

Anne Doran: When did you first see Robert Rauschenberg's work? How are people in the L.A. art scene hearing about what's happening in New York?

Walter Hopps: I can't say how it worked before World War Two, because I was just too young. But the minute World War Two is over, it's by e-mail.

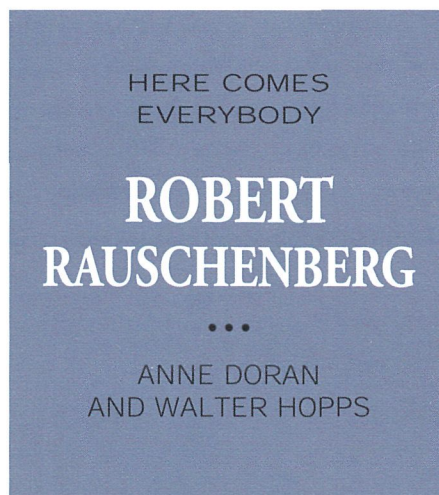
AD: As in ether?

WH: On the ether. The real e-mail of that time was by poet courier. In the beat period, the writers were itinerant - travelling all over the country, back and forth from New York to California. We heard about things, before they were published in the art magazines or anywhere, from the poets. The first person to tell me about Robert Rauschenberg was the extraordinary artist and underground impresario Wallace Berman.

AD: What year is this?

WH: 1952 or '53. Berman and I are sitting around his house drinking wine and smoking marijuana, and he starts telling me about this artist he'd heard of through Robert Creeley. Creeley was one of the great American poets who moved through Black Mountain College. New York people would go there and stay, get a few meals. Willem de Kooning came and went. Franz Kline. John Cage. That's where Rauschenberg first met most of those people. Berman made a point of telling me about Rauschenberg's work, and said, "If you're ever in New York, check it out. Let me know what it looks like." It sounded really interesting to me, because I'm getting to know Edward Keinholz and his work, and I'm also seeing what Berman himself is making.

Some years later, when Berman started making those strange Hebraic letter collages, I asked him, "What are



these things?" He said, "They're coming from poets - ancient poets. They're coming in on the ether. I dream them, and I make them and I stick them down on canvas."

At first I couldn't imagine what Rauschenberg was going to be, but he was the one we were hearing about. And then the whole thing came tumbling out of the trunk around 1954, when Rachel Rosenthal turned up in Los Angeles. She earned her living as a theater coach, and she invented the *instant theater*. She brought work by both Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns with her to L.A. That was really the first time we saw it. She had what is arguably the first combine painting, where Rauschenberg has put a shelf below and a light box above one of the red paintings. Collage in a painting is one thing - that's not going too look too alien. But if you suddenly add a piece of ornamental stained glass and then a shelf from the studio, where the paint cans have been sitting, you've got a different kind of animal.

AD: So, when did you finally get to meet Rauschenberg?

WH: In '58 or '59. All this really intense stuff went on in '59, '60, '61. My gallery in L.A., Ferus Gallery, was open and running. I was working part time at the

Pasadena Museum from 1959 on, occasionally guest-curating a show for Dr. Thomas Levett, the director. He was a man not too much older than I who had come out of the PhD program at Harvard. There was only the Los Angeles County Museum, there was no Museum of Contemporary Art. The Pasadena Art Museum served that function, prior to the existence of MOCA, for quite a number of years. I was working the night shift in a psychiatric ward, trying to make enough to pay for all this...you know, my hobbies. In '62 I went full time with the Pasadena Museum, and never looked back.

