

New exhibition celebrating Rauschenberg centenary opens Jan. 15 in the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery Annex

WGCU | By [Tom Hall](#)

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The Rush Library, Building J, houses the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery Annex.

“Rauschenberg at 100: As Large as the World Is” opens in the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery Annex on Jan. 15. The exhibition focuses on the artist’s deep ties to Southwest Florida and features locally produced and privately held works that span several pivotal decades of Rauschenberg’s career. Most have never been exhibited before.

The exhibition continues the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery’s observance of Rauschenberg’s centenary. He would have turned 100 years old on October 22, 2025.



Courtesy Of Bob Rauschenberg Gallery / Bob Rauschenberg Gallery

Artist Bob Rauschenberg takes a break during a visit to China in 1982.

Considered the most consequential American artist of the last half of the 20th century, Rauschenberg maintained his residence and artist studios on Captiva Island from 1968 through his death in 2009.

The exhibition opens Jan. 15 with a reception and lecture.



Courtesy Of Bob Rauschenberg Gallery / Bob Rauschenberg Gallery

Bob Rauschenberg stands at foot of pier in front of Fish House on his Captiva compound.

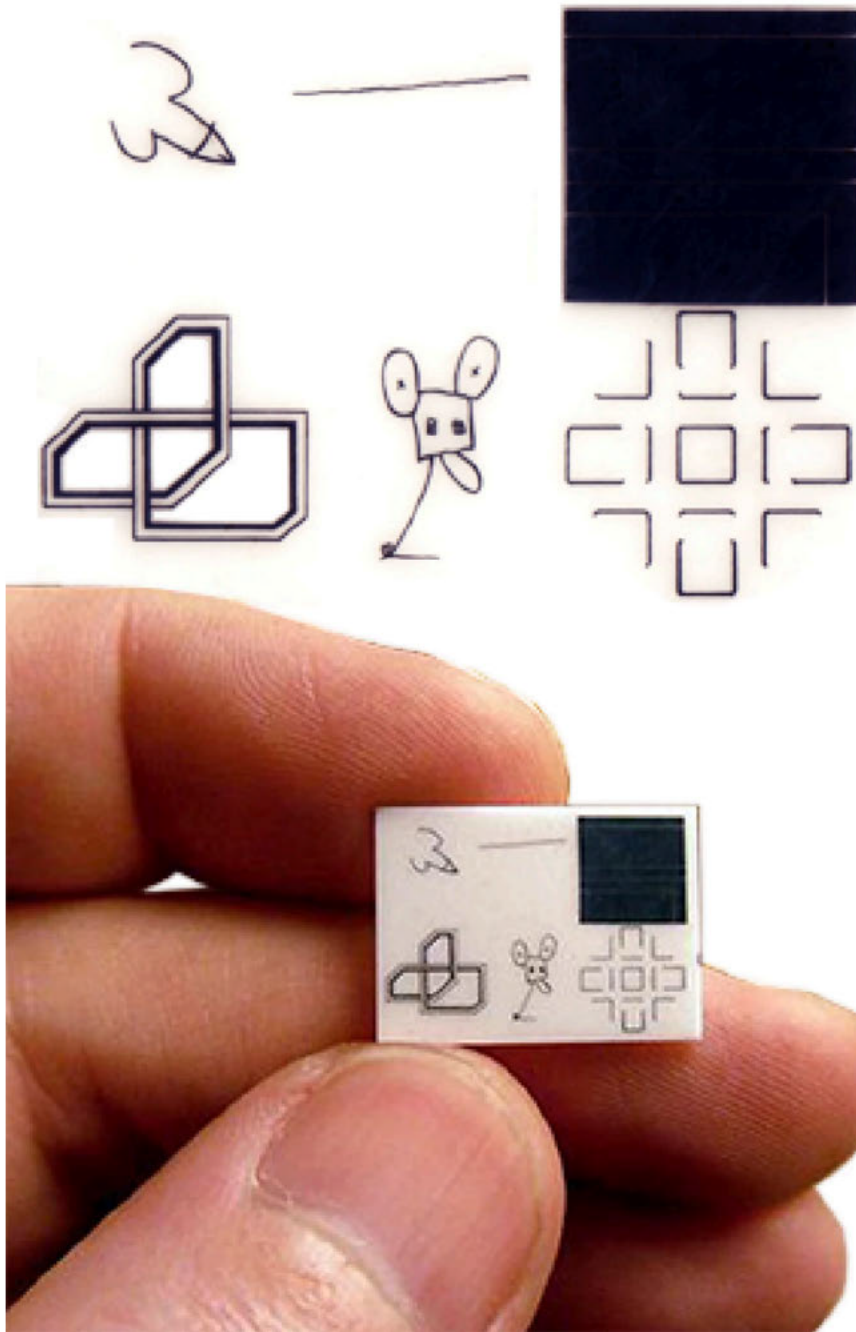
MORE INFORMATION:

