

LOOSE

IN SOME REAL TROPICS:

Robert Rauschenberg's "Stoned Moon" Projects, 1969–70

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Robert Rauschenberg at Gemini G.E.L., 1969
Photograph by Malcolm Lubliner

CONTENTS

5

Introduction

8

Exhibition at Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University

12

Stoned Moon Series

26

Stoned Moon Book

35

Stoned Moon Book Text

58

Stoned Moon Drawing

64

Art in Context: *Stoned Moon Drawing*

73

Rauschenberg at Gemini G.E.L., 1969

Photographs by Malcolm Lubliner

INTRODUCTION

In July 1969, Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008) traveled to Cape Canaveral, Florida, to witness the launch of the first manned space flight to the moon. He was one of seven artists invited to document the mission as part of a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) art program designed to increase public interest in space exploration. After returning to his Manhattan studio, Rauschenberg drew from crates of official NASA photographs, press releases, and technical documents, as well as tourist maps and brochures and his own recollections of the space center and its tropical setting, to capture the launch of Apollo 11, one of the most iconic events of the twentieth century.

The resulting *Stoned Moon* projects comprise a series of thirty-four lithographs and an array of collages and drawings the artist made for *Stoned Moon Book*, which was never published. *Loose in Some Real Tropics: Robert Rauschenberg's "Stoned Moon" Projects, 1969–70* brings together examples of these works along with a sampling of Rauschenberg's source materials and working notes and a selection of photographs documenting the creation and debut of the *Stoned Moon Series* lithographs. The exhibition draws its title from a line in a serialized account of the Apollo launch penned for *Life* magazine by Norman Mailer, who wrote of his own experience at Cape Canaveral: "He was loose in some real tropics at last with swamp and coconut palms. It was encouraging. Technology and the tropics were not built to hide everything from each other." Like the Mailer quotation, the *Stoned Moon* works—which layer scenes of astronauts and rockets, imagery of the lush Floridian landscape, and depictions of complex machinery—illuminate an important moment in artistic, scientific, and American history. Capturing the sensory overload of the Apollo era, Rauschenberg's *Stoned Moon* projects highlight the impact of technological innovation on American culture in the 1960s and prompt reexamination of the ways technology continues to shape our relationships with the natural world.



LOOSE
IN SOME REAL TROPICS:

Robert Rauschenberg's "Stoned Moon" Projects, 1969-70

Robert Rauschenberg's "Stoned Moon" projects are a series of works that explore the relationship between the natural world and the human-made environment. The works are characterized by their use of found images and their focus on the interplay of light and color. The "Stoned Moon" projects were created during a period of intense experimentation and discovery for Rauschenberg, and they represent a significant contribution to the development of his signature style. The works are displayed in a gallery setting, where they are viewed by a diverse audience of art enthusiasts and scholars. The gallery space is designed to provide a clear and unobstructed view of the artworks, allowing visitors to appreciate the intricate details and subtle nuances of each piece. The overall atmosphere of the exhibition is one of quiet contemplation and intellectual curiosity, as visitors engage with the art and reflect on its meaning and impact.

THE EXHIBITION

Exhibition at Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University
December 20, 2014 to March 16, 2015.

This exhibition was organized for the Cantor Arts Center by James Merle Thomas (PhD, Art History, Stanford University, 2014) in close collaboration with the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. On view with a selection of *Stoned Moon* lithographs were drawings and text for the unpublished *Stoned Moon Book*, as well as the summary collage *Stoned Moon Drawing*.





STONED MOON SERIES

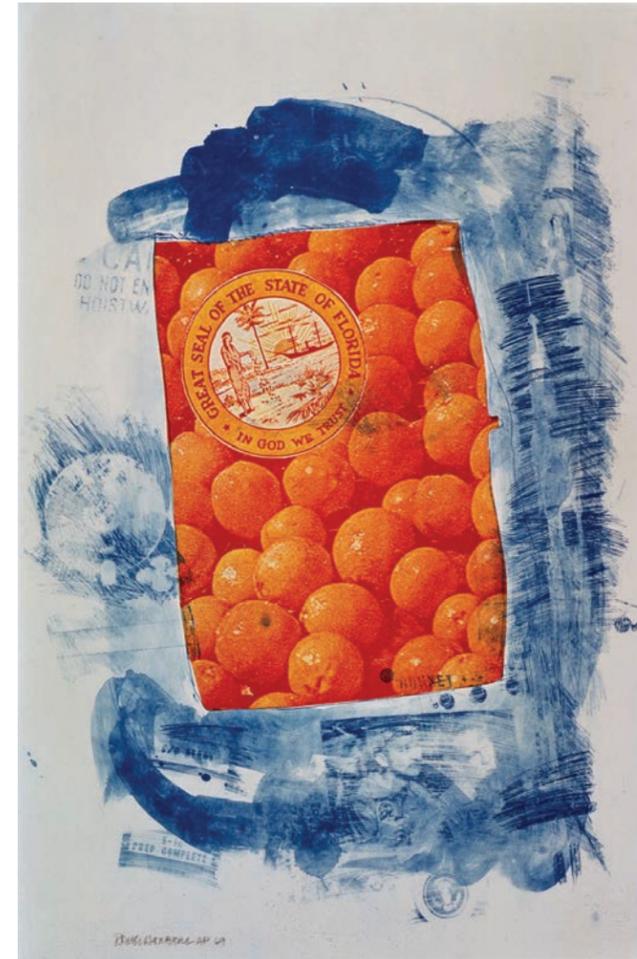
Based on more than thirty unique compositions Rauschenberg created during a brief but intense period after leaving Cape Canaveral, the thirty-four lithographs in Rauschenberg's *Stoned Moon Series* were produced in collaboration with Ken Tyler, a master printer at Los Angeles-based Gemini G.E.L. studios. Alternately colorful and subdued, the prints range in scale from just over two feet to more than seven feet high. The largest and most complex work in the series, *Sky Garden*, represents an extraordinary technical achievement in printmaking, requiring one lithographic stone, four aluminum plates, and a silkscreen to produce the scale and visual effects the artist sought. At eighty-nine inches in height, *Sky Garden* was thought to be the largest hand-pulled lithograph ever created when it was printed in 1969. The smaller and more muted prints *Brake* and *Fuse*, shown together here, underscore Rauschenberg's interest in blending photographic imagery with painterly abstraction. Upon close examination a number of historical references become visible across the *Stoned Moon Series*. For example, in *Trust Zone*, a sepia-toned image of the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk—an iconic early photograph depicting the dawn of modern aviation—provides a literal foundation for an image of an astronaut. In other prints, such as *Ape* (which is in part a sly reference to NASA's use of animals as passengers on their earliest flights) or *Strawboss*, one finds images of astrolabes, a device used by astronomers and navigators since antiquity to locate and predict the position of various heavenly bodies.



Horn (Stoned Moon), 1969. Lithograph, 44 ¼ × 34 inches
(112.4 × 86.4 cm). Collection of Stephen Dull



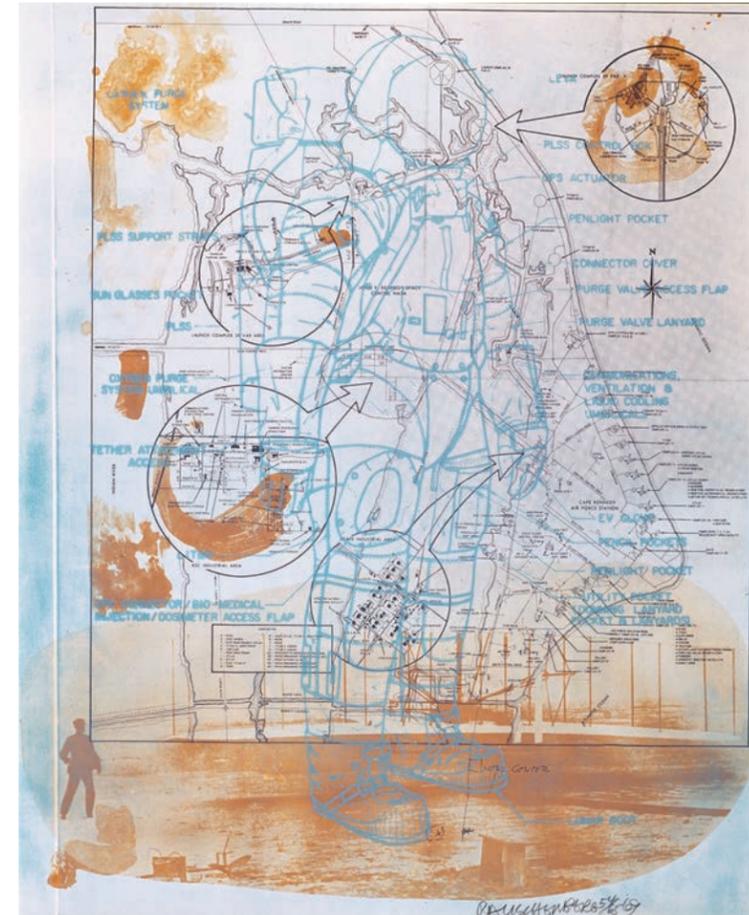
Sky Garden (Stoned Moon), 1969. Lithograph and screenprint, 89 × 42 inches (226.1 × 106.7 cm). Collection of Stephen Dull



Banner (Stoned Moon), 1969. Lithograph, 54 ½ × 36 inches (138.4 × 91.4 cm). Collection of Stephen Dull



Shell (Stoned Moon), 1969. Lithograph, 32 1/4 x 26 inches
(81.6 x 66 cm). Collection of Stephen Dull



Trust Zone (Stoned Moon), 1969. Lithograph, 40 x 33 inches
(101.6 x 83.8 cm). Collection of Stephen Dull



Arena II State II (Stoned Moon), 1969. Lithograph, 47 × 32 inches
(119.4 × 81.3 cm). Collection of Stephen Dull



Fuse (Stoned Moon), 1969. Lithograph, 38 × 26 inches
(96.5 × 66 cm). Collection of Stephen Dull



Brake (Stoned Moon), 1969. Lithograph, 42 × 29 inches
(106.7 × 73.7 cm). Collection of Stephen Dull



Hybrid (Stoned Moon), 1970. Lithograph, 54 ½ × 36 inches
(138.4 × 91.4 cm). Collection of Stephen Dull



Ape (Stoned Moon), 1970. Lithograph, 46 × 33 inches
(116.8 × 83.8 cm). Collection of Stephen Dull



Tracks (Stoned Moon), 1970. Lithograph, 44 × 35 inches
(111.8 × 88.9 cm). Collection of Stephen Dull



Strawboss (Stoned Moon), 1970. Lithograph, 30 × 22 inches
(76.2 × 55.9 cm). Collection of Stephen Dull



Sub-Total (Stoned Moon), 1972. Lithograph, 8 × 12 ½ inches
(20.3 × 31.8 cm). Collection of Stephen Dull

STONED MOON BOOK

While working on the *Stoned Moon* prints Rauschenberg began a series of collages and drawings for a related publication that was to be produced in partnership with Gemini G.E.L. Planned as an edition of five hundred and intended to accompany a copy of *Sub-Total (Stoned Moon)*, *Stoned Moon Book* was never published. The artworks produced for the project remained in the artist's personal collection, and have only rarely been seen or exhibited.

The compositions of *Stoned Moon Book* draw from photographs Malcolm Lubliner and Gemini G.E.L. co-owner Sidney Felsen took of Rauschenberg as he produced the *Stoned Moon* prints.