I made a trip to New York with Edwin Janss. Janss was interested in buying art, and he said, lead me to some art I'd like to buy, and I'll pay for all the transportation, and lunch, and dinner, and whatever. He paid for the hamburgers. I took him to Castelli gallery, and Leo had a couple of pieces of Rauschenberg's up in a group show. We wanted to see more, so he calls Rauschenberg up, and we go down to the studio, and everything is sitting there. *Monogram* (1955-59) is there, all kinds of things from the *combine* period are there. The work was just so incredible. Janss turned to me and said, "This is really wild stuff." He said, "Could we get a couple of these?" And I said, "Ed, I think it would be a good idea to only get one." Can you imagine? But it just seemed like wretched excess to buy two. He looked around and picked out the *Untitled Combine* from 1955, the one with the white shoes and the Plymouth Rock hen. It's rather challenging and difficult, with painting on all four sides of it.

AD: When did your professional collaboration start?

WH: Circumstances were such that I was able to do a Johns retrospective at Pasadena, but I wasn't there long enough to do a show of Rauschenberg's work.

AD: When did you leave Pasadena?

WH: 1967. Anyway, although I was a great admirer of Rauschenberg's work I didn't get to do anything major until 1976. But we knew each other. By the mid-1960s, Rauschenberg was a very real presence in Southern California. After 1962 he was represented in Los Angeles by Virginia Dwan, whose gallery was out in Westwood. She showed Jean Tingley and Yves Klein as well. Whenever Rauschenberg showed in L.A., I would go to the show and hang out.

I had a flat behind Ferus Gallery, upstairs on the second floor. One time when Rauschenberg was there he saw a little Kurt Schwitters's drawing/collage that I had bought at auction, a very simple pencil drawing with a gum label stuck on it. Up at the top of the collage it said *Hinterhaus* – behind the house – and Schwitters had done this elaborate, annotated diagram showing the back wall of a house, the floor plan, and what went on out there in what you might call terrain vague. I got it out of a German auction, by mail. It was a crazy thing – so simple – and it looked like one of Bob's own drawings. And he just took it off the wall and started walking out with it. I said, "Wait a minute. I love that drawing, and uh, you know, it's the only Schwitters I have." And Bob said, "I love it too, and I don't have one." So I said, "Okay, I'll loan it to you." I didn't get that thing back from him until one day in the late seventies when I saw it hanging in his offices at Lafayette Street. I thought it was time for it to come back to me, so I took it back.

AD: When were you finally able to do a show of Rauschenberg's work?

WH: The first show that I had a chance to do was the 1976 retrospective at the National Museum of American Art. I realized when we were organizing it - looking at his files and records - that there was an incredible body of early work done before the combines. So in 1976 I already knew that there was a whole lot of homework to do.

AD: Were you able to include any of the early work?

WH: Yes, but there were only about four or five things from the pre-combine period in the whole show. There was one blueprint figure, and there was 2 2 *the Lily White* (ca. 1950) – *White Painting with Numbers*, it used to be called. And I knew perfectly well at the time that we didn't have a good grip on the context. The myth was that almost everything from before 1954 had been destroyed, but it was clear to me that this just wasn't true. I made up my mind to really research the early work – find out what had gone on and sort it out. That was one of the bigger extrapolations and excavations I've ever done. A great windfall was finding photographs Rauschenberg had taken himself documenting the work. We had all of them printed out, and began tracking it down. There were things that Cy Twombly owned, things that Johns owned. There was a great work that had belonged to the composer Morton Feldman. Things began turning up. *Robert Rauschenberg: The Early 1950s* was the second Rauschenberg show that I did - it opened in June of '91.

AD: You have now done three surveys of Robert Rauschenberg's work. What kind of perspective has that given you on the art?

WH: Well, two prior to this one. This time around, there was more to look at in two ways. More early work had been unearthed, and there was all the work that had been made since '76.

Additionally, the files of color transparencies and slides are very complete now, so I was able to look at work from '49 up through '76 more thoroughly than I had twenty years ago. By the way, I made a very conscious decision to not look at what we call the juvenalia, the student work that he might have made prior to '49 at the Kansas City Art Institute and the Academie Julian in Paris. However interesting it might be, this just wasn't the occasion to look at it.

