

Transcription of text on panel B of Robert Rauschenberg's *Autobiography* (1968).

SFMOMA Permanent Collection Object Files

Port Arthur Texas Oct. 22, 1925. Mother: Dora. Father: Ernest (grandparents): Holland Dutch, Swedish, German, Cherokee. De Queen Gr. Sch., Woodrow Wilson H. Sch. Jr., Thomas Jefferson H. Sch. Grad. 1942. / U. of Tex. U.S. Navy 2 ½ yrs neuropsychiatric tech. Family moved to Lafayette La. with sister, Janet, born Apr. 23, 1936. After Navy: / returned home, left home. Worked in Los Angeles. Moved to Kansas City to study painting K.C.A.I. went to Paris, 1947, met Sue Weil. Std. Acad. Julian. 1948 Black Mountain College N.C. disciplined by Albers. Learned photography. Worked hard but poorly for Albers. Made contact with music and modern dance. Felt too isolated, Sue and I moved to NYC. Went to Art Students League. Vytlacil & Kantor. Best work made at home. Wht. Painting with no.'s best example. Summer 1950, Outer Island Conn. Married Sue Weil. Christopher (son) born July 16, 1951 in NYC. First one man show Betty Parsons: paintings mostly silver & wht. with cinematic composition. All paintings destroyed in two accidental fires. Summer Blk. Mt. Coll. N.C. started all blk. & all wht. paintings. Winter divorced. Sue & Christopher living in NYC. I went to Italy with painter & friend Cy Twombly. Ran out of money in Rome. Took chance getting job in Casablanca at Atlas Construction Co. Worked 2 mo. Got sick, left. Traveled Fr. & Sp. Morocco. Returned to Rome. While traveling constructed rope objects & boxes. Showed in Rome & Florence. Critic in Florence said work should be thrown in the Arno. I did. Returned to NYC 1952. Loft on Fulton Street. Made growing dirt paintings. Show of all wht. & all blk. paintings and elemental sculpture made from rocks, wood & rope. Closest friends at this time dancers and musicians. Few painters. Began doing theater work with Merce Cunningham and Paul Taylor. Blk & Wht. show at Stable NYC 1953 misunderstood as gestures & antipaintings. The wht. paintings were open composition by responding to the activity within their reach. Began red paintings using comic strips as color ground. Included lights and reflectors. 1956 had show Egan Gall. NYC. New Year's day had a Feldman concert with paintings. "Charlene" largest and last example of red picture. Earned living by doing free lance jobs in display mostly for Gene Moore. Began a series in "crowd" color, insisting the object material keep its identity. Paintings became awkward physically, began being free standing: Combines. Stuffed animals. Bed. Shoes. Wrote fugue type plays and word spoken music; never performed. Moved to Pearl Street off Fulton. Jasper Johns lived in the same building and had just painted his first flag. It would be difficult to imagine my

work at that time without his encouragement. John Cage was also a generous source of inspiration. It was a rich exchange. Rebus, Wager, Hymnal, Odalisk, Canyon, Coca-Cola Plan, Curfew, Satellite were all done in the next couple of years. 1958 show at Leo Castelli. Jasper Johns, Emile De Antonio and I pooled funds, made John Cage 20 yr. retrospective concert at Town Hall NYC. Moved to Front St. off Wall. Trophy I, Monogram, Broadcast. Allegory. 4 Summer Rentals. Pilgrim. 2 ½ yrs. making 34 drawings for Dante's Inferno, The last 6 mo. in Florida. Isolation needed for concentration. I became the lighting man & designer for Merce Cunningham Dance Co. Summerspace, Crises, Antic Meet, Winterbranch, Field Dances, Nocturnes, Spring Weather & People, Paired, Suite, Changling, Night Wandering, & Story. Local touring with Dance Co. was awkward, but beautiful addition to my work. The dances, the dancers, the collaboration, the responsibilities and trust which are essential in cooperative art because the most important & satisfying element in my life worked positively with the privateness and loneliness of painting. Carolyn Brown, Viola Farber & Steve Paxton inspired me to the challenge of deserving their love and confidence. First one man show of paintings in Europe, Galerie Daniel Cordier, Paris. First one man show in Italy, Galleria dell'Arete. Trip to Stockholm. American Embassy, Paris: "Collaboration for David Tudor" me, Niki de St. Phalle, Jasper Johns, Jean Tinguely & David Tudor. Time Paintings, First Landing Jump, Blue Eagle, Blue Exit, Rigger, Pantomine, Trophy II & III, Black Market, Wall Street Slug, Reservoir, floor pieces: Empire I & II, Aen Floga, Red Rock, 19346, Trophy IV, (Blue Light Bulbs, Michael McClure). Started lithography, Universal Ltd. Art Editions, Tanya Grosman, Long Island. Big influence on paintings. "The Costruction of Boston," a collaboration by Niki de St. Phalle, Kenneth Koch, Jean Tinguely & me, dir. by Merce Cunningham, NYC. Starring, with collaborators, Oyvind Fahlstrom, Frank Stella, Billy Kluver, Steve Paxton, Viola Farber & Henry Geldzahler. Moved to Broadway & 12th St. Began "Oracle", a five piece sculpture with remote control sound and fountain. Collaborator Billy Kluver assisted by Harold Hodges. "Oracle" interrupted by "Dylaby" in Amsterdam, Sandburg, dir. of Stedelijk. Met Marcel Rayesse & Per Ultvedt. Ace, Stripper, Cartoon, Trophy V. Began silk screen paintings to escape familiarity of objects & collage. Barge, Dry Run, Sundog, Quarry, Brace, Shortstop, Overcast I, II, III, Strawboss, Crocus, Exile, Glider, Calendar Buoy, Gift for Ileana, Payload, Archive, Estate, Manuscript, Overdrive, Bait, Kite, Die Hard, Dry Run, Tadpole, Cove, Express, Junction, Roundtrip, Bicycle, Transom, Spot, Shaftway, Tideline, Star Grass, Stop Gap, Trellis, Dry Cell,

