

PLATES

*Night Shades, 1991*



PLATE 1

*Party-Bird (Night Shade)*



PLATE 2

*Hollyhock Party (Night Shade)*

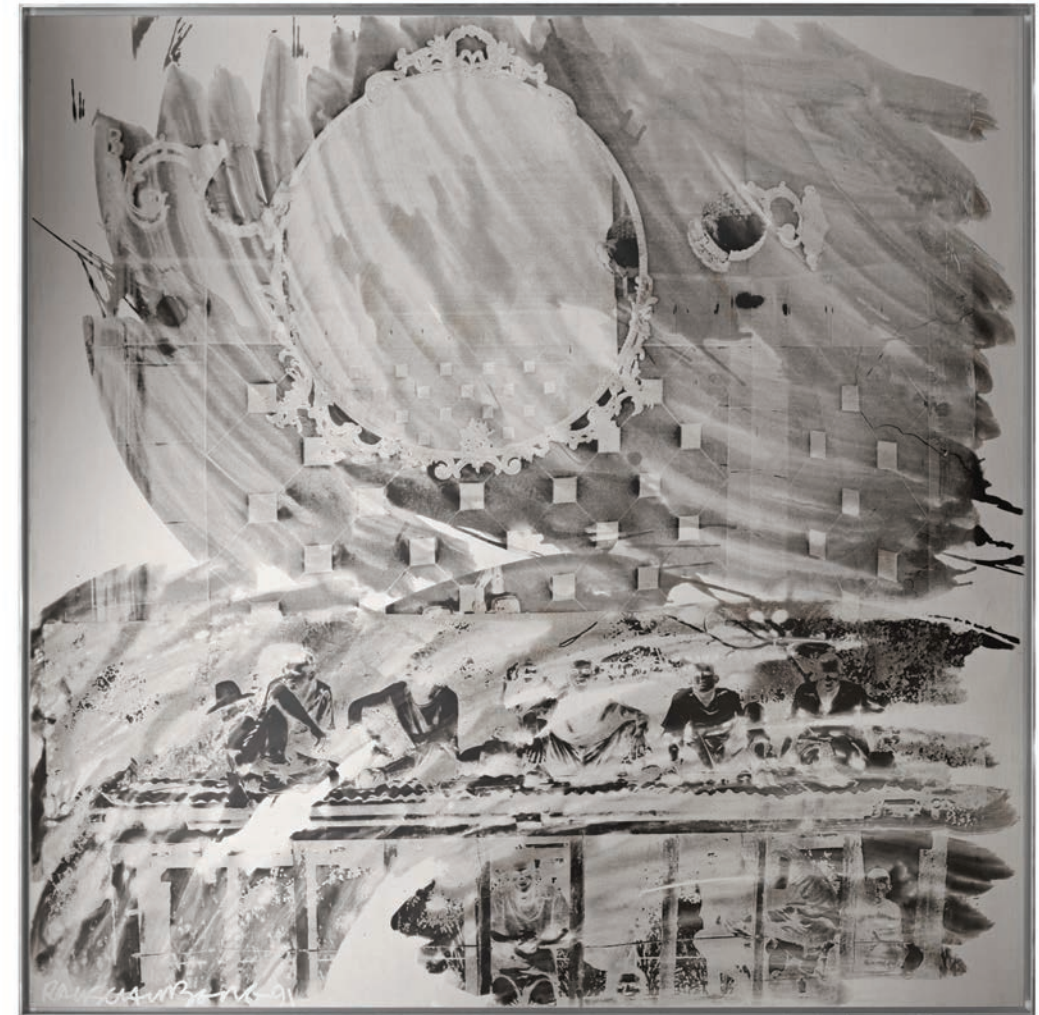


PLATE 3

*Vanities (Night Shade)*





PLATE 4

*Palm Sunday (Night Shade)*



PLATE 5

*Radiator Stop (Night Shade)*





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*Hydro (Night Shade)*



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PLATES

*Phantoms, 1991*

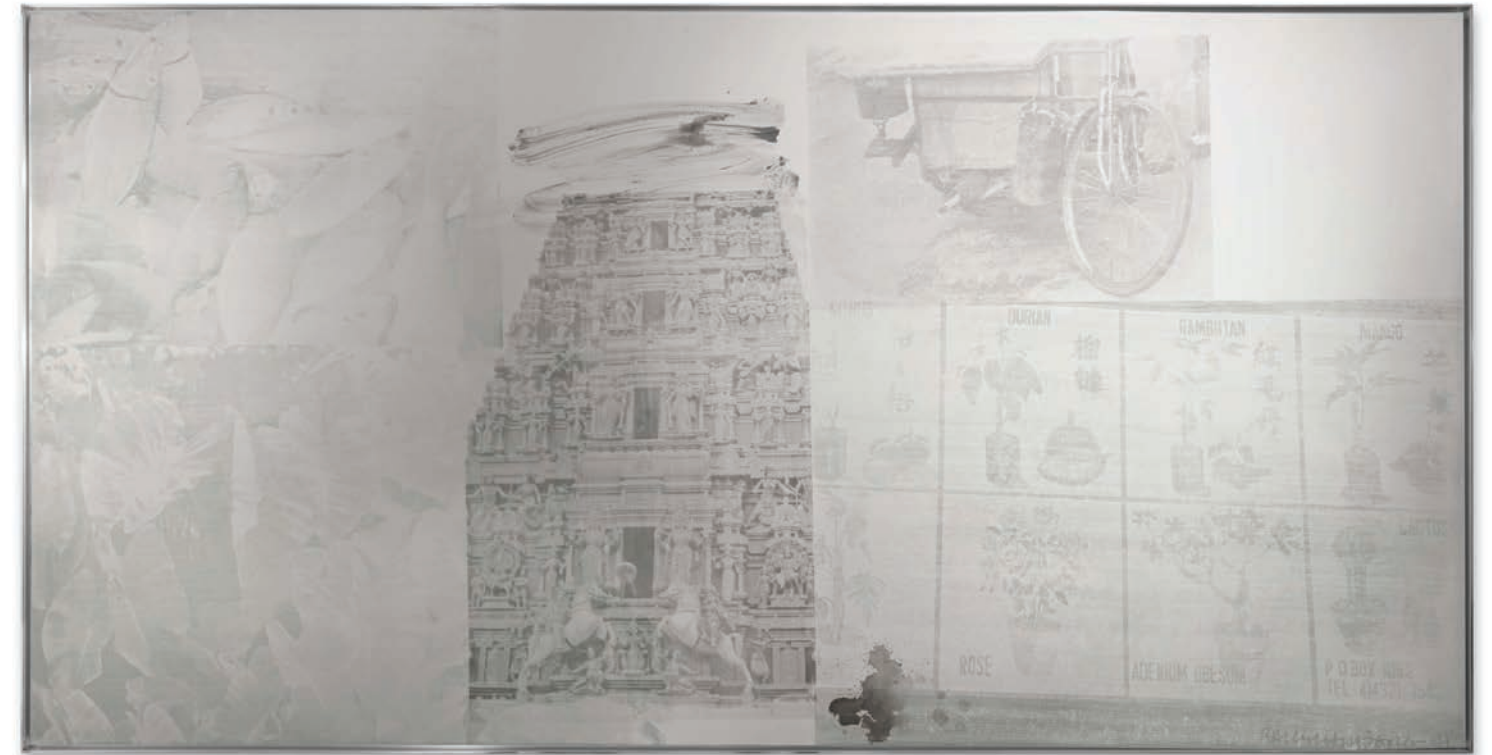


PLATE 16

*Hindu Hoopla (Phantom)*