AD: You've called Rauschenberg the most inventive and prolific artist of our time. In 1996, while you were organizing this current retrospective, Hans Ulrich Obrist interviewed you for ArtForum. In the interview, you say that you are concerned about whether one can truly represent such a vast body of work and still have the show seem discriminating. Hans Ulrich Obrist replies that he would call it framing abundance. How do you frame abundance?

WH: Well, we did it by making a catalog that was 631 pages long, and I consider that a concise job. 631 pages and three physical venues in New York to fit it all in.

AD: That would be overkill with most artists, but...

WH: It didn't seem to be this time. We included a mere 480 items in the show. But several of those items, such as the *The 1/4 Mile or 2 Furlong Piece* (1981-present), or *Hiccups* (1978), each have more than fifty parts to them.

AD: Do you want to talk about that aspect of Rauschenberg?

WH: I wanted to say that Rauschenberg is an instinctive collector and curator of things from the real world. It starts when he is a boy growing up in Port Arthur, Texas. In his room he made his own little natural history museum with wooden milk crates. He had rocks, interesting bits of wood, toys in various states of disrepair. And it's interesting – even as a child he was cutting out pictures that interested him from magazines and pasting them up on his wall. It's all there early on, and in a very conscious and sophisticated and wonderful way, he carries on with it. He is very much in the tradition of the early American artist, Charles Willson Peale. In the late 1700s, long before there was a Smithsonian Institution, Peale had established a museum in Philadelphia that had a portrait gallery and a section that was a whole cabinet of wonders - you know, dinosaur bones, mechanical devices and interesting things. It was a very practical American version of a *wunderkammer*. Rauschenberg has always collected all sorts of things, including the work of other artists. In every studio of his I've ever seen, and in every place he's ever lived, he has had cupboards, or ledges, or shelves just filled up with this sort of material.

AD: In his catalog essay for this show, Charles Stuckey writes that in a work like the *1/4 Mile Piece* "scale is not called upon to accommodate sweeping ideas....nor, least of all, to emphasize anything. To put it another way, (the work) is monumental in scale only." I would add that Rauschenberg is not elevating any one thing, or idea, or part, over any other.

WH: I would agree. In a piece like *Scanning* (1963), you have an image of the kind of found urban sculpture

– ventilators and water tanks stuck on tops of buildings – that can make the art in corporate lobbies look absurd. They have a very strong presence. And Bob has juxtaposed it with an image of the Merce Cunningham dancers. Or he'll put New York City street signs and buildings together with the splendid Bernini altar in St. Peter's. It speaks of his high regard for both. With Rauschenberg, it's not an either/or, it's an and.

AD: When you organized this current retrospective, you were looking at almost 50 years of work. In what ways would you say that clarified things, and in what ways did it complicate them?

WH: With this show matters were made much easier. Well, let me start at the beginning. First the difficult part. The artist has been enormously productive. So that's always difficult. How do you get the show down to a mere, two, three, or four hundred works? That part was arduous. What was thrilling this time around, was not feeling the need to reargue every theoretical aspect of the work – what a *combine* was, what primary structures were, why this stuff was art. One could see it for the sensuous work that it is. Beyond being a conceptual pioneer, Rauschenberg is a lyric artist of the highest order. That was the great joy this time.

When you're a true poet of the object, which Robert Rauschenberg is, you can take things as found in life, and run them across the gap, and suddenly they're given a poetic turn as art. He combines images the way poets put words together. What's important to understand when looking at the work of a number of American artists, especially Rauschenberg, is that the use of disjunctive images has been going on in America for over 150 years. Long before

there was surrealism, which doesn't officially come until 1922, Edgar Allan Poe was writing stories like *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Frederick Usher played music that is perhaps the first thought of the kind of sound compositions Cage would come up with. One of the better descriptions of what Jackson Pollock or de Kooning were up to, not to mention Ernst, is in Poe's descriptions of Usher's infernal, irrational, disturbing paintings. T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Hilda Doolittle all admired Poe. Their metaphors are jolting, the imagery is vivid and unsettling. In France, Lautremont is writing about the chance meeting of a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table. The French symbolists took a great interest in Poe. He's a major source for European surrealism, and he haunts the work of the American surrealists Man Ray and Joseph Cornell. His use of the disjunctive image as metaphor makes him part of the lineage that includes Rauschenberg and the artists who come after him.

