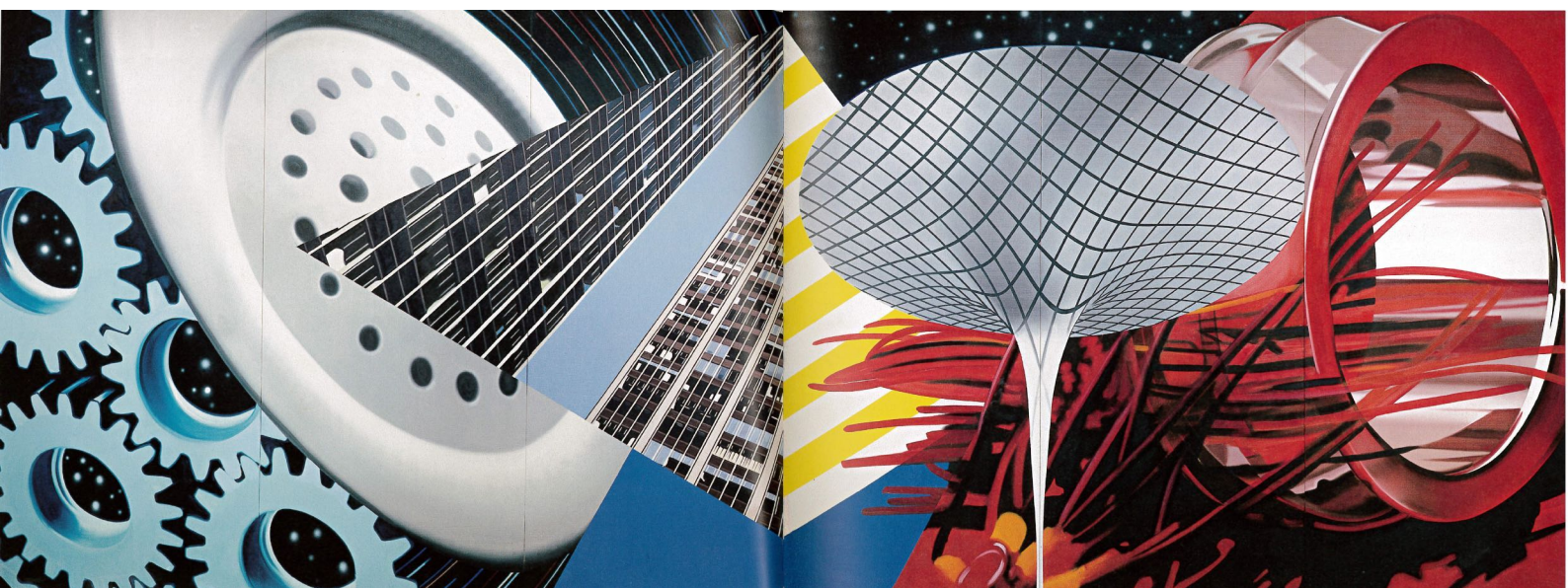
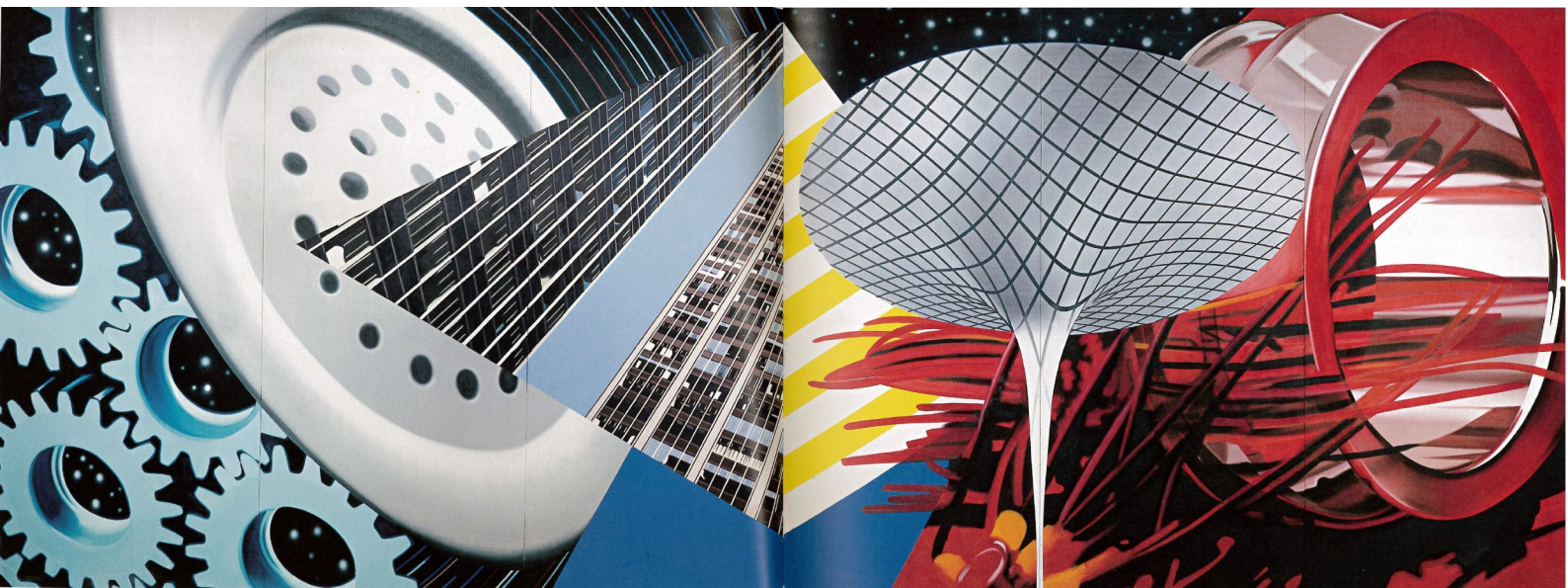


