

RRFA 01: Robert Rauschenberg papers

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Christ Church
Coaway Street
London NW1 5NJ
Tel 0171-706 4596
Fax 0171-479 8515

Tim - this is fine; I've made some spelling, punctuation notes.

Fax: Bradley Jeffries
From: Tim Marlow

*THANKS,
Bradley 17-vii-98*

17 PAGES INCLUDING THIS
p.s. look forward to the audio tape.

tate
The art magazine

Dear Bradley,

Here's an edited transcript of the BBC interview with Bob from last April to be published in **tate** magazine this September - to coincide with the opening of the Bilbao show. It made great radio but somehow I can't quite reproduce the sound of the waves (or Bob's laugh) on paper. Feel free to amend or cut or rejig as necessary but I'd really appreciate it if we could move quickly on this.


Tanya is sending you a copy of the radio programme which was very well received. I hope it meets with approval on Captiva.

Haven't seen the sun since Florida - no, really, it's raining in London and the temperature is touching 60 degrees. Hotter than July eh?

Please pass my thanks and best wishes to Bob .. and of course to you too ...

*7/20
Sending
Piano's
info on
Padre
Pic project
to collect
then
info.*

Tim
Tim Marlow
[Editor]

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Marketing Communications
Ltd. Registered in England
No 1229337. Registered
office: Malvern House,
Bell Street, Maidenhead,
Berkshire SL6 1BR.
VAT No (GB) 659 4205 12

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An interview with Robert Rauschenburg

Do you have to get yourself into an emotional frame of mind as well as a physical state to make art?

More or less. To get to my studio I have to walk through a kind of jungle and by the time I have left the house and begun to walk through it, I have forgotten the ideas I had. I think the worst work I have ever done is when I had an idea. Once I get to the studio, I just respond to what's around me and begin working.

So instead of ideas and mental images, you have to scavenge for objects and you have to have vast numbers of photographic images that are ready to be reproduced, to be transferred, and that's your palette.

Yes. But the palette is so full I feel I can go in any direction, so it is like a field. The palette is like "What do you want for dinner?" ... pick and choose, usually it is the first thing I see.

Do you still scavenge around junk shops and yards?

I'm not really working like that anymore but I do still scavenge a little. I stop on the road to pick up provocative material.

Are you always looking to reinvent yourself, or just to subvert self-imposed structures of working and making?

I wouldn't ever want to know me in that sense, creatively. If I can't surprise myself then I may as well not be working.

So you still surprise yourself?

Yes, as a matter of fact, I do.

Has a writer or a critic come close to encapsulating you and the way you work, striking a chord and making you think, 'Yes that's perhaps how it is'. I ask because I'm very struck how similar all the articles in the recent catalogues are and how an orthodoxy has grown up over the years which rarely seems to be challenged. Has anyone ever surprised you in what they have written?

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Rarely. Because that is a double filter. They are understanding me, supposedly, and they are understanding what they feel about it. So that is even more than second hand. I am dyslexic, and have trouble reading, so I am spared all the misinformation.

Looking back, which pieces of work do you think have been the most successful?

Usually there is a piece at the end of every period that lets it all out of my system. Pieces like 'Charleen' and 'Rebus', 'Barge' and then there's 'Soundings', which was a piece that let technology out. Even though I go back into those things, there is usually one major piece that says "Well, you better get it out, you're moving on". I was thinking recently about 'Charleen'. It's amazing, I don't know why it should be there. I don't know how it exists, except through some temporary obsession that I was having or was exorcising.

'Charleen' has an umbrella embedded into the surface, was that a temporary obsession or just an object that happened to be lying around?

Yeah, it was lying around .. like tyres, you find them all over the place. But people like to symbolise and give meaning to objects that reappear in my work. Do you know what they say about umbrellas in my art? That it's a rectum. If I was to read Freud into it or Jung, it would be a breast because in this way of thinking all straight things are phallic and so I should think all round things should be tits. But the crotch critics read the umbrella as a rectum, apparently because of the pucker. I simply don't understand that way of thinking.

So what kind of thinking should we adopt then, looking at your work?

Look at what there is, not what it isn't or what it should be. I find the realistic world so much more interesting and dynamic than any historical event

But what about the way things trigger associations just by putting them together. There is that old surrealist dictum from Lautreamont about the chance meeting of an umbrella and a sewing machine on a dissecting table where meaning is changed when objects are placed in different contexts. It seems to me that you play those games a little bit.

