

**ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG**

American, b. 1925

*Trophy V (For Jasper Johns)*, 1962

Oil, collage, and found objects on canvas

78 × 72 in. (198.1 × 182.9 cm.)

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick R. Weisman  
in honor of James W. Foster, 1971 (4022.1)

In the 1950s Robert Rauschenberg was one of the leading proponents of the idea that painting should not be categorized as a purely two-dimensional art form. He helped break the traditional boundaries between sculpture and painting by creating works that joined both, a form he called “combines.” *Trophy V* is an example of a Rauschenberg combine, composed of freely painted areas and three-dimensional objects either attached to or set into the canvas. By selecting such banal objects from contemporary life as a cardboard box and a window screen, Rauschenberg—much as Marcel Duchamp did earlier—demonstrates that ordinary entities are worthy of aesthetic consideration. Rauschenberg’s return to recognizable subjects made him a transitional link, along with Jasper Johns, between the abstract expressionists and the pop artists.

The title of this piece is a tribute to Rauschenberg’s friend, and elements in the canvas allude to the work of Johns. The manner in which the box was “painted out,” the variety of gray tones, and the small stenciled map of America on the left are each witty references to the paintings of Jasper Johns. RAD

## **ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG**

American, b. Port Arthur, TX, 1925; d.  
Captiva Island, FL, 2008

### ***Trophy V (for Jasper Johns)*, 1962**

Combine-painting on canvas

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honor of James W. Foster, 1971 (4022.1)

In the 1950s, Rauschenberg was one of the leading proponents of the idea that painting should not be categorized as a purely two-dimensional art form. He helped break the traditional boundaries between sculpture and painting by creating works that joined both, a form he called "combines." *Trophy V (for Jasper Johns)* is an example of a combine, composed of freely painted areas and three-dimensional objects either attached to or set into the canvas. By selecting banal objects from contemporary life, Rauschenberg demonstrated that ordinary entities are worthy of aesthetic consideration.

Rauschenberg's use of recognizable subjects made him a transitional link, along with Jasper Johns, between Abstraction, Expressionism, and Pop Art. The title of this work, *Trophy V (for Jasper Johns)*, is a tribute to Rauschenberg's artist friend, with elements in the canvas alluding to the work of Jasper Johns. The manner in which the box was "painted out," the variety of gray tones, and the small map of the United States are each witty references to the work of Johns, an example of which may be viewed in this gallery.

"Trophy V (for Jasper Johns)"  
Gift of Mr & Mrs Frederick R. Weisman, 1971  
(#4022.1)

GAL ~~28~~ Robert Rauchenberg, US  
27 b. 1925-  
1962  
Gallery 327

Combine painting on canvas

ARTIST: born in 1925, Port Arthur, Texas. Studied Kansas City Art Institute; Academia Julian, Paris; Black Mountain College (with Josef Albers): Art Students League, NY. Moved to NY in 1951 where he was an important painter. Work is represented in international shows and major galleries. He bridged Abstract Expressionism and the later Pop Art movement. Influence of Dada.

SUBJECT: An assemblage or combine painting (collage plus paint) with a box-like form protruding from the canvas at center right. At left, metal opening with cover that slides up and down, like a screen window.

STYLE: Rauchenberg's work was not so much Pop Art as it was a precursor of it, a signal that a major break was at hand. His work utilizing a range of media was a reaction to the vague delineation characteristic of so much abstract expressionism. He sought to return to the subject picture through employment of most banal and commonplace motifs - i.e. newspaper images, and the introduction of real, three-dimensional, extra-pictorial elements such as the box and window. He thus frees the picture from its strictly two-dimensional limitations. This becomes an important breakdown as the boundaries between painting and sculpture cease to exist. An opening up of the painting to embrace the spectator and the actual physical environment through extra-pictorial accessories. Rauchenberg believes anything can be put into a "painting," as we see here: a drawing, a box etc. Everything is free to be chosen: figurative objects of everyday living and experience are brought into contact with pictorial elements (paint as palette, as drip, as splash, as blob, pencil tracings). Together these juxtaposed configurations of simultaneously successive images combine with

fluid homogeneity and take on life of their own in such a manner that the painting becomes its own subject. For Rauchenberg the choice of what is to be included in a work has the greatest meaning...it cannot have been used before; it must be fresh. Re: sensitivity for compositional values - painting "works" without or with these added-on elements. He shows the iconography of contemporary civilization in his own personal way...which can be, at once, humorous, brutal, satiric, violent or... He followed a different path from Abstract Expressionism along with Jasper Johns while others began to experiment in a more-eye-catching "realism" ...i.e. Warhol, Rosenquist, Oldenburg sometimes called the "soup-can" direction.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS: Discuss the various added-on parts of the painting...box, window, drawing. What kind of a reaction do you get to the whole work? How does the use of color affect you? Discuss the pictorial elements in the painting...the map of USA and the 3 round circles...what do you think they mean to you? Notice how well the painting holds together without the added-on parts.