galerie
jean-françois
cazeau





James ROSENQUIST (1933-2017)

Eau de Robot, 1981-4

Huile sur toile/ Oil on canvas

Jonction de six panneaux / Six panels in jonction

274.3 x 731.5 cm

9' x 24'

Inv. aux Archives James Rosenquist sous n°84.20

Signed, dated and titled by the artist on the back

Provenance

Renault Co., Fondation l'Incitation, Paris (commande)

Jean Hamon (acquis auprès de l'artiste)

Succession Jean Hamon

In 1967, the automobile manufacturer Renault starts to commission works by famous artists of the time such as Vassarely, Jean Tinguely, Dubuffet and Simon Hantaï. In 1977 the company decides to create a dedicated fondation for the arts, called the *Incitation à la création*. Unfortunately, a period of troubles in the the late 1980s forces them to renounce the this enterprise. As a result, this work was given back and then bought from the artist by Jean Hamon. The title of the artwork, *Eau de Robot*, comes from the lubrifiant Renault used in their assembly line.

En 1967, le constructeur automobile Renault commence à commander des œuvres à des artistes célèbres de l'époque tels que Vassarely, Jean Tinguely, Dubuffet et Simon Hantaï. Plus tard, en 1977, l'entreprise décide de créer une fondation dédiée aux arts, appelée l'Incitation à la création. Malheureusement, une période de troubles à la fin des années 1980 les oblige à renoncer à cette entreprise. Par conséquent, cette œuvre est restituée puis rachetée à l'artiste par Jean Hamon. Le titre de l'oeuvre, Eau de Robot, derrive du lubrifiant utilisée par Renault dans la chaîne de production.

Expositions

Rosenquist, Moscow, oeuvres 1961-1991. Tretyakov Gallery, Central Hall of Artists, Moscow, U.S.S.R., 5 février- 5 mars, 1991.

James Rosenquist: a Retrospective, dir. Walter Hopps et Sarah Bancroft. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York et Bilbao, 2003. (ill. p.200-1, réf. 380)

Vertiges. Printemps de septembre à Toulouse, Toulouse, France. 23 septembre- 16 octobre 2005, ref. pp 21, 184 et ill. p. 75 et p.4.

James Rosenquist: Four Decades, 1970-2010, Paris, Thaddeus Ropac, 10 septembre 2016- 7 janvier 2017.

Automobile and Culture, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, July 21 1984-January 6 1985.

