

RAUSCHENBERG

PAST POP: ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG AND JAMES ROSENQUIST GRAPHICS

ROSENQUIST

KEAN UNIVERSITY

Acknowledgements

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Catalog essay, Past Pop: Robert Rauschenberg and James Rosenquist Graphics of the 1970s
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**PAST POP:
ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG
AND JAMES ROSENQUIST GRAPHICS**

March 31 through May 7, 2009
Kean University • CAS Gallery

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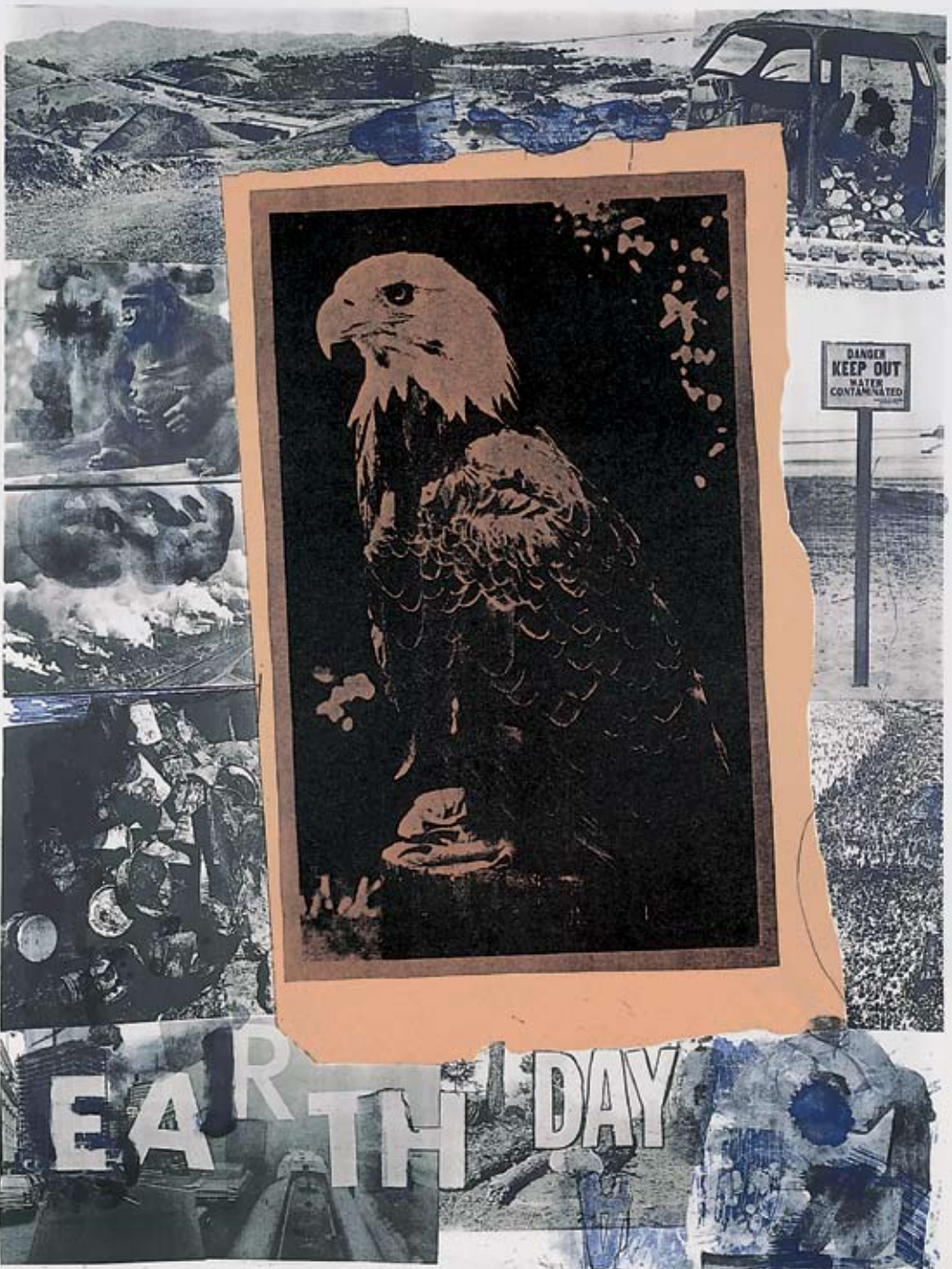
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Universal Limited Art Editions

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CRUSCHENBERG AP 170

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Introduction

Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008) and James Rosenquist (1933–) are both highly acclaimed contemporary artists associated first and foremost with the Pop Art movement of the 1960s. Challenging tradition, Pop artists regularly incorporated into their work mass-produced images drawn from popular culture and the world of advertising art. Although the work of both artists has appeared in numerous comprehensive exhibitions at the finest museums in the world, little attention has been paid to their graphic work. In fact, this exhibition marks the first time only prints by the two artists have been shown together.

As Dr. Lewis Kachur remarks in the catalogue essay: “There are quite a few parallels between them during the 1970s, including certain shared imagery, such as JFK, wheels and tires, and newspapers. In 1971 Rosenquist preceded Rauschenberg in working at Graphicstudio in Tampa; in fact, both artists relocated to Florida early in the decade and became closer friends. They both aspired to create unusually large-scale prints, the works of both artists had a socially conscious dimension, and each lobbied for artists’ rights... Thus it is their trajectory past the Pop era that this exhibition of graphic work addresses.”

Past Pop: Robert Rauschenberg and James Rosenquist Graphics, which will be on view from March 31 through May 7, 2009, at Kean University’s CAS Gallery, consists of twenty-nine prints made from 1965 through 1988. The show evolved from a class project conceived by Dr. Lewis Kachur, a professor in the art history department at Kean University. Advanced students were asked to examine twelve graphic works by Robert Rauschenberg and James Rosenquist that had been donated to Kean University years ago. The class visited several museum collections in the region in order to examine other graphic works by the two artists. They met with print curators in an effort to contextualize the prints in the Kean University collection. Dr. Kachur’s students—Kimberly Alvarado, Maria Pia Carracino, Melissa D’Amico, Danielle Fallon, Heather Ferry, Marcele Franca, Gwen Howard, Susan McGurk, Melissa Merritt, and Aaron Shum—collaborated and chose the exhibition artworks together. In addition to eight Kean prints, a number of comparative images were selected to help illuminate our understanding of and appreciation for the graphic work of these two artists. Essays by Dr. Kachur’s students can be found at the CAS Gallery website: www.kean.edu/~gallery/essays.html.

On behalf of Kean University, I wish to thank the following lenders to the exhibition: Montclair Art Museum, The Newark Museum, O’Hara Gallery, Prudential Insurance Company of America, Estate of Robert Rauschenberg, Universal Limited Art Editions, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Our gratitude also goes to Dr. Kachur and his students for the academic efforts that they initiated and that are evident in this important exhibition. For their work in planning, coordinating, and installing the show, we are grateful to gallery assistants Christopher Clark, Mariel Collerd, Stephanie Natiello, and Joya Thompson. Special thanks also go to Dawood Farahi, President of Kean University, and Holly Logue, Acting Dean of the School of Visual and Performing Arts. We appreciate their support for Kean’s growing exhibition program and for this opportunity to investigate the graphic works of Robert Rauschenberg and James Rosenquist.

