



TITLE: *Kip-Up*
ARTIST: Robert Rauschenberg
DATE: 1964
SIZE: 43 1/2" x 31 1/2"
MEDIUM: Lithograph
ACQUISITION # : 65.6
Additional Works in the Collection by the Artist? Yes No



"I work in the gap between art and life." RR

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Rauschenberg made his first lithograph in 1964 at Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE) in West Islip, New York. Created in 1964, *Kip-Up* is one of many lithographs created during the period 1964 - 1970. This six year span was important for Rauschenberg and the revival of lithographic printmaking. During this time Rauschenberg's interest in the lithographic printing process was renewed. Rauschenberg found a new appreciation for what he once referenced as an old-fashioned medium. Rauschenberg utilized numerous images taken from newspapers and magazines to aid in creating his work. Through his innovative use of image sources, Rauschenberg helped revive the viability of the lithographic printing process.

On the surface *Kip-Up* may appear to be messy and randomly put together, but Rauschenberg leaves nothing to chance. His work is complex and well thought out. Rauschenberg places images upon one another to disrupt the clarity of the piece and force viewers to take a closer look. His strategic placement of images leads the viewer to find a distinct image of an upside down glass half full of water. The placement of the image amidst a chaotic scene makes reference to the famous question, "Is the glass half full or half empty?" Viewers are asked to answer the question with a pessimistic or optimistic point of view. *Kip-Up* symbolically relates to the endless possibilities that city life has to offer. A person can live his/her life with the "half full" mentality or the "half empty" mentality. Rauschenberg reminds viewers they have the choice to seize, or not to seize, available opportunities and to embrace or ignore a city's problems.

ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY

Robert Rauschenberg's (October 22, 1925 - May 12, 2008) art is dramatic and confrontational. *Signs*, a collage created in 1970, confronts the apocalyptic sixties by depicting the war in Vietnam, the oppression of African Americans, and the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. Rauschenberg's enthusiasm for popular culture and his rejection of the seriousness of the Abstract Expressionists' work, like Barnett Newman's 1951-52 *Adam* or Franz Kline's 1950 *Chief*, led him to search for a new way of painting.



Barnett Newman, *Adam*, 1951-52, oil on canvas, 8' x 6', Tate Modern, London.



Franz Kline, *Chief*, 1950, oil on canvas, 58 3/8" x 6' 1 1/2", Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY.

Rauschenberg at first disliked the lithographic printmaking technique. He said it was old-fashioned, "the second half of the twentieth century is no time to start writing on rocks." Rauschenberg, however, became significant in the revival of lithography. Through lithography, Rauschenberg was able to blend his passion for painterly marks with the photographic image, as in his 1964 print titled *Kip up*.

REFERENCES

<http://www.bobrauschenberggallery.com>

RELATED TERMINOLOGY

Abstract Expressionism — Abstract Expressionism was an American post-World War II art movement, characterized by the view that art is nonrepresentational and the result of "action" within the canvas space.

Universal Limited Art Editions — A fine art print publisher established in 1957 by Tatyana Grosman. ULAE worked with Rauschenberg to spark a revival of lithographic printmaking in America. ULAE continues to collaborate with artists to publish small edition prints and artists' books.



Robert Rauschenberg, *Signs*, 1970, collage, 43" x 34", Private Collection, New York, NY.



Rauschenberg in his studio 1951 (left), and 2006.

“City” Tree Installations Grades K—12

Session Activity: Robert Rauschenberg lived with a disability, dyslexia. This is a multi-sensory project, a tree installation, which can be adapted for a wide range of ages and abilities, including adults with physical, perceptual, and cognitive challenges. Multi-sensory learning is often used for people with dyslexia. In this activity students will produce an installation which reflects the “city environment” of Rauschenberg’s piece, *Kip-Up*, but also the environment of the students.

Objectives:

- Students will gain an understanding of dyslexia and the challenges it presents to learning.
- Students will gain an understanding of the role dyslexia might play in the development of a unique artistic design.
- Students will explore placement and overlapping.
- Students will be introduced to multi-media.

Materials: markers, crayons, white construction paper, brown craft paper, scissors, masking tape or double sided tape, sound recording device, and any other desired materials, paint, cloth, glitter, old magazines, foliage, etc.

Procedure:

Robert Rauschenberg was diagnosed with dyslexia early in his career. Dyslexia is a disability with which many successful artists are diagnosed. Examples of other artists from the past with dyslexia are Leonardo Di Vinci and Pablo Picasso.