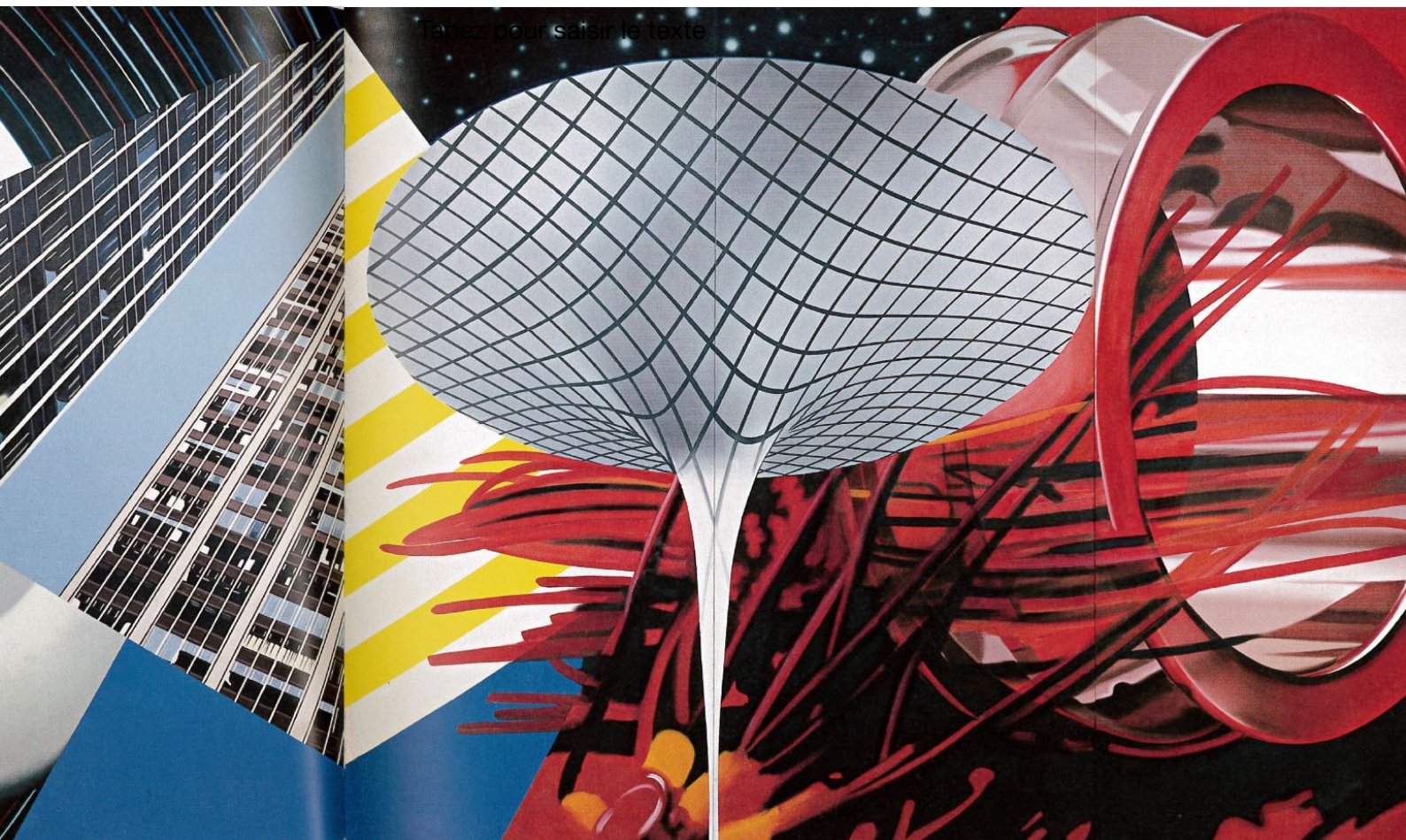
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Rosenquist, James, with David Dalton. *Painting Below Zero: Notes on a Life in Art*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. (ref. p. 280).

Diederich, Stephan, and Yilmaz Dziewior, eds. *James Rosenquist: Painting as Immersion*. With essays by Stephan Diederich, Sarah Bancroft, Tino Grass, Isabel Gebhardt, Tom Holert, Yilmaz Dziewior, and Tim Griffin. Munich, London, New York: Prestel Verlag, 2017. (ref. p. 293)

