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## EXHIBITIONS OF ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG'S "BOUNDARY-BUSTING ART" ON VIEW AT GRAM THIS FEBRUARY

*Rauschenberg in Context* and *Rauschenberg at Gemini* on view February 3 – May 20, 2012;  
*Robert Rauschenberg: Synapsis Shuffle* on view March 3 – May 20, 2012

**GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., January 10, 2012** – Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM) will host three distinct exhibitions celebrating the work of American artist Robert Rauschenberg, beginning this February, providing a rich introduction to the defining aspects of Rauschenberg's art.

*Rauschenberg in Context* and *Rauschenberg at Gemini* will be on view February 3 – May 20, 2012. *Robert Rauschenberg: Synapsis Shuffle* begins March 3, and runs until May 20, 2012.

### **Robert Rauschenberg**

Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008) was one of the most important American artists of the twentieth century. He worked in a broad range of media as a painter, sculptor, printmaker, draftsman (drawing), photographer, performance artist, choreographer, and theater designer.

In each of these media, Rauschenberg made innovative use of materials that led to radical new formats—the early "combines," mixing painting and ordinary objects like a chair, radio, or taxidermied goat; the silkscreen paintings with their transfer of photographic imagery to the canvas; and, the use of electronics and other means to create participatory works of art that prompt audience interaction.

A chronicler of contemporary life, particularly the American experience, Rauschenberg's great themes were the city, technology, multiculturalism, and the environment. The provocative and poetic collisions of images, things, and ideas in Rauschenberg's art are layered with personal reflections on the social, political, and cultural currents of our time.

### ***Rauschenberg in Context***

*February 3 – May 20, 2012*

This exhibition displays works by other, related artists to examine where Rauschenberg fits within the history of twentieth-century American art.

Rauschenberg came of age as an artist during the late 1940s and 1950s, during the development of Abstract Expressionism in New York City. Works by artist Robert Motherwell and others are presented that exemplify this period and its style, incorporating the personal and spontaneous gesture of the brush.

View works that incorporate the Dada and Surrealism roots of chance and accident—a strong influence on Rauschenberg's work. View a work of art by Marcel Duchamp, known for utilizing found objects, of which were later very important to Rauschenberg's art.

In his use of personal gesture, chance, accident, and the found object, Rauschenberg expands upon precedents set by other artists. In Rauschenberg's incorporation and celebration of the commonplace and popular culture, he parallels the early art of Jasper Johns and anticipates in the late 1950s and early 1960s the advent of Pop art.

***Rauschenberg at Gemini***

*February 3 – May 20, 2012*

View works from Rauschenberg's printmaking career, which began in the early 1960s and continued into the early twenty-first century. Many of his prints were produced at Gemini G.E.L., the world-famous publishing workshop of prints and multiples in Los Angeles, California.

Rauschenberg's prints pushed the boundaries of what printmaking could be. By collaborating with Gemini's printers over a 30-year period, he produced more than 250 editioned works of art that deviated from typical prints in scale, by incorporating unconventional materials such as textiles and light, and by changing how the viewer could interact with the resulting work of art.

Many of Rauschenberg's most famous prints, print series, and multiples are included in this exhibition. View the *Stoned Moon Series*, which documents the American space program leading to the Apollo 11 mission; the *Tibetan Keys and Locks*, *Samarkand Stitches*, and *Marrakech* series, which demonstrate the artist's commitment to multiculturalism and international cooperation; and the famous limited edition lithograph and poster that announced the first Earth Day in 1970.

***Robert Rauschenberg: Synapsis Shuffle***

*March 3 – May 20, 2012*

*Synapsis Shuffle* has been exhibited in only two other cities in the world—New York and Paris—before arriving in Grand Rapids.

This exhibition consists of 52 large-scale panels, and is a monumental participatory work that incorporates chance and performance, hallmarks of Rauschenberg's art. Each of the 52 panels is a collage of images taken from photographs the artist took during his global travels. The title of the work and the number of paintings refer to a deck of cards, a clever signal of the work's installation method: each time the panels of *Synapsis Shuffle* are presented, they are meant to be "shuffled" by event participants, in displays of no more than seven and no fewer than three.

GRAM will organize a Grand Rapids event and "deal out a hand" to the event participants, where the panels will be shuffled into a unique exhibition. The event will be filmed and available for viewing after the event. The *Synapsis Shuffle* exhibition will continue through May 20, 2012.