AD: How would you describe Robert Rauschenberg's place in that lineage?

WH: Robert Rauschenberg occupies a unique position in the art of his time. He is the crucial bridge between one generation of American artists – De Kooning, Barnett Newman, Clyfford Still, and Kline – and the artists working from the later '50s on: Johns, Warhol and the pop artists, and the artists who emerge in the 1980s – Richard Prince, Haim Steinbach, and so on.

From the later '40s on Rauschenberg was living in New York with his young wife and collaborator, Susan Weil. Through her family he knew Charles Egan, who showed de Kooning, Kline, and Joseph Cornell. Betty Parsons showed Pollock, Newman, Still, and Ad

Reinhardt. In 1950, rather than go to the gallery where he had a connection through his wife's parents, he took some smaller paintings in to Betty Parsons. That's how it was done in those days. It was before people brought in slides. Parsons set the paintings out, and was sitting there quietly, and he asked, "What do you think?" And the famous response was, "I think I could show you next spring." He was not asking for a show. He just wanted an outside opinion from a professional. Anyway, he kept his mouth shut. He was totally stunned and elated.

By the mid-1950s Robert Rauschenberg had brought some very disparate elements into play in his work. To begin with, he was a consummate abstract expressionist. It's worth noting that Clyfford Still approved of Betty Parson's decision. He came with her to Bob's studio to help pick out the work for the 1951 show. By 1953, you can see how thoroughly Rauschenberg is a part of the New York School. He's doing black paintings and earth toned works clearly related to the world of de Kooning and Kline, as well as the *Elemental Sculptures*. *Music Box (Elemental Sculpture)* (ca 1953) was one that Duchamp particularly liked. You tip it, and move it around, and the stones go clank, clunk, clunk, bump – making clanks when they hit the nails, and thuds when they hit the wood. It's a basic kind of music. Duchamp said, "Ah yes, it seems to me I've heard that song before." I especially love *Untitled (Elemental Sculpture) [spike and block]* (ca. 1953). He's taken an ordinary thing from the world, a nail, and given it all the dignity of a Giacometti figure. The *Elemental Sculptures* are like little monuments made from the humble stuff we just normally pay no attention to, or throw

away. You begin to think about that kind of thing, and sooner or later you're going to end up with a painting of a Campbell's soup can.

AD: Would you say the *Elemental Sculptures* are also New York School work?

WH: Absolutely. They resemble works within the abstract expressionist canon, and they also relate to the works of Aaron Siskind, who taught at Black Mountain - those beautiful rock walls and simple textures. Siskind was the abstract expressionist photographer, if you will.

Rauschenberg's most important early photographs turn up in this context. He studied photography at Black Mountain with Hazel Larsen Archer, who he said was very open to what you took pictures of but who made sure you learned your darkroom techniques. He was looking at the commonplace world without any preconception about having to take pictures of important people or dramatic events or wonders of nature. He found the universe right the edge of his own garden. He photographed a window with the shade drawn down. Most people would say that is a picture of nothing. He photographed an old carriage where the blackness of the carriage's interior fills up most of the frame, and there is a little light coming through an opening in the center. His masterpiece was *Ceiling + Lightbulb* (1950) – I finally figured out that it was taken in Knox Martin's studio. Never forget that the first Rauschenberg to go into a museum was a photograph. Edward Steichen bought two for the Museum of Modern Art in 1952.