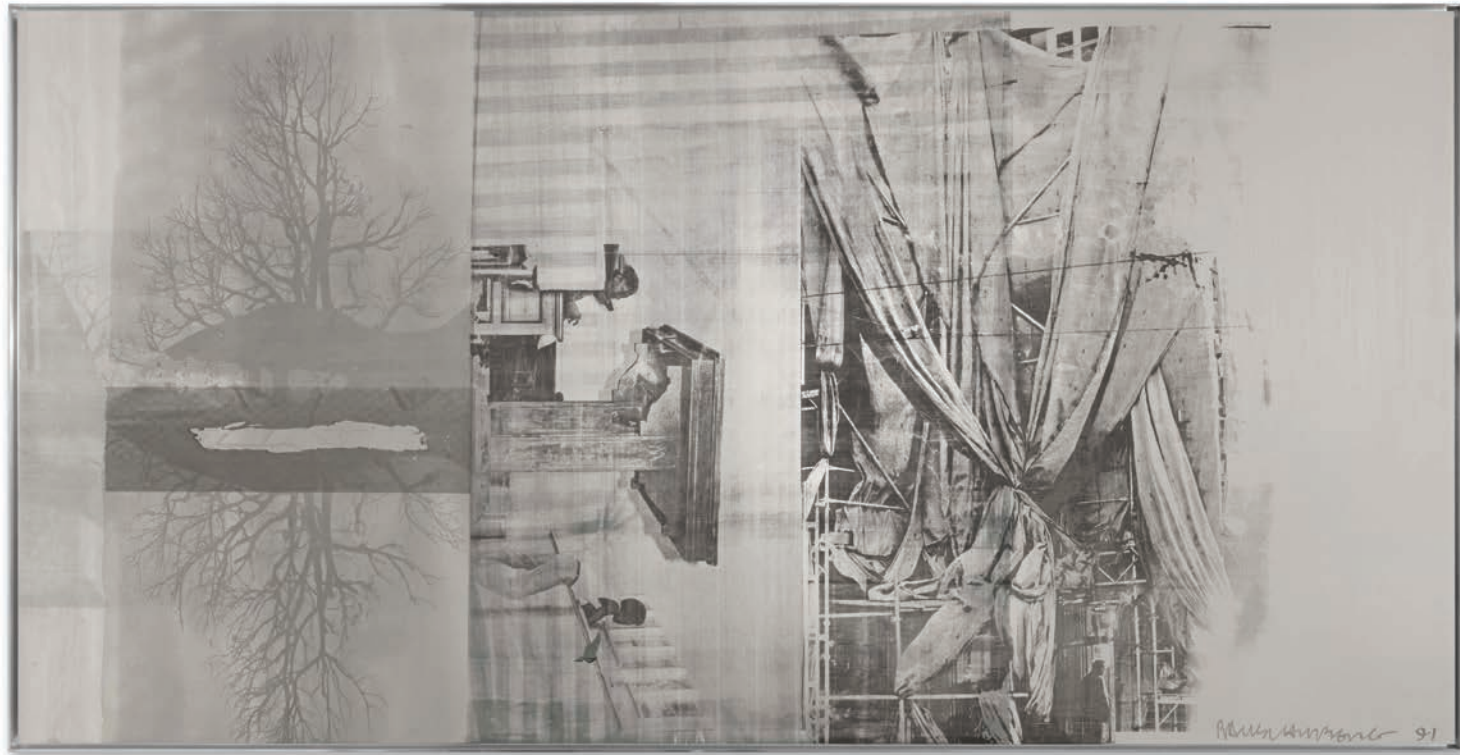


PLATE 17

*Botanical Vaudeville (Phantom)*



PLATE 18

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PLATE 20  
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PLATE 21  
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PLATE 22  
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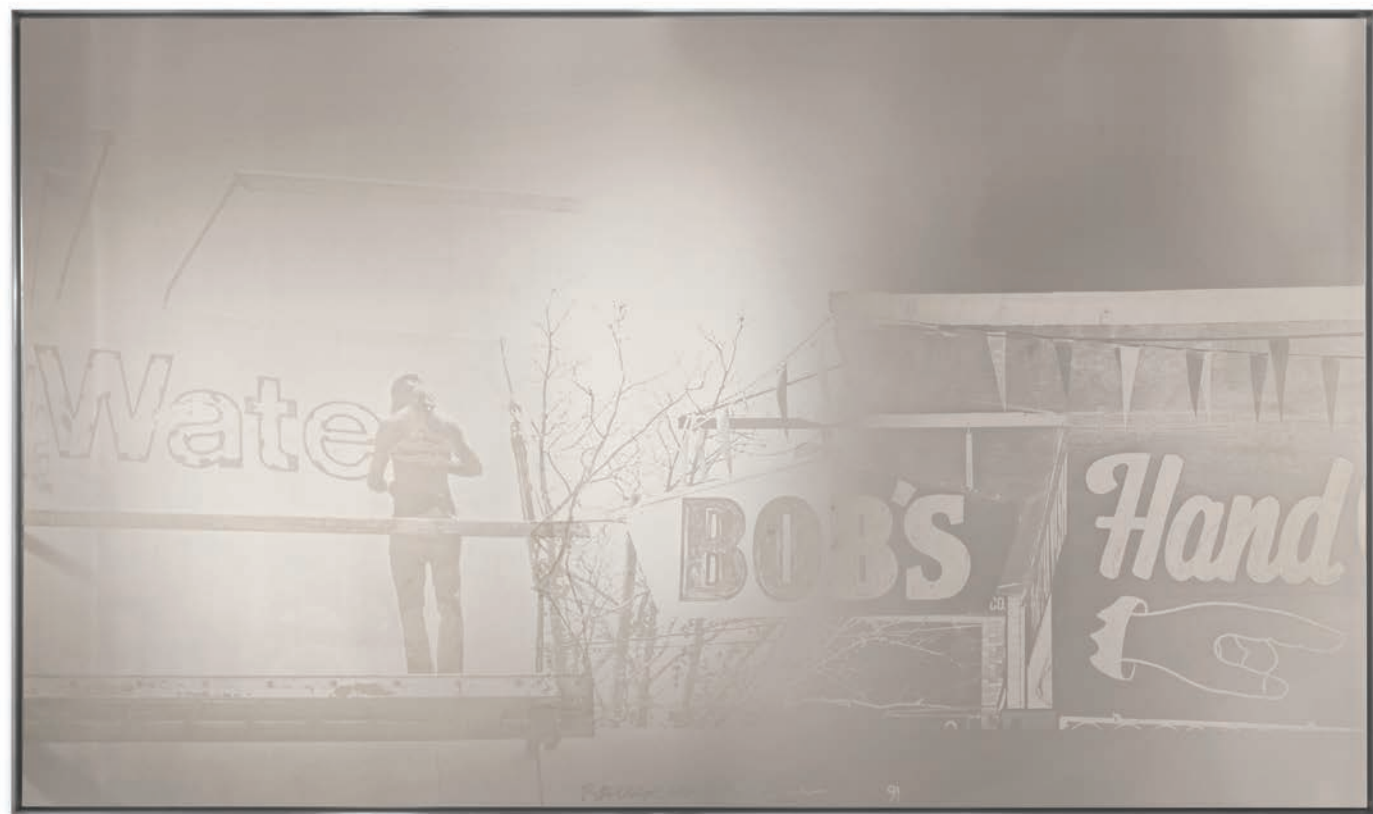


PLATE 23  
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PLATE 24  
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PLATE 25

