

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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Tue – Sat 11:00am – 7:00pm



ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

Wednesday, 28 September – Saturday, 12 November 2011

Opening reception: Tuesday, September 27th, from 6 to 8 pm

There is no poor subject. A pair of socks is no less suitable to make a painting than wood, nails, turpentine, oil, and fabric.

-- Robert Rauschenberg

Gagosian Gallery Paris is pleased to present an exhibition of painting and sculpture by Robert Rauschenberg.

Rauschenberg stands as one of the most inventive artists in American art, arguably the first of his generation to chart a viable course out of Abstract Expressionism towards the formal integration of art and the mess of life. His approach to making art using discarded materials, everyday objects and appropriated images eviscerated the distinctions between medium and genre, abstraction and representation, while his "flatbed picture plane" created an enduring change in the relationship between artist, image, and viewer. From the outset, the incidental, the immediate, and the perception of a presence greater than his own artistic virtuosity drove Rauschenberg's creative energies. By working in what he called "the gap between art and life" he developed an altogether new visual language based on collage as a microcosm of the unbounded world that rejected the conventions of unitary meaning advanced by high art.

In the early *Elemental Sculptures*, Rauschenberg stripped the medium to its fundamentals, using fragments of found wood, brick, concrete and iron to create sculptures and pedestals possessing a quiet humility that belies their latent energy. His unending fascination with the incidental materials that he came across in the urban environment is evident in two floor-based works, *Hue Cart* (1982), a little tricycle wheel jauntily positioned between three candy-striped construction poles, or *The Brutal Calming of the Waves by Moonlight* (1981), a simple yet forceful consisting of a crushed metal drum from which a large piece of scrap metal thrusts out into space.

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Throughout his life, Rauschenberg also experimented with new ways to construct a pictorial surface - from dye transfer to silkscreen and chemical imprint -- producing potent accumulations of collaged images that address their reproducible nature while re-envisioning the relation of art to life. In his humorously titled *Urban Bourbon* series from the early 1990s, found images such as a baby buggy, rocky seashore or a Greek statue are printed directly onto metal supports, then brushstrokes of varnish and lacquer are applied to transform the reflective surfaces creating interplay between control and chaos in layered and veiled similitudes.

The exhibition, presented in collaboration with the Estate of Robert Rauschenberg will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue.

Robert Rauschenberg was born in 1925, in Port Arthur, Texas and died on Captiva Island, Florida in 2008. He has been the subject of numerous exhibitions worldwide including "Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective," the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1997) (traveled to the Menil Collection, Contemporary Arts Museum and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Museum Ludwig, Cologne and the Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, through 1999); "Combines," the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2005) (traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Centre Pompidou, Paris, and Moderna Museet, Stockholm, through 2007); and "Gluts," the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (2009), traveled to the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao in 2010.

Press Enquiries

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