Neil Tetkowsky
Director of University Galleries

Previous spread:
Robert Rauschenberg
Earth Day, 1970
Lithograph and *chine collé*
52 3/8 x 37 3/8 in.
Estate of
Robert Rauschenberg
VAGA
Art © Estate of
Robert Rauschenberg/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY

Opposite:
Robert Rauschenberg
Core Poster, 1965
Color screenprint on
white wove paper
36 x 23 7/8 in.
Montclair Art Museum
Art © Estate of
Robert Rauschenberg/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY



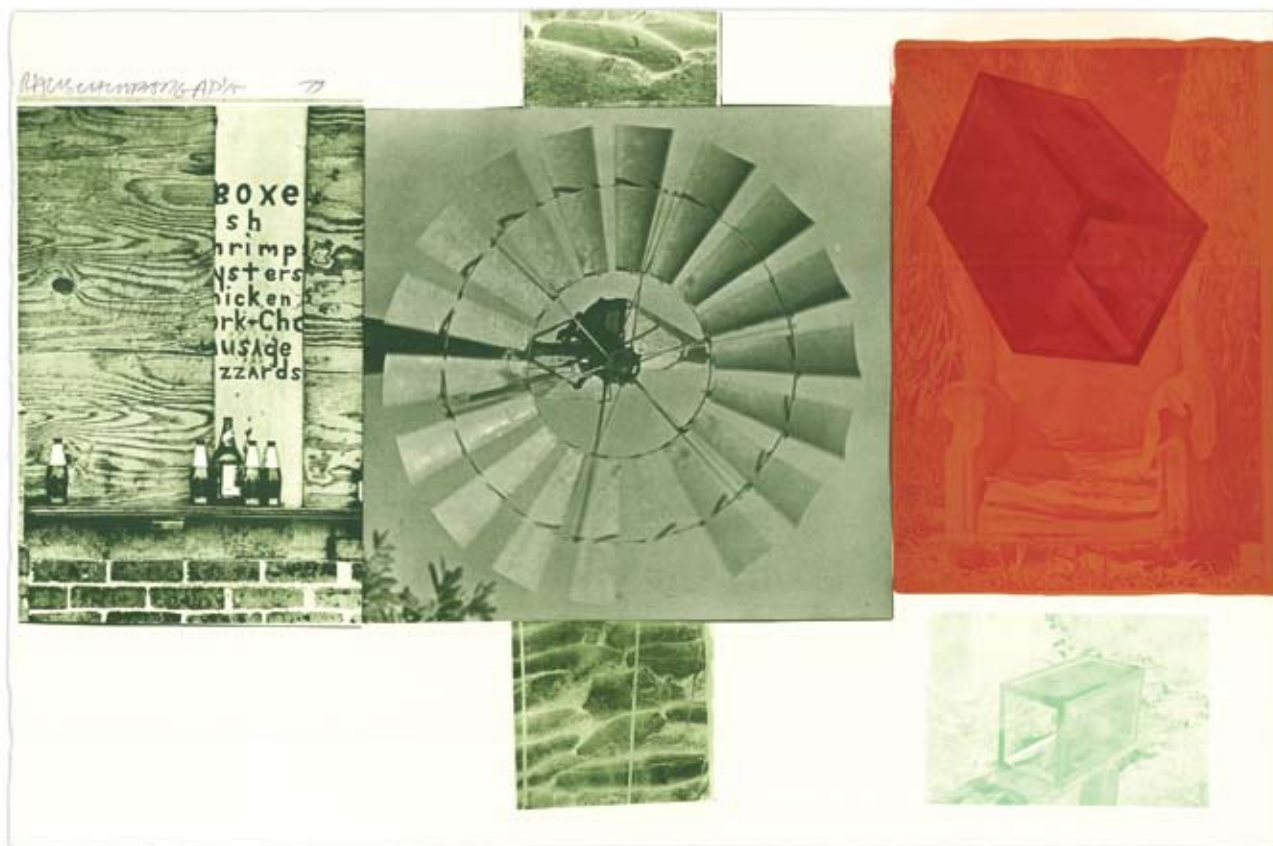
PAST POP: ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG AND JAMES ROSENQUIST GRAPHICS OF THE 1970s

Lewis Kachur

Robert Rauschenberg and James Rosenquist are indisputable masters in the canon of post-World War II American art, yet their printmaking has received far less attention than their paintings and sculptures. Their earliest efforts in printmaking date from the 1960s, a heavily scrutinized decade,¹ so a study of their graphics of the 1970s provides fresher terrain, as well as a chance to contextualize the prints from 1977 in the Kean University collection. Decades are artificial markers, to be sure, but since both artists were widely acclaimed by 1970, the years that followed became a “what next?” for their art. However, by that time both artists had the reputation and the resources to do for the most part whatever they wished, even as the attention of the art world was diverted to newer trends, from Conceptualism to Earthworks to Post-Minimalism. Thus it is on their quieter trajectory *past* the glittering Pop era that this exhibition of graphic work is focused.

Robert Rauschenberg’s initial reluctance to make prints eventually gave way to extensive experimentation in both materials and subjects. He tried various techniques, including *cliché verre* and *chine collé*, on surfaces that ranged from plastic or Mylar to fabric. In the late 1960s, Rauschenberg challenged scale in printmaking with *Booster* (1967), the world’s largest lithographic print to date, but it was soon dwarfed by the billboard-scaled *Autobiography* (1968, cat. no. 2, p. 6), paradoxically the most public of formats for the most personal of subjects. *Booster’s* skeletal self-portrait, a life-sized X-ray, is repeated in

Opposite:
Robert Rauschenberg
Autobiography, 1968
Color offset lithograph on
three sheets
16 ft. 6 3/4 in. x 4 ft. 3/4 in.
The Whitney Museum
of American Art
Art © Estate of
Robert Rauschenberg/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY



Autobiography with an overlay of astrological symbols apparently related to the (cosmic) artist. The central panel is a textual, chronological “self-portrait” of landmarks in the artist’s development, a spiral résumé. The right or lower panel is dominated by a self-portrait of the artist in action on roller skates performing in his dance piece entitled *Pelican*, which had debuted in 1963.

It has frequently been noted that James Rosenquist began his career as a billboard painter, but it was actually Rauschenberg who with *Autobiography* created something resembling an actual billboard, a triptych more than sixteen and a half feet high when shown vertically. Because the print far exceeded the limitations of art presses, it was printed on a billboard press. Another unusual feature was the huge edition of two thousand copies and the low cost of \$150, clearly an attempt at wide public distribution. A considerable amount of leeway was given to the owner of one of these huge images, who could hang it “either horizontally or vertically. It can be papered directly on to the wall or made into a screen.”² Once he started,

Robert Rauschenberg
Glacial Decoy Series:
Lithograph I, 1979
 Lithograph
 32 x 48 in.
 Universal Limited Art Editions
 Art © Estate of
 Robert Rauschenberg
 and U.L.A.E./Licensed by
 VAGA, New York, NY
 Published by U.L.A.E.