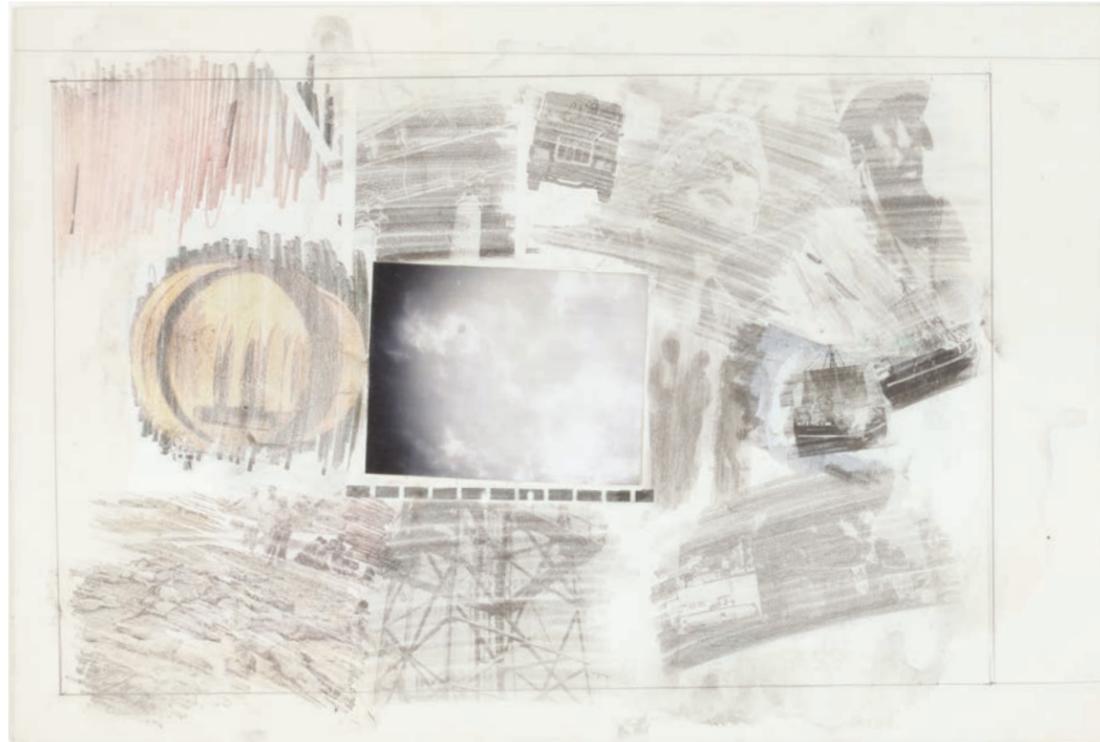
Cover Page, *Stoned Moon Book*, 1970. Collage of photographs, watercolor, press type, acetate, graphite, and colored pencil on illustration board. 16 × 20 1/8 inches (40.6 × 51.1 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation



Drawing for Stoned Moon Book, 1970. Solvent transfer with paper collage, watercolor, photograph, and graphite on illustration board.
10 × 14 7/8 inches (25.4 × 37.8 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation



Drawing for Stoned Moon Book, 1970. Solvent transfer with photographs, printed reproductions, watercolor, and graphite on illustration board.
10 × 14 7/8 inches (25.4 × 37.8 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation



Drawing for Stoned Moon Book, 1970. Solvent transfer with photograph, watercolor, and graphite on illustration board.
10 x 14 ⁷/₈ inches (25.4 x 37.8 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation



Drawing for Stoned Moon Book, 1970. Solvent transfer with printed reproductions, photographs, and graphite on illustration board.
10 x 15 inches (25.4 x 38.1 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation



Drawing for Stoned Moon Book, 1970. Collage of photographs, watercolor, colored pencil, and graphite on illustration board. 16 × 20 ¼ inches (40.6 × 51.4 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation



Drawing for Stoned Moon Book, 1970. Collage of photographs, printed reproductions, watercolor, and colored pencil on illustration board. 16 × 20 ¼ inches (40.6 × 51.4 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation



STONED MOON BOOK TEXT

Also included throughout *Stoned Moon Book's* pages are fragments of texts by Rauschenberg and curator Henry T. Hopkins. While Rauschenberg's texts (written entirely in capital letters) draw directly from his personal experiences visiting Florida to witness the launch, Hopkins's poetic writings reflect broadly on the relationship between historic events and artistic representation. Through the inclusion of images that more explicitly acknowledge the turmoil of the late 1960s—in particular the Vietnam War—*Stoned Moon Book* alludes to Rauschenberg's evolving understanding of NASA as a symbol of "peaceful and scientific" exploration that was nevertheless inextricably linked to the postwar military industrial complex.

Drawing for Stoned Moon Book, 1970. Collage of photographs, printed reproductions, watercolor, colored pencil, and graphite on illustration board. 16 × 20 ¼ inches (40.6 × 51.4 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

SAT JULY 12 1969 LAIKA 4 YEAR MUTT GAVE BIRTH TO 7 LIVE PUPS.
ON A GULF ISLAND IN FLORIDA AGNES CAME DOWN PM FROM NEW YORK
TO CARE FOR LAIKA, PUPS AND KID.

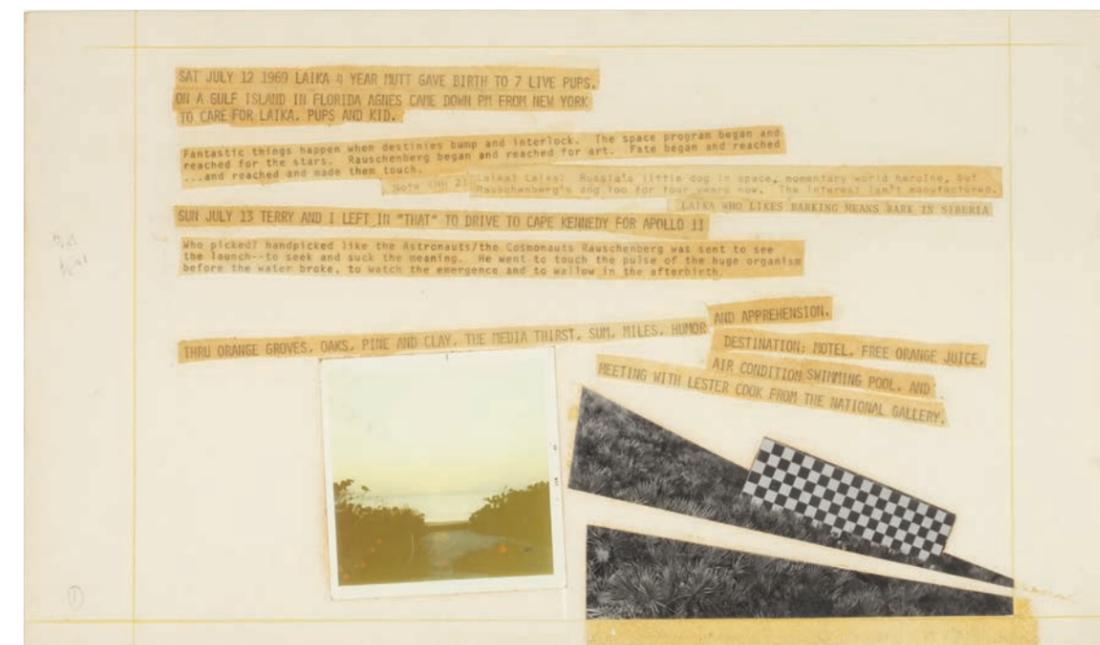
Fantastic things happen when destinies bump and interlock. The space program began and reached for the stars. Rauschenberg began and reached for art. Fate began and reached . . . and reached and made them touch.

Note (HH 2) Laika? Laika? Russia's little dog in space, momentary world heroine, but Rauschenberg's dog too for four years now. The interest isn't manufactured.
LAIKA WHO LIKES BARKING MEANS BARK IN SIBERIA

SUN JULY 13 TERRY AND I LEFT IN "THAT" TO DRIVE TO CAPE KENNEDY FOR APOLLO 11

Who picked? handpicked like the Astronauts/the Cosmonauts Rauschenberg was sent to see the launch--to seek and suck the meaning. He went to touch the pulse of the huge organism before the water broke, to watch the emergence and to wallow in the afterbirth.

THRU ORANGE GROVES, OAKS, PINE AND CLAY, THE MEDIA THIRST, SUM, MILES, HUMOR AND APPREHENSION.
DESTINATION: MOTEL, FREE ORANGE JUICE,
AIR CONDITION SWIMMING POOL, AND
MEETING WITH LESTER COOK FROM THE NATIONAL GALLERY.



Stoned Moon Book, Page 1, 1970. Collage of text on paper, photographs, graphite, and colored pencil on illustration board, 9 5/8 x 16 inches (24.4 x 40.6 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

to document--to document--strange word of totality here defeated, brought exhausted to its knees through thirty lithographic "combine" prints which could have been and may yet be less or more before the circle closes, simultaneously heralding endings and new beginnings. Yet, in the purer sense there is no beginning or an end since the works now produced were not conceived sequentially but rather emerged as a composite diary of days and events all recalled with Proustian complexity and completeness. Upon which day did the ecological combat between Cape Kennedy and the Everglades absorb his interest? When exactly did Edward White become his man/poet hero replacing the athlete of the past? When did Lindbergh's face appear as a spectre over Kitty Hawk? No matter--in the exhaustive continuum of commitment it all floated by weightlessly to be held and gravitized in place.

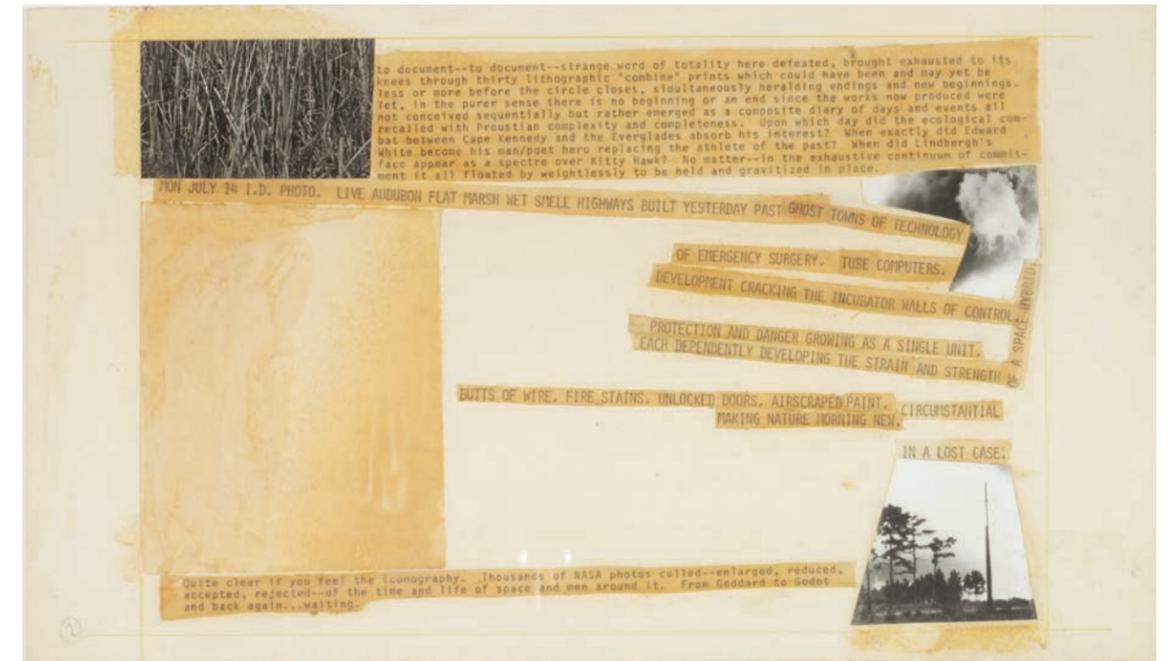
MON JULY 14 I.D. PHOTO. LIVE AUDUBON FLAT MARSH WET SMELL HIGHWAYS BUILT YESTERDAY PAST GHOST TOWNS OF TECHNOLOGY
 OF EMERGENCY SURGERY, TUBE COMPUTERS.
 DEVELOPMENT CRACKING THE INCUBATOR WALLS OF CONTROL.