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I don't play those games. I dislocate but not for a particular meeting . I just want to involve you into seeing them for what they are, and so I am actually anti-surrealistic.

So in your celebrated piece 'Monogram' - the goat and the tyre are in a more formal relationship, one that has nothing to do with the bizarre or, as people like Robert Hughes have said, something about the act of sexual penetration - the goat going through the tyre.

The goat was attracting too much attention by itself. I needed something neutral to fasten that goat to its garden and its as simple as that. If I had thought what Bob Hughes thought, I would have avoided it at all costs. Actually, I saw Bob on a street in New York not so long ago and I said 'Bob there is something I have been worrying about: if you feel that tyres are so sexual how on earth do you ever cross the street without getting run over'.

I mean I care too much about the tyre and the goat to submit them to that kind of pornography. When I was very young, living in Texas, I talked my father into paying a dollar for me to have a goat, little kid which grew faster than I did and was never really a pet. That is my association with goats, not via mythology. I also used to take care of the chickens and that's why I have an affection for chickens. I have had all kinds of animals. I raised my father's hunting dogs, even though I was shell-shocked and didn't want to kill anything. All these things come into my art but are frequently misread or overread.

Let's talk about the collaborative work you've done, particularly with dance. Do you differentiate between studio-based work and your work for the stage?

Yes but it's all interrelated. The reason I really like collaborating, which is an overused word nowadays, is that it draws me out of myself. I am forced to do something I wouldn't ordinarily do in the studio. I have always envied the performer because no matter how great a performance is, it might be remembered but not re-experienced whereas I feel like I am in the furniture business. I mean you can go back and change your mind as many times as you want but it doesn't have that danger of live performance. I have done everything I can to insinuate that, like not being able to see anything but your own reflection in 'Soundings'. Unless you make a noise, you don't let the piece know that there is anyone else in the room. I did the same thing for 'Oracle', where you were in control; you could be the conductor of any of the instruments (which are the 5 radios), tune them any way you want, in fact I made that piece for the musicians I knew like Martin Feldman and

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John Cage, Earl Brown and Christian Woolf. It could be a musical instrument that they could conduct.

How close do you want to be to the live performance though?

I get as close as I can. I had a lot of irritation about the lighting we had when I was working with Merce Cunningham in the early sixties. I was doing the costumes and the sets but I couldn't get past the lighting man. This was a time of abstract psychological lighting: purple from one side; green from the other. To me though, it didn't matter what colour they were. I just wanted to see them and sense the physical interaction. That's another thing that the ballet does still, incidentally, It takes away the element of surprise because someone is bringing up the lights before the dancer comes into view. All the movement is being anticipated so it wasn't until I was able to do the lighting too and I was working with people that had an attitude that was compatible with mine, that I was able to really complete a piece.

Do you think you have ever learnt from dancing in order to produce 3 or 2 dimensional pieces of work.

Oh yes, everything I do feeds back.

So dance is a kind of living collage for you?

Yes.

Does it make painting feel a bit static when you have been collaborating with dancers?

No. I learn. I know that nothing has to be the way it is.

→ When you see a performer and it's mainly dancers, because dancers are more abstract than actors, there's something deeply and expressively revealing in what they do. If the dancer is very sensitive, you would know what he or she had for breakfast, how they feel. Did they get a letter in the mail? All from the particular performance they give. I might be simple but that is what I see in theatre.

It sounds as if you decode theatre in the way that people decode your paintings in a way?

No. I don't read it that way but I know that the human body is that fragile and is the expression of what has happened to them.

Those early dance collaborations that started at Black Mountain, they have a huge aura about them now.

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Cunningham's 'Dance piece no 1' for example, did they seem or feel momentous at the time?

Yeah - that was a kind of freedom. In fact that was the beginning of the whole Happenings scene. Incidentally, the only thing I ever did at Black Mountain that {Joseph} Albers said he liked, I mean publicly, was a performance piece and he didn't know I did it. I did a play and dyed all the costumes and I produced it, and he came in the next day and said 'I hope all of you saw the theatre piece in the dining hall last night' (there wasn't anything else to do in Black Mountain at night) "now that's what I have been trying to teach you" and that was the first and last compliment that I ever got from him.

But you still have a respect and an affection for Joseph Albers.

Very much. He enabled me to find out more about myself in a very concentrated period, by exposing me to all kinds of theories that it would have taken me years to have confronted.

Colour theories mainly?

