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Robert Rauschenberg
North African Collages and Scatole Personali c. 1952

June 4 - August 10, 2012

NEW YORK, NY – Craig F. Starr Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of ***Robert Rauschenberg: North African Collages and Scatole Personali c. 1952***. The show, which runs through August 10, examines two bodies of work Robert Rauschenberg created while traveling through Europe and North Africa with Cy Twombly between the fall of 1952 and the spring of 1953. His use of found materials to create the intimately scaled and portable works represents an important turning point in Rauschenberg's approach to art and anticipates the Combines of the 1950s.

Thirty-one of the known thirty-eight North African Collages are on view in this exhibition. During his seven month trip, Rauschenberg gathered local printed papers and old engravings found in bookstalls and flea markets. He used these materials in the collages, which – with the exception of two works, *Untitled [locomotive]* and *Untitled [scorpion and plant]* – he mounted on paperboard collected from the insides of shirts as they were returned from the cleaners.

Highlights of the exhibition include *Untitled [pictographs and feathers]*, which has two hinged panels that can be opened to reveal brightly colored feathers, one red and one teal. *Untitled [locomotive]* also has a hinged panel which lifts to reveal a found inscription. Due to their delicacy, both are shown closed in the exhibition. Reproductions of the panels opened are illustrated in the catalogue.

The works are repetitive in size and scale, and most are only approximately 10 x 7 inches or 14 x 5 inches. The collages were by necessity mobile, and at the end of his trip, they were packed up and not exhibited for more than twenty years. While some have been exhibited in past Rauschenberg shows, this is the first exhibition highlighting this body of work.

The exhibition also includes two assemblage boxes, or *Scatole Personali*, which in Italian means personal boxes. One is a hinged veneered wood box with brass and silver fittings. The inside lid is lined with a satiny fabric and the bottom with found engravings. Rauschenberg glued a winged insect to a twig and placed it in the box. This piece, like the printed reproduction in the paper pocket of the collage *Untitled [Christian symbol]*, is removable. The second assemblage is a lidded stained wood box. It is filled with a base of dirt in which the artist embedded a chip of mica, two rows of sharp pins, and a plastic lens. Under the lens is a small gelatin silver photograph of the artist.



Robert Rauschenberg,
Untitled [Christian symbol], c. 1952
Collage: engraving, paper, cut paper,
tissue paper, pencil, and glue on paper
mounted on paperboard with printed
reproduction and glue, 10 x 7 inches.
The Sonnabend Collection

Robert Rauschenberg: North African Collages and Scatole Personali c. 1952 is comprised of loans from the The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, The Sonnabend Collection and a private collection. A fully-illustrated catalogue, with an essay by John Yau, accompanies the exhibition.

Craig F. Starr Gallery is located at 5 East 73rd Street between Fifth and Madison Avenues. Summer gallery hours are Monday - Friday, 11:00am to 5:00pm, and by appointment. For general information please view the gallery's website at www.starr-art.com.