PROTECTION AND DANGER GROWING AS A SINGLE UNIT,
 EACH DEPENDENTLY DEVELOPING THE STRAIN AND STRENGTH
 [vertical] OF A SPACE HYBRID.

BUTTS OF WIRE, FIRE STAINS, UNLOCKED DOORS, AIRSCRAPED PAINT, CIRCUMSTANTIAL
 MAKING NATURE MORNING NEW.

IN A LOST CASE.

Quite clear if you feel the iconography. Thousands of NASA photos culled--enlarged, reduced, accepted, rejected--of the time and life of space and men around it. From Goddard to Godot and back again . . . waiting.



Stoned Moon Book, Page 2, 1970. Collage of text on paper, photographs, graphite, and colored pencil on illustration board, 9 7/8 x 16 inches (24.4 x 40.6 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

Fate conspired to make ready the new Gemini Workshop in Los Angeles on time to hand him as first user a Stonehenge scaled monolith just to be sure that he understood the nature of the challenge to his decade evolving lithographic skills.

MUSEUMS FOR BUSES OF NOON BLEACHED GROUPS WHEELING THRU SPEAKERS OF OBITUARY RAP KEEPING ROCKET CARCASSES GROUNDED. MEMORIES OF WAR AND WEATHER INSTANT AGGRESSION ATMOSPHERIC AUTOPSIES, MILITARY AFFLUENCE, RETIRED POWER. LIFE IN THE EMPTY COKE MACHINE

[vertical] ASSUMING POTENTIALITY IN PROCESS IS SLEEP.

Man and space--space and man--who can draw the dream/reality line so deeply rooted in the past? Who can unlock the door which has no key? The great priests of Ur were there as they climbed their mountain temples. Pity poor Icarus and his adventure with the sun. Leonardo's intellect leapt into the sky. The Wrights and Lindy populated it. It was left to men weaned on Buck Rogers, Flash Gordon and funny flicks to reach Earth's satellite.

LAUNCHING CONTROL 2 IDEOLOGIES MAN/TECHNOLOGY COEXISTING, RESPONSIVE, RESPONSIBLE.

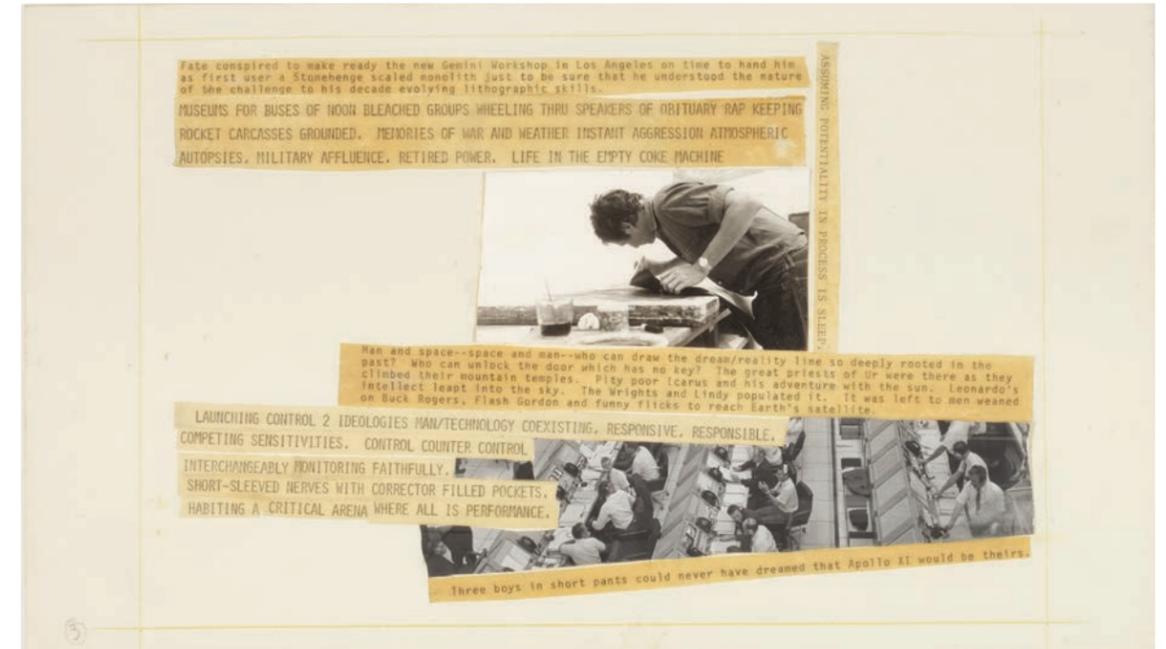
COMPETING SENSITIVITIES. CONTROL COUNTER CONTROL

INTERCHANGEABLY MONITORING FAITHFULLY.

SHORT-SLEEVED NERVES WITH CORRECTOR FILLED POCKETS.

HABITING A CRITICAL ARENA WHERE ALL IS PERFORMANCE.

Three boys in short pants could never have dreamed that Apollo XI would be theirs.



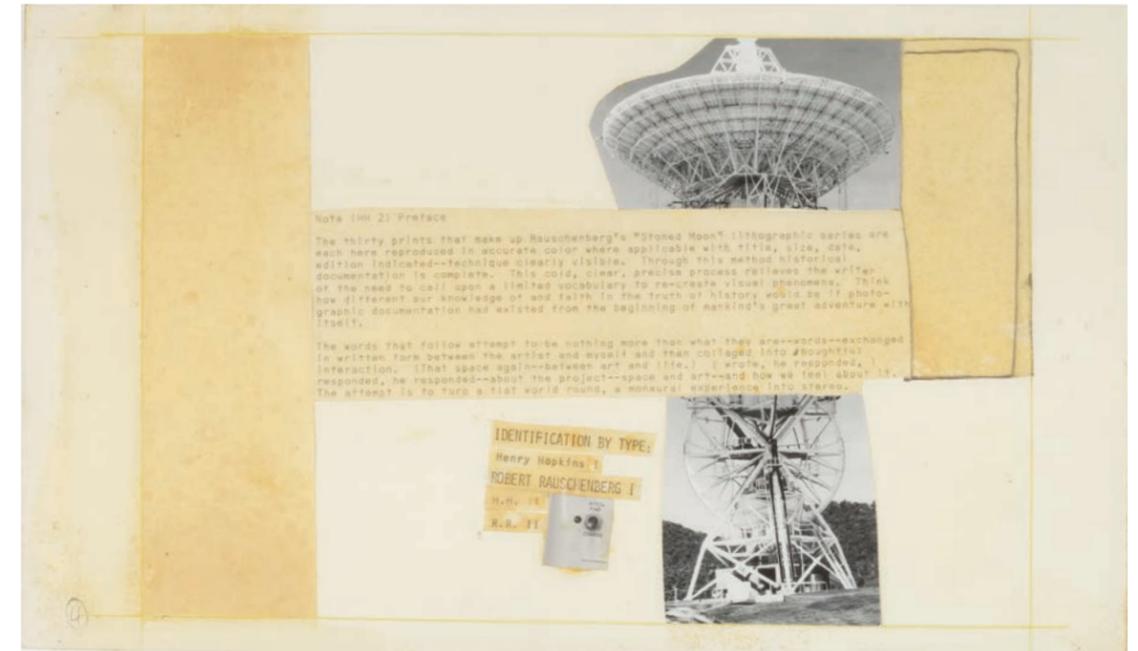
Stoned Moon Book, Page 3, 1970. Collage of text on paper, photographs, graphite, and colored pencil on illustration board, 9 3/8 x 16 inches (23.8 x 40.6 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

Note (HH 2) Preface

The thirty prints that make up Rauschenberg's "Stoned Moon" lithographic series are each here reproduced in accurate color where applicable with title, size, date, edition indicated--technique clearly visible. Through this method historical documentation is complete. This cold, clear, precise process relieves the writer of the need to call upon a limited vocabulary to re-create visual phenomena. Think how different our knowledge of and faith in the truth of history would be if photographic documentation had existed from the beginning of mankind's great adventure with itself.

The words that follow attempt to be nothing more than what they are--words--exchanged in written form between the artist and myself and then collaged into thoughtful interaction. (That space again--between art and life.) I wrote, he responded, I responded, he responded--about the project--space and art--and how we feel about it. The attempt is to turn a flat world round, a monaural experience into stereo.

IDENTIFICATION BY TYPE:
Henry Hopkins I
ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG I
H.H. II
R.R. II



Stoned Moon Book, Page 4, 1970. Collage of text on paper, photographs, graphite, and colored pencil on illustration board, 9 3/8 x 16 inches (23.8 x 40.6 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

It happened to happen from Florida (Audubon Bird Sanctuary with nesting birds at home) where a president said it would happen and when it would happen--and then left. It could have happened somewhere else at some earlier time and in that there is universal human significance.

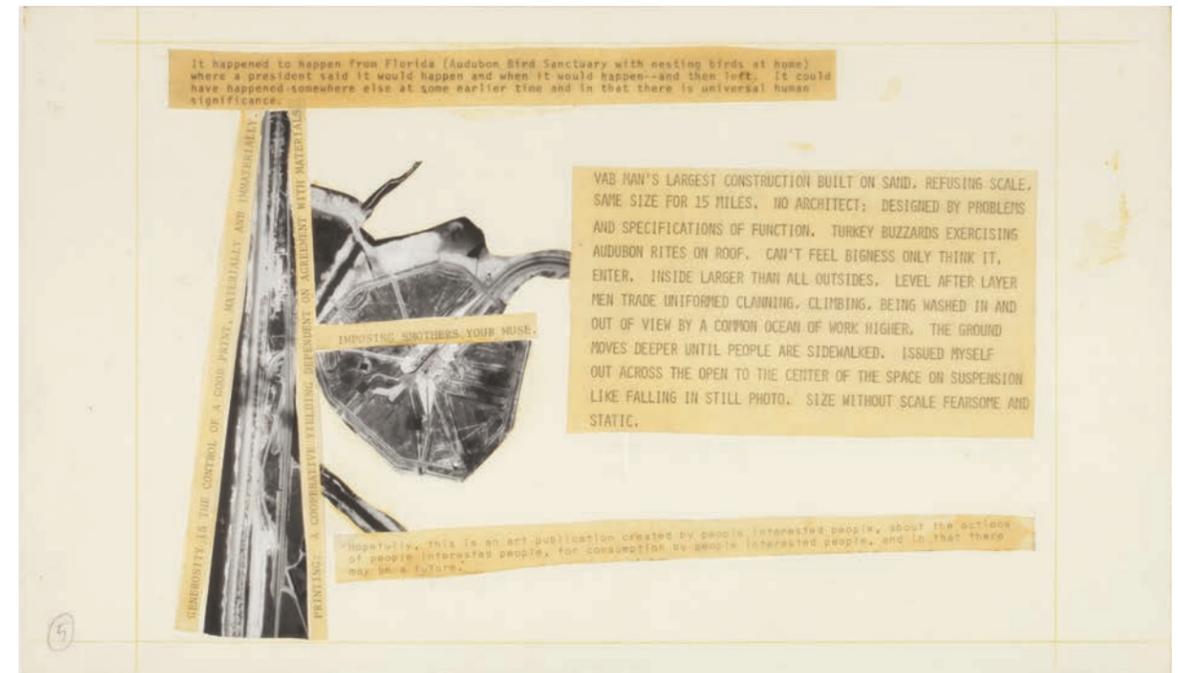
[vertical] GENEROSITY IS THE CONTROL OF A GOOD PRINT, MATERIALLY AND IMMATERIALLY.

[vertical] PRINTING: A COOPERATIVE YIELDING DEPENDENT ON AGREEMENT WITH MATERIALS

IMPOSING SMOTHERS YOUR MUSE.