The exhibition runs through May 2.

The title is drawn from the artist's deeply held belief and profound philosophy on the interconnectedness of local and global perspectives. "Fort Myers is as small as your mind is. It can be just as large as the world is," Rauschenberg once said.

Included in the exhibition are:

- "Autobiography" (1968): A monumental "self-portrait" triptych created the same year that Rauschenberg purchased his first property and home on Captiva Island.
- Unique paintings and transfer drawings: featuring original works from Rauschenberg's acclaimed SPREADS, BOREALIS, ANAGRAM, and RUNT series.
- The "MOON MUSEUM" ceramic chip: a collective artwork featuring contributions from Rauschenberg, Andy Warhol and four other artists.



Courtesy Of Bob Rauschenberg Gallery / Bob Rauschenberg Gallery

Bob Rauschenberg Gallery Director Jade Dellinger displays copy of moon museum ceramic chip.

A copy of the chip was covertly attached to the Apollo 12 lunar lander and resides to this day on the lunar surface. Rauschenberg once described the moon museum chip as "the smallest piece I have ever made" and "also the farthest away." He also stated, "I made a piece that is approx. 1" x ½" [that] was flown to the moon by NASA and stored there for future discovery."

For more, hear/read: ["In 1968, Rauschenberg participated in clandestine operation to land art on the moon."](#)

The exhibition also honors Rauschenberg's role as a global diplomat. Between 1984 and 1991, he launched the Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange (ROCI) at the United Nations. By bringing art to nations such as Cuba, Chile, Tibet, China and the Soviet Union during the height of the Cold War, Rauschenberg used the creative process to transcend political borders, foster cross-cultural understanding and to promote world

peace.

For more, hear/read: ["Bob Rauschenberg took art to countries where it had been suppressed."](#)

As Pulitzer Prize-winning art critic Jerry Saltz famously remarked, "Robert Rauschenberg was not a giant of American art; he was the giant."

For more, hear/read: ["Robert Rauschenberg influenced the way artists think about and create art while putting Fort Myers on the art world map."](#)

The opening night reception starts at 7 p.m. and continues to 8:30. It is preceded by an ArtSPEAK@FSW lecture on Bob Rauschenberg by Jeff Arnal, executive director of the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center/Asheville, NC.



WGCU Arts Reporter Tom Hall / WGCU Arts Reporter Tom Hall

The Bob Rauschenberg Gallery is curating exhibitions in the Rush Library while its main gallery is being renovated.

The Bob Rauschenberg Gallery Annex is located in Building J-118 of the Lee campus of Florida SouthWestern State College.

Admission is free and open to the public.

Gallery hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Bob Rauschenberg Gallery was founded as The Gallery of Fine Art in 1979 on the Lee County campus of Florida Southwestern State College/FSW (then Edison Community College). On June 4, 2004, the Gallery of Fine Art was renamed the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery to honor and commemorate its lengthy association and friendship with the artist. Over more than three decades until his death, the gallery worked closely with Rauschenberg to present world premiere exhibitions including multiple installations of the "¼ Mile or Two Furlong Piece."

The artist insisted on naming the space the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery (versus the "Robert Rauschenberg Gallery") as it was consistent with the intimate, informal relationship he maintained with both the local Southwest Florida community and FSW. For the dedication ceremony, the artist (as he often did) created an original print edition to benefit the gallery and to commemorate this important event. As he had recently suffered a stroke, Rauschenberg inked his thumb with orange pigment, adding a unique impression on each lithograph and simply signed them "Bob."