→ Yeah, colour tricks, compositional tricks and tricks of perspectives: making one line look shorter than another line; one colour making another colour a liar, those kinds of things. There wasn't a day that went by where he didn't say art was a swindle and that helped me.

Did you consciously want to rebel against it?

No, I wanted to be admired by him. I even had one of his prize students do one of my compositions because he said I was too messy but he recognised it.

Did you seek the approval of John Cage and Merce Cunningham?

John Cage I didn't have to worry about. He said that there wouldn't have to be two of us because we were so alike. He also said he had studied Zen and I was naturally Zen. No matter what I did I always thought with John that I didn't need his permission, that it was open and I was able to do things that surprised him and he did things that shocked me.

Did his celebrated '4 min 33 seconds' composition seem a natural thing to you, as an artist who was making white paintings at the time?

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I was honoured and still am that I could influence him.

He described your work paintings as "like a clock in the room", somehow documenting the duration of everything.

If one was sensitive enough you would know exactly what was going on in that room. That's what I meant about dancers and their performance. The white paintings were an attempt to get the works to acknowledge where they were, to have a sensuality that would not be interpretative. The thing that was wrong about the white works is that unfortunately they had to be a particular and that's what turned them into an academic work. The white paintings are not supposed to have the memory of how they had been handled, not like a scrap book, they had to be white, no fingerprints, to keep them from being personal. I have had some of the greatest painters, friends like like Cy Twombly and Brice Marden who painted some of the white paintings, because its so boring.. even Pontus Hulton did some.

There are still the same number of white paintings but the most recently completed ones have become the original and, because of boredom or economic pressure, some of the original 'original' ones are now the grounds for my historical works. Like the 2 panel horizontal piece was 'Yoiks'.

So there is a sense of you burying your own past?

Yes, combined with impatience, greed and economy (laughs)...just like 'Bed'. Everybody thinks that the bed was a startling idea. But it was more practical than anything at the beginning. I had this old Chevrolet with wooden panels, a 'Woody', that's what they were called, which started to sprout all kinds of mosses at Black Mountain College, it started to grow .. it was wonderful. But I had to start covering it because it gets very cold at night in the mountains, so I stole a quilt from the laundry room. Later on I found out, actually it was just a few weeks ago, that Dorothea Rockburn had claimed that she was at Black Mountain the same time as I was and she recognised the quilt as the one she had lost in the laundry room. Anyway, by the time summer came, I didn't need the quilt to cover the car but I did need something to paint on and the quilt was there. I started off trying to use the abstracts of the colours but I could never make it not look like a quilt. So I said 'to hell with it' and all it needed to be finished was a pillow and so I added it and it became a bed.

That was part of the red series you were painting, following on from the black and white work. You then began to take

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colour into all kinds of different areas - was that partly to break free from the theories of Albers?

Yeah it took a long time to get away from Albers.

Are you very happy or confident now with colour?

Oh very much, my head is not filled with all the lies that he told me. You need lies if you think art is a swindle.

Explain, particularity for those of us who are not so well versed in colour theory, what you were escaping from.

Every one knows there are certain complementary colours and Albers was teaching on a much more sophisticated level,

But why wouldn't you use those kind of rules, say green against red?..

Well you don't want to use green to make red look redder.. you don't want to use one colour to make a fantasy. Colour is colour and that's it but from where he was coming from, it was psychological too. Colours had an assignment, in fact even the abstract expressionists used that too. Green is envy, isn't that original? Have you ever heard that before, black is depressing, white is innocence, I mean its just shit...and I am sure there are teachers all around the world who are still teaching that. If I want to get passion into a painting I don't have to use red. Have you ever seen the yellow passion? Its attitude that gives any kind of expression to colours, they are not fixed things. They are alive...

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So were the abstract expressionists as a group, in particular artists like De Kooning, similar figures in a way to people like Albers?... In the sense that you respected them deeply but wanted to react against them because you found what they were doing constricting?

I learnt so much from them, the most positive is that paint is allowed to look like paint. And De Kooning was very good at that, I mean when I was developing in New York and Black Mountain there were two schools of painting. One was Hans Hoffman and one was Bill De Kooning and I went with the De Kooning/Pollock atmosphere, what they were calling 'action paintings'. I was a natural for action, because my weakest personality trait is lack of patience. If I have to worry about something its in the way.

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Do you work on the floor when you are making paintings?

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I work on a table. I use to work on the floor but I am not as young as I used to be. I even have trouble reaching across the table and shoving things around.