VAB MAN'S LARGEST CONSTRUCTION BUILT ON SAND, REFUSING SCALE, SAME SIZE FOR 15 MILES. NO ARCHITECT: DESIGNED BY PROBLEMS AND SPECIFICATIONS OF FUNCTION. TURKEY BUZZARDS EXERCISING AUDUBON RITES ON ROOF. CAN'T FEEL BIGNESS ONLY THINK IT. ENTER. INSIDE LARGER THAN ALL OUTSIDES. LEVEL AFTER LAYER MEN TRADE UNIFORMED CLANNING, CLIMBING, BEING WASHED IN AND OUT OF VIEW BY A COMMON OCEAN OF WORK HIGHER. THE GROUND MOVES DEEPER UNTIL PEOPLE ARE SIDEWALKED. ISSUED MYSELF OUT ACROSS THE OPEN TO THE CENTER OF THE SPACE ON SUSPENSION LIKE FALLING IN STILL PHOTO. SIZE WITHOUT SCALE FEARSOME AND STATIC.

Hopefully, this is an art publication created by people interested people, about the actions of people interested people, for consumption by people interested people, and in that there may be a future.



Stoned Moon Book, Page 5, 1970. Collage of text on paper, photographs, graphite, and colored pencil on illustration board, 9 3/8 x 16 inches (23.8 x 40.6 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

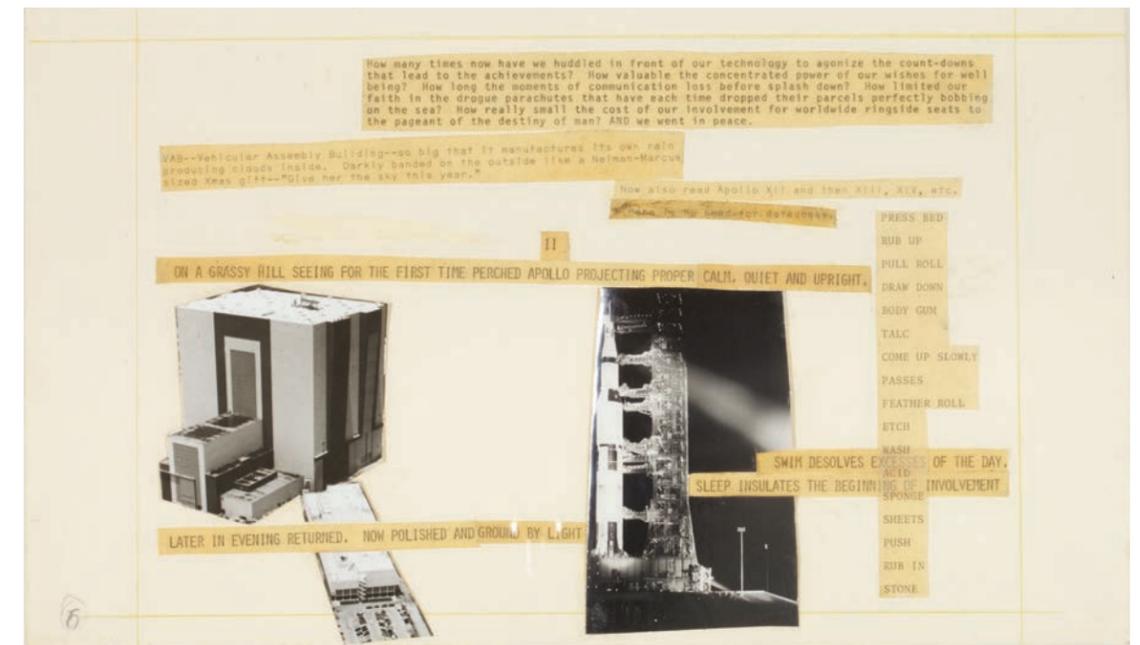
How many times now have we huddled in front of our technology to agonize the count-downs that lead to the achievements? How valuable the concentrated power of our wishes for well being? How long the moments of communication loss before splash down? How limited our faith in the drogue parachutes that have each time dropped their parcels perfectly bobbing on the sea? How really small the cost of our involvement for worldwide ringside seats to the pageant of the destiny of man? AND we went in peace.

VAB--Vehicular Assembly Building--so big that it manufactures its own rain producing clouds inside. Darkly banded on the outside like a Neiman-Marcus sized Xmas gift--"Give her the sky this year."

Now also read Apollo XII and then XIII, XIV, etc.
There is no need for datedness.

II
ON A GRASSY HILL SEEING FOR THE FIRST TIME PERCHED APOLLO PROJECTING PROPER CALM, QUIET AND UPRIGHT.

PRESS BED
RUB UP
PULL ROLL
DRAW DOWN
BODY GUM
TALC
COME UP SLOWLY
PASSES
FEATHER ROLL
ETCH
WASH
SWIM DESOLVES EXCESSES OF THE DAY.
ACID
SLEEP INSULATES THE BEGINNING OF INVOLVEMENT
SPONGE
SHEETS
PUSH
RUB IN
STONE



Stoned Moon Book, Page 6, 1970. Collage of text on paper, photographs, graphite, and colored pencil on illustration board, 9 3/8 x 16 inches (23.8 x 40.6 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

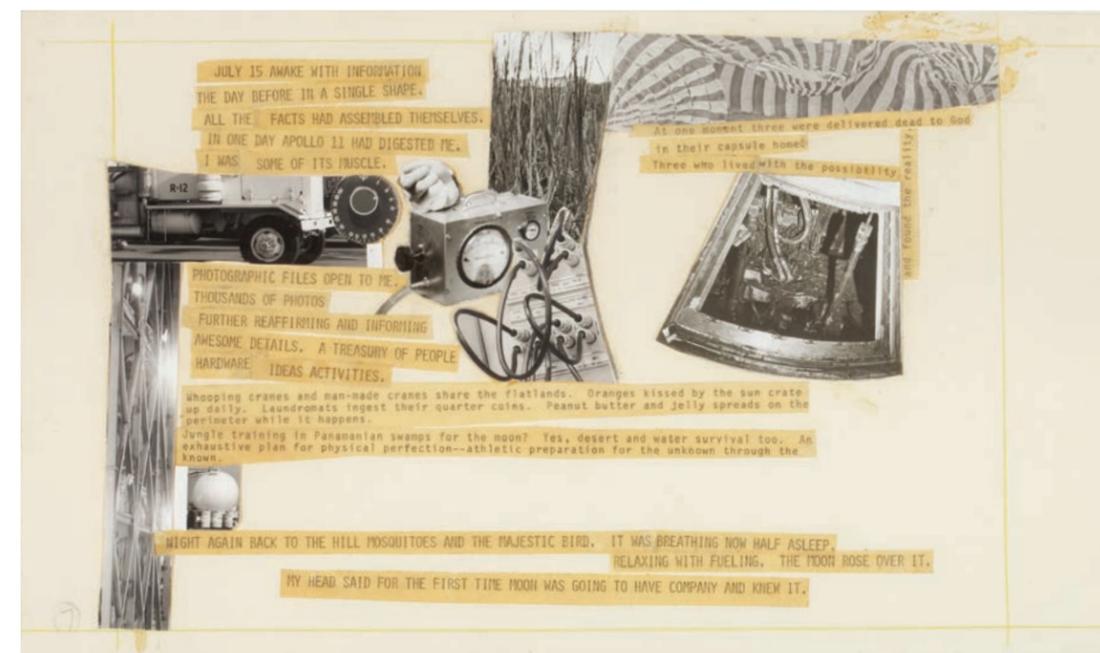
JULY 15 AWAKE WITH INFORMATION
THE DAY BEFORE IN A SINGLE SHAPE.
ALL THE FACTS HAD ASSEMBLED THEMSELVES.
IN ONE DAY APOLLO 11 HAD DIGESTED ME.
I WAS SOME OF ITS MUSCLE.

**At one moment three were delivered dead to God
in their capsule home.
Three who lived with the possibility
[vertical] and found the reality.**

PHOTOGRAPHIC FILES OPEN TO ME.
THOUSANDS OF PHOTOS
FURTHER REAFFIRMING AND INFORMING
AWESOME DETAILS. A TREASURY OF PEOPLE
HARDWARE IDEAS ACTIVITIES.

**Whooping cranes and man-made cranes share the flatlands. Oranges kissed by the sun crate
up daily. Laundromats ingest their quarter coins. Peanut butter and jelly spreads on the
perimeter while it happens.
Jungle training in Panamanian swamps for the moon? Yes, desert and water survival too. An
exhaustive plan for physical perfection--athletic preparation for the unknown through the
known.**

NIGHT AGAIN BACK TO THE HILL MOSQUITOES AND THE MAJESTIC BIRD. IT WAS BREATHING NOW HALF ASLEEP.
RELAXING WITH FUELING. THE MOON ROSE OVER IT.
MY HEAD SAID FOR THE FIRST TIME MOON WAS GOING TO HAVE COMPANY AND KNEW IT.



Stoned Moon Book, Page 7, 1970. Collage of text on paper, photographs, graphite, and colored pencil on illustration board, 9 3/8 x 16 inches (23.8 x 40.6 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

I have often wondered about that machine that night and what its thoughts might be. Tomorrow a silver prince in flight, its maiden mission clear, but tonight a giant bullfrog burping steamy breath into the humid evening air. Translucent golden lids lifting-falling, thinking of the moon, waiting to be toe-prodded off its lily pad in morning light--performing the Herculean leap Mark Twain first set for it.

Edward White, spatial poet hero, spent twenty-one minutes in Extra Vehicular Activity and did not wish to come in for supper.

[vertical] NO PROGRAM

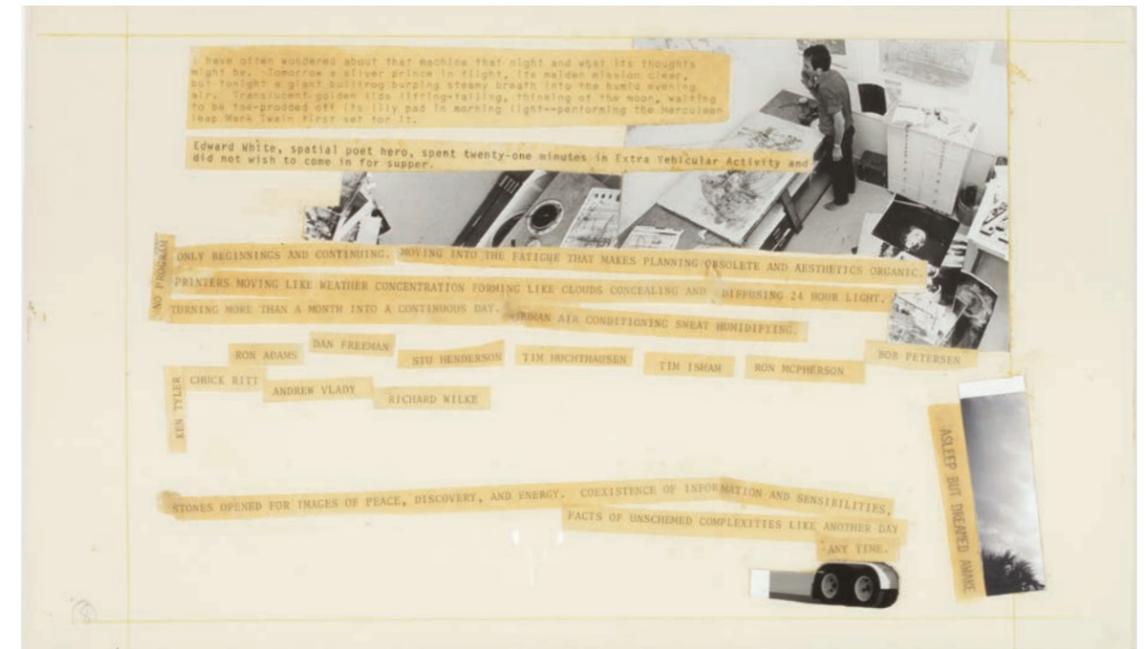
ONLY BEGINNINGS AND CONTINUING. MOVING INTO THE FATIGUE THAT MAKES PLANNING OBSOLETE AND AESTHETICS ORGANIC. PRINTERS MOVING LIKE WEATHER CONCENTRATION FORMING LIKE CLOUDS CONCEALING AND DIFFUSING 24 HOUR LIGHT. TURNING MORE THAN A MONTH INTO A CONTINUOUS DAY. HUMAN AIR CONDITIONING SWEAT HUMIDIFYING.