*Office Break (Phantom)*



PLATES

**Photographs, 1979–87**



PLATE 26

*Fort Myers, Florida, 1979*



PLATE 27

*Fort Myers, Florida, 1979*



PLATE 28

*Charleston, South Carolina, 1980*





PLATE 29

*Charleston, South Carolina, 1980*

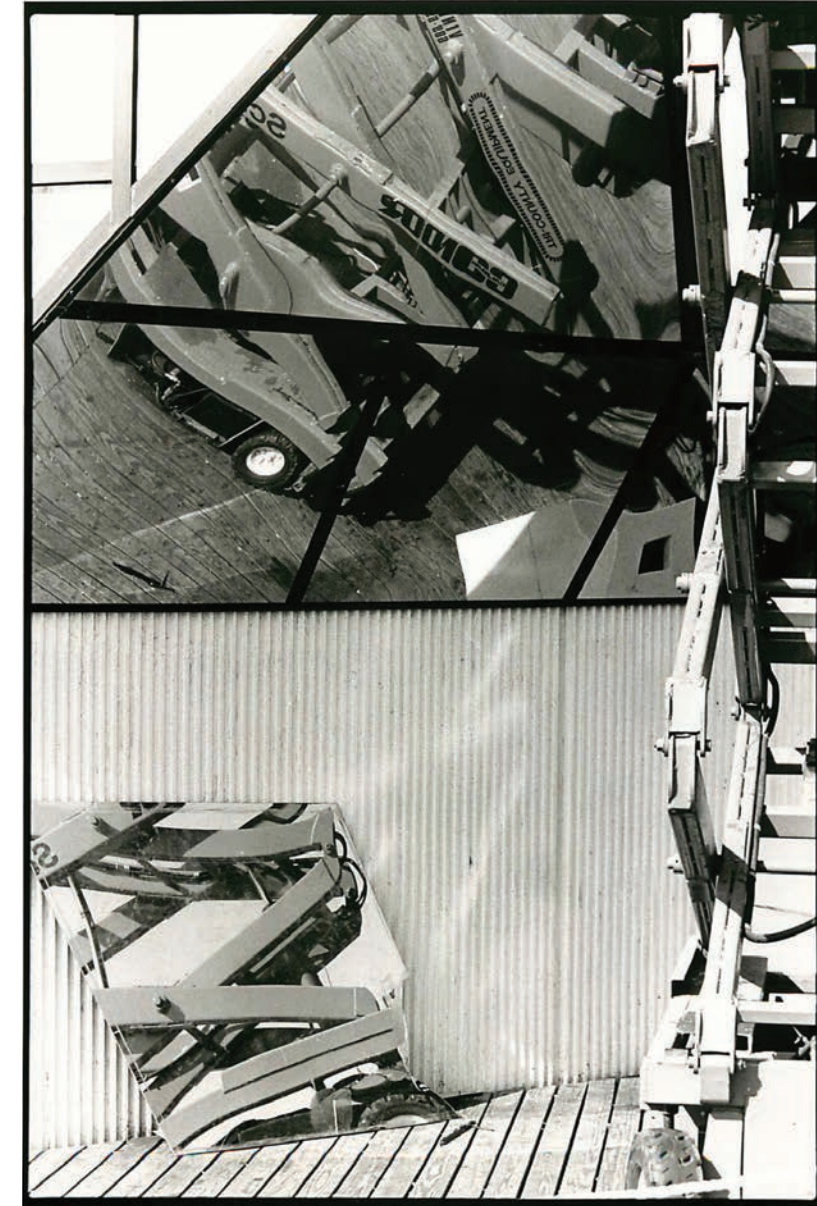


PLATE 30

*Atlantic City, New Jersey, 1980*





PLATE 31

*Boston, Massachusetts, 1980*



PLATE 32

*New York City, 1980*





PLATE 33  
*New Jersey, 1980*

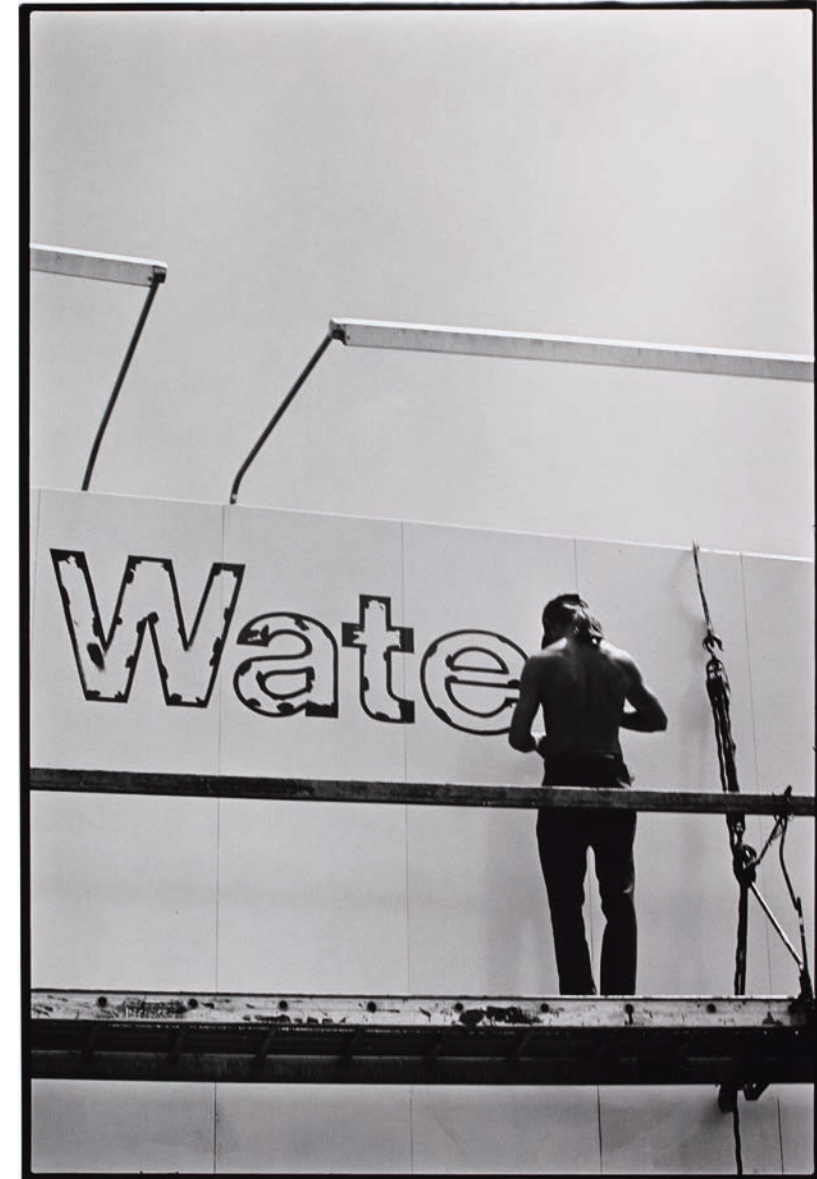


PLATE 34  
*Fort Myers, Florida, 1980*





PLATE 35

*Atlantic City, New Jersey, 1980*



PLATE 36

*New York City, 1981*





PLATE 37

*New York City, 1981*



PLATE 38

*Charleston, South Carolina, 1981*





PLATE 39

*Chiang Mai, Thailand, 1983*



PLATE 40

*Venezuela, 1985*





PLATE 41  
*Venezuela, 1985*



PLATE 42  
*Cuba, 1987*

#### WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

*Night Shades and Phantoms: An Exhibition of Works by Robert Rauschenberg* was held at the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, New York, March 18–July 19, 2019.

### *Night Shades*

The title *Night Shade* brings to mind the potentially deadly plant, but in this series of forty-five metal paintings, Rauschenberg connects the words to shadows, both in the pictorial and nether realms. Countering the innate flatness of the silkscreened imagery, he modeled the surfaces with deep blacks, swaths of silvery grays, and highlights from partly reflective areas that remain exposed on the brushed and mirrored aluminum substrates. Painting with the appropriately named “Aluma Black” tarnishing agent, he shrouded the pictures in a cover of darkness. Each gestural swipe of the medium across the surface, whether applied at full strength or diluted with water, draws a curtain between the image and the viewer.

Over the course of his career, Rauschenberg regularly blurred the boundaries of artistic categories, and his *Night Shades* extended this practice in subtle ways. He made them with silkscreens, yet the corrosive Aluma Black burns into the plate with painterly tonal effect, akin to the intaglio printmaking process of aquatint. Using photographs as source material, they also evoke the origins of the medium itself—images are “developed” and “fixed” through a chemical process. The tarnished grounds recall the early photographs produced on light-sensitive metal plates, such as daguerreotypes and tintypes.