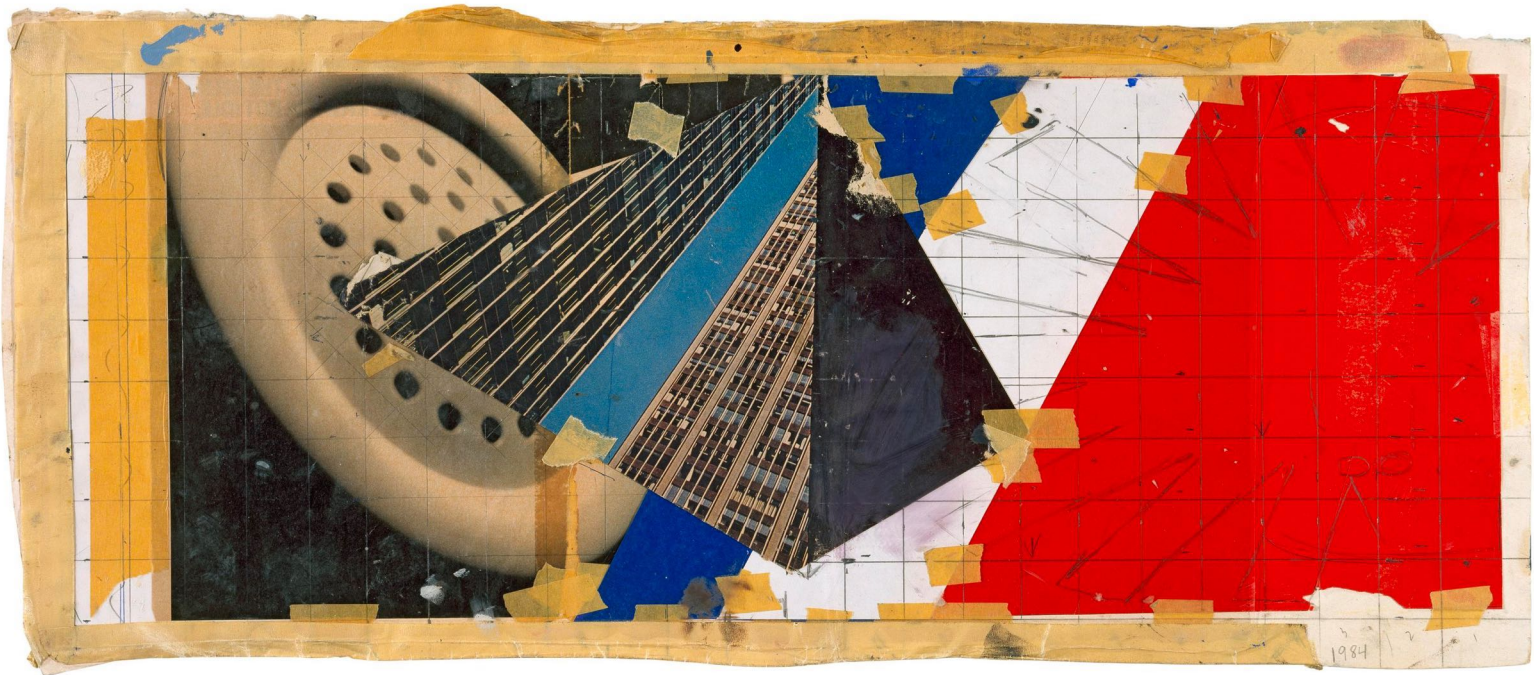


Detail of *Eau de Robot*, 1984 (Central panels).
274.3 x 731.5 cm

James Rosenquist, *Source for Eau de Robot*, 1984. Collage and mixed media on paper, with adventitious marks. 33 x 75.6 cm (13" x 29 3/4").

Destroyed in a studio fire on 25th May 2009.

Inv. arch. n°84.S11



Rosenquist and the Collage

Rosenquist's practice owes a lot to the idea of the collage. Working up close with details and creating works that extended long beyond his field of vision in his advertisement banners in Times Square, the artist started cropping images and reconstructing them in unusual ways: "I thought: how can I do a new kind of picture?...If I can take a fragment of something realistic and put the fragment in space at a certain size, I could make a painting where people would recognize something at a certain rate of speed. The largest fragment would be the closest and the hardest to recognize. Therefore, I could make a mysterious painting". Rosenquist would collect clippings from magazines and adds that he would then start to pin to his studio walls and organize. It is from the clippings incorporated into collages that he made the maquettes for his paintings. He focuses on their formal properties of shape and colour just as much as he does on their message. He adds, subtracts and reorders until the desired effect is achieved. His final paintings, with their warped perspectives and flat, flashy colours, are in no way realistic. But they do represent an intrusion of reality into the artwork the same way the first collages by Braque and Picasso, with their integration of newspaper clippings of current events, did. It is with this idea in mind that the French branch of Pop became known as the New Realists – and that the group show that first included Rosenquist at the Sidney Janis gallery was named the New Realists too.

James Rosenquist, *Eau de Robot*

«What really, really got to me was the idea that, could I ever do anything like Michelangelo?»

James Rosenquist

One of the pioneers of Pop Art together with Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol and Claes Oldenburg, James Rosenquist has created intriguing and surprising images of contemporary life. Drawing from the popular iconography of mass-media, advertisement – in part owing to his experience as a billboard painter – he developed a distinct voice in the movement, capable of capturing and conjuring the political and social tenor of the times with a keen sense of irony.

His passion for the abstract line and the emotivity of colour, drawing from his admiration for the abstract expressionist movement he grew up admiring in the late 40s and early 50s imbues his paintings with a vivacity of form, colour and line that is meant to both amaze and unnerve.

His perspective goes beyond the American way of life that Pop Art was so fond of, evolving into greater global truths. *Eau de Robot*, a 1984 commission by the Renault foundation in France, showcases this perfectly. The monumental format, comprised of six inter-locking panes that add to over 7 meters in width, is testament to the diffusion of ideas through the new means of communication of the Space Age. The artist has always been particularly fascinated by scientific phenomena and the hardware of technology. Deeply aware of the power of the mechanisms of mass media from his years in advertisement, Rosenquist reformulates household items, like the telephone, together with scientific references and moving mechanical parts into an entirely new message. The red, white and blue colour palette, together with the mechanical parts, are meant to be a clear reference to the commissioner of the work, the French automobile manufacturer Renault. The kaleidoscope of disparate images is ordered by the central motif of a prism, perhaps a nod to the ongoing project for the glass Louvre Pyramid that had just been green-lit. The difference in scale of the presented objects – the telephone, the fibre-wire cables, creates a narrative that is at the same time enigmatic and fascinating to the viewer. His painting resembles a hallucinatory dream, where objects float in outer space, feeling no pull of gravity. The scale is strange, as is the centre prism that seems to pull and wrap the objects into a parallel universe. In a way the painting, with its vertigo effect on the viewer, pulls the spectator in a different world.

