の作り方を知らない連中と、チーズは作れるが牛乳のない連中と
をビデオで結びつけるわけだ。

日本やアメリカのようにソフィスティケートされていない社
会では世界のほかの部分についてはまったく知らない。中国で驚
いたのは、一生、中国に住んでいても、15マイル旅行するのに
許可がいるし、それが何世代も続いてきている。自分の国全体の
ことも分からない。そこで、ほくの展覧会をきっかけに南米のヴィ
デオを見せたらどうなるか。

東野 モスクワではやらないの？

ラウシェンバーグ あそこは問題が複雑でね、まだ手続きをちゃ
んとやってないで交渉の最中ですがね。もっとも、モスクワから
の公式な答は、「レーガンが大統領の間は、貴兄の展覧会は開けま
せん」という、もっとも明快な答だった(笑)。これではどうも手
のつけようがない。北京でもいまではむずかしくなりつつあるけ
ど、中国でほくが主張したのは、このプロジェクトは、
個人と個人の関係に立つもので、^{ナショナル・ソシエティ} 国家と国家の関係ではない、
ということだった。

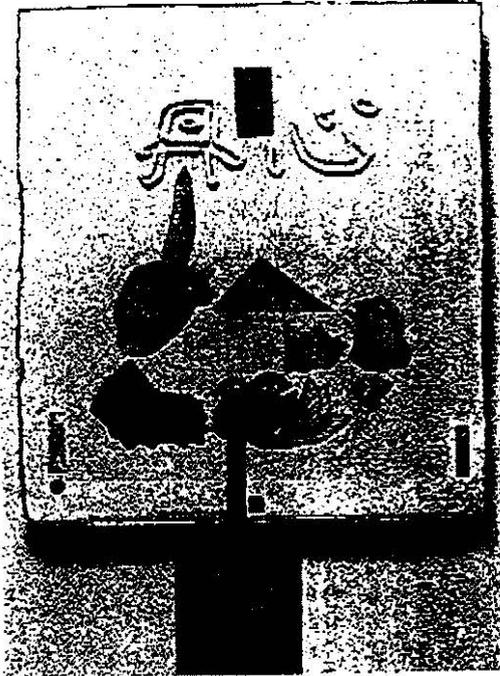
これこそ、中国のような国がいま必要としている関係だ。あま
り事実を隠そうとしなかったからね。写真も、一度だけ、町に
しゃちゅういるスパイに止められたとき以外は、何を撮っても
平気だった。

東野 中国とラウシェンバーグという組み合わせはなかなか判
激的だな。東洋の社会主義リアリズムの大國とアメリカのアヴァ
ンギャルドとのコンビン。もっとも、それに、日本を加えると、
ちよっと、ラウシェンバーグにおける日中米安保条約といった感
もしないでもないけどな(笑)。

* * *

ラウシェンバーグ 中国に最初は紙を作る研究にいったのがよ
かったのかもしれない。一種の斜めの間接的な関係だったわけだ
からね。ただ、タイミングはぴったりとよかったとはいえる。最
近ではまた規制が厳しくなったけど、ほくがいるときは、芸術作
品には政治的スローガンは不要という雰囲気があったね。ほくら
のためにじつに美しい古い木版や絹絵や現在の画家たちの展覧会
を開いてくれたときも、ほとんどの美術家たちが参加できたとい
う。それと、壁に書かれた古いスローガンを塗り消して、ほ