As much as the *Night Shades* aim to frustrate the viewer’s gaze, they also generate a melancholic mood, even when the artist added a note of levity with verbal punning in his titles. Their elegiac tone and palette may well owe to the moment of their making, 1991, during the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The series was conceived as Rauschenberg entered the final quarter of his life. Derived exclusively from his own photographs, and, hence, reflecting his view of the world, these works are undeniably retrospective. Analogous to distant memories, the foggy, blurred, and partially erased imagery of the *Night Shades* may well allude to the challenges of recall and coming to terms with the passage of time.

#### Plate 1

*Party-Bird (Night Shade)*, 1991

Tarnish and silkscreen ink on brushed aluminum, 48 × 36 inches (122 × 91.5 cm)

The delicate tracery of tree branches and leaves in *Party-Bird*—one of the more picturesque *Night Shades*, along with *Hollyhock Party (Night Shade)*—draws yet another kind of screen across our vision. At the lower left is a peacock perched in a tree, though it seems poised to traverse the curved path in the landscape that lies before it—a negative space seemingly formed by erasure. Close inspection of the source photograph (plate 40), however, reveals that part of the image remained “undeveloped.” It shows how Rauschenberg selectively applied an area of clear resist that was left untouched by the subsequent application of the darkening tarnish. Barely visible, it anticipates the ghostly traces of the *Phantoms*.

#### Plate 2

*Hollyhock Party (Night Shade)*, 1991

Tarnish and silkscreen ink on mirrored aluminum, 36 × 48 1/8 inches (91.5 × 122.1 cm)

The image on the left side of *Hollyhock Party* comes from a photograph of an elaborate fountain in Caracas, taken during a trip in 1985 in preparation for *ROCI VENEZUELA*, and features two statues separated by a tall stem of the



eponymous flower. A delicate web of textured foliage covers the right side of the piece, with effects similar to those found in *Party-Bird (Night Shade)*. The gentle brown tints used in a few of the *Night Shades*, like this one, are the result of a perhaps unforeseen chemical reaction. Such visual changes would have undoubtedly delighted Rauschenberg, given his embrace of unpredictable processes.