At the same time, Rauschenberg is making minimal and conceptual works. *This is the First Half of a Print Designed to Exist in Passing Time* (1949), is just fiendishly simple. It's an amazing thing

to have made so early on. The work consists of 14 prints made from a single woodblock. For each successive print, Rauschenberg carved another line into the block. It starts solid black, and just goes through this process. Eventually he would have cut away all the wood that was left to print the black.

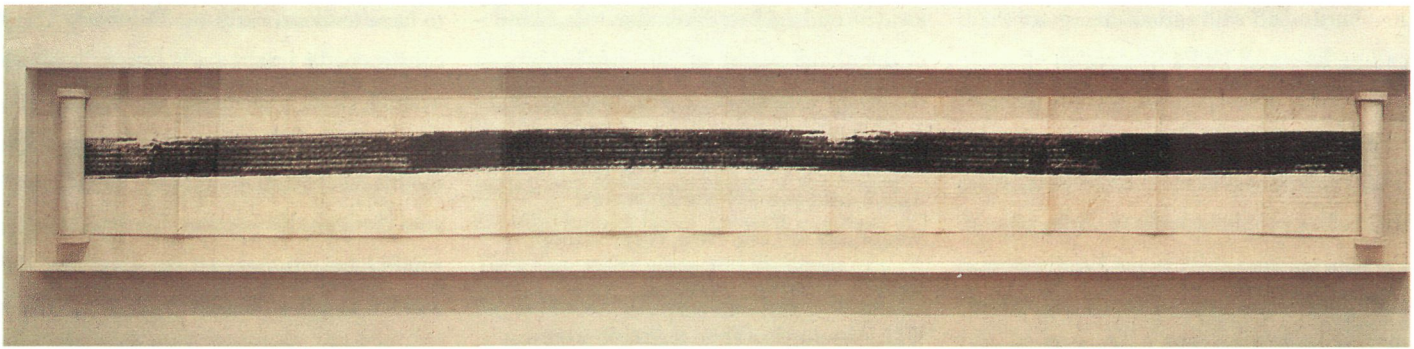
AD: And this is the first work in the show?

WH: Yes. Next there are the modular divisions in the *White Paintings*.

AD: That's the minimal element.

WH: Well, they're conceptual, too. There was a set of matte white paintings, and then there was a set of matte black ones - most of which he painted over. When he didn't have canvas or money, he just used one. Some artists, when they want to get busy in the studio, they will grab whatever is at hand. Bob painted over some great early works. The *White Paintings* were modular: three, or four, or five, or seven panels. John Cage called them landing strips for shadows and motes of dust. They inspired his work for piano: "4'33". Each movement begins when the pianist opens the keyboard lid, and ends when he closes it. Cage felt that the music could be all the little bits of noise - the coughs, and harumphings, and shufflings - that actually went on in that time span.

The *Print in Time* was the first of three important examples of an linear work whose subject is the process of its creation. The next is *Cy + Roman Steps* (1952). There were quite a number of pictures, but he edited them down to five - just enough to make the movement of the person approaching the camera clear. The third is the *Automobile Tire Print* (1953). The whole thing is 22 feet long, but it could just keep going forever. The *Tire Print* is, of course, is an additive



Robert Rauschenberg. *Automobile Tire Print*, 1953. Monoprint. 16 1/2 x 264 1/2 inches. Collaboration with John Cage. Collection The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Purchased thru a gift of Phyllis Wattis. All photographs courtesy of the Artist. © Robert Rauschenberg. Licensed by V.A.G.A. Photographs by Ed Chappel, Inc.

process. He makes the *Erased De Kooning Drawing* in the same year. He said, "If I'm going to erase a drawing, it has to be one I really admire." And the astounding thing is that de Kooning had enough regard for the whole idea to go along it. What a champ he was. As different as they were, he knew that Bob admired his work. And he said, "Well, okay, if we are going to do it, let's get a really good one." He narrowed it down to 3 drawings and let Bob choose. And they were really good ones. De Kooning had picked drawings that had grease pencil and smears of graphite on them. He said, "I'm not going to make it easy for you - it shouldn't be too easy."

