

Robert Rauschenberg

Rush #10 - The Cloister Series, 1980

transfer print on silk collage
246.0 cm x 188.0 cm

Collection of the Vancouver Art
Gallery, Permanent Collection Fund
and Public Donations raised through
Volunteer Committee

VAG 81.1



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Photo: Robert Keziere, Vancouver Art Gallery

Robert Rauschenberg

Rush #10 - The Cloister Series, 1980

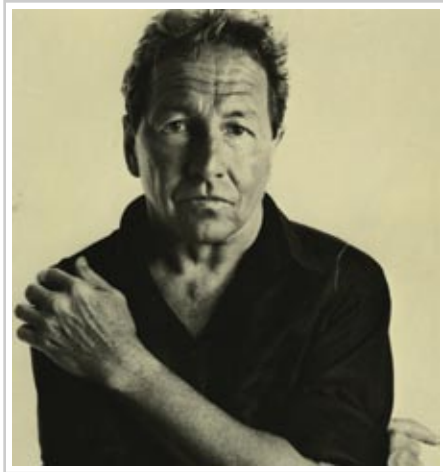


Image source: Andrew Forge. *Rauschenberg*. New York: Abrams, 1969.

Artist's Biography

Nationality: American

Born: 1922-10-25, Port Arthur, Texas

Died:

Born Milton Ernest Rauschenberg on October 22, 1925 in Port Arthur, Texas, Robert Rauschenberg studied at the Kansas City Art Institute and the Académie Julian in Paris, before enrolling in 1948 at the legendary Black Mountain College in North Carolina. There his painting instructor was the renowned Bauhaus figure Josef Albers, whose rigid discipline and sense of method inspired Rauschenberg, as he once said, to do "exactly the reverse" of what Albers taught him.

More often, Rauschenberg's early works reflected the aesthetic of his friend, composer John Cage, another member of the Black Mountain faculty, whose music of chance occurrences and found sounds perfectly suited Rauschenberg's personality. The "white paintings" produced by Rauschenberg at Black Mountain in 1951, while they contain no image at all, are said to be so exceptionally blank and reflective that their surfaces respond and change in sympathy with the ambient conditions in which they are shown, "so you could almost tell how many people are in the room," as Rauschenberg once commented.

In 1952 Rauschenberg began his series of "Black Paintings" and "Red Paintings," in which large, expressionistically brushed areas of color were combined with collage and found objects attached to the canvas. These so-called "Combine Paintings" ultimately came to include such theretofore un-painterly objects as a stuffed goat and the artist's own bed quilt, breaking down traditional boundaries between painting and sculpture, and reportedly prompting one Abstract Expressionist painter to remark, "If this is Modern Art, then I quit!" Rauschenberg's Combines provided inspiration for a generation of artists seeking alternatives to traditional artistic media.

Rauschenberg's approach was sometimes called "Neo-Dada," a label he shared with the painter Jasper Johns, with whom he had a long artistic and personal relationship. Rauschenberg's oft-repeated quote that he wanted to work "in the gap between art and life," suggested a questioning of the distinction between art objects and everyday objects reminiscent of the issues raised by the notorious "Fountain" of Dada pioneer Marcel Duchamp. At the same time, Johns' paintings of numerals, flags, and the like, were reprising Duchamp's message of the role of the observer in creating art's meaning.

By 1962, Rauschenberg's paintings were beginning to incorporate not only found objects but found images as well—photographs transferred to the canvas by means of the silkscreen process. Previously used only in commercial applications, silkscreen allowed Rauschenberg to address the multiple reproducibility of images, and the consequent flattening of experience that that implies. In this respect, his work is exactly contemporaneous with that of Andy Warhol, and both Rauschenberg and Johns are frequently cited as important forerunners of American Pop Art.

In addition to painting and sculpture, Rauschenberg's long career has also included significant contributions to printmaking and Performance Art. He continues to work from his home and studio in Captiva, Florida.