Rosenquist borrows from the power of history painting in order to absorb the viewer into his work, making use of the large format and the difference in scale. The monumental scale of the painting makes it an environment all on its own, stretching the limits of the human eye, making the viewer traverse the artwork. The Renault commission called, after all, for a “mural”. But the electric, flashy colours of the amalgam of forms, including its flag-like quality, owes more to advertisement and propaganda. It is a deep reflexion upon the nature and dynamics of modern capitalist and mechanical culture, with the booming exuberance of the industrial complex. Distinct from other Pop artists with their flat, two-dimensional rendering of forms, Rosenquist’s shapes have depth to them, though never perspective. His colours, both lurid and in variations of grey, are also more diverse than the limited palettes of Warhol or Lichtenstein. His manner of painting is also more traditional, relying almost never on stencils or mechanical means of projection in order to create the difference in scale for his paintings, only on his own hand.

At the time of this commission, Rosenquist had already reached international acclaim, notably his work *F-III* having toured several museums in Europe. The Centre Pompidou in Paris had already made its first acquisition by the artist in the 1970s, and his 1997 *Swimmer in the Econo-mist*, created for Deutschebank, will cement his status in his country as well as abroad. Rosenquist's *Eau de Robot* is not just an iconic image of industry and speed of communication – it also reveals the poetry of it.

French

Un des pionniers du Pop Art avec Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol et Claes Oldenburg, James Rosenquist a créé des images intrigantes et surprenantes de la vie contemporaine. S'inspirant de l'iconographie populaire des médias de masse et de la publicité - en partie grâce à son expérience de peintre d'affiches - il a développé une voix distincte au sein du mouvement, capable de capturer et d'évoquer la teneur politique et sociale de l'époque avec un sens aigu de l'ironie.

Sa passion pour la ligne abstraite et l'émotivité de la couleur, tirée de son admiration pour le mouvement expressionniste abstrait qu'il a grandi en admirant à la fin des années '40 et au début des années '50, imprègne ses peintures d'une vivacité de forme, de couleur et de ligne qui est destinée à étonner et à déconcerter.

Sa perspective va au-delà de la manière de vivre américaine que le Pop Art affectionnait tant, évoluant vers de plus grandes réalités mondiales. *Eau de Robot*, une commande passée en 1984 par la fondation Renault en France, en est la parfaite illustration. Le format monumental, composé de six vitres qui s'emboîtent les unes dans les autres pour atteindre une largeur de plus de 7 mètres, témoigne de la diffusion des idées grâce aux nouveaux moyens de communication de l'ère spatiale. L'artiste a toujours été particulièrement fasciné par les phénomènes scientifiques et le matériel technologique. Profondément conscient du pouvoir des mécanismes des médias de masse depuis ses années dans la publicité, Rosenquist reformule des objets domestiques, comme le téléphone, en y ajoutant des références scientifiques et des pièces mécaniques en mouvement, pour en faire un message entièrement nouveau. La palette de couleurs rouge, blanc et bleu, ainsi que les pièces mécaniques, se veulent une référence claire au commanditaire de l'œuvre, le constructeur automobile français Renault. Le kaléidoscope d'images disparates est ordonné par le motif central d'un prisme, peut-être un clin d'œil au projet en cours de la pyramide de verre du Louvre, qui vient d'être approuvé. La différence d'échelle des objets présentés - le téléphone, les câbles en fibre optique - crée un récit à la fois énigmatique et fascinant pour le spectateur. Sa peinture ressemble à un rêve hallucinatoire, où les objets flottent dans l'espace, sans aucune gravité. L'échelle est étrange, tout comme le prisme central qui semble attirer et envelopper les objets dans un univers parallèle. D'une certaine manière, la peinture, avec son effet de vertige sur le spectateur, l'entraîne dans un autre monde.

Rosenquist emprunte la puissance de la peinture d'histoire afin d'absorber le spectateur dans son œuvre, en utilisant le grand format et la différence d'échelle. L'échelle monumentale de la peinture en fait un environnement à part entière, qui repousse les limites de l'œil humain et oblige le spectateur à traverser l'œuvre. La commande de Renault prévoyait, après tout, une "peinture murale". Mais les couleurs électriques et éclatantes de l'amalgame de formes, y compris son aspect de drapeau, doivent davantage à la publicité et à la propagande. Il s'agit d'une profonde réflexion sur la nature et la dynamique de la culture capitaliste et mécanique moderne, avec l'exubérance bouillonnante du complexe industriel. Se distinguant des autres artistes pop par leur rendu plat et bidimensionnel des formes, les formes de Rosenquist ont de la profondeur, mais jamais de perspective. Ses couleurs, à la fois éclatantes et dans des variations de gris, sont également plus variées que les palettes limitées de Warhol ou de Lichtenstein. Sa manière de peindre est également plus traditionnelle, ne s'appuyant presque jamais sur des pochoirs ou des moyens mécaniques de projection pour créer la différence d'échelle de ses tableaux, mais uniquement sur sa propre main.