So do you almost dance around when you are making paintings?

✓ ~~Uh-hu~~ Yes.

So there is a bit of a Pollock there. I am sure you have seen that amazing footage of Pollock painting. That almost balletic grace with which he swings up and down and around the canvas, a total immersion in what one is doing.

I like that it is like a echo, the way something is made is part of its truth. I mean, if there's a splash it must have been wet and it could have been quick. That's what I got from Pollock and De Kooning. I did not resist them so much as I resisted the attitude of the other abstract expressionists like Still and Newman and the rest of them. It wasn't what they were doing it was what they thought they were doing.

Which was what? Treading an heroic perhaps pioneering path?

No not the ego part, it was the mood. My work doesn't have a mood until it is finished and then you can respond to it any way that you want to. But so much abstarct expressionism had the intention of graveness or passion or intensity. I didn't see that though. I didn't read that. I read the honesty of the pigment in their works, or lack of it.

So was it a very symbolic act, when you persuaded De Kooning to give you a drawing to erase?

I was doing my white paintings and I had been spending weeks erasing my own drawings and I love to draw. That has to do with appreciation of scale and intimacy. In a drawing you don't have that overwhelming feeling of a painting. But whenever I erased my own drawings it wasn't art, it was just erasing it, which would then be part of the technique. What was wrong was that I was not erasing art. Anyway, Bill De Kooning was the most well known and international American artist that I knew. It was not an easy thing to do once I figured it out, but by then it just had to be done. I was almost hoping that he wouldn't be home when I knocked on his door then that could have been the piece. But, he was there and I explained the predicament I was in and the idea I'd had. He went over and put a painting against the studio door and I said 'don't

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do this to me, please don't do this to me'. I'd bought a bottle of Jack Daniels and we sat drinking and talking about how he didn't approve of the idea but he understood it and yes, he would do it. He went over to his portfolio and then said ;'No, I am going to give you something I will miss'. He wasn't making it easy, so he went to the second portfolio and he pulled out something, I didn't see what it was and then he said 'No I am going to give you something that is going to be impossible for you to erase'. And I thought 'thank God' (laughs). He gave me something that was done in crayon and splatters of oil paint. It took me three weeks before I could get it erased.

I was not destroying his work though, this was a positive action on my part and I never thought of it as an act of vandalism.

So it wasn't killing the father figure?

No.

When you see those pieces now are there still those traces of the past?

Yes, you can understand that this was a positive act and a creative one, and one that doesn't have to be done twice.

There is also a question there of what is creative and what is destructive, because the destructive can be a creative act as well. Do you think there is any parallel there with dance, in that piece? In dance you see the action and then all that is left is the traces, and the traces are only in your memory. There seems to be some physical trace when someone moves from one side of the room to another, and then it evaporates.

I do have some favourite images that I use over and over, but it is a classic value that they have. Such as a door. Every time a door is closed, every time a door is opened, something has happened, and the same with a chair. An empty chair has all the expectations of somebody not there, or who is there.

And this is how people then start to be active in the way that they engage with the work, presumably because a chair is an invitation for them to sit on it, they can do it literally or metaphorically, but they have to make that leap.

Yes, but realise that there are a few classic images that do have a story and are not symbolic, and they are not psychological. It is a fact that an empty chair has the possibility of someone sitting on it.

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When you talk about classic images, the image of John Kennedy appeared in you art in a number of guises in the sixties, in dance pieces and 2dimensional and 3dimensional collages, presumably you had to make a decision about that, because that would always be a psychologically charged image, and political too.

Well it wasn't until his murder. I mean at that time he was like Mickey Mouse except that he was the President, like Coca-Cola if you like. It was something in our lives that we had to consider a reality. I was in Texas travelling with Merce Cunningham's dance company when he was shot. When I travelled with the dance company I continued to do my own work too. So I set up all my materials, and before he was shot I had these seven foot silk screens made of that famous photograph of him pointing the finger. It took me a long time to figure out whether I should use those or not, because I didn't want them to represent the tragedy. I also didn't want to jump on the kind of bandwagon that developed after Marilyn Monroe's death. All of a sudden there wasn't a painting in the world that didn't have Marilyn on it. So I didn't want to be commercial and vulgar, it's a matter of state, and I thought this is what I had intended to do, the only honest thing is to go ahead and do it. You can see why it was an impossible situation because it was built in to be misread but I thought sooner or later that aspect would be gone and an image will remain. DIDN'T

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ROCI, the Rauscheburg overseas cultural interchange, had a strong social and political motive didn't it - the idea of spreading the artistic word in places where freedom of expression was severely limited?