Robert Rauschenberg
Kill Devil Hill, 1975
 Lithograph
 27 x 81 1/8 in.
 Universal Limited Art Editions
 Art © Estate of
 Robert Rauschenberg and
 U.L.A.E./Licensed by VAGA,
 New York, NY
 Published by U.L.A.E.

Rauschenberg wanted to push printmaking beyond its traditional limits and challenge the graphics specialists who worked with him.

Although the imagery in many of Rauschenberg's works is multivalent, certain themes recur across time, suggesting their significance in the artist's worldview. One of these, the American eagle, enjoyed a long life in his work, first as a stuffed specimen in *Canyon* (1959) and then as a frequent image in the silkscreen paintings of the early 1960s. In *Earth Day* (1970, cat. no. 4, p. 2), the endangered species appears as a troubled U.S. "madonna" surrounded by a predella of environmental problems, "deforested land, strip mining, junkyards, an endangered gorilla, and air and water pollution."³ Rauschenberg used an unusual technique of applying the eagle in *chine collé* to achieve a collage-like effect. This print was also issued as a poster in a large, unsigned edition of ten thousand lithographs celebrating the very first Earth Day, for the benefit of the American Environment Foundation. It marks the beginning of Rauschenberg's concern for the environment, which continued throughout his career. For Rauschenberg, the decade of the 1970s began with newspaper collages ripped from the headlines and transferred directly into silkscreens in the *Currents* series, a title that suggests both current events and streams of media news and information.

Rauschenberg again crossed collage with printmaking in *Horsefeathers Thirteen* (1972–76), a series of prints that required several assistants to paste many copies of printed matter in the same position on each of eighty-three prints. The "collage" of techniques includes color lithograph, screenprint, pochoir, collage, and embossing. The title is a whimsical non sequitur—like "hen's teeth"—although actual feathers are present in



Horsefeathers Thirteen 13—XIV (cat. no. 5, not pictured) with ostriches rotated at the center of the image. We can only speculate if there is any connection to the 1932 Marx Brothers comedy bearing a similar name.

From the opacity of collage, Rauschenberg introduced its opposite, diaphanous veils of prints on fabrics, in the Hoarfrost series of 1974. Almost more wearable than frameable, these prints waft in the breeze and invite the spectator's gentle touch. Their imagery is only partly perceptible through the gauzes and folds and often requires the spectator to move in order to decipher it. In this exhibition, the lithograph *Back Out* (1979, cat. no. 12, p.12), is related to the Hoarfrosts, with its printing of transparent blue like a fabric veil. In the later Hoarfrost-related *Samarkand Stitches* (1988, cat. no. 14), Rauschenberg uses locally produced, brightly colored fabrics as multiples, returning via another culture, to the fabrics prominent among the materials of the early combine paintings of the late 1950s.

Like Rauschenberg, Rosenquist was persuaded by the legendary Tatyana Grosman to start making prints at Universal Limited Art Editions in the mid-1960s,⁴ although his prints of the 1970s are more circumscribed in scope than Rauschenberg's. Indeed, Rosenquist's focus from 1974 to 1978 on tripartite imagery arrayed horizontally could be considered as a series, a mode of working that many artists had used since the 1960s. He takes

Above:
James Rosenquist
Flying Stone, 1974–76
13-color lithograph
36 1/2 x 74 1/2 in.
Prudential Insurance
Company of America
Art © James Rosenquist/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY

Opposite:
Robert Rauschenberg
Untitled, 1972
Serigraph
40 x 29 3/4 in.
Montclair Art Museum
Art © Estate of
Robert Rauschenberg/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY





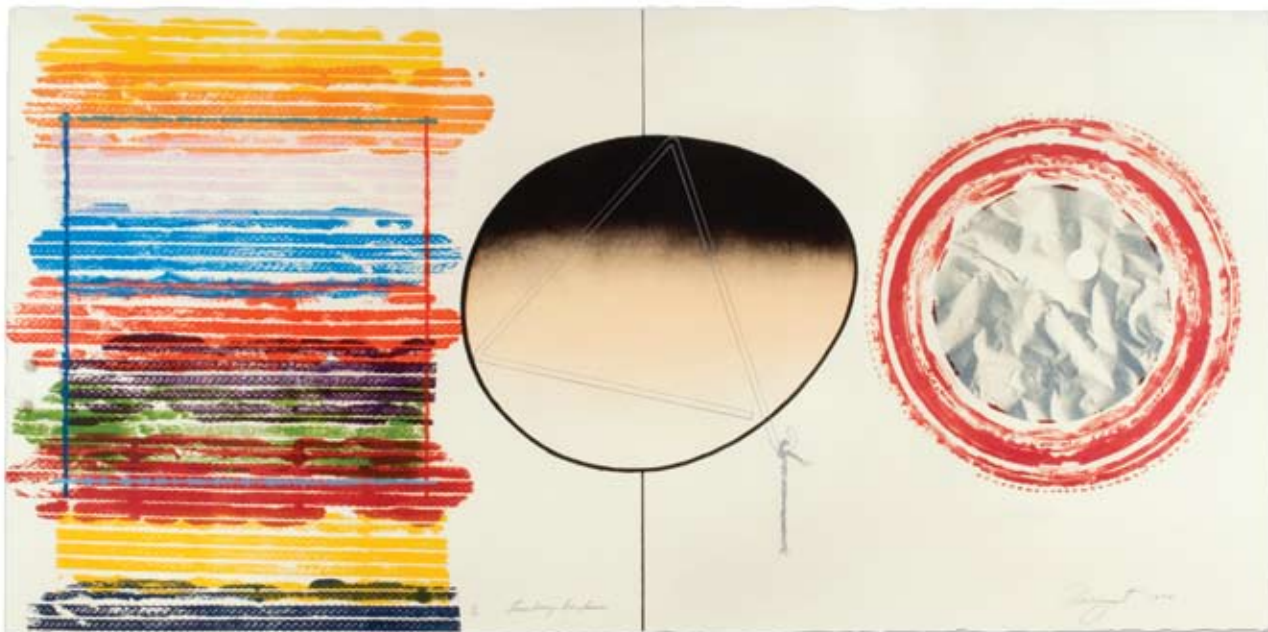
PAULS WINTER 1966 29



Above:
James Rosenquist
Fast Feast, 1977
Lithograph
36 1/2 x 73 7/8 in.
Kean University
Art © James Rosenquist/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY

this compositional format through its paces by combining and reshuffling certain images. In the early 1970s, he began with a trio of images arranged vertically, as in *Music School* (1971, cat. no. 15, p. 16), and *1-2-3 Outside* (1972, cat. no. 16, p. 21). The former print bears a subtitle dedicating the piece to Peter Schjeldahl, a well-known art critic. Rosenquist had befriended Schjeldahl as a poet before he became known as an art critic. The two men planned to create a portfolio of prints and poetry, a collaboration that was tragically interrupted by Rosenquist's automobile accident in 1971, and only *Music School* remained.⁵ This lithograph is made up of two joined sheets, with stylized rain on a car roof above and the wings of a bird stretched beyond a square on white below. The blood-red color inside the car suggests an association to the crash. The tripartite vertical format reminds me of the opening titles for a television program of that period called "What's My Line?," in which images of a head, body, and legs are shuffled, deriving from the Surrealist concept called "exquisite corpse." This was a method in which several artists collaborated on an overall image by adding to previous unseen parts folded over. Likewise, in *1-2-3 Outside* Rosenquist continues the lines established by the blue car hood in the center. These lines extend down in the red vertical and up in the silver vertical of the more ambiguous fragments at top and bottom, which match more in terms of their placement than in the continuation of the image.