Source: "Robert Rauschenberg," *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. January 13, 2006. <http://www.wikipedia.org>.

Robert Rauschenberg

Rush #10 - The Cloister Series, 1980

Artistic Context

Nationality: American

Training: Académie Julian, Paris; Art Students League of New York; Kansas City Art Institute; Black Mountain College, North Carolina

Peers: Cy Twombly; Jasper Johns

Groups: Assemblage; Dada; Pop; graphics; New York School; Abstraction; 20th century; 21st century

Provenance: purchased from Ace Gallery in 1981

Subject: allegory; portrait; satire

Other Works in the Vancouver Art Gallery Collection

Robert Rauschenberg
Lawn, 1965
lithograph on paper
Murrin Estate Funds
VAG 67.4

Robert Rauschenberg
Test Stone 6, 1967
lithograph on paper
Murrin Estate Funds
VAG 67.28

Robert Rauschenberg
Test Stone 7, 1967
lithograph on paper
Murrin Estate Funds
VAG 67.29

Robert Rauschenberg
Passport, 1967
silkscreen on Plexiglass
Siwash Auction Funds
VAG 68.27.1 a-c

Robert Rauschenberg
Strawboss, 1970
lithograph on paper
Gift of Gary R. Bell
VAG 75.16

Robert Rauschenberg
Post, 1969
two colour lithograph on paper
Gift of Dorothy Austin
VAG 77.16

Robert Rauschenberg
Airport Series - Switchboard, 1974
colours on cheesecloth, satin, cotton collage
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ira Young
VAG 80.21

Robert Rauschenberg

Rush #10 - The Cloister Series, 1980

Robert Rauschenberg
Centennial Certificate MMA, 1969
lithograph on paper
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ira Young
VAG 80.22

Robert Rauschenberg
Preview, 1974
transfer, lithograph and collage; silk chiffon, silk taffeta and kraft paper
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ira Young
VAG 80.23

Robert Rauschenberg
Pages and Fuses - Page 1, 1974
handmade paper
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ira Young
VAG 80.24

Robert Rauschenberg
Publicon - Station 1
wood
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ira Young
VAG 80.25

Robert Rauschenberg
Autobiography
offset lithograph on paper
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ira Young
VAG 81.20 a-c

Robert Rauschenberg
General Delivery (from Cardbird Series), 1971
lithograph on paper
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ira Young
VAG 82.30

Robert Rauschenberg
Save Venice., 1973
lithograph on paper
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ira Young
VAG 82.31

Robert Rauschenberg
The Tramp, 1974
embossed lithograph with collage on paper
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ira Young
VAG 82.32

Robert Rauschenberg
Untitled, 1978
lithograph on paper
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ira Young
VAG 82.33

Robert Rauschenberg
Untitled, 1968
transfer drawing, pencil, watercolour and gouache on paper
Gift of J. Ron Longstaffe
VAG 82.34

Robert Rauschenberg

Rush #10 - The Cloister Series, 1980

Robert Rauschenberg
Untitled - Egyptian Series, 1973
collage on paper
Gift of Ira and Lori Young
VAG 83.69

Robert Rauschenberg
Double Standard Jammer CW
cloth and metal
Gift of a Private Collector, West Vancouver
VAG 84.57 a-m

Robert Rauschenberg
Meter Cl Jammer
cotton silk
Gift of a Private Collector, West Vancouver
VAG 84.58

Robert Rauschenberg
Skyrite, 1969
lithograph on paper
Gift of J. Ron Longstaffe
VAG 84.59

Robert Rauschenberg
Sky Garden
lithograph and silkscreen on paper
Gift of J. Ron Longstaffe
VAG 84.60

Robert Rauschenberg
Tanya, 1974
lithograph with blind embossing on paper
Gift of J. Ron Longstaffe
VAG 84.61

Robert Rauschenberg
Yellow Body, 1971
lithograph on paper
Gift of J. Ron Longstaffe
VAG 84.62