AD: So by 1953 there are abstract expressionist, minimalist, and conceptual elements in Rauschenberg's work.

WH: The most important thing is the way found images and objects are already turning up. Rauschenberg's work from the middle fifties on had a profound effect on a younger generation of American artists. Some very early paintings have bits of collage in them. A key work is *Untitled (matte black painting with Ashville Citizen)* (1952), which introduced unembellished newspaper sheets as part of the composition. All sorts of other material begins to appear in the red paintings. By the late fall of '53, '54 Rauschenberg is

using found images from the media as elements within abstract paintings. Red patch, yellow patch, trees. Birch trees by a lake. Color, gesture, image. More gestures, another image. It starts happening in its earliest form around 1952, but it gets really going in 1953-54.

We now know that as early as 1952, Rauschenberg was making what he called transfer drawings, assembling magazine and newspaper images and using solvents to transfer them onto good paper. Rather than using a technique of cutting or tearing and pasting down a la Schwitters, he was making a new kind of monoprint. It was an extraordinary advance - a collage with a homogeneous surface. They were one of a kind works on paper, which is why he called them drawings. They became, for him, his medium for



Robert Rauschenberg. *Red Import*, 1954. Oil, Fabric And Wood On Canvas, 18 x 18 inches. Photo Credit: Burckhardt 323.

doing studies.

AD: You told me that there were only a few conventional drawings in the whole show.

WH: Rauschenberg is not involved with the grand western tradition of drawing in the way that Jasper Johns is. Johns's drawing is bravura drawing, beautiful drawing, the kind of drawing that Cezanne, or Seurat, would have understood. Rauschenberg invented a new way of drawing. There are only about four or five traditionally made drawings in this show, and they're very diagrammatic in a way. Perhaps the most beautiful is the third study for the final state of *Monogram*. Another is a very straightforward tracing of a pair of feet. I said, "Whose feet are those?" He said, "They're mine." And I said, "How did you trace them?" And he said, "With difficulty - squatting down and just pushing the pencil around. I could feel my way, but I couldn't see what I was doing." And he smiled and said, "I sort of liked that."

AD: When did he start to scale up the transfer drawings?

WH: The first silkscreens come around 1961. His breakthrough was discovering a way for these found and assembled images to be both intimate works on paper and, through the silkscreen

process, monumental works on canvas. *Barge* (1962-63) is a thirty-two-foot-long painting with huge images on it. The late Dr. Allen Solomon did the first museum retrospective of Rauschenberg's work at the Jewish Museum in 1963. And Bob managed to finish *Barge* just in time to squeeze into the show.