## Plate 3

*Vanities (Night Shade)*, 1991

Tarnish and silkscreen ink on brushed aluminum, 48 × 48 inches (122 × 121.9 cm)

The main motif of *Vanities* is derived from a photograph of a baroque mirror on a tiled wall, frustrates expectations. Instead of allowing the actual reflective surface of the aluminum panel to return our own image or mirror the space in which we stand, the artist rigorously obscured the looking glass with sweeping, dark-gray strokes. Rauschenberg's mirror hovers suggestively over a second image that silhouettes rows of men atop and inside of a makeshift structure. In the same decade that Rauschenberg made the *Night Shades* and *Phantoms*, photographers like Zoe Leonard, Nan Goldin, and Lyle Ashton Harris featured empty or off-kilter mirrors as metaphors for the feelings of difference inherent to their queer identity. Thwarted reflection became an emblem for otherness or, in the case of then-current Postmodernist theory, decentered subjectivity. Regardless of his own sexual identity or sexual politics, Rauschenberg denies any viewer of this picture a clear image of the self.

## Plate 4

*Palm Sunday (Night Shade)*, 1991

Tarnish and silkscreen ink on brushed aluminum, 36 × 47 ¾ inches (91.5 × 121.4 cm)

The pairing of tropical fronds and a church exterior produced the droll title, *Palm Sunday*. This *Night Shade* is one of the few instances where Rauschenberg silkscreened only one image, which he then cropped, positioned, and selectively tarnished to adumbrate certain qualities of his chosen subject. Here, the off-center composition reveals a brooding upper register that turns the ostensibly heavenly domain into a sinister stretch of sky. Raised in a religious household in Port Arthur, Texas, the artist had early ambitions of becoming a preacher, but grew disillusioned with the fundamentalist Church of Christ, in part because it forbade dancing. Indeed, the pronouncement “Jesus Saves” on the church's facade seems a fickle promise, swept up in a tornado of inky gestural swipes.

## Plate 5

*Radiator Stop (Night Shade)*, 1991

Tarnish and silkscreen ink on mirrored aluminum, 36 ⅞ × 47 inches (93.7 × 119.5 cm)

The clearest part of this murky image turns out to be the most deceptive. A truck with a flatbed trailer is parked in front of what appears to be a tree-dotted landscape, stretching into the distance, but the background is, in fact, a painted mural. Upon closer scrutiny, one notes the naive depiction of the foliage and the rows of clouds in the sky. In this picture within a picture, Rauschenberg momentarily fools us (or may successfully trick the less attentive observer), showing his hand at classic trompe l'oeil.

## Plate 6

*Hydro (Night Shade)*, 1991

Tarnish and silkscreen ink on mirrored aluminum, 48 × 83 ⅞ inches (122 × 213.2 cm)

This aqueous painting displays thematic unity across image, title, and facture. The punning title alludes not only to the fire hydrant, but also to the liquidity of Rauschenberg's gestural marks, which hydroplane across the surface—the result of the wet-on-wet process employed throughout the *Night Shades*. Rauschenberg reduced the blackening effects of the corrosive tarnish by using water-soaked rags to wipe away the Aluma Black while it was still wet. As in

much of his work, the artist's hand defers to the nature of the materials: even as he directed the tarnish and water to specific areas, they bubbled, pooled together, dripped, and splashed with painterly autonomy. Water is nature's mirror, and *Hydro*'s reflective surface turns Rauschenberg's fluid strokes into distorting ripples and the viewer into an unwitting Narcissus.

## Plate 7

*Path (Night Shade)*, 1991

Tarnish and silkscreen ink on brushed aluminum, 48 × 36 inches (122 × 91.4 cm)

## Plate 8

*Motor Range (Night Shade)*, 1991

Tarnish and silkscreen ink on brushed aluminum, 48 × 36 ⅞ inches (122 × 91.6 cm)

*Path* and *Motor Range* display a number of motifs ubiquitous in Rauschenberg's oeuvre—such as wheels, windows, animals, and chickens—underscoring the self-referential content of these metal paintings. In Combines such as *Monogram* (1955–59), or his first choreographed dance, *Pelican* (1963), Rauschenberg used wheels to evoke or provide mobility, while also alluding to life cycles and temporality. Both these *Night Shades* include modes of transportation suggestively placed at the bottom of their respective compositions, as if to picture metonymically the terrain to be traveled by the viewer's eye: a bicycle in *Path* and the truck wheels in *Motor Range*. The spectral images of the latter could easily be mistaken for metal sink stoppers, in another example of Rauschenberg's penchant for uncanny doubling. In *Path*, the squarely planted feet—a pictograph from an acupuncturist's chart—recall the artist's own traced feet in the drawing *Lawn Combed* (1954), and his illustration for *Canto XIV* (1959–60), from the series *Thirty-Four Illustrations for Dante's Inferno*.

## Plate 9

*Off the Walls (Night Shade)*, 1991

Tarnish and silkscreen ink on brushed aluminum, 48 × 48 inches (122 × 121.8 cm)

While Rauschenberg's artwork rarely makes overt political statements, *Off the Walls* attests to his engagement in international politics. The sweeping black strokes dramatically altered his photographs of the palimpsest of anonymous graffiti on the Berlin Wall, taken in November 1989, the same month that it came down. “FREEDOM,” scrawled in white letters across the base of the composition, heralds the liberation of East Germany. He completed this painting in 1991, shortly after the country's reunification. Not by chance, Rauschenberg topped the images of the wall with one of a billboard in New Orleans. The advertisement for “GLASS” evokes the broken shards of Kristallnacht, while “1945” (part of the company's telephone number) corresponds to the year World War II ended. All told, *Off the Walls* is a rallying cry against fascism and communism, a call to break down barriers erected by willful intolerance.

## Plate 10

*Neapolitan Excavation (Night Shade)*, 1991

Tarnish and silkscreen ink on mirrored aluminum, 84 × 48 inches (213.4 × 122 cm)

*Neapolitan Excavation* is both highly reflective and cast deep in shadow. Emphasizing the vertical format of this *Night Shade*, Rauschenberg stacked and overlapped images one on top of the other, a common compositional approach for him, but in this case, one that dovetailed with the “excavation” theme cued by the title. The dominant motif of the shovel appears to be caught in motion, an effect of the swishing strokes. It digs down to the image embedded below, a photograph of Naples's largest city square, the Piazza del Plebiscito, with its two bronze equestrian statues encircled by parked cars. A screenprint of stones forms the bedrock of the composition, completing Rauschenberg's archeological allusions.