Opposite:
Robert Rauschenberg
Back Out, 1979
Silkscreen
30 3/4 x 23 in.
O'Hara Gallery, Inc.
Art © Estate of
Robert Rauschenberg/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY



In 1974 Rosenquist rotated the three-part image 45 degrees to the horizontal in many works, thus eliminating the figural vestige of the upright format. On one level these tripartite horizontals return to the flag-like bands of color in prints of the late 1960s, such as the French *tricouleur* in *Horse Blinders* 1968.

The monumental print *Off the Continental Divide* (1974, cat. no. 17, not pictured), was a technical tour de force created from twenty-nine plates. At 42 by 78 inches, it is unusually large for a print at this time; indeed, it was the largest then made by the U.L.A.E. print shop, on a scale to rival painting. The print introduced a number of new images for the artist: the rising stair (a wooden type often found in basements), crumpled paper, the nails in a five-bar gate (“an ugly time reminder”), and an open book facing down. Rosenquist himself has identified the book as “reason being thrown on the floor.”⁶ The book’s binding connects across the vertical divide to link with the metallic car frame, reminiscent of the linear linkages in *1-2-3 Outside*. In the dark shadow below the stair, a circle, a triangle, and a square are outlined. These are “symbols of clarity and Zen balance”⁷ and often recur in his prints of the mid-1970s, such as *Strawberry Sunglasses* (1974, cat. no. 18, p. 14). These three geometries are the subject of a well-known *sumi-e* ink painting known as *Circle, Triangle, and Square* by Sengai Gibon (1750–1837), a Japanese monk of the Rinzaï sect, a branch of Zen Buddhism. Gibon uses

Above:
James Rosenquist
Strawberry Sunglasses, 1974
18-color lithograph
36 1/2 x 74 1/8 in.
Prudential Insurance
Company of America
Art © James Rosenquist/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY

Opposite:
James Rosenquist
***Miles from America:
The Third Century***, 1975
8-color lithograph
30 x 22 in.
Prudential Insurance
Company of America
Art © James Rosenquist/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY







James Rosenquist
Black Tie, 1975
 Color lithograph on rolled
 white Arches Cover paper
 36 5/8 x 73 13/16 in.
 Kean University
 Art © James Rosenquist/
 Licensed by VAGA,
 New York, NY

the circle “to represent infinity as the formless basis of all beings; the triangle is the beginning of all forms and the square is the triangle doubled in a doubling process whose infinite unfolding gives us the multiplicity of the forms that comprise the universe.”⁸

The diagonal connections between the crumpled paper and the nails are accomplished with a full spectrum of hues, suggesting the artist’s palette. The theme of the color spectrum occurs throughout this period in a variety of Rosenquist’s images. Likewise, the shadow under the stair and the open book connect in black and white, the colors of drawing. By 1974, the tripartite bands of color disappear in favor of horizontal triple images. The aviator glasses in *Strawberry Sunglasses*, a necessity for the artist in his new residence in Florida, reveal within the shaded lens the faint inscription of a dinner triangle. Together with the square at the left and the circle at the right, the triangle completes the geometric trio of Gibon’s Zen symbol. The title of the print has an alliterative reference to *The Strawberry Statement*, a non-fiction bestseller in which nineteen-year-old James Simon Kunen chronicled his experiences at Columbia University from 1966 to 1968; a fictionalized version of the book was made into a film in 1970.

Opposite:
 James Rosenquist
Music School, 1971
 9-color lithograph
 34 7/8 x 30 1/8 in.
 Montclair Art Museum
 Art © James Rosenquist/
 Licensed by VAGA,
 New York, NY

In *Strawberry Sunglasses*, a full palette of colors is stacked in ten tire-tread swaths at the left, and a comparable array of the color spectrum is rendered



in taut lines vectoring from the square to the edge of *Yellow Landing* (1974, cat. no. 19, p. 19); both are examples of indexical color (color that represents itself).⁹ *Yellow Landing's* tire hangs from a rope, which takes it out of the realm of the skid marks that appear in *Strawberry Sunglasses*, recalling Rosenquist's crash in 1971. The tire in *Yellow Landing* may be hanging from a tree in the backyard, where it can serve as a swing or as a target for football practice.

At the right in *Yellow Landing*, the triangles are green and multicolor wedges that cover a Kennedy half-dollar. The hole surrounded by blood-like spatters of red chillingly evokes the Kennedy assassination. In *Miles from America: The Third Century* of 1975 (cat. no. 21, p. 15), these slices are pieces of the half-dollar itself, which was first minted in 1964 and quickly became very popular. The image of JFK had appeared in Rosenquist's painting *President Elect* of 1960–61 and also in several of Rauschenberg's paintings, as well as his *Core Poster* of 1965 (cat. no. 1, p. 4). In *Miles*, the coin is combined with the tire; having consolidated the horizontal compositional trio of triangle, circle, and square, Rosenquist collapses it here into three overlapping circles.

Violent Turn (1977, cat. no. 23, p. 18) has more linear images; the wavy tire treads in a U shape, four blurry dinner triangles on strings, and one tally

James Rosenquist
Violent Turn, 1977
 Color lithograph
 on rolled white
 Arches Cover paper
 32 11/16 x 73 3/4 in.
 Kean University
 Art © James Rosenquist/
 Licensed by VAGA,
 New York, NY