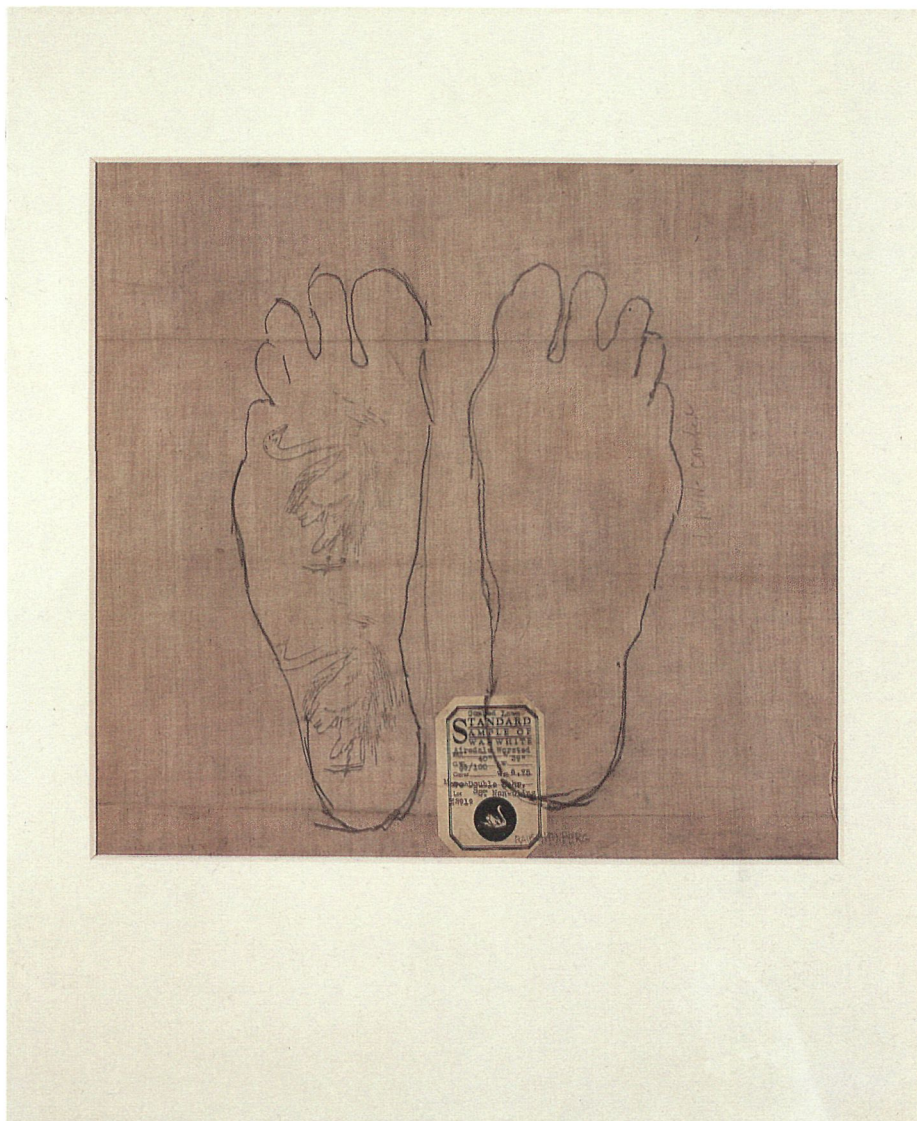
Recently, he's been able to make what are, in effect, giant watercolors from found images - and his own photographs too, by the way - with the Iris printer. More and more he uses his own photographs.

AD: Did you see the show at the Jewish Museum?

WH: Yes, I did. I saw both the Rauschenberg show and the Johns show two years later. Solomon did a wonderful job. In the late '50s and early '60s, he ran the Jewish Museum as the liveliest museum for contemporary art in New York. Neither the Whitney nor the Museum of Modern Art were, well, sufficiently responsive, let's put it that way, to the new directions in art that were beginning to come up in the later fifties and early sixties, and there was room for a serious kunsthalle. It was amazing what was shown there. Solomon took an international view. He did Rauschenberg, he did Johns, he did Yves Klein's first museum show in New York.

AD: You were saying that Rauschenberg's work had a profound effect on the next generation of American artists.

WH: Rauschenberg has been coming up with relevant stuff for at least three generations of artists. First of all, for his contemporaries - especially Jasper Johns and Cy Twombly. Rauschenberg led Castelli to Johns's studio, and Leo gave Jasper a show. But before we have Johns and Rauschenberg, we have Rauschenberg and Twombly, and their



Robert Rauschenberg. *Lawn Combed (Foot Drawing)*. Body tracing with found fabric. 14 1/2 x 15 1/2 inches. Photo: Dorothy Zeidman, 1990.

trip into Europe and North Africa in 1952/1953. They informed each others' work in really important ways.