Au moment de cette commande, Rosenquist avait déjà atteint une renommée internationale, son œuvre F-111 ayant notamment fait le tour de plusieurs musées en Europe. Le Centre Pompidou à Paris avait déjà fait sa première acquisition de l'artiste dans les années 1970, et son œuvre Swimmer in the Econo-mist de 1997, créée pour la Deutschebank, cimentera son statut dans son pays ainsi qu'à l'étranger. L'Eau de Robot de Rosenquist n'est pas seulement une image iconique de l'industrie et de la vitesse de communication - elle en révèle aussi la poésie.

Oeuvres de James Rosenquist dans les collections publiques



James Rosenquist, **F-111**, 1964-5, **MoMA**, New York (la plus chère oeuvre de Rosenquist au moment de son acquisition par le musée)



James Rosenquist, **President Elect**, 1960-61, **Musée national d'Art Moderne (Centre Pompidou)**. Acquisition de l'Etat français en 1973.



James Rosenquist, Vue de l'installation «**Painting as immersion**», Musée Ludwig, Cologne, 2017.



Vue de l'exposition «**Rosenquist: a retrospective**», Guggenheim Museum (New York), 2003-4.



James Rosenquist, ***The Swimmer in the econo-mist***, 1997-8, Guggenheim Museum,



James Rosenquist, ***Flamingo capsule***, 1970, Guggenheim Museum, New-York.

JAMES ROSENQUIST PAINTING RECORD

The original painting documented herein is included in the artist's archive.

STUDIO REGISTRATION # 84.20



TITLE *Eau de Robot*

DATE 1981–84

MEDIUM Oil on canvas

DIMENSIONS 9' x 24' (274.3 x 731.5 cm) [108" x 288"]

NUMBER OF PANELS Six

INSCRIPTION(S)
(noted in brackets) On backing in black marker: [JAMES ROSENQUIST] (block letters); ["EAU DE ROBOT"] (block letters); [1981–84]; [1 of six panels] (cursive)

PROVENANCE -Renault Co., Fondation L'Incitation, Paris (commission)
-Jean Hamon
-Private Collection?

EXHIBITIONS *Automobile and Culture*. Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, California. July 21, 1984–January 6, 1985.

Rosenquist: Moscow 1961–1991. Tretyakov Gallery, Central Hall of Artists, Moscow, U.S.S.R. February 5–March 5, 1991.

Vertiges. Printemps de septembre à Toulouse, Toulouse, France. September 23–October 16, 2005.

PUBLICATIONS Adcock, Craig. *James Rosenquist's Commissioned Works*. Stockholm: Painter's Posters in association with Wetterling Gallery, 1990. (illus. p. 16; ref. p. 20)

JAMES ROSENQUIST ESTATE

Draft updated 9/8/2022 (information subject to change without notice) - Page #1 of 2 (84.20)

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JAMES ROSENQUIST PAINTING RECORD

The original painting documented herein is included in the artist's archive.

[Saff, Donald, and Craig Adcock.] *Rosenquist: Moscow 1961–1991*. Aripeka, Florida: James Rosenquist, Inc., [1990]. (illus. p. 80)

Hopps, Walter, and Sarah Bancroft. *James Rosenquist: A Retrospective*. New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2003. (illus. pp. 200–1; ref. p. 380)
[painting not exhibited]

[Pique, Pascal, et al.] *Printemps de septembre à Toulouse—Volume 2: “Vertiges.”* [Toulouse, France: Association Printemps de septembre Festival, 2005]. (ref. pp. 21, 184; installation illus. p. 75 and unpaginated 4 leaf gatefold)

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VERSO IMAGE(S)