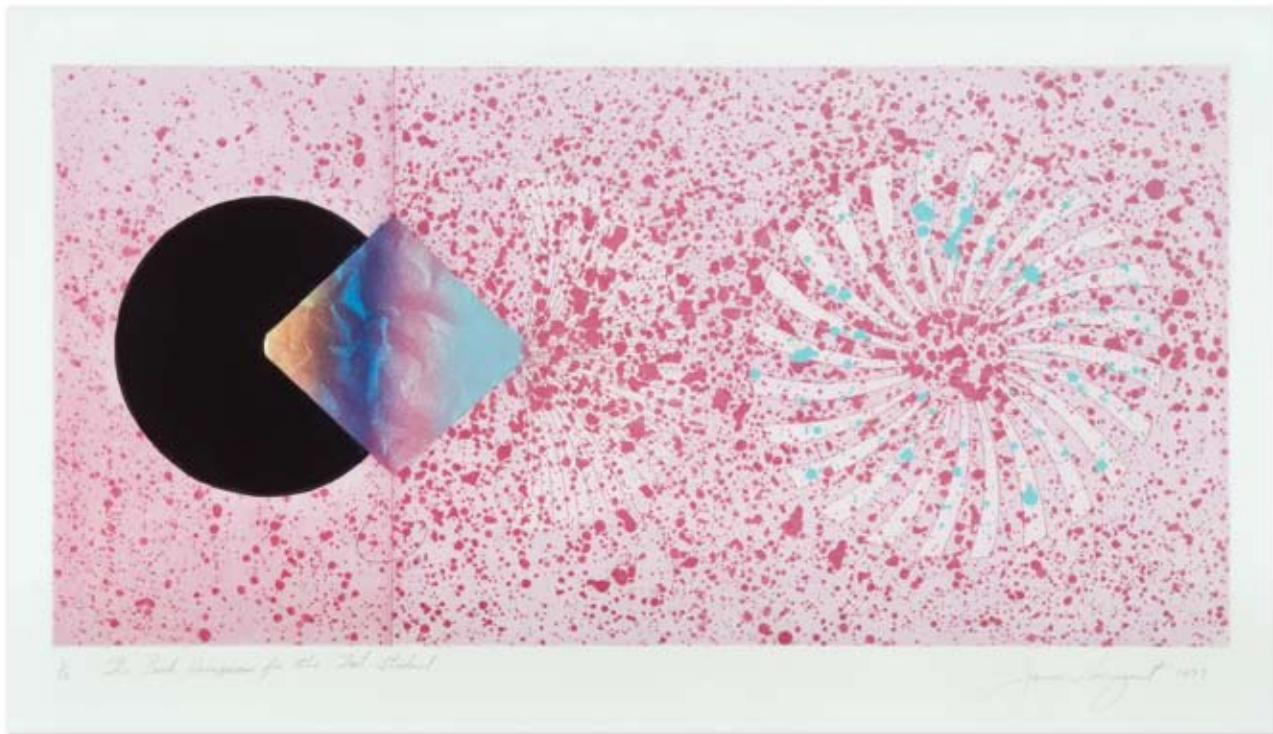
James Rosenquist
Yellow Landing, 1974
 Screenprint
 32 5/8 x 74 1/8 in.
 Prudential Insurance
 Company of America
 Art © James Rosenquist/
 Licensed by VAGA,
 New York, NY

mark of five nails. Linking them is a horizontal rainbow of the color spectrum. The tire track is rendered in violet, perhaps a play on the word “violence” in the title. Tires “turn,” of course, as the curved track implies here, and violently so when there is sudden danger.

Elbow Lake (1977, cat. no. 24, p. 26), one of the finest of these trios, shows an array of four items, a circle of tire tracks; an irregular, aqueous area; a schematic pail with a polka-dot bottom; and an American flag folded into a triangle, as is the custom at the end of the day or at military funerals. There is a play on the tricolor of the flag, whose stripes are overlaid with rows of stock market quotations, suggesting that “the business of America is business.” Here it is worth recalling that the Vietnam War’s last casualties were in the spring of 1975.

Coin Noir (1977, cat. no. 25, p. 25), with its dark ground, evokes the starry sky of the universe. Translated into French, the term “black corner” is one of the first suggestions in Rosenquist’s work of the astral universe that will break out in the large painting *Star Thief* (1980) and be developed during the 1980s. This may be a reference to the concept of black holes in the universe, a fairly new term coined in the mid-1960s.

Finally, in *Derrière l’Etoile* (1977, cat. no. 26, p. 24), Rosenquist looks back to the rising stair of *Off the Continental Divide*, except that here the stair seems to be descending to the right, appropriately for the winding



down of the motif. The stair separates the largely grisaille left side from the color spectrum of crumpled paper on the right. Another French title, which translates as “behind the star,” *Derrière l’Etoile* is the poetic name of the small New York print shop where Rosenquist made it. The concept is also cosmic and thus connects to *Coin Noir*.

The repeated compositional arrangement of this group is itself metaphorical, a secular trinity of daily items. The composition taps our tendency to read across, from left to right, as if we were reading a text. It also mimics the format of the three images on a slot machine. The artist has become the gambler who pulls the lever of the one-armed bandit to spin and bring up three images, which sometimes recur in different positions, as we have seen in the variants of this type.

Although *Dog Descending a Staircase* (cat. no. 29, p. 23) dates to 1982, it is based on a painting Rosenquist made in 1979 and thus rounds out the decade of the 1970s. It marks a subtle denouement of the geometric trio, which persists in the circle of the metal roller, the triangles formed by the stairs, and the square green canvas at the right. However, it breaks

Above:
James Rosenquist
***The Book Disappears
for the Fast Student***, 1978
Hand colored etching
23 x 40 in.
Prudential Insurance
Company of America
Art © James Rosenquist/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY

Opposite:
James Rosenquist
1-2-3 Outside, 1972
6-color lithograph
40 1/2 x 31 in.
Prudential Insurance
Company of America
Art © James Rosenquist/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY



80

1-2-3 Outside

Roy Lichtenstein 1972





Above:
 James Rosenquist
Dog Descending a Staircase, 1982
 Lithograph and intaglio
 on Arches Cold Press
 42 x 70 in.
 Universal Limited
 Art Editions
 Art © James Rosenquist/
 Licensed by VAGA,
 New York, NY

Opposite:
 Robert Rauschenberg
Labor's Centennial, 1881-1981, 1981
 Color offset lithograph
 on smooth
 white wove paper
 36 x 24 in.
 The Newark Art Museum
 Art © Estate of
 Robert Rauschenberg/
 Licensed by VAGA,
 New York, NY

dramatically with the abstraction of the series in favor of greater Photorealism. The title is a witty allusion to Marcel Duchamp's notorious canvas that was a cause célèbre at the Armory Show of 1913. Still, the change from a nude descending a staircase to a Dalmatian neatly spans the distance from early twentieth-century Parisian atelier to postwar American suburban home. Highly gendered scenes flank the family pet, the male blue-collar factory rollers versus the female doll.

Robert Rauschenberg got to know and admire Marcel Duchamp in New York in the late 1950s. Their work appeared together in a New York group exhibition *Art and the Object* in January 1959,¹⁰ and Rauschenberg was able to purchase Duchamp's *Bottle Rack* for its hardware (as opposed to its artwork) price of a few dollars. Dialogue with Duchamp continued from that point.

Rauschenberg's *Kill Devil Hill* (cat. no. 7, p. 9) is a suggestive use of the horizontal compositional trio in 1975, the time when, as we have seen, Rosenquist was using it in his own work. A blue square at the center of Rauschenberg's print is flanked by a shopping bag and a bicycle, an arrangement that relates to a vertical array of the same images in black



and white on shopping bag paper in his earlier lithograph *Kitty Hawk* 1974 (Collection Zimmerli Museum, Rutgers University). Both titles refer to those famous bicycle manufacturers, the Wright Brothers. Indeed, the red bicycle of *Kill Devil Hill* seems to be taking flight.