『丹心』(漢字7文字のうち) 1982年



くには読めなかったけれど、赤茶色の塗料で書かれている文化革命時代のスローガンが白いペンキで塗りつぶされている——それが古いエトルスク美術のような肌合いになって美しいんだ(笑)。塗りつぶしているときの写真は撮らせてくれなかった。もうひとつ、これはぼくらが中国を出てから数週間後のことで、新聞で読んだんだけど、党のメンバーの再登録をやったという。文化革命の時代は、学者や芸術家や教師や技師がみんな農場へ遣い払われて、そこで死んだひとたちもいる。長い間、国を支配してきたのは、とくに地方では、ほとんど文盲の連中だったわけで、いまやあらゆる党員の再登録をはじめているそうだ。気の遠くなるほどいろいろな事を変革していかなければならない——そういう中国にすごく共感するし、だからこそ、ぼくはひとりの異星人として、中に入ってゆき、いろんな表現とか考えとかエネルギーとかをずばり見せたい。ぼくが外国人であることは利点で、だれもぼくを批判したり禁止したりできないから、みんながぼくの作品を経験するチャンスがある。

東野 中国の若い芸術家はどんな状態なのかな。なにかで読んだけど、若い連中が君にデュシャンのことを質問したんだって？
 ラウシェンバーグ そう、あれには驚いた。ふつうは講演はやらないんだが、中国の現状があまりにひどいんで、美術学校スタイルの講演を、ちょうど持ってきていた版画を見せながらやって、アメリカやフランスの美術界で起きたことの話をしたんだ。大家もたくさん来たし、若い美術家もきてね、デュシャンのことを聞くわけだ。そういえば牛の絵を見せたとき、ピカソの絵がぐらいは知っていたが、それがポップのロイ・リキチンスタインがピカソを下敷きにした作品だということと狂喜したね。レアリズムから厳格な抽象絵画まで迎って見せたり、ダダのことはとりわけ訊ねられた。ぼくは、自分をダダを実際には見ていないしあれはむしろ文学の運動だったかもしれない、という前置きをしてから、デュシャンもぼくがはじめて見たときはすでにピカソやブランクーシくらいに古典に見えた、しかしダダの意味は、アカデミーを壊そうとしたところにあるし、何かに反抗することが共通の運動を生み出したんだ、といったことをしゃべった。

東野 ポンビドー・センターの館長だったポントゥス・フルテン

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から聞いた話だけど、かれが北京で若い画家たちを見て歩いたら、赤一色のモノクロームだけの絵を描いている、すごくいい画家がいたんで、フランスのモノクロミスト、イヴ・クラインのことを知っているかと聞くと、相手はにやっとして、これは赤旗の一部分を描いたインアリズムです、と答えたという(笑)。それにしても、中国でデュシャンへの興味があるなんてね。

ラウシェンバーグ ぼくも驚いたよ。ひそかに画集とか本を持ち込むやつがいるらしいね。ともかく、彼らの好奇心の旺盛なこと。世界にたいする好奇心がなくては個人としての存在はあり得ないし、好奇心がなければ世界はのつべらぼうだ。

東野 好奇心とは、自分への反逆から生まれるものだからね。

* * *

ラウシェンバーグ 好奇心は芸術以外のほかの分野では武器として使われてきた。芸術が最後の本当に大切な職業であるのは、世界がなお誠実さと價の強さと意識をもっているからだ。前はスポーツにもそれがあると思っていただけ、今度のオリンピックのごたごたを見ていると、残念だが、選手たちが政治の手段に使われてしまっている。ロスアンゼルスオリンピックに参加して芸術上のイベントをやる計画をやめたのもそのせいなんだ。ぼくの芸術は、いつも、自己表現よりもコミュニケーションの方向に向いてきた。

特定のさまざまな国でぼくが制作する作品は、ぼくのアメリカというエネルギーとそれぞれの国の現実との結合にほかならない。ぼくは、その国独自の文明や現実の内部にあるものが、ぼくのエネルギーを通して翻訳され、眼に見えてくるようにしたい。その国の人たちは、自分の周囲の世界を新しく見る方法をそこでつかむはずだ。