From there, there are two pathways out of Rauschenberg's work. On one hand you've got the lyric minimalism of Robert Rauschenberg and Brice Marden's modular paintings. On the other hand, you have what is going to be, by 1962, Pop Art - the world of Rosenquist, Warhol, and Lichtenstein. Rosenquist is the one who I feel is closest to Rauschenberg's poetic spirit. Warhol could be deadpan, and Lichtenstein is often very formal. But there are narratives and poetics in both Rosenquist

and Rauschenberg - the use of disjunctive visual images as metaphor. Finally, there is what I'll call Pop Art's continuing aftermath - the neo-conceptual art that appears in the early '80s. A phrase John Cage loved, from *Finnegan's Wake*, is "Here comes everybody."

A fascinating bit of crosscurrent involves Rauschenberg's French contemporaries. When Yves Klein came to America a year or so before he died, Rauschenberg was the person he especially wanted to meet. He was interested in other aspects of Rauschenberg's work as well, but he recognized a side to Rauschenberg that



Robert Rauschenberg. *Soundings*. Mirrored plexiglas and silkscreened ink on plexiglas, with concealed electric lights and electronic components, 96 x 432 x 54 inches

I'll call transcendental. Klein did his earliest monochromes in the same years that Rauschenberg was doing the White Paintings. Rauschenberg himself described the *White Paintings* in a curious way: "One white – as in one God." He was the first person in America to acquire an Yves Klein – they traded work.

AD: The 1976 retrospective focused primarily on the *combines*. You have said that one of the revelations when working on the "Early 1950s" show was your discovery of Rauschenberg as a painter.

WH: That's true. Look at that whole little abstract outburst on the nose of *Monogram*. That's the sign of the painter. I think "Wager" is one of the better looking abstract expressionist paintings. *Wager, Canyon, and Winter Pool*, all of 1959, structurally and visually, look fantastic together. They make an extraordinary set. They are some of the most beautiful, delectable things in the show, things that I would hold up to any number of the post-impressionist paintings that looked so gorgeous to our parents and grand parents.

AD: The '76 show downplayed the

technology pieces. Was it easier to look at them this time around?

WH: Yes, as a matter of fact. The humanness of them came through. In *Soundings* (1968), when you clap your hands, and all these chairs appear, it's like a whole troupe of dancers appearing. A chair is one of those objects absolutely and intimately associated with the human body. In the *Carnal Clocks*, we're seeing all these discreet sepia images of male and female genitalia, only coming on at certain times. Human presence is implied in all of them.



Robert Rauschenberg. *The 1/4 Mile Piece or 2 Furlong Piece*. The Guggenheim Museum at Ace Gallery N.Y.
From Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective. Photo: E. Labenski. © SRGF, New York.

AD: Do you think that's more obvious now?

WH: Much more obvious now than it was at the time. They seem much less mechanical now. Tinguely and Rauschenberg really hit it off, by the way. They felt at home with each other, they were talking the same language. There is a goofy humor and anthropomorphizing in Tinguely's machines. They were kind of disfunctional – that is to say that they were more like human beings than machines are supposed to be. We make the machine a paradigm for human behavior, something that does everything right. But that's not the way it is with

human beings. Both Rauschenberg and Tinguely understood that. They had a great rapport.

When this exhibition opened in New York, it was the first time that the *Quarter Mile Piece* had ever been seen in its entirety. It's a little more than 440 yards long, with three dimensional elements that pop up in it. There was no room to put it in the Guggenheim, so we leased Ace Gallery. It was the only work that Rauschenberg wanted to install himself, so he set off with a crew to do that while I was working on the rest of the exhibition. A few days before the opening he came by and said, "Come on down, I want you to look at it. There's just one

thing left to do, and I'll be doing that while you're looking around." Having walked around the piece once, I sat there on this bench that he had made, this thing that looks like a bus-stop bench out of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Near it is an old oil barrel, a sign that says "End Construction," and a wheelbarrow – a heavy-duty one, encrusted with rust and old cement – filled with dirt. He had had somebody bring him a little prickly pear cactus. He comes in with his cactus and plants it in the wheelbarrow and turns around and smiles and says, "I'm done." It was perfect. The last thing he put into his show was a living thing. It survived the whole show.