The bicycle, like the wheel, has a long history in Rauschenberg's art, and the bicycle wheel was, of course, the famous subject of one of Duchamp's first readymades. Thus Rauschenberg's use carries that lingering association, especially the rear wheel, which is turned upright, as it is on Duchamp's readymade. Rauschenberg was likely aware of the fact that Duchamp was a contemporary of the Wright Brothers, who competed in aviation meets in France during the first decade of the twentieth century.

The *Glacial Decoy Series: Lithograph I* (1979, cat. no. 11, p. 8) is also based on the basic tripartite composition of circles and squares. Words are introduced in the form of a handwritten menu of seafood and "gizzards." The first word fragment, "boxe," is enigmatic but clearly identifies the rectangle at the right.

Word and image appear in a sustained dialogue in *Traces suspectes en surface* (1978, cat. no. 10, p. 28), a collaborative portfolio of thirty six lithographs accompanying texts by the French writer and filmmaker Alain Robbe-Grillet. After the first meeting of artist and writer, texts and images

James Rosenquist
Derrière L'Etoile, 1977
 Color lithograph
 on rolled white
 Arches Cover paper
 36 15/16 x 73 7/8 in.
 Kean University
 Art © James Rosenquist/
 Licensed by VAGA,
 New York, NY



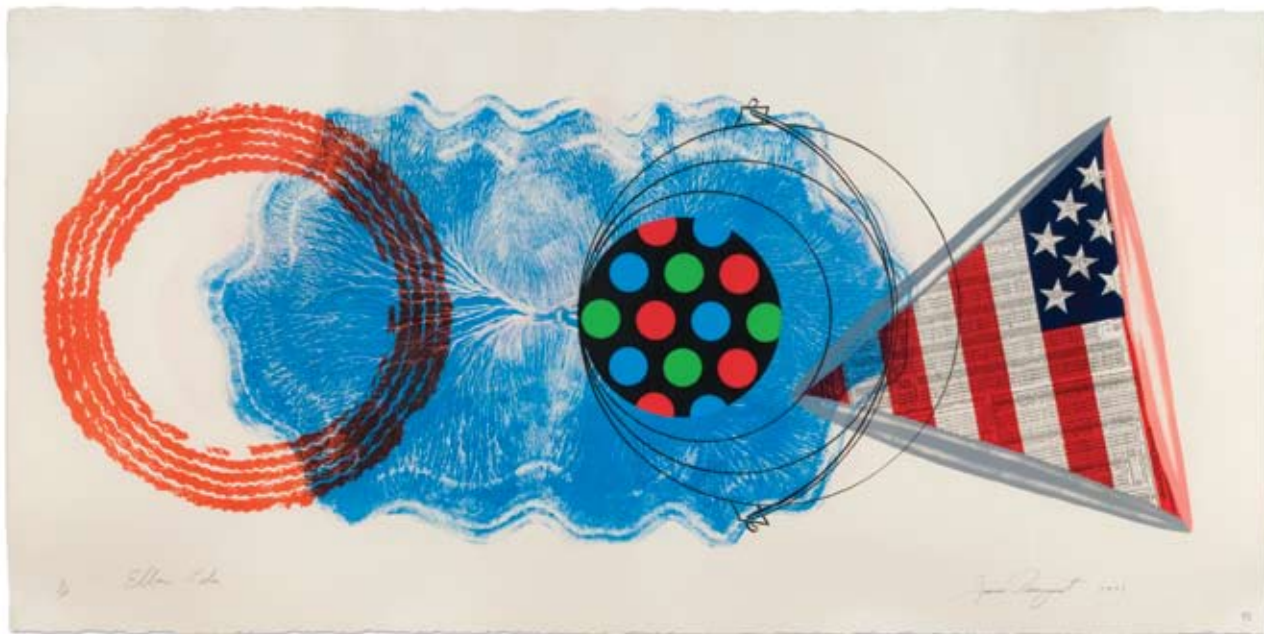
James Rosenquist
Coin Noir, 1977
Color lithograph and
screenprint on
rolled white
Arches Cover paper
36 3/4 x 74 in.
Kean University
Art © James Rosenquist/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY

were sent back and forth over a period of years.¹¹ Witnesses have observed that this was not the most felicitous of collaborations, but its protracted nature makes it a document of Rauschenberg's work through the mid-1970s. The texts resist straightforward narrative much like the "random order" of Rauschenberg's images, yet there are points where their imagery coincides. Robbe-Grillet's text describes and then redescribes the same scene, and a manuscript appears as a text within the text. In a sense, Robbe-Grillet's repetitions also resonate with Rosenquist's method of working in series by using a limited number of images.

The Rauschenberg / Rosenquist Interface

Although this pairing of Rauschenberg and Rosenquist began, fortuitously, with their joint acquisition by Kean University, it has proven to have a certain resonance. Rosenquist spoke movingly of their friendship at the recent Rauschenberg memorial, and it is clear that after Jasper Johns, Rosenquist may well have been the most significant artist friend of Rauschenberg during the latter part of his career.

There are quite a few parallels between them during the 1970s, including certain shared imagery, such as JFK, wheels and tires, and newspapers. In 1971 Rosenquist preceded Rauschenberg in working at Graphicstudio



in Tampa; in fact, both artists relocated to Florida early in the decade and became closer friends. They both aspired to create unusually large-scale prints, the works of both artists had a socially conscious dimension, and each lobbied for artists' rights. As part of that effort, they appeared together before a Senate subcommittee on artists' rights in 1974, and two years later they lobbied Congress for tax deductions for artist-donated artworks.

Robert Rauschenberg, in particular, spent considerable time in his later years, in one interview after another, drawing the distinction between his art and Pop. This is an especially valid argument in his case, since his first recognition as an artist came in the 1950s, well before the emergence of Pop Art. Rosenquist, too, came to renounce the Pop Art label, although he was definitely part of that generation. Thus it is their trajectory past the Pop era that this exhibition of graphic work addresses.

Later, in the 1980s, both artists moved into wider terrain. Rosenquist elaborated on space travel and the cosmos in huge canvases. Rauschenberg took his show on the road, with the Rauschenberg Overseas Cultural Interchange (ROCI) project, which brought collaboration to a global level, engaging numerous artists and artisans from Japan to Samarkand. After the project was announced in 1984, Rauschenberg traveled to and worked in eleven countries before ROCI ended in 1991.

Above:
James Rosenquist
Elbow Lake, 1977
Color lithograph
36 1/4 x 73 1/2 in.
Kean University
Art © James Rosenquist/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY

Opposite:
Robert Rauschenberg
Untitled, 1968
Color offset lithograph
and screenprint with varnish
on white wove paper
34 x 26 in.
The Newark Art Museum
Art © Estate of
Robert Rauschenberg/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY





The Book Disappears for the Fast Student, a Rosenquist print of 1978 (cat. no. 28, p. 20), is an irresistible title within a university context. It seems to predict that the Internet will supersede the printed volume for the collegiate generation as the spectrum-hued page whirls into the black hole at the left. Rauschenberg, on the other hand, remains the ultimate chronicler of the age of printed media.