Ask students to research dyslexia to gain knowledge of this disability. Ask students questions for conducting their research. Questions you may want to ask are: What is dyslexia? What are the different types of dyslexia? What are the most common ways in which dyslexia shows itself? How is a dyslexic mind different? Can dyslexia be managed?

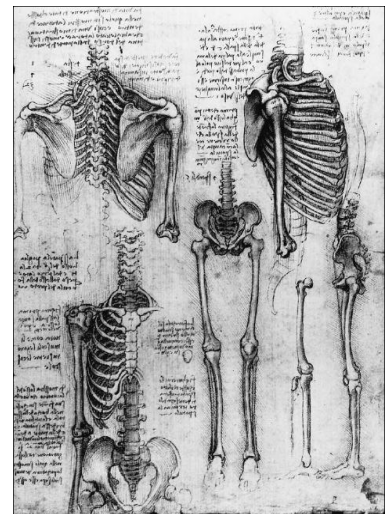
After this discussion, ask students to describe the way they feel *Kip-Up* relates to Rauschenberg’s disability. Sequencing and letter placement are two areas that someone with dyslexia might arrange differently. Discuss Rauschenberg’s placement of objects and layering in the piece. An example to discuss would be the water glass Rauschenberg presents to the viewers. Is the glass intentionally placed upside down or is this a result of his dyslexia? Another example would be areas that are heavily crowded, while others are left with negative space. Ask students to think about the role Robert Rauschenberg’s dyslexia might play in this piece.

1. Ask students to look at Rauschenberg’s imagery, identifying elements of NYC, and then ask them their views of the city in which they live. As in Rauschenberg’s *Kip-Up*, students will aim to convey a sense of their city in their project.
2. Students will make leaves in any shape or size they desire on white construction paper. Students should leave space between each leaf, in case of mistakes.
3. The leaves should be filled to convey images or textures found throughout their chosen city. Students will decide on the media they wish to use with their leaves. This may be collage, cloth, found materials, or paint. Encourage the creation of different textures.
4. Cut leaves out after filling them in.
5. Build two dimensional trunk, roots, and limbs on a wall in the classroom with brown paper or build a 3d structure if so desired.
6. As a group, students will decide on the placement and overlapping of the leaves.
7. After placement of the leaves, discuss sounds related to their imagery, the various sounds of the city.
8. Record these sounds with students.
9. Finally, as a group discuss the city tree installation. Ask students which areas of the work they most appreciate or like— which images, which textures, which sounds? Each student may talk about an aspect of the city he or she did not know before.

Vocabulary: **Orthogonal**—intersecting or lying at right angles.



Pablo Picasso, *Bust of a Woman with a Hat*, 1939, oil on canvas, ca. 21.5” x 18.5”, Estate of Pablo Picasso.



Leonardo Da Vinci, *Orthogonal Views of the Skeleton*, c. 1510-11, pen and ink, from Da Vinci’s journals, Collection of Her Majesty the Queen.

Visual Arts Sunshine State Standards: K– 5

Strand B: Creation and Communication

Standard: The student creates and communicates a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas using knowledge of structures and functions in visual arts.

Visual Arts Sunshine State Standards: 6—12

Strand D: Aesthetic and Critical Analysis

Standard: The student assesses, evaluates, and responds to the characteristics of works of art.

“City” Inspired Monoprints Grades 6—12

Objectives:

- Students will gain an understanding of the lithographic process as well as the monoprinting process.
- Students will gain an understanding of various components Rauschenberg used to create his lithograph, *Kip-Up*.
- Students will create pieces of art influenced by Robert Rauschenberg’s *Kip-Up* through monoprinting.

Materials: Printmaking ink or a thick water-based paint, paintbrushes, sheets of plexiglass, any size will do. You can find plexiglass for next to nothing at your local hardware store. You can also use old garage sale signs for this activity. You also need paper, a covered work area, and a small paint roller.

Procedure: Begin activity by discussing *Kip-Up* with students. Ask students Rauschenberg’s views of his city based on this piece. Then ask students their views of the city in which they live. Do they enjoy living there? What are some characteristics of their city? Examples which may be used are brick buildings, historic areas, parks, etc. After discussion, ask students to draw images they feel relate to their city and their views. These images will be used when creating the monoprints.

1. Place drawn image behind plexiglass.
2. Using a paintbrush, students will trace their images in paint onto the plexiglass.
3. Place paper over the plexiglass and rub lightly with the palm of your hand.
4. Peel away paper.



Ray Duffey, *Untitled*, 2009, monoprint, Maine College of Art.