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NEW YORK

Press Release

Guggenheim New York Honors Centennial of Robert Rauschenberg's Birth with Exhibition of Historic Works Drawn from Its Collection

Robert Rauschenberg: Life Can't Be Stopped features performance programming by Works & Process with Trisha Brown Dance Company and Paul Taylor Dance Company, and more

The exhibition reflects the artist's radical legacy and long-standing relationship with the museum

Exhibition: *Collection in Focus* | *Robert Rauschenberg: Life Can't Be Stopped*
Venue: Guggenheim New York, 1071 Fifth Avenue, New York
Location: Tower Level 7
Dates: October 10, 2025–May 3, 2026

(NEW YORK, NY—October 6, 2025) **In celebration of the centennial of Robert Rauschenberg's birth, the Guggenheim New York presents *Robert Rauschenberg: Life Can't Be Stopped***, a *Collection in Focus* exhibition drawn from the museum's permanent holdings with key loans from the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. Featuring over a dozen pivotal works, the presentation explores the artist's groundbreaking use of materials and media and builds upon his decades-long relationship with the Guggenheim. Timed to what would have been his 100th birthday, the exhibition contributes to a global slate of 2025–26 initiatives that reexamine Rauschenberg's legacy, honoring his **expansive creativity, spirit of curiosity, and commitment to change**.

"Robert Rauschenberg's restless innovation and enduring exploration of materials and techniques have long resonated with the Guggenheim's own commitment to redefining artistic boundaries. *Life Can't Be Stopped* not only commemorates his centennial but also deepens our ongoing dialogue with the work of an artist whose influence on contemporary art remains immeasurable," said Joan Young, Senior Director, Curatorial Affairs.

"Robert Rauschenberg's centennial is not only a moment to honor his legacy, but also a call to renew our commitment to the radical curiosity and spirit of collaboration that defined his life and work," said Courtney J. Martin, Executive Director of the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. "The

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Guggenheim has been a vital partner in sustaining that legacy. By reexamining seminal works from their collection and ours, this exhibition underscores the enduring power of Rauschenberg's belief that art should remain in constant motion, bridging disciplines, communities, and ideas."

A central theme of the exhibition is Rauschenberg's experimental incorporation of photographic imagery into drawing, painting, and printmaking. At the heart of the presentation is *Barge* (1962–63), a 32-foot-long silkscreen painting co-owned by the Guggenheim New York and the Guggenheim Bilbao. Jointly acquired during Rauschenberg's 1997–98 Guggenheim retrospective, *Barge* was among the first 100 artworks to enter Bilbao's collection upon its opening in 1997. Executed predominantly in a 24-hour period, *Barge* remains the largest work in his *Silkscreen Paintings* series, which includes approximately 80 paintings produced between 1962 and 1964. This monumental piece makes its highly anticipated return to New York for the first time in nearly 25 years.

Additional highlights include *Untitled* (1963), a dynamic silkscreen painting created after Rauschenberg began introducing brilliant color into the series. At its center is an image of his longtime friend and collaborator, choreographer Merce Cunningham. The artist's use of media imagery and commercial printing techniques led many critics to associate him with Pop artists such as Andy Warhol. Equally engaged with contemporary culture, Rauschenberg noted to an interviewer, "I want paintings to be reflections of life, and **life can't be stopped**."

Among the earliest works on view is *Untitled (Red Painting)* (ca. 1953–54), a formative example of Rauschenberg's experimentation with materiality, in which brightly toned red paint is layered over a collaged newspaper ground. Works on paper from 1952 to 1980 further demonstrate Rauschenberg's inventive methods, including image transfers made by applying chemical solvents like lighter fluid to magazine or newspaper clippings and then rubbing the reverse with a burnishing tool. Important loans from the Rauschenberg Foundation illustrate how these transfer methods evolved: in the 1980s, he combined screenprinted imagery with brushwork on galvanized metal supports; and in the '90s, he transferred inkjet prints of his own photographs using water.

The Guggenheim has long supported Rauschenberg's work, centering him in a 1961 group show, followed by *Six Painters and the Object* (1963), the first museum exhibition of Pop art in New York. In 1997, the museum presented the most comprehensive retrospective of his career to date—a landmark exhibition spanning its building on Fifth Avenue, the former Guggenheim SoHo, and a satellite gallery on Hudson Street. The show traveled to multiple venues, including the Menil Collection, Contemporary Arts Museum, and Museum of Fine Arts, all in Houston (1998), before continuing to Museum Ludwig, Cologne (1998), and Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (1998–99). In 2009, the Foundation organized the memorial exhibition *Robert Rauschenberg: Gluts* for the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice. It later traveled to Museum Tinguely, Basel (2009–10); Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (2010); and Villa e Collezione Panza, Varese, Italy (2010–11).

