



Student Name:
Class Period:
Date:

Meet the Originals

Texas Originals is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on Robert Rauschenberg. Then, answer questions about it.

Robert Rauschenberg 1925–2008

Port Arthur native Robert Rauschenberg was in his twenties before he saw paintings in a museum. The experience impressed him deeply. Within two decades, he would become one of the most influential artists of the twentieth century.

Rauschenberg studied pharmacology at The University of Texas before being drafted during World War II. He later studied at the Kansas City Art Institute and in Paris and attended the avant-garde Black Mountain College in North Carolina.

In 1949, Rauschenberg moved to New York. Looking beyond the Abstract Expressionism of that time, he realized that, as he put it, “painting relates to both art and life.”

Curious, open-minded, and unafraid of failure, Rauschenberg experimented with diverse materials. On the streets of lower Manhattan, he scavenged found objects—used boxes, tires, clocks—creating multilayered assemblages he called *Combines* that, in the words of critic Robert Hughes, “connect[ed] the language of his images to that of the wider world.” In the 1960s, he and Andy Warhol simultaneously incorporated the commercial technique of silkscreen printing into their artwork.

Rauschenberg was also a pioneer in printmaking, photography, choreography, and set design, collaborating with a diverse array of choreographers, composers, engineers, and artists.

Rauschenberg died in 2008. He has been the subject of multiple retrospective exhibitions and has work in the collections of major museums throughout the world.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Robert Rauschenberg. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. What did Robert Rauschenberg study prior to becoming an artist?
2. What were Rauschenberg's *Combines* made from?

Going Further: Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Taking a Position.** If you were to become an artist, what materials would you use to make your art? Why?