



**Academy Art Museum Celebrates Robert Rauschenberg’s 100th Birthday with Landmark Exhibition
“Rauschenberg 100: New Connections” – Opening December 11, 2025**

Easton, MD – October 11, 2025 – The Academy Art Museum (AAM) will honor the 100th birthday of iconic American artist **Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008)** with *Rauschenberg 100: New Connections*, opening **December 11, 2025**. Presented in partnership with the [Robert Rauschenberg Foundation](#), the exhibition joins an international roster of institutions commemorating the artist’s centenary.

“Rauschenberg’s belief that art could nurture empathy and cross-cultural connection is as vital today as it was in his lifetime,” said Charlotte Potter Kasic, Director of the Academy Art Museum. “We are honored to celebrate his centennial in partnership with the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation and to share this story from the Eastern Shore to the world.”

At its center is ***Chinese Summerhall (1982)***—a one-hundred-foot-long color photograph created in collaboration with Graphicstudio at the University of South Florida. Rarely exhibited due to its monumental scale and fragility, the work will be on loan from the Foundation and shown alongside more than twenty Rauschenberg works from the Museum’s permanent collection.

“Something happened to painting around 1950,” wrote critic Leo Steinberg. That “something” was Rauschenberg: an artist whose openness to popular culture, everyday materials, and cross-disciplinary collaboration redefined what art could be. *Rauschenberg 100: New Connections* captures that spirit of experimentation and exchange, focusing on the artist’s groundbreaking 1982 trip to China and his creative partnership with **Donald Saff, who has lived and worked on Maryland’s Eastern Shore since 1991.**

The exhibition will also feature the premiere of ***100 Foot Photo***, a new film directed by Matt Kresling and presented at the Chesapeake Film Festival. The documentary chronicles the making of *Chinese Summerhall*, with commentary from Saff and other collaborators.

Local Connections, Global Impact

In 1982, Rauschenberg and Saff traveled across China, photographing everyday moments—from back alleys to rural landscapes. Using 52 of those negatives, Rauschenberg composed *Chinese Summerhall* with assistance from George Holzer, a researcher at Graphicstudio, who oversaw the intricate printing process.

Rauschenberg's connection to Maryland continues through Saff, who with his wife, Ruth, donated 28 Studies for Chinese Summerhall to the Museum in 2001. Their contributions and first-hand insight have deepened AAM's role in preserving and contextualizing Rauschenberg's legacy.

Rauschenberg 100: New Connections invites audiences to explore the artist's global vision while celebrating how his pioneering projects were grounded in collaboration—including those with artists and makers connected to Maryland's vibrant creative community.

From China to the World

Rauschenberg's 1982 journey laid the foundation for the **Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange (ROCI)**—a seven-year, Saff-led project that brought the artist to politically isolated nations including Cuba, the Soviet Union, East Germany, and Tibet. ROCI sought to foster global dialogue through art, culminating in a landmark exhibition at the National Gallery of Art in 1991.

Exhibition Details

Rauschenberg 100: New Connections

On view **December 11, 2025 – May 2026**

Curated by **Lee Glazer**, Academy Art Museum

Supported by the **Robert Rauschenberg Foundation**

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About the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation builds on the legacy of artist Robert Rauschenberg, emphasizing his belief that artists can drive social change. Rauschenberg sought to act in the “gap” between art and life, valuing chance and collaboration across disciplines. As such, the Foundation celebrates new and even untested ways of thinking.

About Rauschenberg 100

Robert Rauschenberg's (1925-2008) strong conviction that engagement with art can nurture people's sensibilities as individuals, community members, and citizens was key to his ethos. The Centennial celebrations seek to allow audiences familiar with him and those encountering the artist for the first time to form fresh perspectives about his artwork.

A year of global activities and exhibitions in honor of Rauschenberg's Centennial reexamines the artist through a contemporary lens, highlighting his enduring influence on generations of artists and advocates for social progress. The Centennial's activation of the artist's legacy promotes cross-disciplinary explorations and creates opportunities for critical dialogue.

About the Academy Art Museum

Founded in 1958, the Academy Art Museum is the Eastern Shore's leading cultural institution, accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. It combines the dynamism of an ambitious contemporary art museum with the intimacy of a community space. With five working studios, a 24,000 sq. ft. facility, and innovative programs including a robust artist-in-residence initiative and major commissions for its soaring atrium, the Museum is a destination for artists, scholars, collectors, and families alike.

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