Throughout the course of the exhibitions, guests can enhance their experience by attending diverse weekly programming focusing on Rauschenberg. From lectures, films, drop-in Docent-led tours, gallery talks, and a special Merce Cunningham-inspired dance performance, there are a variety of ways to engage with Rauschenberg's works and learn more about this innovative American artist.

**Rauschenberg programming (Includes Friday Nights at GRAM and weekly Saturday Series):**

**FRIDAY NIGHTS AT GRAM – Conversations**

**Feb 03** Film: *Fully Awake: Black Mountain College* (2007), 7:00 pm

**Feb 24** Rauschenberg Revisited: Gallery Talk with artist Richard App, 7:00 pm

**Mar 02** Film: *Rauschenberg Synapsis Shuffle*, New York, 7:00 pm

**Mar 23** Rauschenberg Revisited: Gallery Talk with artist Katherine Sullivan, 7:00 pm

**Mar 30** Merce Cunningham-Inspired Dance Presentation with Amy Wilson, 7:00 pm

**Apr 27** Rauschenberg Revisited: Gallery Talk with artist Matt Zacharias, 7:00 pm

**May 04** Photography Workshop & Collage Activity, 7:00 pm

**May 11** Rauschenberg Shuffle Activity, 7:00 pm

**May 18** Film: *Robert Rauschenberg Retrospective* (1979), 7:00 pm

### THE SATURDAY SERIES: LECTURES, FILMS, TALKS & TOURS

**Feb 04** Tour: Docent-led tour of exhibition, 2:00 pm

**Feb 11** Tour: Docent-led tour of exhibition, 2:00 pm

**Feb 18** Film: *Robert Rauschenberg Retrospective* (1979), 2:00 pm

**Feb 25** Lecture: Kirsten Strom, "Robert Rauschenberg: Herald of Postmodernism,"  
2:00pm

**Mar 03** Gallery Talk: Dana Friis-Hansen, Director and CEO, 2:00 pm

**Mar 10** Tour: Docent-led tour of exhibition, 2:00 pm

**Mar 17** Film: *Fully Awake: Black Mountain College* (2007), 2:00 pm

**Mar 24** Lecture: Henry Luttikhuizen, "Mindful Ramblings: The Art of Robert  
Rauschenberg," 2:00 pm

**Mar 31** Film: *Who Gets to Call It Art?* (2006), 2:00 pm

**Apr 07** Film: *Fully Awake: Black Mountain College* (2007), 2:00 pm

**Apr 14** Tour: Docent-led tour of the exhibition, 2:00 pm

**Apr 21** Lecture: Thomas Post, "Rauschenberg: Paintings, Parallels & Re-presentations,"  
2:00 pm

**Apr 28** Film: *Who Gets to Call it Art?* (2006), 2:00 pm

**May 05** Museum closed for annual fundraising event

**May 11** Rauschenberg Shuffle Activity, 7:00 pm

**May 12** Tour: Docent-led tour of the exhibition, 2:00 pm

**May 19** Tour: Docent-led tour of the exhibition, 2:00 pm

In addition to the above programming, the Education Center Studio also features art-making activities for families inspired by the work of Robert Rauschenberg. February's theme is Think In Ink, a colorful screenprinting project.

Learn more about *Rauschenberg in Context*, *Rauschenberg at Gemini*, and *Robert Rauschenberg: Synapsis Shuffle* at [artmuseumgr.org](http://artmuseumgr.org).

*Rauschenberg in Context* is organized by the Grand Rapids Art Museum

*Rauschenberg at Gemini* was organized by the Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena, CA.

Exhibition tour management by Landau Traveling Exhibitions, Los Angeles, CA.

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*Robert Rauschenberg: Synapsis Shuffle*. This exhibition was organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. The Grand Rapids presentation has been made possible by Presenting Sponsor Daniel & Pamela DeVos Foundation.

**About the Grand Rapids Art Museum**

The mission of the Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM) is: to inspire discovery, enjoyment, and learning about art; to serve as a welcoming and inclusive cultural resource; to collect, conserve, and interpret works of art of the finest quality. Established in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids, the new Art Museum is internationally known for its distinguished design and LEED Gold certified status. Established in 1910 as the Grand Rapids Art Association, GRAM has grown to include more than 5,000 works of art, including American and European 19th and 20th century painting and sculpture and more than 3,500 works on paper. Embracing the city's legacy as a leading center of design and manufacturing, GRAM has a growing collection in the area of design and modern craft.

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