Robert Rauschenberg
Untitled
pencil, wash, frottage, ink, watercolour, ink transfer drawing on paper
Estate of Dorothy B. Austin
VAG 85.35

Robert Rauschenberg
Hot Shots, 1968
lithograph with collage and stencil on paper
Gift of J. Ron Longstaffe
VAG 86.320

Robert Rauschenberg
Poster for Peace, 1983
colour lithograph on paper
Gift of the Estate of Clayton Kerry Black
VAG 89.64.2

Robert Rauschenberg

Rush #10 - The Cloister Series, 1980

Robert Rauschenberg
Sub-Total
lithograph on paper
Gift of Gordon and Marion Smith
VAG 98.3.13

Robert Rauschenberg
Untitled
collage, photo transfer on paper
Gift of Toni and Hildegard Cavelti
VAG 2004.1.1

Robert Rauschenberg
Atrium
collage, photo transfer on paper
Gift of Toni and Hildegard Cavelti
VAG 2004.1.2 a-c

Robert Rauschenberg
Scrambler
collage, screenprint on paper
Maxine Shaw and Family
VAG 2005.6.1



Bibliography

Transferred Impressions: Robert Rauschenberg and Cy Twombly
Publication
1986

[transcription]

TRANSFERRED IMPRESSIONS: ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG AND CY TWOMBLY

Since the early sixties a number of artists have investigated the fundamental nature of drawing with its distinctive expressive possibilities. As this exhibition of work from the Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery shows, two artists have reached a similar, and yet very different, summary of experimentation and discovery.

Robert Rauschenberg and Cy Twombly are artists of major achievement and influence in contemporary art. They are among the American artists who reached maturity in the fifties and, with such contemporaries as Jasper Johns and Andy Warhol, generated an enormous output of painting, collage, sculpture, graphics, film and performance.

Both artists attended the New York Art Students League and Rauschenberg, who had been to Black Mountain College, North Carolina in the forties, persuaded Twombly to return with him in 1952. It was at Black Mountain that composer John Cage, dancer Merce Cunningham and poet Charles Olson became the stimuli for a generation of artists. In the fall of 1952 Rauschenberg and Twombly continued to travel together to Italy and North Africa. Twombly remained in Rome and Rauschenberg returned to New York.

Maturing in the context of Abstract Expressionism, they responded equally to a concern with surface, gesture and the use of collage. In a method one could

Robert Rauschenberg

Rush #10 - The Cloister Series, 1980

describe as free association, object, image or idea became stimuli for new directions. Approximately the same age, both artists are involved in a translation of choice, and both are aware of history and of appropriating it for themselves through the use of expressionistic gesture.

For Twombly, who incorporates the language of writing, the scrawl, and the stylization of the mark into the act of painting and drawing, expressionism is cool and distant. The flat surface is covered with what looks like calligraphy or random jottings, often amid washes of delicate and elegant images. Meditative in nature, familiar forms and poetic images with classical references to Greek and Roman history, literature and philosophy, occur throughout his work.

In the process itself, Twombly starts with line and body gesture, working up to the internalized images in which form and poetic imagination combine—a visualization that depicts inner state more than idea. On the other hand, Rauschenberg starts with identifiable images of popular culture and mass media, using them more directly to organize and interpret the contemporary urban world into a coherent work of art. These externally observed images are very American in their boldness, while even identifiable images, such as the mushrooms in Twombly's *Natural History, Part I, Mushrooms*, are more liquid in structure with their poetic and magical references.

Rauschenberg has often been compared to the German artist Kurt Schwitters, one of the European masters of collage. However, Rauschenberg saw collage as a means of injecting reality into his art without imitating it. This cause and effect method of setting one thing beside another reflects the thinking of an artist who does not want to imitate the real world, but reflect it with a collaboration of materials working for him. In a summary of experimentation even his interest in photography becomes an important element. Such sources become stimuli, opening up possibilities of a new kind of image, combined in complex and unexpected ways.