[vertical] KEN TYLER

RON ADAMS DAN FREEMAN STU HENDERSON TIM HUCHTHAUSEN TIM ISHAM RON MCPHERSON BOB PETERSEN
CHUCK RITT ANDREW VLADY RICHARD WILKE

[vertical] ASLEEP BUT DREAMED AWAKE

STONES OPENED FOR IMAGES OF PEACE, DISCOVERY, AND ENERGY. COEXISTENCE OF INFORMATION AND SENSIBILITIES,
FACTS OF UNSCHEMED COMPLEXITIES LIKE ANOTHER DAY
ANY TIME.



Stoned Moon Book, Page 8, 1970. Collage of text on paper, photographs, graphite, and colored pencil on illustration board, 9 3/8 x 16 inches (23.8 x 40.6 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

JULY 16, ON VIEWING SITE AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE. 3 AM WAITING WALKING SMOKING
APOLLO 11 COVERED AND SHIMMERING IN ICE.

**Werner, household word of rocketry, insisted on the way and won.
Present and past--past and present--lost in the continuum of zippers, belts, buttons and
life support. Cumbersome suits and helmet shields spin off their golden light reflecting
back tiny men and moonships dancing on the faces of their heads.**

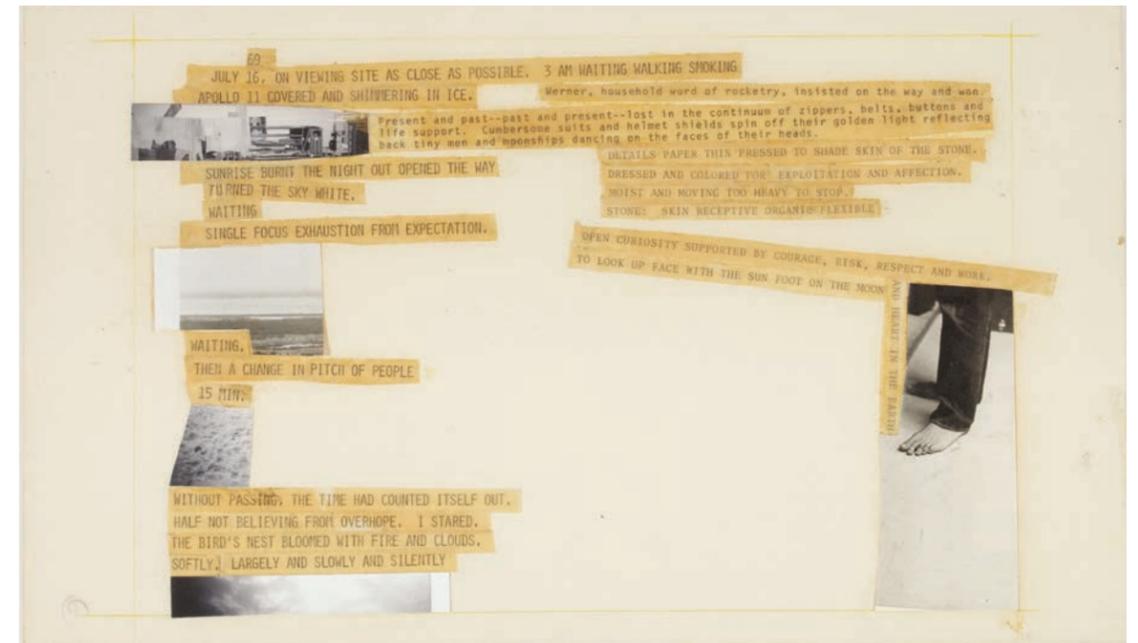
SUNRISE BURNT THE NIGHT OUT OPENED THE WAY
TURNED THE SKY WHITE.
WAITING
SINGLE FOCUS EXHAUSTION FROM EXPECTATION.

DETAILS PAPER THIN PRESSED TO SHADE SKIN OF THE STONE.
DRESSED AND COLORED FOR EXPLOITATION AND AFFECTION.
MOIST AND MOVING TOO HEAVY TO STOP.
STONE: SKIN RECEPTIVE ORGANIC FLEXIBLE

OPEN CURIOSITY SUPPORTED BY COURAGE, RISK, RESPECT AND WORK.
TO LOOK UP FACE WITH THE SUN FOOT ON THE MOON
[vertical] AND HEART IN THE EARTH

WAITING.
THEN A CHANGE IN PITCH OF PEOPLE
15 MIN.

WITHOUT PASSING, THE TIME HAD COUNTED ITSELF OUT.
HALF NOT BELIEVING FROM OVERHOPE. I STARED.
THE BIRD'S NEST BLOOMED WITH FIRE AND CLOUDS.
SOFTLY. LARGELY AND SLOWLY AND SILENTLY



Stoned Moon Book, Page 9, 1970. Collage of text on paper, photographs, graphite, and colored pencil on illustration board, 9 3/8 x 16 inches (23.8 x 40.6 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

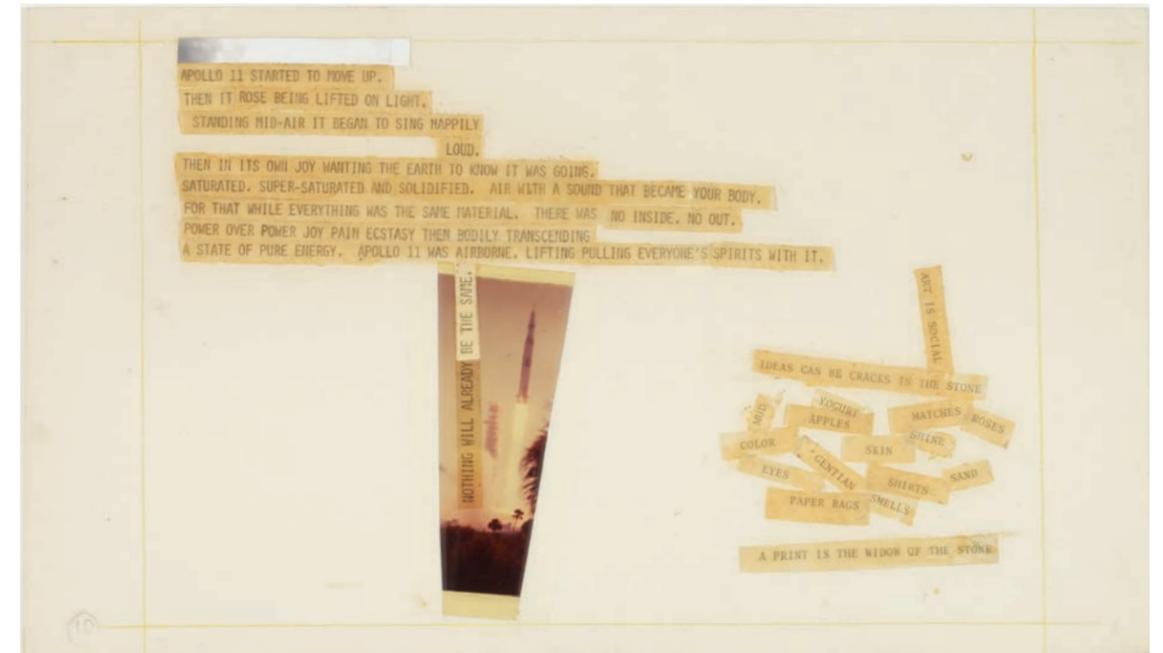
APOLLO 11 STARTED TO MOVE UP.
THEN IT ROSE BEING LIFTED ON LIGHT.
STANDING MID-AIR IT BEGAN TO SING HAPPILY
LOUD.
THEN IN ITS OWN JOY WANTING THE EARTH TO KNOW IT WAS GOING,
SATURATED, SUPER-SATURATED AND SOLIDIFIED. AIR WITH A SOUND THAT BECAME YOUR BODY.
FOR THAT WHILE EVERYTHING WAS THE SAME MATERIAL. THERE WAS NO INSIDE, NO OUT.
POWER OVER POWER JOY PAIN ECSTASY THEN BODILY TRANSCENDING
A STATE OF PURE ENERGY. APOLLO 11 WAS AIRBORNE, LIFTING PULLING EVERYONE'S SPIRITS WITH IT.
[vertical] NOTHING WILL ALREADY BE THE SAME.

[vertical] ART IS SOCIAL

IDEAS CAN BE CRACKS IN THE STONE

MUD YOGURT APPLES MATCHES ROSES
COLOR SKIN SHINE
EYES GENTIAN SHIRTS SAND
PAPER BAGS SMELLS

A PRINT IS THE WIDOW OF THE STONE



Stoned Moon Book, Page 10, 1970. Collage of text on paper, photographs, graphite, and colored pencil on illustration board, 9 3/8 x 16 inches (23.8 x 40.6 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

JULY 16 BACK TO PUPS AND ISLAND. THE APOLLO EXPERIENCE SET.
 WALK WITH A NEW SHADOW.
 FLORIDA SUN FIXED IT TIGHT.
 DECISION TO RECORD MOON TRIP
 WITH LITHOS AT GEMINI.
 ENTHUSIASTIC APPROVAL OF
 KEN TYLER.

Three earlier men and free falling food locked up with pelvic overflow found room for Snoopy and hapless Charlie Brown who came within a hairs breadth of the greatest pumpkin of all time.

SKY GARDEN WAVES HORN SACK MARSH EARTH TIE SHELL

Machine and men--men and plans--plans and plots--plots and maps and diagrams--sub orbits, orbits and complex spatial loops reduced to two dimensions for use by minds which understand the third and fourth.

MOON ROSE BANNER LOOP BRAKE TRUST ZONE RACK SKY HOOK ARENA POST

Clumsy LEM on squashed and aching feet concentrating on holding his seams together for departure. Big and dumb like Lenny of "Of Mice and Men" doing what he is told only to be cast off alone in space.

SPORE GHOST FUSE HYBRID EARTH CRUST

Surprising little about the moon--one print marks the journey half way through--there but not returned--the seeming purpose in the doing not done. But wait--yes, there they are, that crew, peering out of isolation--through the oranges.