As a hub for experimentation, the Guggenheim continues to inspire and uplift artists whose work extends beyond traditional confines. By challenging the artistic status quo of his time, Rauschenberg embodied the very spirit of innovation that Hilla Rebay—founding director of the Guggenheim Museum and Foundation—sought to promote through her commitment to abstract

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and non-objective art. *Robert Rauschenberg: Life Can't Be Stopped* marks the fifth installment in the museum's ongoing *Collection in Focus* series, which aims to make its world-renowned holdings more accessible to the public.

A robust slate of public programs accompanies the exhibition, including an evening of poetry, a film series, and close-looking gallery talks led by experts from the Guggenheim and the Rauschenberg Foundation.

Timed to opening week, Works & Process will present "Robert Rauschenberg Dance Collaborations" on October 15, a one-night-only event in the rotunda exploring Rauschenberg's boundary-pushing work with choreographers Trisha Brown and Paul Taylor. The Trisha Brown Dance Company will perform an excerpt from *Astral Converted* (1991), originally commissioned by the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. The work incorporates Rauschenberg's gleaming towers outfitted with motion sensors that detect dancers' movements and trigger lights and sound. John Cage's score, an eight-track recording of live musicians, emanates from tapes embedded in mobile towers. The Paul Taylor Dance Company will perform *3 Epitaphs* (1956), a witty and inventive exploration of posture and gesture set to early New Orleans jazz, with faceless figures moving in gray leotards. They will also present *Tracer* (1962), set to music by James Tenney, a work that pairs Taylor's refined, pared-down choreography with Rauschenberg's stage set featuring a spinning bicycle wheel, which playfully draws the audience's eye.

For more information on exhibition programming, visit guggenheim.org/calendar.

Robert Rauschenberg: Life Can't Be Stopped is organized by Joan Young, Senior Director, Curatorial Affairs.

About the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation:
The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation builds on the legacy of artist Robert Rauschenberg, emphasizing his belief that artists can drive social change. Rauschenberg sought to act in the "gap" between art and life, valuing chance and collaboration across disciplines. As such, the Foundation celebrates new and even untested ways of thinking. To learn more, visit rauschenbergfoundation.org/.

About Rauschenberg 100:
Robert Rauschenberg's strong conviction that engagement with art can nurture people's sensibilities as individuals, community members, and citizens was key to his ethos. The centennial celebrations seek to allow audiences familiar with him and those encountering the artist for the first time to form fresh perspectives about his artwork. A year of global activities and exhibitions in honor of Rauschenberg's centennial reexamines the artist through a contemporary lens, highlighting his enduring influence on generations of artists and advocates for social progress. The centennial's activation of the artist's legacy promotes cross-disciplinary explorations and creates opportunities for critical dialogue.

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For more information on centennial programming and news, visit rauschenberg100.org, and follow the conversation on Instagram and Facebook (@rauschenbergfoundation). #Rauschenberg100

About Robert Rauschenberg
Robert Rauschenberg (b. 1925, Port Arthur, Texas; d. 2008, Captiva Island, Florida) studied at several art schools, including the Kansas City Art Institute, Académie Julian in Paris, the Art Students League in New York, and the experimental Black Mountain College in North Carolina, where he was taught by former Bauhaus instructor Josef Albers. He went on to collaborate with influential creatives including Trisha Brown, John Cage, Jasper Johns, Cy Twombly, Susan Weil, and Merce Cunningham, with whom he produced over twenty dance works. Deeply engaged with performance throughout his career, Rauschenberg emerged in the mid-1950s as a key figure in the New York art scene, forging a critical dialogue with Johns that pushed both artists beyond traditional art making into new modes incorporating everyday materials and imagery. In 1962, he began using screenprinting techniques in his paintings, reflecting a growing interest in mass media and reproduction. His first retrospective was held at the Jewish Museum, New York, in 1963; and he achieved international acclaim in 1964 when he became one of the first United States citizens to win the Grand Prize for painting at the Venice Biennale. In the late 1960s, Rauschenberg increasingly focused on interdisciplinary work such as printmaking, set design, and technologically driven projects—all of which expanded the possibilities of Abstract Expressionism and shaped the direction of postwar art. Rauschenberg's experimentation and use of unconventional materials continued throughout his six-decade career, and his expansive artistic philosophy endures in his work today.

Support
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About the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation was established in 1937 and is dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of modern and contemporary art through exhibitions, education programs, research initiatives, and publications. The international constellation of museums includes the Guggenheim New York; the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; the Guggenheim Bilbao; and the future Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. A "temple of spirit" where radical art and architecture meet, the Guggenheim New York is among a group of eight Frank Lloyd Wright structures in the United States designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site. To learn more about the Guggenheim New York and the Guggenheim's activities around the world, visit guggenheim.org.

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