

## Bob Rauschenberg Gallery at FSW State College



Thanks to Jade Dellinger, this insightful sentiment from world-renowned artist Robert Rauschenberg hasn't been lost to obscurity: "Fort Myers is as small as your mind is. It can be just as large as the world is." Rauschenberg's nearly half-century presence on Captiva had the same effect on the local cultural scene as inventor Thomas A. Edison's seasonal presence made on the community at large.

Rauschenberg made a deeper connection when he worked with architects and administrators at the community college in Fort Myers, now called Florida SouthWestern State College, to create a gallery. It opened in 1979 and Rauschenberg launched a solo exhibit the following year—the first of 15 exhibits that included some world premieres.

"That an artist of Rauschenberg's stature and historical significance engaged so deeply with our faculty, staff and students through this gallery, and ultimately gave us his name, certainly separates and distinguishes us from other university museums or college-based galleries," says Dellinger, FSW's director of exhibitions and collections.

In his four years curating exhibits, Dellinger has drawn national attention to the contemporary, often commissioned projects created site-specifically for the gallery by the likes of Yoko Ono, MacArthur "genius" Ann Hamilton, and Academy Award-nominated actor James Franco. "We do not accept unsolicited proposals directly from artists, but are closely connected with a vast network of colleagues at prominent museums and galleries around the world," notes Dellinger.

"FluZusic: Fluxus MUSEic" (with interactive sound-related installations and performances) runs from Aug. 25 to Nov. 11. Fluxus artists experimented with site-specific and participatory sound projects in the 1960s and '70s; John Lennon and Ono were pioneers.

It's not the type of gallery where you can drop in to select a piece for the living room; rather, it's a special place inspired by an artist who broke all post-war boundaries but still found community here.



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