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 Yes...specifically the idea of ROCI came to me as a result of working in China. The constraint there and the hopelessness of any of the Chinese finding out how the world was made me feel that something had to be done, however small. So that's where the idea of ROCI came from. It was a struggle to let one part of the world know how the other existed, the simple things like how they eat and how they dance and who they worship. I'm saying that's simple, right ... but it really is fundamental, a foundation for basic understanding that is usually ignored ... what colours they like and what was their land like and so on .. And I thought that with ROCI, I would take a piece of every country the tour travelled to and integrate that into the information from place to place..

So you were working in collaboration with artists in different countries, you were also taking photographs as well as using

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documentation and other materials to produce work from each location as well as a record.

Right, and I met all the artists and writers and dancers I could and spoke all the languages I know ... and didn't know ... and I think it worked. It actually worked less with the political establishment that it did with the artists but then artists are often among the biggest threat to politics. I think it made drastic changes in art.

There is a piece in your studio at present that has images of the Guggenheim Bilbao and there are images of the city, this is a direct response, I guess, of going to see the opening of the building where your own retrospective will finish up but is that a continuation of the idea of Rocky? Is that a working method that comes from ROCI, travelling, taking images and then immediately assimilating them into your work ? → ROCI

I always did that. I use the camera as a way of not forgetting like earlier artists would do sketches. I was invited as one of the artists to witness the take off of Apollo 11, and everybody was sketching or had their watercolour sets out but things were happening too fast, so I just took pictures and later did twenty odd works ~~on Gemini~~ and went through NASA's photographs too. I just want to know as much as I can about nearly everything. ←

What about the surface of the Guggenheim Bilbao, just to go back to that recent piece? I found that titanium incredibly seductive.

Me too.

It struck me that as you've worked on cardboard, aluminium, mirrors and a whole host of other surfaces, that you might just consider working with titanium....

RR? →

Funny you should say that because there is a big titanium piece coming up. I'm working Renzo Piano in a Cathedral he's building near Foggia. In fact, I'm doing 'The Apocalypse' : a fifty foot asymmetrical arch, 45 feet high and 150 feet wide, using titanium . Padres Pio is being made into a saint and the cathedral has to be finished by December of the Millennium. Also, one of the last pieces that Roy Lichtenstein did is in the cathedral too; it is the Lord's Supper.

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Does it irritate you the way that you are projected historically?

No.

What about the way that people talk about the fifties, of you and Jasper Johns, the twin talents of American art. He's Apollo you are Dionysious; he says no, you say yes. You were close friends and colleagues and you are lumped together. Does that bother you?

It did at the time, in fact that is why we couldn't work together anymore.

He was too competitive, restrictive?

I just can't think of two artists who have as radically different attitudes about everything and yet you couldn't mention Johns without

→ Rauschenburg, or the other way around. It was irritating for both of us and it wasn't competitive in that sense. During his retrospective at Moma, he was being interviewed, and the interviewer said 'well, you are nothing like Rauschenburg' and he said 'Thank God'.

Did you have a strong influence upon each other as artists though?

We did because we respected each other. I respected his point of view and he assessed mine.

Was he your most valuable critic in the 50s and you his?

→ Well, in a sense, we were the only ones. Everybody else thought I was a clown and incapable of anything serious. And he was some kind of eccentric so we were both isolated and became a two-man school of art.

Does Leo Castelli get too much credit for the discovery of the two of you?

I think he got credit for discovering Jasper, but I had been around, Betty Parsons, the Stable Gallery...

So there was no sense of the Castelli Gallery being an artistic home for you?

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No. I think my work was always too physical for Leo's comfort. For Leo, art has to fit in with his intellectuality and the aggressiveness of my attitude put him off, because he couldn't control it. I think he knew what Jasper was going to do. My exasperation with myself, is that I am afraid that I will be able to control it, and that is very different.

Did you have a close collaborative relationship with Merce Cunningham, one where you learnt equally from each other?