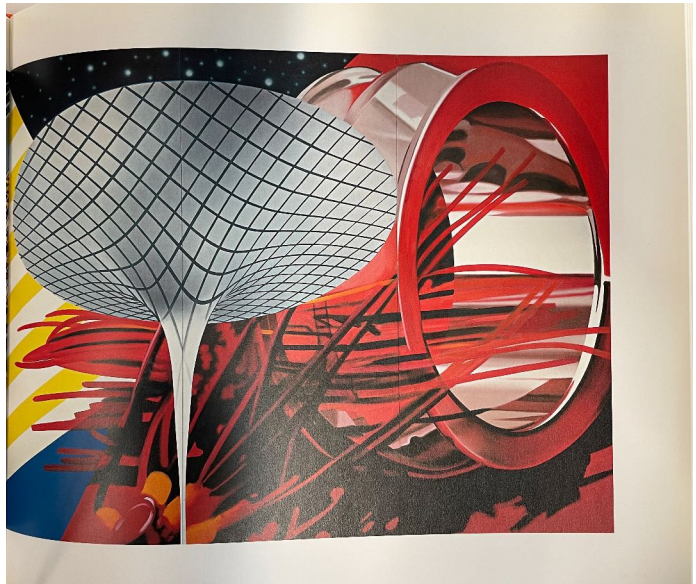
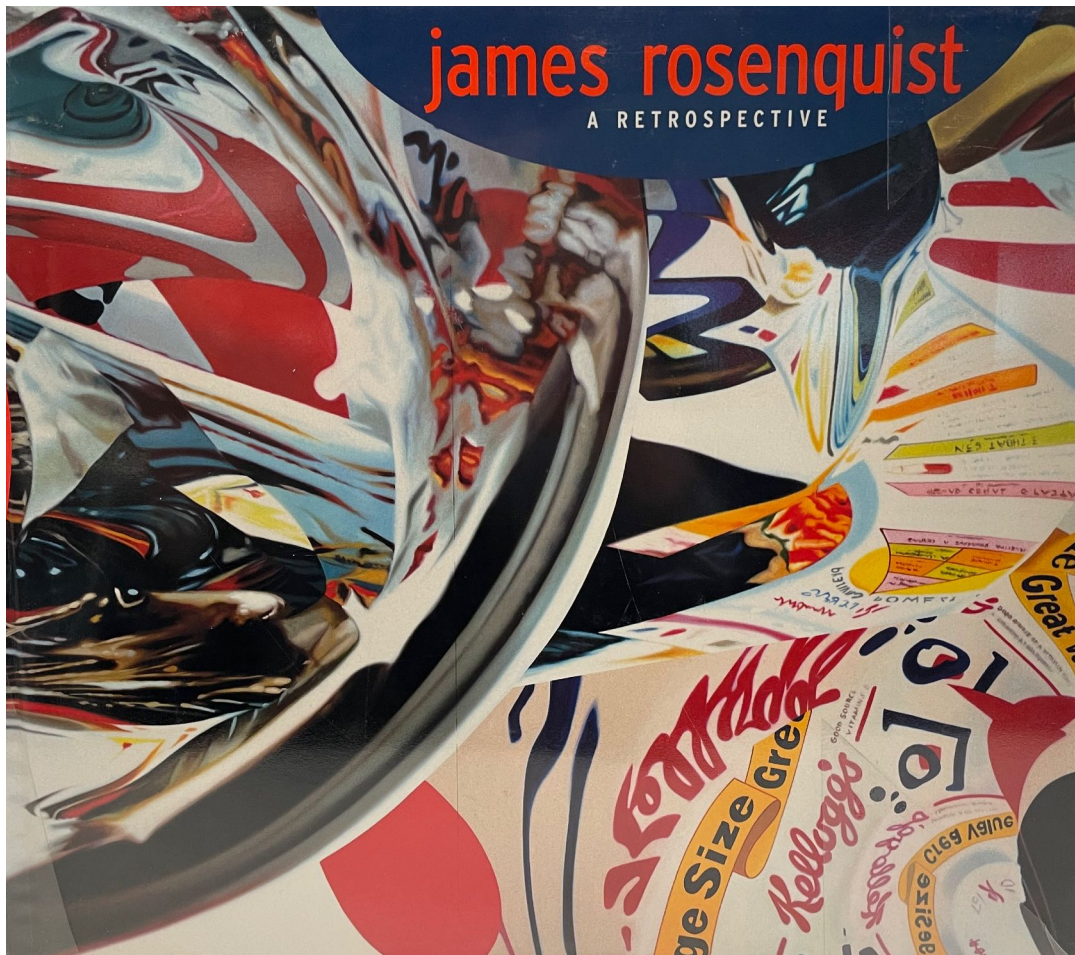
JAMES ROSENQUIST ESTATE

Draft updated 9/8/2022 (information subject to change without notice) - Page #2 of 2 (84.20)

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The Guggenheim retrospective in Bilbao and New York, 2003-2004.



1983

In March construction is complete on a large, naturally lit studio on Rosenquist's property in Aripeka, Florida. His lithograph *Ice Point*—which incorporates a slivered image of a woman's face on a starry white background—is published by Visconti/Laxo Vujic in the portfolio *Art and Sport* to commemorate the upcoming 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia.

1984

Alex von Bidder, Paul Kovi, and Tom Margittai, owners of the Four Seasons restaurant in the Seagram Building, New York, commission Rosenquist to create a painting in honor of the restaurant's twenty-fifth year of service. The resulting seven-and-one-half-by-twenty-four-foot painting *Flowers, Fish and Females for the Four Seasons* (1984) is installed in the east corner of the Pool Room, the restaurant's main dining room. The French automobile manufacturer Renault Automobile Co. commissions Rosenquist to paint a mural for the Fondation l'Incitation, Paris; *Eau du Robot* (1984) is Rosenquist's response.

1985

The Denver Art Museum organizes the retrospective *James Rosenquist: Paintings 1961–1985*, curated by Dianne Perry Vanderlip. The exhibition travels to the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; the Des Moines Art Center; the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Rosenquist completes *Sunshot*, a mural commissioned for the lobby of the Ashley Tower in Tampa, Florida.

