



Kayak Alert (Runts), 2007, pigment transfer on polylaminate

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## *RUNTS*

### **ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG'S NEW SERIES OF PAINTINGS FROM 2007 OPENS THIS WEEK**

**NEW YORK, January 8, 2008**—PaceWildenstein is pleased to present Robert Rauschenberg's 2007 series of paintings *Runts* at 534 West 25<sup>th</sup> Street, New York City from January 11 through February 16, 2008. The artist will be present at the public opening reception on Thursday, January 10<sup>th</sup> from 6-8 p.m.

The paintings *Runts* on exhibit each measure approximately 5' x 6' and are the smallest works the artist has produced in many years. These channel surfing montages are assembled from Rauschenberg's archive of photographs, which he then transfers onto polylaminate synthetic material mounted on aluminum panels. *Runts* represents a decades-long involvement in transfer images that began over 50 years ago transferring the medium of photography into painting. "Mine is the need to be where it will always never be the same again; a kind of archaeology in time only, forcing one to see whatever the light or the darkness touches, and care. My concern is the move at the speed within which to act. Photography is the most direct communication in nonviolent contacts," wrote Rauschenberg in a 1981 essay. This and other related statements are reprinted in the accompanying exhibition catalogue.

Rauschenberg's voracious experimentation with materials in the 1950s led to the creation of his celebrated *Combine* series. In the next decade he continued to make paintings, drawings, and sculpture and his interests also extended into the theater where he designed sets, costumes, and lighting and collaborated with leading choreographers such as

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Traffic Grooming (Runts), 2007, pigment transfer on poly laminate



Z + A (Runts), 2007, pigment transfer on poly laminate

Trisha Brown and Merce Cunningham.

A turning point occurred in 1962; Rauschenberg began a serious investigation of printmaking which led to his silkscreen paintings. Applying the solvent transfer technique he discovered and used earlier in drawings to this new body of work, Rauschenberg's approach allowed for a new use of photography in contemporary art. His silkscreen transfers included iconic American images: J.F.K., the bald eagle, and space missions, capturing an era, setting, and sentiment. Referring to the period Rauschenberg remarked, "I was bombarded with TV sets and magazines, by the excess of the world. I thought an honest work should incorporate all of these elements, which were and are a reality."

In the 1970s Rauschenberg continued the transfer technique using various fabrics in lieu of the traditional canvas support in a series called *Hoarfrosts*. Rauschenberg's more recent investigations of the photographic transfer method in his 1990s *Anagrams* series, as well as the newer *Scenarios* and the current *Runts* reveal the use of more personal, although no less enigmatic, images. *Runts* however offer no discernable narrative and any perceived narrative is in the perception of the viewer's associations. Now drawn from his own archive of photographs taken all over the world since the 1980s, Rauschenberg has replaced the eye of mass media with his own.

Robert Rauschenberg's work has been the subject of exhibitions worldwide for nearly sixty years. Recently, The Menil Collection organized *Robert Rauschenberg: Cardboards and Related Pieces*, the first large-scale museum exhibition devoted to the artist's cardboard series created in 1971 and 1972. The exhibition, organized by Josef Helfenstein and the late Walter Hopps, coincided with the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Menil Collection. Part of a larger exhibition entitled *Traveling 1970-1976* at the Museu Serralves, Porto, the exhibition is on view through March 30, 2008 when it will then travel to Haus der Kunst, Munich from May 9 through September 7, 2008 and Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donna Regina (MADRE), Naples from October 18, 2008 to January 19, 2009.

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Forbidden Fruit (Runts), 2007, pigment transfer on polylaminate



Upstream (Runts), 2007,

Robert Rauschenberg (b. 1925, Port Arthur, Texas) briefly attended the University of Texas at Austin in 1943 and served in the U.S. Navy during World War II prior to studying art. Upon being honorably discharged in the summer of 1945, Rauschenberg enrolled at the Kansas City Art Institute (1947) and later at the Académie Julien in Paris (1948) before studying with Josef Albers at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, where he formed life-long friendships with John Cage, Merce Cunningham and David Tudor. After moving to New York City in 1949, Rauschenberg enrolled in the Arts Students League. In the spring of 1951, Rauschenberg was invited to exhibit at the Betty Parsons Gallery in New York City. Two years later he created the first of his acclaimed *Combine* sculptures, works that incorporated painting and a variety of found objects. The juxtaposition of different media (lithography, painting, photography, silk-screening and sculpture) and their interplay comprise Rauschenberg's chief interests, and throughout his career, his work has been marked by a sense of experimentation and chance. During the 1950s, Rauschenberg also began his lifelong involvement and affiliation with theatre and dance, designing sets and costumes for a variety of productions worldwide.

In 2005, The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles organized *Robert Rauschenberg: Combines*, a retrospective of the artist's 'Combine' paintings and sculptures completed during the years 1953 to 1964. The exhibition debuted at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in December 2005 and then traveled to The Museum of Contemporary Art from May to September 2006. *Robert Rauschenberg: Combines* also made stops at two European venues, first at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris and then at Moderna Museet, Stockholm where the exhibition was on view through April 2007.

Robert Rauschenberg's work has been the subject of hundreds of solo shows and numerous retrospectives around the world including those organized by The Jewish Museum, New York (1963); Whitechapel Gallery, London (1964); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (1965); The Museum of Modern Art, New York (1966, 1969); Stedelijk Museum,

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Amsterdam (1968); Israel Museum, Jerusalem (1974); National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, DC (and tour, 1976-7); Staatliche Kunsthalle, Berlin (1980) and a tour including the Louisiana Museum, Copenhagen (1980) and the Tate Gallery, London (1981); Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris (1981); Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul-de-Vence, France (1984); the 41st Venice Biennale (1984); Fundacion Juan March, Madrid and Fundacion Joan Miró, Barcelona (both 1985); Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (and tour 1986-7); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (1987); Whitney Museum of American Art (1990); The Menil Collection, Houston (and tour 1991-3); Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (and tour 1997-9); the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2002); and the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford (2004).

The artist's work can be found in over 75 public collections throughout the United States and abroad.

Robert Rauschenberg has lived and worked in Captiva, Florida since 1970.

Additional information for *Runts* is available upon request by contacting Jennifer Benz Joy, Public Relations Associate, at 212.421.3292 or via email at [jjjoy@pacewildenstein.com](mailto:jjjoy@pacewildenstein.com).

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Indelible (Runts), 2007, pigment transfer on poly laminate



On Track (Runts), 2007, pigment transfer on poly laminate

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