

PRESS RELEASE

GEMINI G.E.L. AT JONI MOISANT WEYL



RAUSCHENBERG ART FOR CHANGE

A selection of mixed-media artworks by **Robert Rauschenberg** published by the Los Angeles artists' workshop, Gemini G.E.L., will be on view at **Gemini G.E.L. at Joni Moisant Weyl** from September 23 through November 1, 1997. Sales from the exhibition will benefit Change Inc., a foundation established by Rauschenberg to assist artists in need of emergency aid.

The works on view, created in impromptu "workshops" around the world as well as at Gemini in Los Angeles, are made of a wide variety of papers, fabrics and metals, and include both printed "found" imagery and Rauschenberg's own photography. They are proof of Rauschenberg's unique ability to manipulate any medium as he stretches the boundary of collaboration between artist and workshop.

Whether it is ordinary cardboard, as seen in *Cardbird II*, or newspaper images pressed and transferred to layers of gossamer fabrics in *Mule (Hoarfrost)*, Rauschenberg is never shy about making use of things that are discarded or taken for granted. He responds to, and makes fullest use of, the resources at hand. Constantly in pursuit of change, he frequently presents himself with challenges by traveling to foreign lands and establishing a collaboration with local workers. In the exhibition, the earliest examples of this are Rauschenberg's landmark series of handmade paper objects, *Pages and Fuses*, which were created at the Richard de Bas papermill in France. Later examples on view include selections from *Bones & Unions*, made with the assistance of craftsmen at the Gandhi ashram in India using indigenous mud, fabrics and paper, and *7 Characters*, created in a paper factory in the People's Republic of China. The artworks resulting from these faraway collaborations, in their materials, their format and their imagery, are clear reflections of the people and places that spawned them. Perhaps the best example of Rauschenberg's belief in the power of art to communicate beyond language and cultural barriers was his ambitious 7-year traveling project, ROCI (Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange). In 1988, Rauschenberg and ROCI traveled to Uzbekistan, then part of the USSR, where he became attracted to the extraordinary patterned silks woven by the nomadic families of Samarkand. The *Samarkand Stitches* on view are the result of combining these fabrics with photographs taken by Rauschenberg during his visit.

Clearly Rauschenberg enjoys collaboration, including with his viewers; it adds the element of change that stimulates his creative impulses. In *Borealis Shares*, a 6-foot high chair made of Lexan and brass panels with photographic and painted imagery, the form invites the viewer to become a part of the work. Typically Rauschenberg, its romantic title indicates that the object is more beautiful when there are two people sitting on it instead of one.

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Joni

Robert Rauschenberg was born in Port Arthur, Texas, and studied art at the Kansas City Art Institute, the Academie Julian in Paris and Black Mountain College in North Carolina. Rauschenberg is internationally recognized as one of America's most important and influential artists. His work is collected and exhibited by museums worldwide, and has been the subject of numerous one-person exhibitions. A major retrospective of Rauschenberg's work will be presented by New York's Guggenheim Museum in both its uptown and downtown locations in the Autumn of 1997.

Change Inc. is tax-exempt, non-profit foundation established by Robert Rauschenberg in 1970 to assist artists of all disciplines in need of emergency aid. Artists in need are given a one-time grant of up to \$1000 to cover situations recognized by the Board of Directors as constituting an emergency. Since its inception, Change Inc. has assisted over 1,000 artists with emergency aid.

Additional information and visuals are available by contacting the gallery at 212-219-1446.