## Plate 11

*Avenue (Night Shade)*, 1991

Tarnish and silkscreen ink on mirrored aluminum, 83 ¼ × 47 ⅞ inches (211.5 × 121.5 cm)

## Plate 12

*Manhole House (Night Shade)*, 1991

Tarnish and silkscreen ink on brushed aluminum, 83 ⅞ × 48 inches (213 × 122 cm)

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Purchase, with funds from Leonard and Judy Lauder 2019.414

These large, commanding vertical panels are two of the most macabre and unsettling compositions within the series, their contents all but covered in a blanket of night, and they are worthy of the darker connotations of the series title. Little light enters into the pictorial space, where Rauschenberg obscured the reflective metal surface with swaths of inky chiaroscuro that range from somber grays to opaque black. Rauschenberg frequently shared source imagery across his different series. In *Manhole House*, the ominous-looking milk can that appears twice suspended on the right was used in a sculpture titled *Classic Cattleman Counter Column (Kabal American Zephyr)* of 1983. An iteration of the distressing image of an abandoned child's stroller at the top of *Avenue* can also be found in *Time Scan (Phantom)* (plate 18). In all these works, however, Rauschenberg transformed everyday things into disembodied, barely recognizable shapes.

## Plate 13

*Driveway Detour (Night Shade)*, 1991

Tarnish and silkscreen ink on brushed aluminum, 48 ⅞ × 60 inches (122.2 cm × 152.3 cm)

Rauschenberg screenprinted only two, not three, photographs for *Driveway Detour*, though the patches of dark tarnish and shiny areas of the metal ground left in reserve suggest an absent third one. The image at left, with the sign “NO OUTLET” placed upside down, was taken in Miami in 1987. He snapped the other photograph of a house and driveway (with directions “IN” and “OUT”) during a 1991 visit to his home state of Texas (fig. 4, p. 16). Always on the lookout for coincidence, Rauschenberg noted a signpost indicating “Lafayette St.,” the same street address as his New York City home and studio. Lafayette is also the name of the Louisiana town that Rauschenberg's family moved to in 1945. The title thus refers to the roundabout visual excursions in Rauschenberg's metal paintings and to the life-changing detours that led him from Texas to New York, and eventually to Florida, adding additional layers of depth to this particular *Night Shade*.

## Plate 14

*Monday (Night Shade)*, 1991

Tarnish and silkscreen ink on mirrored aluminum, 48 × 60 inches (121.9 × 152.3 cm)

*Monday* is composed of two images: a single towel hanging from a clothesline on the left and an unidentified cruciform object on the right. In the original photograph of the clothesline (plate 26), a white towel is set against the night sky. At least four different steps were involved in the making of *Monday* (whose title refers to laundry day). First Rauschenberg screenprinted both images with clear resist and then he applied the Aluma Black with sweeping strokes over much of the panel. Lastly, he made two, different-sized impressions of the towels using two layers of silkscreen ink: the first, larger image in white, over which he printed the second, smaller one in black, where the clothesline appears prominently. The end result appears to be a solarized image of a black towel that “casts” a white shadow. The before- and-after comparison allows one to see—if not fully understand—the complex techniques used by the artist to bring his matter-of-fact photographs into the evocative realm of the painterly.

## Plate 15

*Drums (Night Shade)*, 1991

Tarnish and silkscreen ink on brushed aluminum, 48 × 35 ⅞ inches (121.9 × 91.2 cm)

Rauschenberg composed *Drums* with two separate photographic images of roughly equal dimensions, but applied passages of dramatic chiaroscuro so that they appear as one. The upper photograph of a rooftop in Cuba captures the silhouetted figure of a boy standing next to a clothesline (plate 42). The one below, featuring a stack of oil drums, was taken in Miami. Together they might bring to mind the image of Huckleberry Finn posed defiantly on his raft, with the post of the laundry-line simulating a mast.

## Phantoms

The ghost-like appearance of the *Phantoms* emerged by chance. This creative method was not unusual for Rauschenberg, an artist who “collaborated” with his materials and often pushed the limits of their intended use. In a typically fortuitous moment, he intended to apply the tarnishing process he was then using in his *Night Shades* to anodized mirrored aluminum, unaware that the oxidizing agent, Aluma Black, would not chemically react with the pre-treated metal. The result was a spectral image that barely registered, immediately appealing to Rauschenberg's interest in veiling and obfuscation. Among all the metal painting series, the imagery in the *Phantoms* is the most difficult to discern.

Reductive in composition, the *Phantoms*, which number eighteen in total, contain few of the painterly splatters and sweeping gestures used aggressively in the other metal paintings, including the *Night Shades*. The apparitional quality of the *Phantoms* is intensified when they are exhibited in natural light. Each panel changes in appearance depending on the degree of ambient illumination, the reflections of external objects, and the angle of view. The ways in which the *Phantoms* register their environment recall Rauschenberg's *White Paintings* (1951): both series function as “clocks of the room.” John Cage famously referred to those pristine monochromes as “airports for lights, shadows, and particles,” underscoring the role of transience and contingency, or “changing what is seen by means of what is happening.” In the *Phantoms* Rauschenberg makes the viewer aware of the physical act of looking over time and through space: discerning the overlay of screens; making sense of intrusive reflections, including one's own; moving to and fro to discover hidden tints of pale color; and grasping at forms that momentarily linger, coalesce, or dissipate. Activated by light, Rauschenberg's *Phantoms* turn dormant by the end of the day, as night-fall slowly blankets them in shadow.

## Plate 16

*Hindu Hoopla (Phantom)*, 1991

Silkscreen ink on anodized mirrored aluminum, 48 ½ × 96 inches (123.2 × 243.8 cm)

Private collection

The five separate images in *Hindu Hoopla*—an unusually high number for the *Phantoms*—all come from Rauschenberg's trip to Malaysia in 1989, one of ten countries he visited during his ROCI tour (1984–91). This panoply documents some of what captured his interest during his travels at home and abroad, notably architectural facades, different types of signage, flora and fauna, and wheels. Above the central image of an intricately carved temple, Rauschenberg added a seemingly gratuitous painterly flourish, which deliberately draws attention to the high reflectivity of the surface. The artist placed such discrete strokes or splatters exactly in his *Phantoms*, respecting the integrity of the already tenuous image and contributing to the overall compositional balance, in contrast to the expansive and obscuring gestural fields of the *Night Shades*.