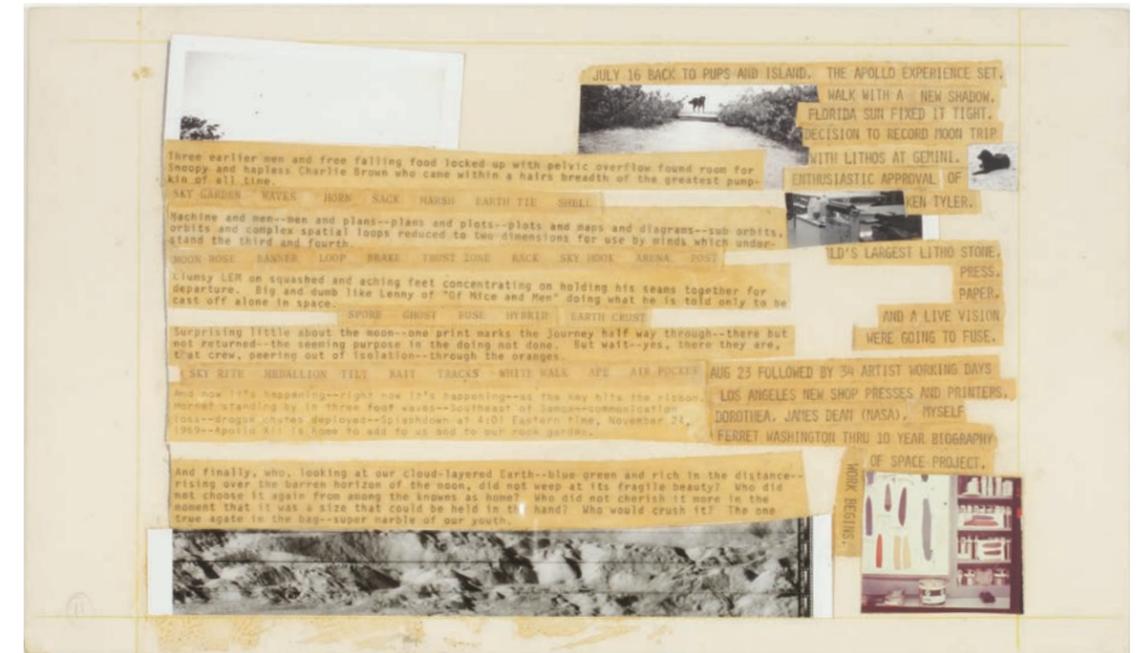
SKY RITE MEDALLION TILT BAIT TRACKS WHITE WALK APE AIR POCKET

And now it's happening--right now it's happening--as the key hits the ribbon. Hornet standing by in three foot waves--Southeast of Samoa--communication loss--drogue chutes deployed--Splashdown at 4:01 Eastern time, November 24, 1969--Apollo XII is home to add to us and to our rock garden.

And finally, who, looking at our cloud-layered Earth--blue green and rich in the distance--rising over the barren horizon of the moon, did not weep at its fragile beauty? Who did not choose it again from among the knowns as home? Who did not cherish it more in the moment that it was a size that could be held in the hand? Who would crush it? The one true agate in the bag--super marble of our youth.

RLD'S LARGEST LITHO STONE,
 PRESS,
 PAPER,
 AND A LIVE VISION
 WERE GOING TO FUSE.

AUG 23 FOLLOWED BY 34 ARTIST WORKING DAYS
 LOS ANGELES NEW SHOP PRESSES AND PRINTERS,
 DOROTHEA, JAMES DEAN (NASA), MYSELF
 FERRET WASHINGTON THRU 10 YEAR BIOGRAPHY
 OF SPACE PROJECT.
 [vertical] WORK BEGINS.



Stoned Moon Book, Page 11, 1970. Collage of text on paper, photographs, graphite, and colored pencil on illustration board, 9 3/8 x 16 inches (23.8 x 40.6 cm). Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

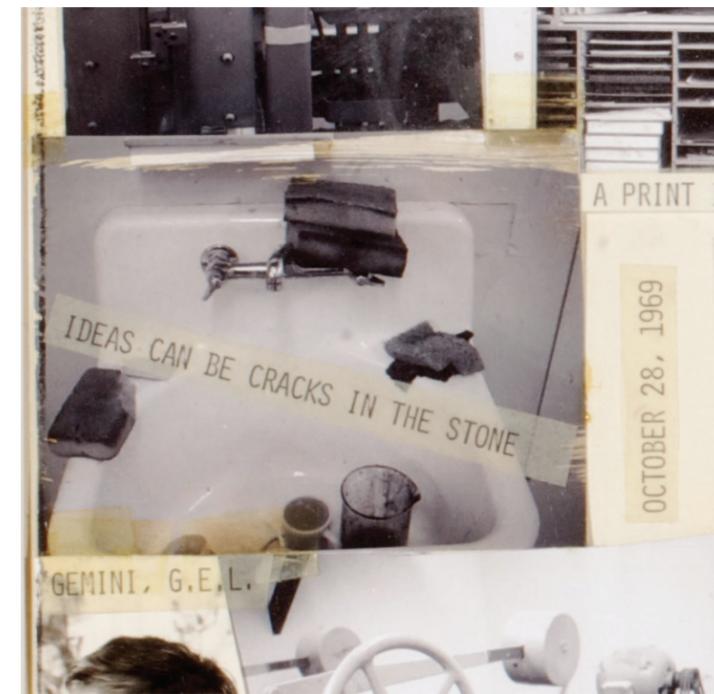
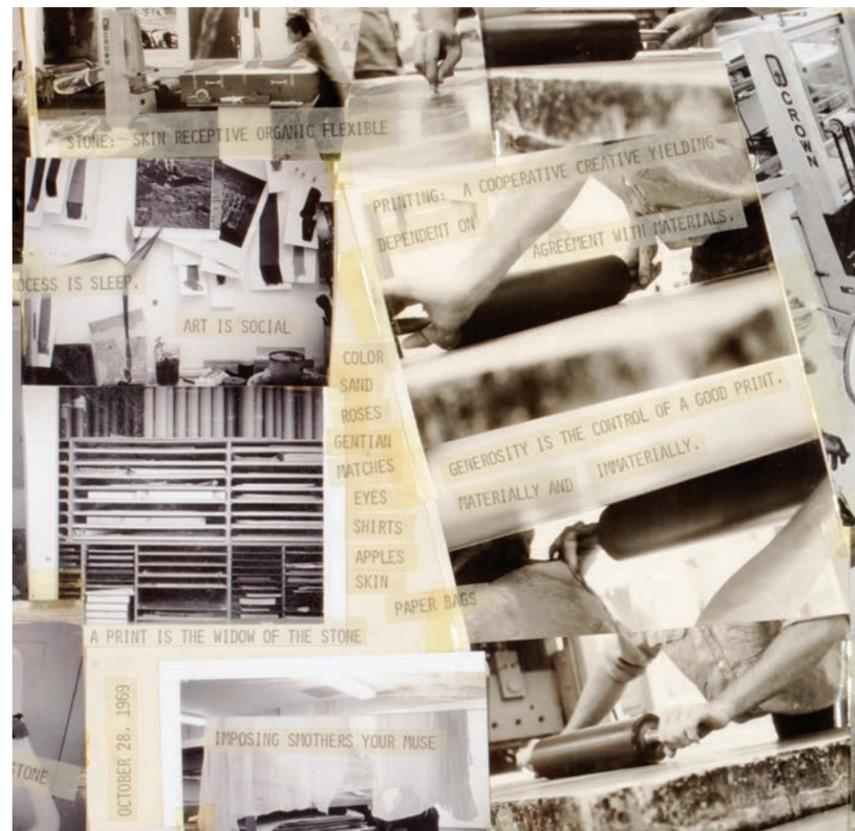
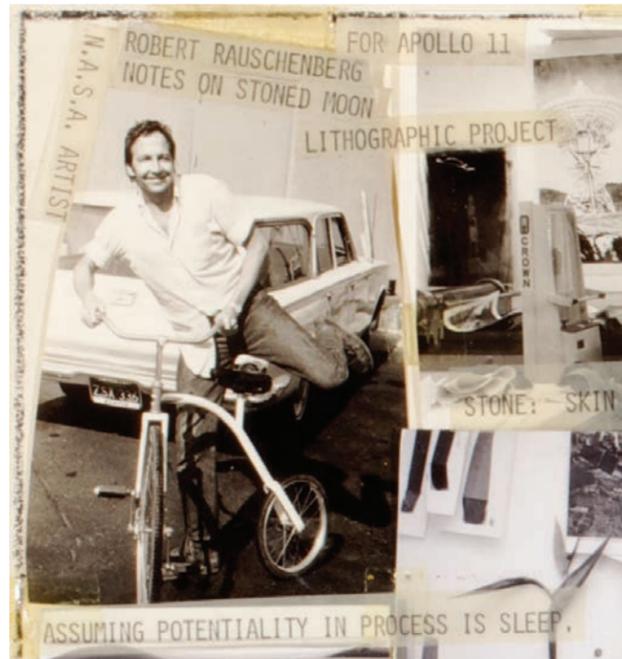
STONED MOON DRAWING

Stoned Moon Drawing, dated October 28, 1969, records Rauschenberg's reflections on the Apollo 11 launch in July of that same year and the lithographic series it inspired. Embedded with the artist's writings are photographs by Sidney Felsen and Malcolm Lubliner, who documented the working process at the innovative print studio Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles, along with official images from NASA. The right side of the composition features the rising smoke plume of the rocket launch and the first boot prints on the moon's surface. This work, together with the thirty-four *Stoned Moon* lithographs and the nineteen drawings and collages for the unpublished *Stoned Moon Book*, provides a singular account of the space program and humankind's first lunar landing. In the collaged text, he remarks on the environs of Cape Canaveral, Florida, "highways built yesterday past ghost towns of technology abandoned with the haste and impatience of emergency surgery." He intimates the anthropomorphizing sentiment, "My head said for the first time moon was going to have company and knew it." Rauschenberg's impressions contain a mixture of trepidation and wonder that conveys the technological and astronomical sublime.



Stoned Moon Drawing, 1969. Collage and crayon on illustration board, 19 7/8 x 28 3/4 inches (50.5 x 73 cm).
Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

Details on following pages



RECOLLECTIONS: FREE ORANGE JUICE MOTEL AIR-CONDITIONED POOL
 CAPE CANAVERAL (KENNEDY) I.D. PHOTO LIVE AUDUBON FLAT MARSH.
 WET SMELL HIGHWAYS BUILT YESTERDAY PAST GHOST TOWNS OF TECHNOLOGY
 ABANDONED WITH THE HASTE AND IMPATIENCE OF EMERGENCY SURGERY,
 SHIELDS AGAINST AN INVITED THREAT. PROTECTION AND DANGER
 GROWING AS A SINGLE UNIT. EACH DEPENDENTLY DEVELOPING THE
 STRAIN AND STRENGTH OF A SPACE HYBRID. BITS OF WIRE,
 FIRE STAINS, UNLOCKED DOORS MAKING NATURE LOOK MORNING NEW,
 FACTS LIKE CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE IN A LOST CASE,
 MUSEUMS FOR BUSES OF SUN-BLEACHED GROUPS WHEELING THRU SPEAKERS OF
 OBITUARY RAP KEEPING ROCKET CARCASSES GROUNDED, MEMORIES OF WAR,
 INSTANT AGGRESSION. MILITARY AFFLUENCE,
 RETIRED POWER. LIFE IN THE EMPTY COKE MACHINE.

PRESS BED
 RUB UP
 PULL
 ROLL
 DRAW DOWN
 BODY GUM
 TALC
 COME UP SLOWLY
 PASSES
 FEATHER ROLL
 WASH
 SPONGE
 SHEETS
 RUB IN
 STONE
 ETCH
 ACID
 PUSH

ASLEEP BUT DREAMED AWAKE.
 JULY 16, 1969
 3 A.M. WAITING WALKING SMOKING
 ON VIEWING SITE AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE
 APOLLO 11 COVERED AND SHIMMERING IN ICE.
 WAITING
 SINGLE FOCUS EXHAUSTION FROM EXPECTATION.
 WAITING
 A CHANGE IN PITCH OF PEOPLE.
 15 MIN.
 WITHOUT PASSING,
 THE TIME HAD COUNTED ITSELF OUT.
 HALF NOT BELIEVING FROM OVERHOPE.
 I STARED.
 SURPRISE BURST THE NIGHT OUT OPENED THE WAY TURNED THE SKY WHITE.
 NOTHING WILL ALREADY BE THE SAME. R.R.
 THE BIRD'S NEST BLOOMED WITH FIRE AND CLOUDS.
 SOFTLY LARGELY SLOWLY SILENTLY
 APOLLO 11 STARTED TO MOVE UP.
 THEN IT ROSE BEING LIFTED ON LIGHT.
 STANDING MID-AIR. IT BEGAN TO SING HAPPILY LOUD.
 IN ITS OWN JOY WANTING THE EARTH TO KNOW IT WAS GOING
 SATURATED. SUPER-SATURATED. AND SOLIDIFIED AIR WITH
 A SOUND THAT BECAME YOUR BODY.
 FOR THAT WHILE EVERYTHING WAS THE SAME MATERIAL.
 POWER OVER POWER JOY PAIN ECSTASY THERE WAS NO INSIDE, NO OUT.
 THEN BODILY TRANSCENDING A STATE OF ENERGY.
 APOLLO 11 WAS AIRBORNE.
 LIFTING PULLING EVERYONE'S SPIRITS WITH IT.

