OU Art Museum Launches New Rauschenberg Exhibition

NORMAN, OKLA. – As excitement builds for the opening of the new Stuart Wing at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art at the University of Oklahoma this fall, the museum debuts a new exhibition of modern art. Robert Rauschenberg: Prints from Universal Limited Art Editions, 1962-2008 opens this fall at the museum.

The exhibition examines the extensive collaboration between Rauschenberg and the fine art print publisher, Universal Limited Art Editions. Together, artist and publisher helped redefine printmaking through an extensive experimentation with the medium, and the results contributed significantly to the history of modern art in the United States. The exhibition provides a thorough survey of that relationship, from the first year of their collaboration in 1962 to Rauschenberg’s final series, Lotus, produced in 2008, the year of his death.

“The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art is very privileged to be the home of many important works of art, due to the generosity of collectors like Mrs. Sash Spencer,” said Ghislain d’Humières, director of the museum. “I would also like to thank Bill Goldston, director of ULAE, for his support of art and education in Oklahoma and for making this exhibition possible.

“From June’s reinstallaion of contemporary and modern art to this fall’s Rauschenberg exhibition, everything is leading up to the big opening of the new Stuart Wing in October. Exciting times definitely are ahead of us.”

A guest lecture by Mary Lynn Kotz, biographer and author of Rauschenberg: Art and Life (2004, Harry N. Abrams, Inc.) will precede the opening reception. The
Museum Association will host the opening reception and invites the public to attend the complimentary reception. The opening also doubles as a book-signing event for Kotz’s publication.

Prior to the reception, paid Association members with Metro Arts Circle benefits are invited to an exclusive tour of the exhibition with d’Humières, followed by an after party at In the Raw restaurant on Campus Corner. The tour begins at 8:30 p.m. Friday, Sep. 16; the after party begins at 9 p.m.

Rauschenberg was born in Port Arthur, Texas, in 1925. In 1948, he attended Black Mountain College in North Carolina, where he met musician John Cage and dancer Merce Cunningham. The two not only informed Rauschenberg’s work but often provided him with a public forum for his experimentation in the coming years. For instance, a collaboration with Cage offered Rauschenberg the opportunity to develop his first combine, an assemblage of painting and found objects that both challenged distinctions between painting and sculpture and blurred the boundaries between art and everyday life.

His interest in the excess of the world and the increasing profusion of images in American culture, especially through television and magazines, eventually led Rauschenberg to printmaking and ULAE in 1961.

Tatyana Grosman, a Russian immigrant, founded ULAE in 1957. Grosman encouraged Rauschenberg to experiment with lithography, resulting in the 1962 Stuntman series. Rauschenberg used discarded printing plates from newspapers to develop a bemusing array of imagery. The resulting work is open to interpretation and requires the viewer’s participation in the construction of meaning.

Rauschenberg often pushed the boundaries of printmaking, and, in 1969, his plan to use photo-sensitive stones led Grosman to seek the help of Bill Goldston, a student who had already experimented with the process. Goldston’s influence at ULAE grew, and, in 1976, Grosman asked him to take over the press.

Rauschenberg would become a close friend and adviser to Goldston over the ensuing decades. Their collaboration pushed the boundaries of printmaking as they experimented with nontraditional processes and materials. Rauschenberg continued to work with ULAE until his death in 2008, and the press produced last print series, the Lotus Series.

“This exhibition offers an intriguing exploration of the stylistic and thematic directions of Rauschenberg’s career and the important contributions he and ULAE made to contemporary printmaking,” said Mark White, Eugene B. Adkins Curator at the museum.
Through a special gift by Spencer, visitors now can view Rauschenberg’s final 12-piece *Lotus Series*. The museum debuted the series in June as part of a reinstallment of modern and contemporary works from the permanent collection.

An exhibition catalog is available in Muse, the museum store.

The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art is located in the OU Arts District on the corner of Elm Avenue and Boyd Street, at 555 Elm Ave., on the OU Norman campus.

Admission to the museum is free to all OU students with a current student ID and all museum association members, $5 for adults, $4 for seniors, $3 for children 6 to 17 years of age, $2 for OU faculty/staff and free for military veterans with proof and children 5 and under. The museum is closed on Mondays and admission is free on Tuesdays. The museum’s website is www.ou.edu/fjjma. Information and accommodations on the basis of disability are available by calling (405) 325-4938.

Construction on a new wing is under way, but the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art is open and fully functional with exhibitions and programming throughout the entire construction process.

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**IMAGE CUTLINE**


Robert Rauschenberg (U.S., 1925-2008)
*Soviet/American Array VII*, 1991
Intaglio in 14 colors, 79 x 511/4 in. Edition 55
Published by Universal Limited Art Editions