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Merce was very isolated, his ideas were his ideas. I used to complain to John that I couldn't do what I want to do and John would say 'you are absolutely right, I am in a much more advantageous situation because he can't trip over the music'. And I had to blend in with the dancers and get in the way when it was possible and get out when it wasn't. But I did pieces that I went along with Merce's improvisations and that was challenging. He wouldn't allow the dancers to know until before the performance what they were going to do and I made costumes in the wings and then dancers could choose. I would also make sculptures on the road with things I had collected from each town we went to. It got very difficult in London because we were at Saddlers Wells for a month and then we went to Soho for another month and God, I cleaned up that town (laugh) there was nothing left that I could have used by the time I got out of that one.

Did you always want to compose music? Or is it something you decided to do much later on? I was thinking of pieces you did with Cunningham and Trisha Brown.

I guess my first professional piece was the sound for Paul Taylor, I treated that like an object, it was the time being repeated every 15 seconds. I have always wanted to get into music, or sound .. you see, I'm so intimidated through knowing so many important creative people that I can't call my dance 'dances' I have to call them 'theatre pieces' and I call my music 'sound'. I just bought a 16 track mixer and a grand piano and I have a violin and lots of drums. It's a frustration of mine, which I am sorry to say the retrospective has interfered with - getting into the music or sound I want to.

Do you almost see sound as opposed to hearing it?

You'd prefer it that way. I don't compose, I play spontaneously, that's the nicest way I can put it. I am going to make a library of different

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sounds and then use them as if I'm painting on the mixer itself. Sounds like fun doesn't it?

It does, yes, it also sounds rather like the image banks you have in your studio ...

That is the way I like to think of it, like I need a little red here...

Your work has invariably^b been seen as somehow reflecting an urban experience, of image bombardment and a sense of dynamic flux. Since you moved to Captiva the work still seems to retain that quality. Has Captiva had a direct impact on your work?

It's certainly had a direct impact on me. When I moved from New York, where I had lived for 29 years and counted very much on the urban experience, I wasn't sure that I could live on an island. But I rationalised and consoled myself with the idea that anytime I got restless I still had my place in New York and I could just leave. By the third day I got so preoccupied and absorbed by things like the waves picking up or the wind coming from another direction that I've just never felt that restlessness. I really haven't missed the city that much. Plus I don't just stay here; I have been around the world two or three times since then, which helps.

Does New York ever still feel like home then? You have a big studio there, a converted church, do you ever feel it's a place where you can create or is it a period of your life that is over now?

I don't think of it as being over. But I have used this place so constructively that I somehow have brought in all the things I would need but didn't have space for in the building in New York. I used to work in the chapel. I did all the Revolvers there and major amount of the silk screen pieces, but I enjoy the space here.

Your birth place, Port Arthur, is a few hundred miles across the water. Does the Gulf connect you back to childhood in a way?

I'm always more comfortable around water or better still, when water surrounds me. I never could live in the mountains. I would feel restricted psychologically by the thought of not being able to get over the hill or even by an idea somehow not being able to reach me.

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From various accounts, your childhood was quite religious and there was a time when you were thinking of going into some kind of religious life. Is art ever a surrogate form of religion for you?

I don't know. When I was at Betty Fords because I was trying to stop drinking, there was a strong and basic Christian concept of you-can't-do-anything-without-god around the place and I had some trouble when I was asked to state my spirituality on the forms. They asked me what was I and I said "I am an artist".

And you think that in some way art can start to change the world or how it is seen?

I'd rather think of it as not so much changing but showing the world that there is less embarrassment and guilt and hostility than is often supposed, by promoting the idea that individuals themselves are responsible. You can only do that by making people proud to be themselves. I mean religion is so intimidating.

So is art but it doesn't have to be, is that what you are saying?

Art is artificially intimidating and not necessarily so, whereas religion is programmed to be intimidating. Think of Frank Geary's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao - it's the first time I have been in a building as beautiful as that, as awesome, without feeling small.

Has the retrospective had a big impact on you .. the way you see a career evolve; your changing interests and obsessions?

Well, I'm surprised that there is a career. That in itself seems an amazing thing and it does feel like an ill-begotten luxury to see the amassed work and sometimes see how successfully my temporary obsessions have worked out. But in another sense, the retrospective is just driving me crazy, because people will ask me very simple questions like 'where did you do that?' and it conjures up exactly that precise moment and then the question is over and I am left trembling, gasping for breath. I can remember what everybody was wearing, how every one was feeling, what they were doing and so the nostalgia that has been provoked - going back to works from '49 and '48 - has really interfered with my life which just wants to be lived ahead of time. I am so glad I have impossible commissions right now so that I can get on. I am

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tolerating but not enjoying the past history. I know I was there and I don't have to be there again.

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