東野 本当に、そこでコミュニケーションが成り立つと信じているわけですか。

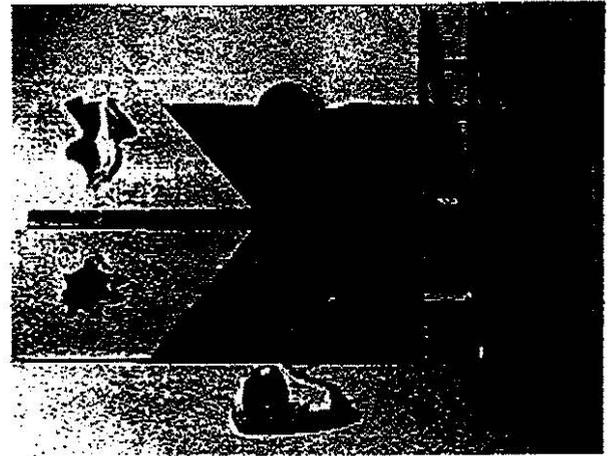
ラウシェンバーグ もちろんさ。とくに、たとえば、今度の信楽での陶板制作のときでも、大塚オーミ会社の現場の専門家と一緒に仕事をしたわけだけど、彼らがこれまでやってきたセラミックの仕事では考えられない、無茶なことを一緒に実験していった。そこには、ヒエラルキーがなくなって、先輩が新米に相談することもあれば、新米が思いがけないアイデアを提案することもある。こういう現場で、すでに、コミュニケーションがあったわけです。

東野 君の作品といえば、コンバイン・ペインティングという考え方が基調になっている。つまり、雑誌によった写真や自分の撮った写真や日常的なオブジェ——それが世界のトピックであったり、何でも日常の風景であったり、がらくたであったりするわけだが、それらが、まるで新聞の紙面のように、いわば無関係の関係でもって画面上にコンバイン(結合)されている。それは、世界というものの味さ、あるいは多様性を……。

ラウシェンバーグ 同時性と、あらゆる矛盾も含めてだ。

東野 そう、そういう世界というものの表層の曖昧な多様性を、君の画面は反映していると思うんだ。そのとき、君は、画面にコンバインするイメージやオブジェをどうやって選ぶのか、という

「泥神社」 1982年



こと。視覚的な面白さか、言語的な基準か、あるいは本能的なのか。

ラウシェンバーグ それは本能的にだ。しかし、同時に、選択はまた、事実や物から逆襲される。曖昧さというのはいい言葉だ。そこらにころがっている物にも破局的な経験をしてきた痕跡が残っている。それを見て、それが何であり、また、それが何ではないかと、二度、考えなければならぬ。ほくは、画面の調和とか造形ということは考えない。あるイメージやオブジェが画面上で、正にそこにあるべき位置にあるように見えたら、それは使わないことにしているんだ。また、この作品の色調があまりにうまくいったら、調子をわざとこわすことにしている。

東野 相互に無関係な記事や写真が並存している新聞の紙面と同じだね。ほくの十歳になる娘が、新聞をいやがるんだ。殺人とか災害とか、悪いニュースでいっぱいでしょう、新聞は、いいニュースは悪いニュースが何も無いときにしかのらない。それがいやだ、というんだ。新聞の紙面の大きさはいつも同じだから、ニュースが多いときは大事件も小さく扱われたりする。娘はね、ニュースがないときは新聞を白くしておけばいい、といい張る。休刊日で新聞が来ないと、何も起こらなかった、と安心する(笑)。

ラウシェンバーグ ほくの記事がのった、先週の「ニュース・ウィーク」は彼女に見せない方がいい(笑)。ほくの作品にコンポジションがあるとすれば、それは、関係性を利用するのではなくて、事物が無関係に存在していることを強調するためにある。すると、その作品を見て、たとえば君は、心の中に、ある関係性を作り出すだろう。それは、ほかの人が心の中に作り出す関係性とはまったくちがうものであるはずで、この多様な異なった反応が作品の生命を長びかせる。新聞の場合は、一度読んだらおしまいだ。しかし、ほくの作品を読むときは、情報が抽象化され、不調和なものだから、前の日には思いもつかなかったことが見えてくることもある。そしていつかは、曖昧な画面のすべてが分かってしまうときがくるかもしれない。そうなったら芸術作品は象徴となってしまう。ほくは、その時を出来る限り先に延ばすために、画面を複雑に、あるいは同じことだが、単純にしておきたい。