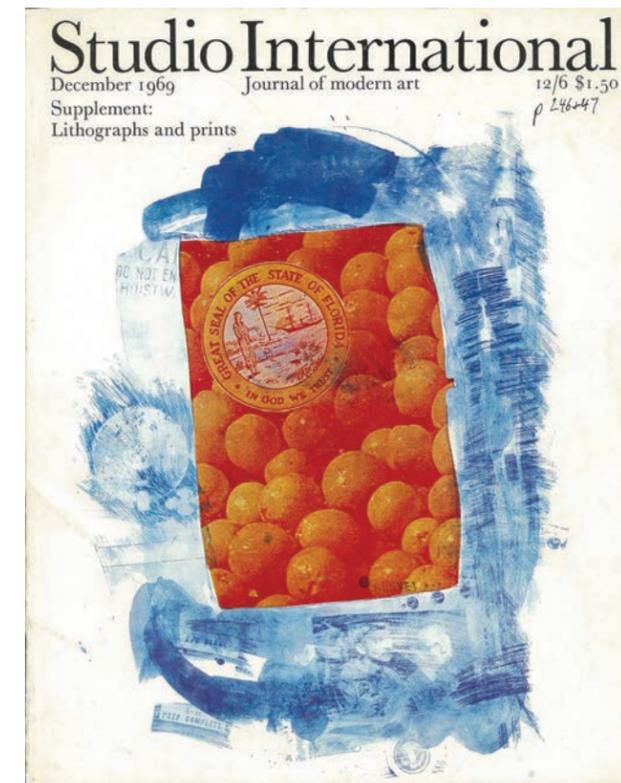
Art in Context: *Stoned Moon Drawing*



Apollo 11 lunar mission, Saturn V rocket clears the launch pad, Cape Canaveral, Florida, July 16, 1969
Photo: NASA

In the summer of 1969, at the invitation of NASA, Rauschenberg witnessed the Apollo 11 space launch, the first manned mission to the moon. *Stoned Moon Drawing* contains Rauschenberg's account of the event, "The bird's nest bloomed with fire and clouds. Softly largely slowly silently Apollo 11 started to move up. Then it rose being lifted on light. In its own joy wanting the earth to know it was going. Saturated, super-saturated, and solidified air with a sound that became your body. For that while everything was the same material. Power over power joy pain ecstasy there was no inside, no out. Then bodily transcending a state of energy. Apollo 11 was airborne, lifting pulling everyone's spirits with it."

Stoned Moon Drawing was published as a black-and-white, double-page spread in the December 1969 issue of *Studio International*. The cover featured the lithograph *Banner* (1969) from the *Stoned Moon* series. The image prominently displays the state seal of Florida resting in a bed of oranges, its signature fruit. These familiar symbols rein in the otherworldliness of Cape Canaveral, where gigantic sophisticated machines intrude upon a vast, sparse landscape. First among the artist's memories of being there, recorded in *Stoned Moon Drawing*, was the "free orange juice." Rauschenberg purchased a property on Captiva Island off the Gulf Coast of Florida in summer 1968. By fall 1970, he would move there permanently.



Cover of *Studio International* (London), December 1969

Rauschenberg dedicated the upper-right corner of *Stoned Moon Drawing* to his observations on the Vehicle Assembly Building (VAB) in Cape Canaveral, Florida. He marveled at the enormity of the monolith, built for the express purpose of assembling the Saturn V rocket for the Apollo 11 launch. Looming 525 feet tall by 518 feet wide and covering 8 acres, the VAB remains the world's tallest single-story structure. According to Rauschenberg, "Only possible to think how big it is. Can't feel it. Enter. Inside larger than all outsides. Level after level men of trade uniformed clanning [sic] climbing. Being washed in an [sic] out of view by a common ocean of work."



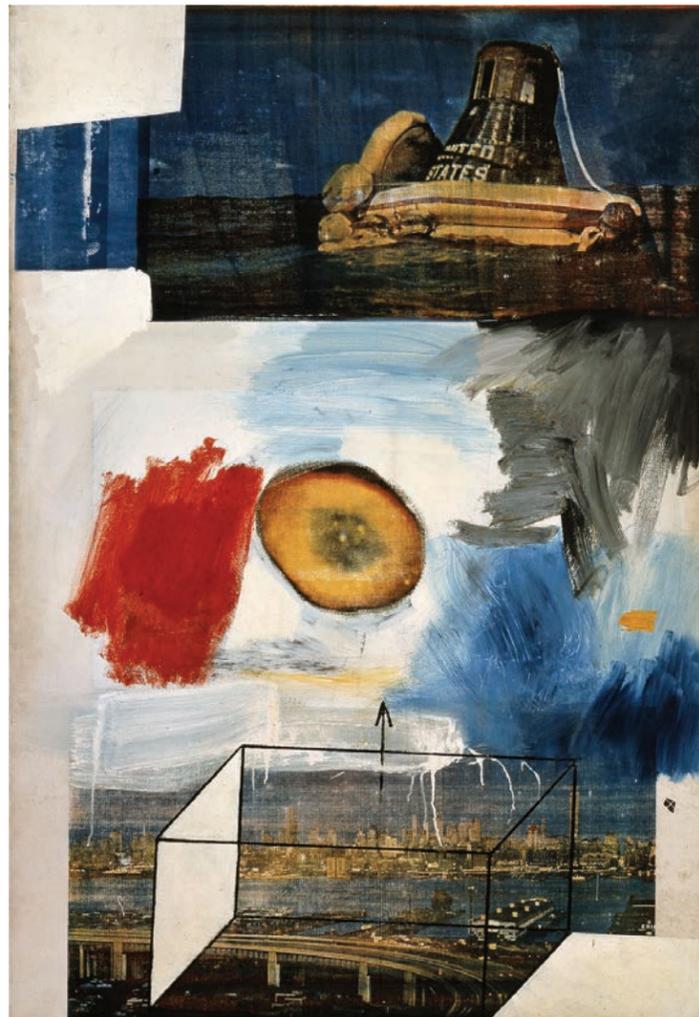
NASA Vehicle Assembly Building,
Cape Canaveral, Florida, 1969
Photo: NASA



Robert Rauschenberg, *Overcast I*, 1962.
Oil and silkscreen ink on canvas.
97 ½ × 72 inches (247.7 × 182.9 cm).
Tokyo Metropolitan Museum, Japan

Rauschenberg was an enthusiastic observer of the U.S. space program from its beginning, enlisting mass-media images of its activities in the picture inventory for his silkscreen paintings (1962–64). A *Newsweek* magazine image of NASA officials handling a spacecraft (October 8, 1962) is emphatically repeated four times in *Overcast I*. The screen was used in at least six other paintings, including *Calendar*, *Glider*, *Overcast II*, *Payload* (all 1962), *Barge* (1962–63), and *Shortstop* (1963). "Payload" is a term from the space program playbook, referring to the carrying capacity of an aircraft.

Rauschenberg's interest in space program photography is also evident in *Stop Gap* (1963). The upper portion of the silkscreen painting is dominated by an image of the Sigma 7 splashdown from *Life* magazine (October 26, 1962). The spacecraft housed astronaut Walter H. Schirra Jr., who safely returned from a six-orbit mission around earth on October 3, 1962. The screenprint recurs in a number of contemporaneous paintings, including *Die Hard* (1963), *Harbor, Whale* (both 1964), and *Untitled* (1964–65; RRF 64.027). Rauschenberg's engagement with the silkscreen process coincided with his initiation into lithography in 1962.



Robert Rauschenberg, *Stop Gap*, 1963.
Oil and silkscreen ink on canvas,
58 × 40 inches (147.3 × 101.6 cm).
The Hara Museum, Tokyo

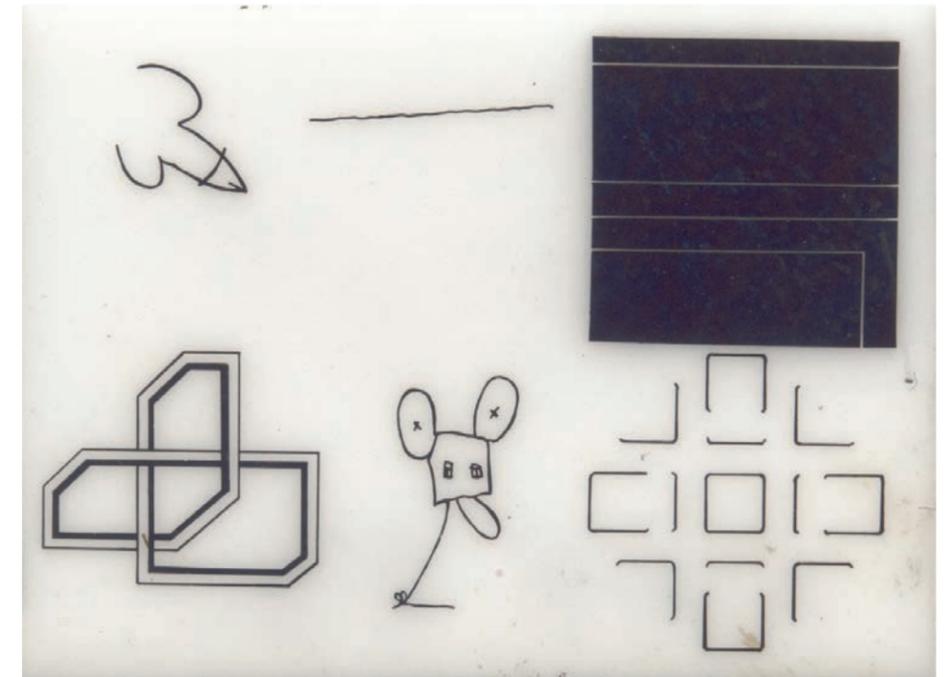
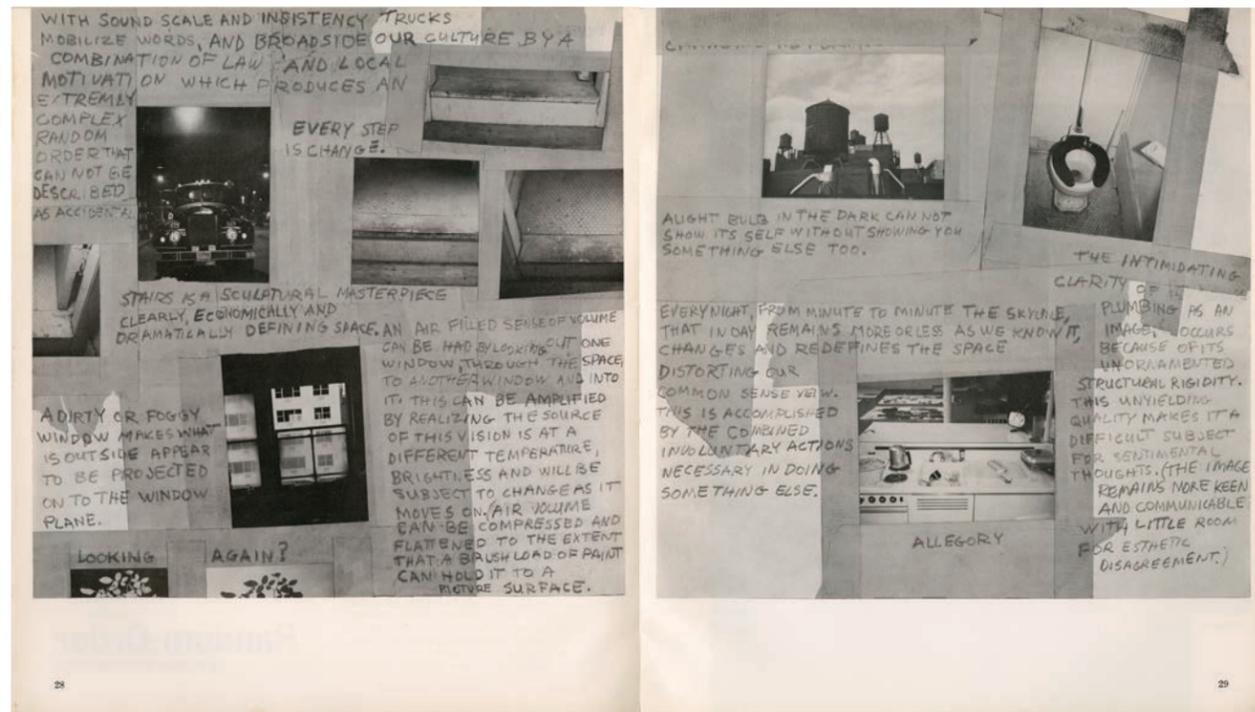


