

Exhibition: *Rauschenberg: The 1/4 Mile*

On view: October 28, 2018–June 9, 2019

Location: BCAM, Level 3



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(Los Angeles–September 24, 2018) The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) presents *Rauschenberg: The 1/4 Mile*, an expansive installation featuring pioneering American artist Robert Rauschenberg’s magnum opus *The 1/4 Mile or 2 Furlong Piece* (1981–98). Completed over a period of 17 years, *The 1/4 Mile* is composed of 190 panels that, combined, measure approximately 1,000 feet—or nearly a quarter mile—in length. Signifying the distance between Rauschenberg’s studio and his home on Captiva Island, Florida, the quarter-mile span is representative of the artist’s central belief in working in the “gap between” art and life. Cross-cultural exchange was a driving force of Rauschenberg’s art practice. He traveled extensively throughout his career, and he sourced the wide range of materials and imagery included in *The 1/4 Mile* from Asia, Europe, Latin America, northern Africa, and the United States. The piece comprises an eclectic array of materials including various textiles, images culled from mass media, and photographs by the artist that are interspersed between bold passages of paint, while everyday objects such as chairs, cardboard boxes, and traffic lights add sculptural depth. The work also has an audio element, composed of sounds that Rauschenberg recorded during his travels. Together the visual and aural components of *The 1/4 Mile*, coupled with its monumental scale, create an immersive viewing environment. This exhibition marks the first time the work will be exhibited in its entirety.

Rauschenberg: The 1/4 Mile is co-curated by Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director, and Katia Zavistovski, Assistant Curator of Modern Art. This installation will occupy the entire floor of BCAM, Level 3.

Rauschenberg often referred to *The 1/4 Mile* as a self-portrait, and the work reveals the broad scope of his artistic practice through the multitude of materials and techniques employed (including printmaking, photography, sculpture, painting, and use of technology). The piece serves as a self-contained retrospective of the artist's oeuvre, referencing important bodies of work such as his *White Paintings* (1951), *Combines* (1954–64), *Currents* (1970), *Cardboards* (1971–72), *Spreads* (1975–83), and *Gluts* (1986–94); his metal paintings including *Shiners* (1986–93), *Urban Bourbons* (1988–96), and *Night Shades* (1991); and the series *Anagrams (A Pun)* (1997–2002). Some of these references are evident in works on view in *Rauschenberg: In and About L.A.* (August 11, 2018–February 10, 2019), a LACMA exhibition focusing on Rauschenberg's longstanding relationship with Los Angeles that features a selection of works he made in L.A. between the late 1960s and the late 1990s. In addition to being self-referential, in *The 1/4 Mile or 2 Furlong Piece* Rauschenberg also includes images of artwork from multiple cultures and time periods, situating his work in the context of a global art history.

“Robert Rauschenberg's *The 1/4 Mile or 2 Furlong Piece* has always been an inspiration to me. This work is an immersive meditation on the whole world of culture as well as the artist's own life of ideas. It's global and personal—a museum of images unto itself,” said exhibition co-curator Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director.

Rauschenberg: In and About L.A.

Rauschenberg: In and About L.A. is a special presentation focusing on the indelible impact that Los Angeles had on Rauschenberg's artistic practice. On view in the Resnick Pavilion, the exhibition comprises works from LACMA's collection as well as loans from the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, Gemini G.E.L., and the Lyn and Norman Lear Collection. Highlights of the exhibition include two large-scale prints from LACMA's collection: *Booster* (1967), a life-size self-portrait printed at Gemini G.E.L. that at the time of its creation was the largest hand-pulled print ever made and the first to combine lithography and screenprinting; and *Currents* (1970), which, at 54 feet long, exceeded Rauschenberg's previous experiments with monumentality. Rauschenberg created an audio montage of contemporaneous news broadcasts to accompany *Currents* when it was first exhibited in 1970. This audio component was recently re-discovered and digitized by the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation.

Rauschenberg: In and About L.A. presents *Currents* with its original soundtrack for the first time in almost 50 years. Also on view is Rauschenberg's *Rodeo Palace (Spread)* (1975–76), photographs of Los Angeles from the artist's *In + Out City Limits* series (1981), and his *L.A. Uncovered* screenprints (1998).

"Los Angeles played a pivotal role in Rauschenberg's artistic development. Over the course of six decades he created some of his most groundbreaking work in L.A., inspired by the environment, the region's technological innovations, and the collaborative opportunities he found here. Many of the works in *In and About L.A.* are also notable precedents to or are directly referenced in *The 1/4 Mile*—this is a unique opportunity to show these works concurrently," said Katia Zavistovski, Assistant Curator of Modern Art and curator of *Rauschenberg: In and About L.A.*

About Robert Rauschenberg

Robert Rauschenberg (b. 1925, Port Arthur, Texas; d. 2008, Captiva, Florida) moved to New York in 1949. He had his first solo exhibition there at the Betty Parsons Gallery in 1951 and later exhibited at Leo Castelli. In 1962, Virginia Dwan presented a group of the artist's celebrated, and controversial, Combines (1954–64), his first solo exhibition in Los Angeles, at the Dwan Gallery. The following year, he was recognized with a retrospective exhibition at the Jewish Museum in 1963 and went on to receive the Grand Prize for Painting at the Venice Biennale in 1964. Subsequent retrospectives, all multi-venue, were organized in 1976 by the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; in 1997 by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and in 2016 by Tate Modern, London and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Artworks from his 60-year career can be found in all of these institutions as well as other major museum collections around the world, including Art Institute of Chicago, Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, The Menil Collection in Houston, Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, Museum Ludwig in Cologne, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

Credit

Rauschenberg: The 1/4 Mile was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Rauschenberg: In and About L.A. was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

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About LACMA

Since its inception in 1965, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography, mirroring Los Angeles's rich cultural heritage and uniquely diverse population. Today LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection of over 139,000 objects that illuminate 6,000 years of art history from new and unexpected points of view. A museum of international stature as well as a vital cultural center for Southern California, LACMA shares its vast collection with the Greater Los Angeles County and beyond through exhibitions, public programs, and research facilities that attract over 1.5 million visitors annually, in addition to serving millions more through community partnerships, school outreach programs, and creative digital initiatives. LACMA's main campus is located halfway between the ocean and downtown, adjacent to the La Brea Tar Pits and Museum and the future home of the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures. Dedicated to serving all of Los Angeles, LACMA collaborates with a range of curators, educators, and artists on exhibitions and programs at various sites throughout the County.

Location: 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036. lacma.org

Image caption:

Robert Rauschenberg, *The 1/4 Mile or 2 Furlong Piece*, 1981–98, installation view, *Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective*, Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa, 1998–99, © Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, photo © FMGB Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa, by Erika Barahona Ede

Press Contact: press@lacma.org or 323 857-6522

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