## Plate 17

*Botanical Vaudeville (Phantom)*, 1991

Silkscreen ink on anodized mirrored aluminum, 48 ½ × 96 inches (123.1 × 243.7 cm)

Though visible only to a mobile and discerning eye, several works in the *Phantom* series contain delicate traces of one or more pastel hues, as with *Botanical Vaudeville*. This tripartite composition features a green-tinged image of a tree (rotated at far left) and a pattern of faint blue stripes at center. Depending on the lighting, the far-right section, depicting a construction site, can take on a mauve-gray tint. In 1948–49, while at Black Mountain College, Rauschenberg studied with the Bauhaus artist and educator Josef Albers. In his seminal volume, the *Interaction of Color* (1963), Albers writes, “In visual perception a color is almost never seen as it really is—as it physically is. This fact makes color the most relative medium in art.” Undoubtedly, Rauschenberg would have been innately aware of the fugitive effects of color in the *Phantoms*, given his subtle additions to the already muted silkscreen palette, and the vivid hues reflected into the pictorial space from the surroundings. Note the painterly dollop of silkscreen ink, the same tint as the tree, that rests on the surface at lower center.

## Plate 18

*Time Scan (Phantom)*, 1991

Silkscreen ink on anodized mirrored aluminum, 48 ½ × 60 ⅞ inches (123.3 × 152.7 cm)

Private collection

Nostalgia permeates this metal painting, whose title and content refer to the passage of time (“scan” meaning a form of looking, but also making a rhyming pun on “span”). Rauschenberg paired images of a discarded baby carriage in New York and the clock at the Musée d’Orsay in Paris. The latter photograph was taken inside the museum through the window, so that the hands appear to run backward. Between them he screenprinted a snapshot of a child, visible from the waist down, leaning onto a wooden scooter stenciled with a “thumbs-up” symbol. The combination of images is undeniably wistful—perhaps a commentary by the then sixty-six-year-old Rauschenberg on innocence lost and a desire to turn back the clock. Such sentiments may seem odd from an artist who disparaged psychological interpretations and claimed never to have seen “a sad cup of coffee.” Autobiographical elements, however, often leave their phantom traces in Rauschenberg’s works.

## Plate 19

*Alley Wise (Phantom)*, 1991

Silkscreen ink on anodized mirrored aluminum, 48 × 47 inches (122 × 119.4 cm)

## Plate 20

*House Call (Phantom)*, 1991

Silkscreen ink on anodized mirrored aluminum, 48 × 48 ½ inches (122 × 123.1 cm)

Although Rauschenberg frequently repeated the same source image within a single work and across his silkscreened metal painting series, he nearly always transformed the allusions and appearance through collage juxtapositions and different color applications. In *House Call* and *Alley Wise*, he faintly imprinted identical silkscreens of a photograph of a pair of windows from adjacent New York buildings, disguised by subtle variations in tint and positive/negative reversals (plate 36). These compositions epitomize Rauschenberg’s interest in split screens, framing devices, and finding difference in repetition. The two windows—one open, the other shuttered with a makeshift cardboard curtain—represent a tension common to the *Night Shades* and *Phantoms*: a push-and-pull between visual access and denial of the viewer’s gaze.

## Plate 21

*Holy Molley (Phantom)*, 1991

Silkscreen ink on anodized mirrored aluminum, 48 ⅞ × 59 inches (123.4 × 149.8 cm)

*Holy Molley* is a study in contrasts. Rauschenberg juxtaposed images of a hen and a roast chicken with a close-up detail of two carved statues, so that the two- and three-dimensional forms respectively resist and create perspectival depth. The divided spatial composition underscores a contrast that Rauschenberg staged between the prosaic and poetic. The stone drapery’s ethereal light and shadow modulations, caught by his camera, heighten the evocative gesture of the sculpted hands, which recall Christ’s open palms bearing the stigmata after his resurrection. The flat outline drawing of the chickens is lighter in mood. Barnyard fowl appear as a leitmotif throughout Rauschenberg’s career, beginning with the *Combines* (1954–64), though here the animal amusingly exists as both a cartoon and a rotisserie dinner.

## Plate 22

*Bounders (Phantom)*, 1991

Silkscreen ink on anodized mirrored aluminum, 48 ½ × 59 ⅞ inches (123.1 cm × 152.2 cm)

*Bounders* brings together two of Rauschenberg signature leitmotifs: curtains and building facades. The bountiful fabric in the upper register drapes over a house, where laundry has been hung to dry from a second-story balcony (plate 28), in a sequence of overlays that block our view into space. Rauschenberg adds to the visual screening with a latticework of clapboard siding, lines, railing, stairs, and window frames. The traffic sign “DO NOT ENTER” acknowledges the artist’s intent. He only provides access at the margins, through the strips of mirrored surface left bare on either side of the composition. Yet, viewer beware of the reflections that gain ground within the pictorial space, for these can only be a mirage.

## Plate 23

*Literacy (Phantom)*, 1991

Silkscreen ink on anodized mirrored aluminum, 49 ½ × 85 inches (125.7 × 215.9 cm)

*Literacy* epitomizes Rauschenberg’s play with word and image in a composition dominated by signage. “Literacy” refers not only to the ability to read or write but also to a person’s proficiency in a specific field. Rauschenberg represents his own creativity or “hand” in written and pictographic forms. His deliberate misspelling of “literacy” draws attention to the homonymic intrusion of the visual: liter[see]. “Bob’s Hand” points beyond the frame (plate 33), claiming authorship of this work. Donald Saff, the experimental printmaker and artistic director of ROCI, once remarked that Rauschenberg’s titles were “just a continuation of the art,” that “extended out to the people” and compelled them to “participate.”

## Plate 24

*Marsh Haven (Phantom)*, 1991

Silkscreen ink on anodized mirrored aluminum, 60 × 48 ½ inches (152.5 × 123.2 cm)

Inhabiting the gray zone between the two series, *Marsh Haven* is technically a *Phantom*, but is closer in tonality to *Night Shades* such as *Driveway Detour* (plate 13). The contained area of spontaneous brushwork at lower left and the lack of deep, enveloping shadows reaffirm its phantom presence. Nonetheless, the in-between status of *Marsh Haven* confirms that in Rauschenberg’s art and creative approach nothing was ever black or white or strictly defined. Only the rule of the unpredictable is certain.