1 Gus Foster produced the first catalog raisonné of Rauschenberg's 1960s prints in 1970. According to Rauschenberg expert Charles Stuckey, "I think that Gus's enthusiasm really made Rauschenberg take himself seriously as a printmaker and so set the stage for the 70s." (e-mail to the author, Feb. 21, 2009).

2 Broadside press, *Autobiography prospectus*.

3 Robert S. Mattison, *Last Turn—Your Turn: Robert Rauschenberg and the Environmental Crisis* (New York: Jacobson Howard Gallery, 2008), p. 10.

4 Ruth E. Fine, "Off the Continental Divide and Other Risky Journeys," in Walter Hopps and Sarah Bancroft, *James Rosenquist: A Retrospective* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2003), p. 49. See also the sources cited in notes 1 and 2.

5 James Rosenquist, e-mail to the author, Feb. 12, 2009.

6 Constance W. Glenn, *Time Dust*, James Rosenquist Complete Graphics, 1962–1992 (New York: Rizzoli, 1993), p. 56.

7 Judith Goldman, *James Rosenquist* (New York: Viking, 1985), pp. 55–56.

8 This quote is from D.T. Suzuki, who interpreted the picture as "the quintessential embodiment of the Universe." Alexandra Monroe, *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860–1989* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2009), p. 200, fig. 58. See also Ruth Fine, *Graphic studio: Contemporary Art from the Collaborative Workshop at the University of South Florida* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery, 1991), p. 16, and the entry to Elbow Lake, online: <http://www.kean.edu/~gallery/essays.html>.

9 The term is Benjamin Buchloh's. This color stack reminds me of that at the left of Rauschenberg's drawing *Trap* (1968), which is composed of colored towels. See Jonathan O'Hara Gallery, *Robert Rauschenberg Transfer Drawings from the 1960s* (New York: O'Hara Gallery, 2007), pl. 20.

10 Chronology in Walter Hopps and Susan Davidson, *Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1997), p. 557.

11 Tony Towle, "Rauschenberg: Two Collaborations—Robbe-Grillet & Voznesensky," *The Print Collector's Newsletter* 10 (May–June 1979), p. 38.

Robert Rauschenberg
Traces suspectes en surface, 1978
 Collaborative portfolio with
 Alain Robbe-Grillet Portfolio
 of 36 lithographs in a
 clothbound box
 Each sheet:
 27 3/16 x 20 1/2 in.
 Universal Limited Art Editions
 Art © Estate of
 Robert Rauschenberg
 and U.L.A.E./Licensed
 by VAGA, New York, NY
 Published by U.L.A.E.



James Rosenquist (left),
Robert Rauschenberg (right)
Photo: Gianfranco Gorgoni

Robert Rauschenberg

Robert Rauschenberg was an important contemporary artist known primarily for his ingenuity in the fields of both assemblage and printmaking. Born in Port Arthur, Texas, in 1925, Rauschenberg made his initial foray into academic art at the Kansas City Art Institute and continued his studies in Paris at the Académie Julian, which he attended in 1947 under the G.I. Bill. In 1948, Rauschenberg and Susan Weil, a fellow artist and his future wife, decided to attend Black Mountain College in North Carolina, where Rauschenberg studied painting under the renowned German artist Josef Albers. Rauschenberg soon discovered, however, that the college was not conducive to the realization of his own unique methods of making art, and he left for New York in the hope of gaining fresh inspiration in an environment where his artistic concepts could flourish. Once in Manhattan, Rauschenberg expanded the limits of the Abstract Expressionist movement by incorporating found objects into his art to create his most celebrated works, which he called “combines.” His first solo exhibition, held at the Betty Parsons Gallery in Manhattan, took place in 1951; he later became a prominent performance artist, working both alone and collaboratively with John Cage. Rauschenberg also founded and operated Change Inc., a New York–based nonprofit organization dedicated to providing emergency assistance to artists. Later in his career, he tended to focus primarily on collage, executing his work in studios in New York and on Captiva Island in Florida, where he died on May 12, 2008.

James Rosenquist

James Rosenquist is a celebrated contemporary artist widely known for his proficiency in printmaking and his implementation of both vibrant coloring and recurrent personal themes in his work. Born in 1933 in Grand Forks, North Dakota, Rosenquist was first introduced to academic visual art in 1948 after winning a coveted scholarship to the Minneapolis School of Art. He subsequently attended the University of Minnesota, where he studied from 1952 to 1954. During that time, Rosenquist was employed as a commercial poster painter and designer, an experience that proved to have a strong and pervasive influence on his identity as an artist and on his style. In 1955, he received a scholarship to the Art Students League, which required him to relocate to New York. Once in Manhattan, Rosenquist worked as a graphic artist in Times Square but quit that lucrative career in 1960. It was then that his paintings became most profoundly affected by his professional knowledge of commercial art, as he began to implement commercial techniques, objects, and themes into his work with increased frequency and dedication. After participating in the acclaimed exhibition *The New Realists* at the Sidney Janis Gallery in 1962, Rosenquist found himself in popular demand as an artist, and he exhibited works at both the Museum of Modern Art and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. His popularity was not, however, confined to the United States, and he participated in several international as well as national exhibitions throughout the 1960s and 1970s, culminating in his appointment to the National Committee for Art in Washington, a position he held for six years. Rosenquist then returned to New York, where he continues to live and work.



Exhibition Checklist

Robert Rauschenberg

Above left:
Robert Rauschenberg
Calf Startena 1977
Photo-silkscreen and collage
35 3/4 x 47 5/8 in.
Kean University
Art © Estate of
Robert Rauschenberg/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY

Above right:
Robert Rauschenberg
Goat Chow 1977
Photo-silkscreen and collage
35 3/4 x 47 5/8 in.
Kean University
Art © Estate of
Robert Rauschenberg/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY

