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PRESS RELEASE

WINDOW TO CHINA

Robert Rauschenberg: The Lotus Series

Robert Rauschenberg is one of the great American artists. He incorporated “everyday life” into pictures, sculptures, paintings and collages that radically transformed western art from the 1950’s to the present. *The Lotus Series*, Rauschenberg’s final graphic piece from 2008, will be presented at Gl. Holtegaard from January 20, 2017 through April 17, 2017. This exhibition is made possible with the cooperation of Kevin Pottorf, Rauschenberg’s assistant for the last 10 years of the artist’s life, and Florence Tone, assistant curator who acted as intermediary to initiate this endeavor.

For the first time in Denmark

The exhibition highlights Robert Rauschenberg’s (1925-2008) immense artistic interest in China and examines an idealistic artist whose profound conviction to the arts had him constantly searching for new ways to utilize art as a potential lever for intercultural dialogue. During a trip to China in 1982, Rauschenberg took almost 500 photographs as a travel diary. From this compilation of photographs, Rauschenberg found material for the two collections that are on exhibition at Gl. Holtegaard. This collection has never before been presented in Denmark. *Studies for Chinese Summerhall* (1983), a photo series comprised of 10 original prints (38 x 38 cm), is characterized by simple and precise compositions where “everyday” scenes of Chinese life are on display.

The Lotus Series, Rauschenberg’s final graphic piece, was created concurrent with the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. The series consists of 12 digital prints (116.2 x 154.3 cm) – 10 are printed as photogravure – with an overlapping juxtaposition of photos depicting ordinary scenes from Chinese cities, such as markets, streets, harbor, trains, alleys, etc. Each photogravure is supplemented with the distinctive Chinese lotus flower.

The collections’ Chinese origin is brought into perspective from an archived BBC and Danish documentary taken from Danish Radio. The exhibition examines Rauschenberg’s immersion into a country that would form the basis of his artistic practice from his first trip to China in 1982 until his last graphic work in 2008.

Rauschenberg the Idealist

During his trip to China, Rauschenberg experienced the state-controlled cultural obscurity, which became the catalyst for a project he dreamed of: an international travel exhibition called *Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange* (“ROCI”). His ambition was to create transcultural meetings through exhibitions of his own art in 11 totalitarian and politically closed countries. From 1984 to 1991, Rauschenberg himself financed the project by selling pieces from his private collection to keep the project free of political and economic interests. In correlation with the worldview of the Cold War, his vision was to provide an

exhibition as both a window for the outside world to a closed country while simultaneously presenting the culture of a local population in a new light. He managed to produce travel exhibitions in 11 countries, including Mexico, Chile, Venezuela, China, Tibet, Japan, Cuba, USSR, Malaysia, Germany and USA.

The exhibitions contributors and collaborators

Kevin Pottorf, Robert Rauschenberg's assistant for the last 10 years of the artist's life, is loaning *The Lotus Series* to Gl. Holtegaard. A visual artist himself, Pottorf worked side by side with Rauschenberg and helped transform the artist's ideas into graphic works following Rauschenberg's instructions. Assistant curator **Florence Tone** established and facilitated the contact between Gl. Holtegaard and Kevin Pottorf to make this exhibition possible. Ms. Tone has a history in Holte and with Denmark, as she was formerly married to a Dane. In addition, the **University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum** loaned the photograph collection *Studies for Chinese Summerhall*. The exhibition is supported by the **S.C. Van Fund** and the **Politiken Fund**. Gl. Holtegaard's two-year exhibition program is also supported by **Danish Arts Foundation**.

Event Program

The exhibition creates an occasion for an event program that through debate and dialogue focuses on cultural exchanges past and present. It discusses China as a cultural superpower and the use of culture as a "soft power tool." On Saturday, January 21, 2017, the program commences with a talk from Kevin Pottorf about his close collaboration with Rauschenberg and will be moderated by assistant curator Florence Tone. The final program will be published on Gl. Holtegaard's website www.glholtegaard.dk in January 2017.

Opening

The exhibition is open to the public from Friday, January 20, 2017 through April 17, 2017.

Gl. Holtegaard's hours are: Tuesday-Sunday 12 pm to 5 pm and every Thursday evening from 12 pm to 8 pm.

Photos

Press photos can be downloaded from <http://www.glholtegaard.dk/presse.html>

The password for downloads is: Presse

Press

More information about the exhibition can be obtained by contacting Gl. Holtegaard's director/ exhibition curator Maria Gadegaard: mgad@rudersdal.dk / tlf. 45 80 08 78 or Communications Manager Nina Peitersen: ninp@rudersdal.dk / tlf. 45 80 08 78

Photograph and Graphic at Gl. Holtegaard

Gl. Holtegaard has over the years had a tradition of showing older, modern artists, who works with photography. The photo track creates the opportunity to show some of the great heavyweights in art history, as well as the younger generations. In 2017 the photo track is expanded with artists, who work with art on paper, so that it becomes possible to examine graphical productions from some of the artists who set the tone for the 20th century – including Robert Rauschenberg