## Plate 25

*Office Break (Phantom)*, 1991

Silkscreen ink on anodized mirrored aluminum, 48 ½ × 24 inches (123.2 × 61.1 cm)

One of the smallest works in either series, *Office Break* delivers a large laugh with its corny title, indicative of Rauschenberg’s penchant for verbal/visual puns. A building facade houses an overlaid screenprint of an office chair, and both hover over a charging water buffalo. The conflation of images captures the feeling of being let loose from the confines of work, routine, and constricted spaces into the freedom of the open streets. The placement of the artist’s clearly visible signature confirms his self-identification with the adventure-seeking, wide-roaming animal, although the title offers a humorous respite for every worker to enjoy.

## Photographs, 1979–87

In his metal paintings from the 1980s and 1990s, Rauschenberg replaced the appropriated print media that defined his earlier silkscreen series (1962–64) with his own black-and-white photographs, marking a shift from the public world of popular culture to the private realm of autobiography. The examples chosen for this exhibition reveal the dominant subject of Rauschenberg’s camera eye, namely vision itself, which he explored through mirroring, layered spatial planes, and abstract patterns of light and shadow. Of all the metal paintings, the *Night Shades* and *Phantoms*—with their reflective surfaces and grayscale palette—are most strongly linked to the artist’s photographic practice. The selection of photographs also includes certain source images used in these two series, revealing how Rauschenberg intensified the act of visual veiling and discernment through the silkscreen process.

Rauschenberg’s career-long engagement with photography began at Black Mountain College near Asheville, North Carolina, where his instructor, Hazel Larsen Archer, encouraged him to crop the field of view within the camera and print his negatives “full frame.” After photographing steadily through the early 1960s, Rauschenberg largely put his cameras aside until 1979, when he took hundreds of pictures in and around Fort Myers, Florida, to be included in the stage design for Trisha Brown’s *Glacial Decoy*, which premiered in 1979. This photographic campaign was followed by others: *In + Out City Limits* (1979–81) and the Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange (ROCI; 1984–91). These three projects provided the artist with a personal archive—what Rauschenberg called a “repertoire of possible images”—to use in his metal paintings. Rauschenberg trained his camera on the overlooked, forgoing the vista for details hidden in plain sight. Generally void of people (though human simulacra and referents abound), his photographs document facades, signs, window displays, murals, draped cloth, and such other favored motifs as animals, wheels, and a miscellany of discarded consumer objects. In 1981, Rauschenberg explained, “You wait until life is in the frame, then you have the permission to click,” noting, “Photography is like diamond cutting. If you miss you miss.” Even more than the photographs themselves, the *Night Shades* and *Phantoms* capture the dual sensation of precision and ephemerality.

## Plate 26

*Fort Myers, Florida*, 1979. Gelatin silver print, 19 × 13 inches (48.3 × 33 cm)

## Plate 27

*Fort Myers, Florida*, 1979. Gelatin silver print, 19 × 13 inches (48.3 × 33 cm)

## Plate 28

*Charleston, South Carolina*, 1980. Gelatin silver print, 13 × 19 inches (33 × 48.3 cm)

## Plate 29

*Charleston, South Carolina*, 1980. Gelatin silver print, 13 × 19 inches (33 × 48.3 cm)

## Plate 30

*Atlantic City, New Jersey*, 1980. Gelatin silver print, 19 × 13 inches (48.3 × 33 cm)

## Plate 31

*Boston, Massachusetts*, 1980. Gelatin silver print, 19 × 13 inches (48.3 × 33 cm)

## Plate 32

*New York City*, 1980. Gelatin silver print, 13 × 19 inches (33 × 48.3 cm)

## Plate 33

*New Jersey*, 1980. Gelatin silver print, 13 × 19 inches (33 × 48.3 cm)

## Plate 34

*Fort Myers, Florida*, 1980. Gelatin silver print, 19 × 13 inches (48.3 × 33 cm)

## Plate 35

*Atlantic City, New Jersey*, 1980. Gelatin silver print, 13 × 19 inches (33 × 48.3 cm)

## Plate 36

*New York City*, 1981. Gelatin silver print, 13 × 19 inches (33 × 48.3 cm)

## Plate 37

*New York City*, 1981. Gelatin silver print, 12 7⁄8 × 19 1⁄8 inches (32.7 × 48.6 cm)

## Plate 38

*Charleston, South Carolina*, 1981. Gelatin silver print, 13 × 19 inches (33 × 48.3 cm)

## Plate 39

*Chiang Mai, Thailand*, 1983. Gelatin silver print, 13 × 19 inches (33 × 48.3 cm)

## Plate 40

*Venezuela*, 1985. Gelatin silver print, 19 × 13 inches (48.3 × 33 cm)

## Plate 41

*Venezuela*, 1985. Gelatin silver print, 13 × 19 inches (33 × 48.3 cm)

## Plate 42

*Cuba*, 1987. Gelatin silver print, 13 × 19 inches (33 × 48.3 cm)

Didactic texts and object labels by Emily Braun, Daniela Mayer, Chris Murtha, Lucy Riley, Joseph Shaikewitz, and Melissa Waldvogel. Unless otherwise noted, all works from the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation holdings.





Installation view, *Night Shades and Phantoms: An Exhibition of Works by Robert Rauschenberg*, March 18–July 19, 2019, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, New York. Left to right: *Party Bird*, *Hollyhock Party*, *Vaniities*, *Palm Sunday*, *Radiator Stop*, and *Hydro* (all *Night Shades* series, 1991).





Installation view, *Night Shades and Phantoms: An Exhibition of Works by Robert Rauschenberg*, March 18–July 19, 2019, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, New York. Left to right: *Hindu Hoopla* and *Botanical Vaudeville* (both *Phantom* series, 1991).



Installation view, *Night Shades and Phantoms: An Exhibition of Works by Robert Rauschenberg*, March 18–July 19, 2019, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, New York. Left to right: *Time Scan*, *Alley Wise* (top), *House Call* (bottom), and *Holy Molley* (all *Phantom* series, 1991).





Installation view, *Night Shades and Phantoms: An Exhibition of Works by Robert Rauschenberg*, March 18–July 19, 2019, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, New York. Left to right: *Path*, *Motor Range*, and *Off the Walls* (all *Night Shades* series, 1991).



Installation view, *Night Shades and Phantoms: An Exhibition of Works by Robert Rauschenberg*, March 18–July 19, 2019, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, New York. Left to right: *Neapolitan Excavation*, *Avenue*, and *Manhole House* (all *Night Shades* series, 1991).