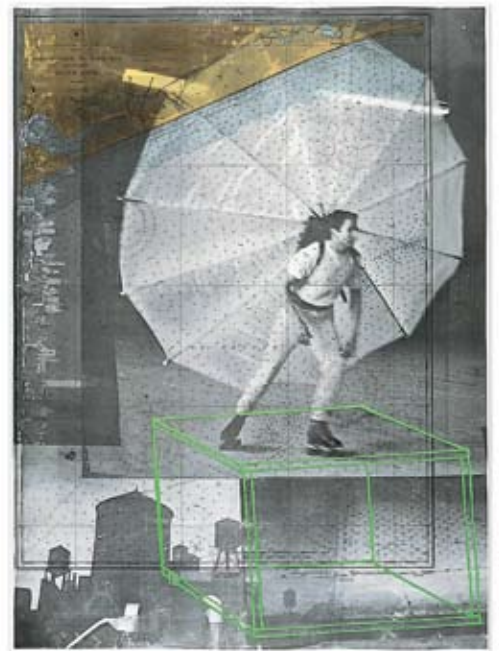
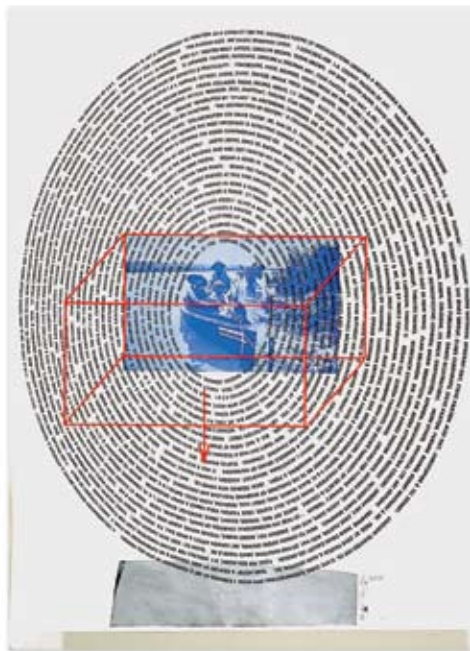
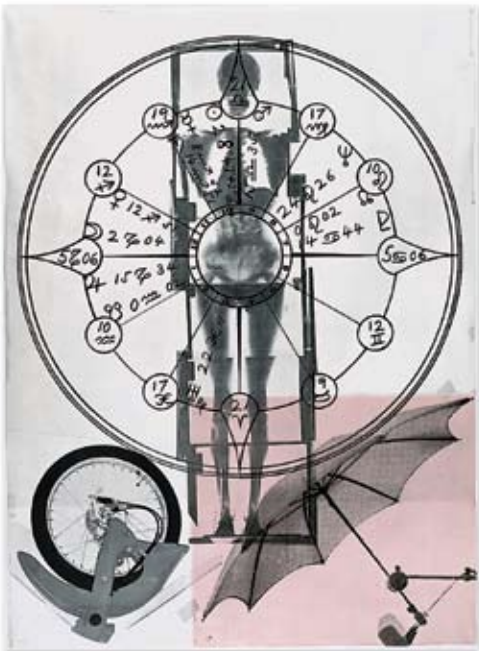
Below left:
Robert Rauschenberg
Mink Chow 1977
Photo-silkscreen and collage
35 3/4 x 47 5/8 in.
Kean University
Art © Estate of
Robert Rauschenberg/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY

Below right:
Robert Rauschenberg
Rabbit Chow 1977
Photo-silkscreen and collage
35 3/4 x 47 5/8 in.
Kean University
Art © Estate of
Robert Rauschenberg/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY

1. **Core Poster**, 1965
Color screenprint on
white wove paper
36 x 23 7/8 in.
Montclair Art Museum
2. **Autobiography**, 1968
Color offset lithograph on three sheets
16 ft. 6 3/4 in. x 4 ft. 3/4 in.
The Whitney Museum of American Art
3. **Untitled**, 1968
Color offset lithograph
and screenprint with varnish
on white wove paper
34 x 26 in.
The Newark Art Museum
4. **Earth Day**, 1970
Lithograph and *chine collé*
30 3/8 x 37 3/8 in.
Estate of Robert Rauschenberg
5. **Horsefeathers Thirteen—XIV**, 1972
Offset lithograph with silkscreen collage
26 x 20 1/2 in.
Prudential Insurance Company of America
6. **Untitled**, 1972
Serigraph
40 x 29 3/4 in.
Montclair Art Museum
7. **Kill Devil Hill**, 1975
Lithograph
27 x 81 1/8 in.
Universal Limited Art Editions
8. **Monkey Chow**, 1977
Photo-silkscreen and collage
35 3/4 x 47 5/8 in.
Kean University
9. **Hog Chow**, 1977
Photo-silkscreen and collage
35 3/4 x 47 5/8 in.
Kean University
10. **Traces suspectes en surface**, 1978
Collaborative portfolio with
Alain Robbe-Grillet
Portfolio of 36 lithographs
in a clothbound box
Each sheet: 27 3/16 x 20 1/2 in.
Universal Limited Art Editions
11. **Glacial Decoy Series: Lithograph I**, 1979
Lithograph
32 x 48 in.
Universal Limited Art Editions
12. **Back Out**, 1979
Silkscreen
30 3/4 x 23 in.
O'Hara Gallery, Inc.
13. **Labor's Centennial, 1881–1981**, 1981
Color offset lithograph on smooth
white wove paper
36 x 24 in.
The Newark Art Museum
14. **Samarkand Stitches**, 1988
Unique screenprint with fabric collage
60 x 47 in.
Prudential Insurance Company of America

James Rosenquist

15. **Music School**, 1971
9-color lithograph
34 7/8 x 30 1/8 in.
Montclair Art Museum
16. **1-2-3 Outside**, 1972
6-color lithograph
40 1/2 x 31 in.
Prudential Insurance Company of America
17. **Off the Continental Divide**, 1973–74
6-color lithograph
43 15/16 x 79 3/16 in.
Prudential Insurance Company of America
18. **Strawberry Sunglasses**, 1974
18-color lithograph
36 1/2 x 74 1/8 in.
Prudential Insurance Company of America
19. **Yellow Landing**, 1974
Screenprint
32 5/8 x 74 1/8 in.
Prudential Insurance Company of America
20. **Flying Stone**, 1974–76
13-color lithograph
36 1/2 x 74 1/2 in.
Prudential Insurance Company of America
21. **Miles from America:
The Third Century**, 1975
8-color lithograph
30 x 22 in.
Prudential Insurance Company of America
22. **Black Tie**, 1975
Color lithograph on rolled white
Arches Cover paper
36 5/8 x 73 13/16 in.
Kean University
23. **Violent Turn**, 1977
Color lithograph on rolled white
Arches Cover paper
32 11/16 x 73 3/4 in.
Kean University
24. **Elbow Lake**, 1977
Color lithograph
36 1/4 x 73 1/2 in.
Kean University
25. **Coin Noir**, 1977
Color lithograph and screenprint
on rolled white Arches Cover paper
36 3/4 x 74 in.
Kean University
26. **Derrière L'Etoile**, 1977
Color lithograph on rolled white
Arches Cover paper
36 15/16 x 73 7/8 in.
Kean University
27. **Fast Feast**, 1977
Lithograph
36 1/2 x 73 7/8 in.
Kean University
28. **The Book Disappears
for the Fast Student**, 1978
Hand-colored etching
23 x 40 in.
Prudential Insurance Company of America
29. **Dog Descending a Staircase**, 1982
Lithograph and intaglio on
Arches Cold Press
42 x 70 in.
Universal Limited Art Editions



Robert Rauschenberg
Autobiography, 1968
Color offset lithograph on three sheets
4 ft. $\frac{3}{4}$ in. x 16 ft. $6\frac{3}{4}$ in.
The Whitney Museum
of American Art
Art © Estate of
Robert Rauschenberg/
Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY

RAUSCHENBERG

PAST POP: ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG AND JAMES ROSENQUIST GRAPHICS

ROSENQUIST