東野 君が今度、倍楽で作った陶板の「泥神社」を見ていてね、陶板に刷った相模の人影はすごくよく分かるけど、奇妙なローマの遺跡のようなイメージは謎めいていた。聞いてみたら、なんのことはない階段の写真を九十度傾けたものだったけど、こういう風に、君のコンパインは、見る人見る国によって、たいへんエキゾチックなものに見えたり、たいへん日常的なものが見えてくる。画面はけっして均質に一律ではなくて、見る人間によって、へこんだ部分、とび出した部分がそれぞれ絡み合っただけに見える。

ラウシェンバーグ しかしね。エキゾチックなものやキッチンなものとの間の結びつきが、もうひとつの答を生み出すんで、論理学では、バナナと林檎を足すことは出来ないし教えられるけど、ここでは、それが出来るわけさ(笑)。

東野 君が作品を、世界が多様であると同じように曖昧なものにしておきたいということよく分かった。

ラウシェンバーグ しかも挑発的にね。ほくの作品が、けっして、単なる自分の記憶の連続ではないことはたしかだ。

いまやっている写真の仕事に「In and Out City Limits」というのがある。ある都市へ行って、何日か過ごして、何千枚という写真を撮る。別に都市をよくしようとか、論じようとか批判しようというのではなくて、その都市をただ体験するために、都市の影から光へと動き廻る。ニューヨークへ帰って、その中から八十枚ほどを選んで、撮ってきたその都市へ帰って写真展をやる。すると、見に来る連中の反応が生まましいんだ。見なれているもの、目の前にありながら見なかったもの、見たことのないもの、自分だけが知っている片隅——それぞれで、自分の都市を再発見する。ほくらは次の都市へ行ってまた同じことをやる。もうじき、これは一冊の本になって出版される予定だ。

東野 もうひとつ、「4分の1マイル」という壮大な計画があると聞いたけど、4分の1マイル、400メートルに及ぶ長さの作品だとか。

ラウシェンバーグ これも、いってみれば、もうひとつの仕掛けの試み、自分の作品を自分の冒険たらしめようという試みというかな。端から端まで4分の1マイルの作品なんて構想しようがない。ある作品にある時間をかけて作ってれば、どこかで自分の美学が結局はまともまってしまうもんだけど、ここでは、予想や先入観をもちようがない。ちょうど、日本で陶板をやったときと同じで、セラミックの専門家に囲まれて、まったく手ぶらで無知のほくは、最初、すごくおびえてしまった。

しかし、無知こそが例外的な作品を作るんであってね。自分が何をしているかを正確に知っている芸術家が多すぎる。それは最悪の芸術家だ。とにかく、この作品が出来上がるころには、自分自身、最初の芽つ方がどんなだったか、まったく分からないと思う。

東野 その大作でコンパインされるのは、やはり世界中の場所や人間のイメージやオブジェなわけね。

ラウシェンバーグ そう、まだはじめたばかりで、それから中国や日本に行ったから、これから、何がでてくるか分からない。それに、この作品は一カ所にかためて展示するのではなくて、展示しようもないけど、ばらばらにあちこちに分散して置くつもりです。たとえば、ブロードウェイ381番地からはじまって、アップタウンで終わるとか、あるいは別の都市に行かないと最後まで見えないとか。観衆は地図を手渡されて、作品から作品へと移動し旅をする。その移動が作品の一部になるから、じっさいには4分の1マイルよりはるかに長い作品ということになる。それに終わりまで見ると最初の方は忘れてしまって、何度も何度も見ることになるかもしれないな(笑)。