Both artists are aware of art as a mental and behavioural act—art as an extension of perception and life. Perhaps at Black Mountain the emphasis on freedom of experimentation made it all seem available and usable as one's own.

For Robert Rauschenberg and Cy Twombly, whose first two person show was at the Stable Gallery in New York in 1951, connections that inhabit their work took two common, but different, directions.

This exhibition will allow us the opportunity to re-examine both artists' work.

Lorna Farrell-Ward
Curator, Vancouver Art Gallery

Further Reading

Forge, Andrew. *Rauschenberg*. New York: Abrams, 1969.

Hunter, Sam. *Robert Rauschenberg*. New York: Rizzoli, 1999.

Joseph, Branden Wayne. *Random Order: Robert Rauschenberg and the Neo-Avant Garde*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003.

Kotz, Mary Lynn. *Rauschenberg/ Art And Life*. New York: Harry N. Abrams Incorporated, 1990.

Robert Rauschenberg

Rush #10 - The Cloister Series, 1980

Mattison, Robert. *Robert Rauschenberg: Braking Boundaries*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

Robert Rauschenberg. Washington: National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, 1976.

Tomkins, Calvin. *Off the Wall: Robert Rauschenberg and the Art World of our Time*. New York: Penguin Books, 1981.

Exhibition History

Exhibitions at the Vancouver Art Gallery

Contemporary Art from the Vancouver Art Gallery Collection. January 27, 1984 - February 12, 1984.

Transferred Impressions: Robert Rauschenberg and Cy Twombly. February 1, 1986 - March 23, 1986.

60 Years 60 Artists. June 1, 1991 - July 28, 1991.

Focus on Rauschenberg. July 10, 1999 - September 26, 1999.

75 Years of Collecting: British Masters, Group of Seven and Pop Icons. February 4, 2006 - May 14, 2006.



Archival History

Memo

Acquisition Record

[transcription]

TO: Members of the Board

FROM: Rauschenberg Acquisition Committee

Our Rauschenberg Campaign has involved close to 100 volunteers selling squares in shopping centres, downtown office buildings and at the Gallery.

We arranged a large mailing to volunteers, past and present, requesting them to sell squares, and including a receipt book for each to sell.

It involved various promotions including the Vancouver Show, Radio Spots and T.V. Interviews, and Press Release at intervals to 22 different sources.

To this date we have received a total of \$28,000 towards our target of \$36,000. We have sold roughly 5,500 square inches of the 7,000 available.

THEREFORE: \$8,000 and 1,500 inches will put us over the top.

[81.1 in pencil]

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Rush #10 - The Cloister Series, 1980



Help take a Rauschenberg to Court

Miscellaneous History

[transcription of excerpt]

Help take a Rauschenberg to Court

Here's a square deal for the Vancouver Art Gallery members—old and new.

Be one of the first to see the Gallery's latest major purchase: Robert Rauschenberg's 'Cloister Series' painting (and have a chance to become part "owner"—for just \$5 per square inch)

Posters and a limited supply of reproductions, signed by the artist, will also be available.

Members' Party
Wednesday, May 13th
6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Refreshments Music

Vancouver Art Gallery, 1145 West Georgia Street, Vancouver



Help take a Rauschenberg to Court

Miscellaneous History

[transcription of excerpt]

HELP TAKE A RAUSCHENBERG TO COURT

The Vancouver Art Gallery is making a major art purchase: ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG'S 'CLOISTER SERIES' PAINTING.

You can help. Every \$5.00 donation buys one square inch of this outstanding work of contemporary art. 7,350 square inches in all—7,350 chances to add to the Vancouver Art Gallery's growing collection.

Visit the Vancouver Art gallery and see this painting for yourself. Buy one square inch...or several. There's no limit!

You helped take the Vancouver Art Gallery to Court.

Now...help the Vancouver Art Gallery take a RAUSCHENBERG to Court

Robert Rauschenberg

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