Painting Below Zero

NOTES ON A LIFE IN ART

James Rosenquist

WITH DAVID DALTON



ALFRED A. KNOPF · NEW YORK · 2009

rant and hung it. At the party they threw for the painting I wore a white jumpsuit and an electric cord for a belt.

After turning down commissions for years, I suddenly found myself getting a lot of them. Later in 1984, the same year I painted *Flowers, Fish and Females*, the French automobile manufacturer Renault asked me to paint a mural for L'Incitation à la Création in Paris. I created *Eau de Robot*, roughly the same size as the Four Seasons painting, but its subject matter turned out to be far more industrial.

I didn't know how Claude-Louis Renard, "Mr. Fox," who was number seven at Renault, would react to it. His plane got into Tampa late in the afternoon, but by the time he got to Aripéka it was dark—I painted by the sun and never had lights installed in the studio. I suggested he spend the night and look at the painting in the morning. But he was very impatient. "I must see the painting tonight," he insisted. "I will look at it now and then I must leave you and go on with my travels." I had an old car parked at one end of the studio and the only thing I could think of was to use the headlights to illuminate the painting, so that's what I did. I started it up, pulled it around, and pointed the headlights at the painting. Renard took one look at it and said, "*J'accepte*," just like that, and was off again into the night and back to the airport.

Commissions serve a lot of different purposes. Even the Sistine Chapel wasn't painted just for the glory of God; the glory of the Vatican, maybe. It's also a tourist attraction, a focal point, an astounding work of art, and lot of other things besides.

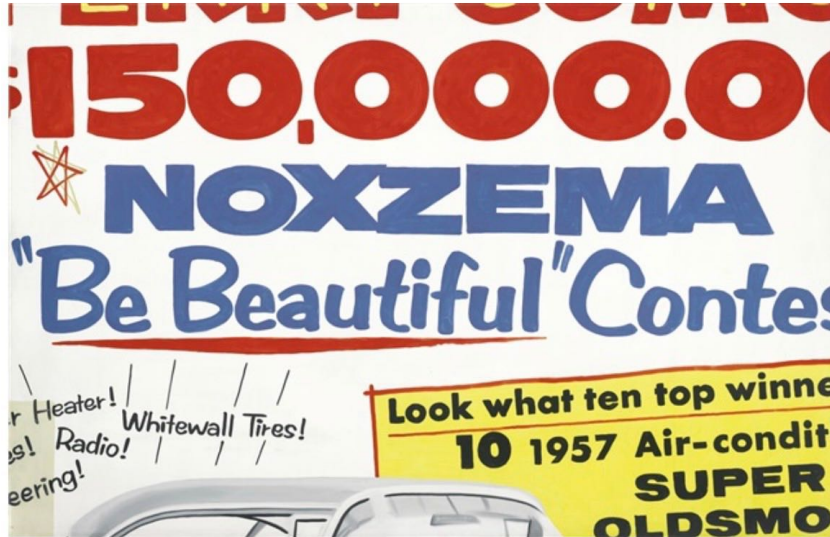
In 1985 Gary Harrod and Tilda Brabson approached me to do a mural for the Ashley Tower Building in Tampa, Florida. Tilda is one of the Lykes sisters. Now, I'm not comparing the lobby of the Ashley Tower in Tampa to the Vatican, or *Sunshot*, the painting I did for Ashley Tower, to the Sistine Chapel; but as public works of art they do have a few things in common.

The purpose of having a mural in the Ashley Tower was to create a sense of place—something the Vatican didn't have to think about. The idea was to create a spot in downtown Tampa to attract interest, a place where people could say, "I'll meet you by that painting." Something like that. Another motive was probably to attract clients who might rent space in the building. During this

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James Rosenquist	
Title	Be beautiful
Description	signed and titled on the stretcher oil on canvas 54 x 84 1/2 in. 137.1 x 213.9 cm. Executed in 1964.
Medium	oil on canvas
Year of Work	1964
Size	Height 54 in.; Width 84.2 in. / Height 137.1 cm.; Width 213.9 cm.
Sale of	Sotheby's New York: Wednesday, May 14, 2014 [Lot 00051] Contemporary Art Evening Auction
Estimate	3,000,000 - 4,000,000 USD
Sold For	3,301,000 USD Premium
Provenance	Ileana Sonnabend, New York



[Full details](#)

2

James Rosenquist	
Title	Director
Description	James Rosenquist (1933-2017) Directorsigned, titled and dated 'JAMES ROSENQUIST 1 More ...
Medium	oil on canvas with painted folding chair frame
Year of Work	1964
Size	Height 98 in.; Width 62 in.; Depth 52 in. / Height 248.9 cm.; Width 157.5 cm.; Depth 132.1 cm.
Misc.	Signed, Inscribed
Sale of	Christie's New York: Wednesday, May 15, 2019 [Lot 0003B] Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale
Estimate	2,000,000 - 3,000,000 USD
Sold For	3,135,000 USD Premium