Wooden Gallop. Worked with Judson Group, theatre/dance. Workshop experimental exchange. Lighting for Yvonne Rainer's "Terrain." 1st prize 5th international exhibition of prints, Ljubljana, Yugo. Show at Galerie Ileana Sonnabend, Paris. Ileana is a special person. First dance/theater piece: "Pelican" Washington, D.C. 1963. Carolyn Brown, P. Ultvedt & me. Carol on pointe, men on roller skates. Sound: collaged; radio, record, movie, T.V. source. Alice Denney, prod. Jewish Museum comprehensive survey show. First goy in new wing. Alan Solomon, dir. Surplus dance theater: artists; Lucinda Childs, Judith Dunn, Alex Hay, Deborah Hay, Robert Morris, Yvonne Rainer, Albert Reed, Steve Paxton & me. "Shot Put" dance in darkness with flashlight on right foot. Music excerpt from "Swedish Bird Calls" by Oyvind Fahlstrom. Steve Paxton, prod. Flush, Tracer, Persimmon, Retroactive I & II, Buffalo, Skyway, Choke, Stunt, Trapeze, Whale, Press, Harbor, Quote, Tree Frog, Creek, Round Sum, Hedge, Lock, Trap. Whitechapel show (retrospective) London, Brian Robertson, dir. Broke attendance records. Included Dante Drawings. Went to London before opening, met London artists & made B.B.C. T.V. special. World tour with Merce Cunningham & Dance Co. as tech. Some of the sets & costumes had to be made in the particular environment, not to be duplicated. The lighting was done spontaneously because of esthetics & practicality. Strasbourg, Paris, Bourges, Venice (while we were there I won the 1st prize at the Venice Biennale.) Vienna, Mannheim, Essen, Cologne, Les Baux, Dartington, London, Stockholm (extra concert: Deborah Hay, Steve Paxton, Alex Hay, Oyvind Fahlstrom, David Tudor & me. "Elgin Tie," duet with Swedish cow.), Turku, Helsinki, Prague, Ostrava, Warsaw, Poznan, Krefeld, Brussels, Antwerp, Scheveningen/Den Haag, Bombay, Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, New Delhi, Bangkok, Tokyo, (extra concert. Exchange: Japanese/American. 10 Japanese painters, musicians, dancers & Deborah Hay, Steve Paxton, Alex Hay, & me.) Kobe, Osaka. End of tour I stopped in Hawaii. Amazing. Abrams publishes Dante Illustrations. More lithos; Universal Ltd. Art Editions. Drawing show Dwan Gallery Los Angeles. Fossil for Bob Morris, N.Y. Birdcalls for Oyvind Fahlstrom, Sleep for Yvonne Rainer. Finished "Oracle" (1965). Real work in progress, improved equipment & info. 1st prize Corcoran Biennial, Washington, D.C. "Axle". Dance/theatre pieces: "Spring Training" Sketch for A.F.A. in Boston. First N.Y. Theater rally artists: Carolyn Brown, Trisha Brown, Jim Dine, Judith Dunn, David Gordon, Alex Hay, Deborah Hay, Tony Holder, Robert Morris, the ONCE Group, Claes Oldenburg, Steve Paxton, Yvonne Rainer, Robert Whitman & me. Prod. by Steve Paxton & Alan Solomon Inc. "Dark Horse" a concert by Alex, Deborah & me

superimposed on final 3 dance concerts of rally. (I did Pelican, Alex Hay replacing Ultvedt, and Spring Training in full with Christopher R. debuting with 23 turtles with lights on their backs for organic lighting.) Map Room II for Cinematreque. 1966 Museum Mod. Art Dante Drawings show. 3 concerts for L.A. County Museum of Art. Theater piece for Washington, D.C. “Now Festival”. “Linoleum” Simone Whitman, Deborah Hay, Steve Paxton, Alex Hay, Christopher & Jill Denney. Linoleum televised for Ch. 13 NYC using superimpositions with mixer. 9 Evenings of Art & Technology at 69th Reg. Armory. A collaboration between artists & scientists & technology “Open Score” with a cast of 500 &, and closed circuit infra red T.V. projection, a tennis match in control of the lights. The beginning of E.A.T., Experiments in Art & Technology to function as a catalyst for the inevitable fusing of specializations creating a responsible man working in the present.