Robert Rauschenberg, *Accident*,
1963. Lithograph, 41 ¼ × 29 ½ inches
(104.8 × 74.9 cm). From an edition
of 29, published by Universal Limited
Art Editions, West Islip, New York
©Robert Rauschenberg Foundation
and Universal Limited Art Editions

Rauschenberg was initially skeptical of lithography but was persuaded to work in the medium by Tatyana Grosman while at her workshop, Universal Limited Art Editions, West Islip, New York, in 1962. He quickly became a devoted practitioner, and the following year, his lithograph *Accident* (1963) was awarded the Grand Prize at the 5th International Exhibition of Graphic Art, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia. A press release issued by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, on June 20, 1963, announcing the achievement, includes the artist's statement on his conversion, "I began lithography reluctantly, thinking that the second half of the twentieth century was no time to start writing on rocks. This biased idea was soon consumed in the concentration any unfamiliar medium requires. Lack of preconception and recognition of the unique possibilities in working on stone, not paper or canvas, suggested that the approach acknowledge this." The distinguishing characteristic of *Accident* is the diagonal fissure caused by a break in the lithographic stone. Rauschenberg made the unusual decision to proceed with printing, embracing the accident, which he viewed as an enhancement rather than an interruption. In *Stoned Moon Drawing*, he wrote, "ideas can be cracks in the stone," and recorded the poetic attribution, "a print is the widow of the stone." Cracked stones would affect several lithographs in the *Stoned Moon* series: *Brake*, *Ghost*, *Horn*, *Marsh*, and *Sack* (all 1969).

The format of *Stoned Moon Drawing*, combining image and text, is reminiscent of Rauschenberg's contribution to the inaugural issue of the short-lived art journal *Location*, edited by Thomas B. Hess and Harold Rosenberg. In *Random Order*, he collaged his own aphoristic writings with original photographs. Imparting insight, observation, ruse, and enigma, the texts include the commentary, "With sound and scale and insistency trucks mobilize words, and broadside our culture by a combination of law and local motivation on which produces an extremely [sic] complex random order that can not be described as accidental." The eponymous concept informs Rauschenberg's approach to collage and illuminates the manner in which he registered events throughout the *Stoned Moon* works. From *Random Order* to *Stoned Moon Drawing*, there is a shift from handwritten to typed text, and the artist's own photographs to images taken by others or drawn from mass-media sources. This development may signal his romance with technology in the latter half of the decade.

Spread with Robert Rauschenberg's *Random Order* (1963), *Location* (New York), Spring 1963



The Moon Museum, 1969. Tantalum nitride film on ceramic $\frac{3}{8} \times \frac{3}{4}$ inches (1 x 1.9 cm). Drawings contributed by (clockwise from top left) Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg, David Novros, John Chamberlain, Claes Oldenburg, and Forrest Myers

In 1969, artist Forrest Myers invited his contemporaries to contribute drawings that he intended to send to the moon. Myers then enlisted Bell Laboratories engineers Fred Waldhauer and Robert Merkle to shrink the drawings and etch them onto a tiny ceramic wafer, measuring $\frac{3}{8} \times \frac{3}{4}$ inches. Rauschenberg furnished the line drawing at top center. Unable to gain official sanction for delivering the piece into space, Myers claimed that an engineer at Cape Canaveral, Florida, secretly attached the wafer to the Intrepid lunar module for the Apollo 12 mission. This collaborative work became known as *The Moon Museum* (1969). Apollo 12 launched on November 14, 1969, the day after the premiere presentation of *Stoned Moon* lithographs at Castelli Gallery, New York.



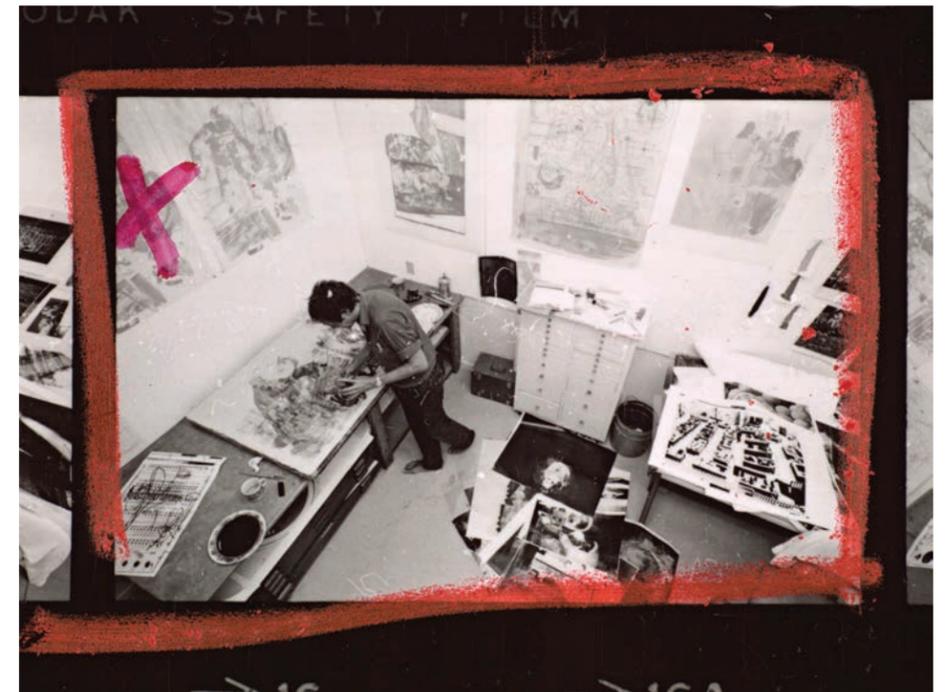
SHOWMAN—Artist Robert Rauschenberg, whose latest wordless “theater piece” will be put on in New York’s Theater and Engineering Festival this week. In a tennis game on stage, wired rackets will control sound and lights.

Robert Rauschenberg portrait,
New York Times Magazine,
October 9, 1966, in Richard
Kostelanetz, “The Artist as
Playwright and Engineer”

In fall 1966, Rauschenberg was preparing *Open Score*, a work that hybridized his waxing interest in theater and technology. (This intersection was perhaps epitomized by NASA, as he expressed in *Stoned Moon Drawing*, “a theatre where performance is all.”) In the *New York Times Magazine* portrait, Rauschenberg sits in front of his painting, *Axle* (1964). The parachuting astronaut in the upper left corner is another NASA image that recurs in several silkscreen paintings (see “Art in Context: Retroactive I”). The artist holds an electronically rigged tennis racket, a prop for *Open Score*, conceived for 9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering (October 1966). Now considered an art-historical landmark, 9 Evenings was plagued by technical difficulties and malfunctions. Rauschenberg embraced the idea of failing well. Unfavorable, even undesirable, results could still be creatively valuable. *New York Times* critic Clive Barnes scoffed, “If the American engineers and technologists participating in this performance were typical of their profession, the Russians are sure to be first on the moon” (October 15, 1966). By the end of the decade, the artist would witness the launch of Apollo 11, the first manned lunar mission, and his artwork may have been sent to the moon by Apollo 12. It was the peculiar alchemy of art and technology after all that NASA sought in inviting artists to observe, interpret, and represent its endeavors.

Rauschenberg at Gemini G.E.L., 1969 *Photographs by Malcolm Lubliner*

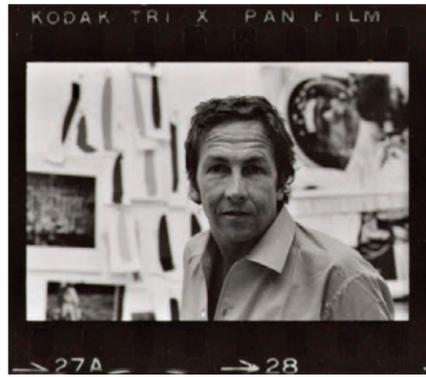
As a contract photographer for Gemini G.E.L., Malcolm Lubliner documented the many artists who passed through the print studio throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Lubliner was present to photograph nearly every stage of the production of *Stoned Moon Series*, capturing informal moments between printing and carefully staging portraits of the artist at work. Lubliner also documented the opening of the first exhibition of *Stoned Moon Series* at Leo Castelli Gallery in New York in November 1969. Selections from Lubliner’s more than five hundred photographs of Rauschenberg at work on *Stoned Moon Series* were to be used throughout *Stoned Moon Book*.



Following pages:

All photographs courtesy the artist; Craig Krull Gallery, Los Angeles; and The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles © Malcolm Lubliner







Shuffle: A Rauschenberg Artwork Lending Library

A HISTORY

In 2014, the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation piloted the Shuffle program, an artwork lending library, to encourage academic exhibitions of Rauschenberg's artworks. The program made available selections from the Foundation art collection for exhibition in art institutions throughout the United States. Joining philanthropic initiative with the goal of nurturing the artist's legacy, Shuffle loans were underwritten by the Foundation. Projects ranged from a focused presentation of a single artwork to exhibitions of numerous works. Committed to audience development and new scholarship, the program sought to connect with university and regional museums, and encouraged dialogue with partnering institutions' collections.

The program drew its name from Rauschenberg's *Synopsis Shuffle* (1999), a painting comprised of fifty-two parts, as in a deck of cards. The work is realized when collaborators choose and assemble at least three and no more than seven panels, generating myriad variations. Every participant who arranges and re-arranges the parts is credited as a composer of the work. Past players include musician David Byrne, artist Chuck Close, choreographer Merce Cunningham, curator Walter Hopps, and gallerist Ileana Sonnabend.

In the spirit of its namesake, the program invited collaboration with partnering institutions to start conversations, continue arguments, and foster new perspectives. The proposition: take Rauschenberg's works as inspiration, counterpoint, or at their most basic, as objects of contemplation and deep looking. Shuffle was both a tribute to the artist's life and oeuvre as well as a venture to cultivate his public. Its spirit continues today through the Foundation's expanded collaborations and programming.

The program, under this name, was closed in 2015; however, it sparked a variety of continuing collaborations that are still active today.

LOOSE IN SOME REAL TROPICS:

Robert Rauschenberg's "Stoned Moon" Projects, 1969–70

This exhibition was organized in 2014 for the Cantor Arts Center by James Merle Thomas (PhD, Art History, Stanford University, 2014) in close collaboration with the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation.

Support for the exhibition was provided by the Halperin Exhibitions Fund and the Contemporary Collectors Circle.

The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation supported the exhibition and website through the program Shuffle: A Rauschenberg Artwork Lending Library.

The website (2014–2022) was designed and developed by Son&Sons. In 2022, the complete website was transferred to this publication designed by Wedeking | Laun and the website was decommissioned.

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6, 9–11: Courtesy Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University

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