For Immediate Release:

TRISHA BROWN DANCE COMPANY WITH THE MERCE CUNNINGHAM TRUST ANNOUNCES A NATIONAL TOUR OF MASTERWORKS BY TRISHA BROWN AND MERCE CUNNINGHAM TO COMMEMORATE ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG'S CENTENNIAL

"I always tell people that dance is the most fragile art form because it's dependent on everything about you…You know, everything shows – your body in a specific time and place, whatever it's thinking, whatever it's feeling. It's all right there. I'm definitely envious." Robert Rauschenberg

NEW YORK, NY, February 20, 2025 — The Trisha Brown Dance Company (TBDC) with the Merce Cunningham Trust will celebrate the Centennial of the iconoclastic American artist Robert Rauschenberg with a national tour dedicated to his extraordinary partnerships with Trisha Brown and Merce Cunningham. *Dancing with Bob: Rauschenberg, Brown and Cunningham Onstage* will bring together these groundbreaking 20th century artists for a historic program of two masterpieces whose visual presentations were designed by Rauschenberg. Beginning with Brown's seminal work, *Set and Reset* (1983), with music by Laurie Anderson, the program will also feature Cunningham's *Travelogue* (1977*)*, a vaudevillian pièce de résistance that has not been seen by a professional company since 1979. The tour kicks off in June 2025 at the American Dance Festival (ADF) in North Carolina followed by performances in several cities across the United States.

"The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation (RRF) is deeply honored to support the Trisha Brown Dance Company in partnership with the Merce Cunningham Trust as part of Rauschenberg's 2025 Centennial celebrations," said Courtney J. Martin, Executive Director of RRF. "Rauschenberg's close friendships with Merce and Trisha were instrumental to his creative vision. Together, they redefined the boundaries of art and movement, and the possibilities for visual expression. Together, they demonstrated the power of collaboration across disciplines. We are thrilled to support this initiative, which continues to inspire contemporary artists today."

Initially meeting Cunningham at Black Mountain College in 1952, Rauschenberg was part of a unique collection of artists from different disciplines who created exciting experimental performances that continued to influence the art world for decades to come. He officially began collaborating with Cunningham in 1954, and throughout the next decade, he created sets, costume designs and lighting for over twenty of his dances. After a hiatus of more than a decade, Rauschenberg reunited with Cunningham, and they had intermittent collaborations until 2007.

When Trisha Brown began to create works for the proscenium stage, her first collaborator was Rauschenberg, and together they created several of Brown's most iconic pieces. Their first joint-effort for the stage was *Glacial Decoy* (1979), followed by *Set and Reset* (1983), *Foray Forêt* (1990), and *Astral Convertible* (1991), among others. Rauschenberg was a lifetime member of TBDC's Board, and he and Brown became close friends, building a rich connection that lasted until Rauschenberg's death in 2008.

“Over the course of five decades, Trisha and Bob maintained a creative dialogue that deeply influenced one another and pushed the boundaries of form and movement,” said Kirstin Kapustik, Executive Director of TBDC. “*Set and Reset* is the defining testament to their collaboration and remains a landmark work that exemplifies their shared spirit of innovation, experimentation, and artistic risk-taking.”

Set and Reset premiered in New York City at BAM’s Next Wave Festival in 1983. The seductively fluid quality of the movement in this masterpiece, juxtaposed with the unpredictable geometric style has become a hallmark of Brown’s work. Performed to a driving score by Laurie Anderson, the exploration of visibility and invisibility is reflected in the set and the translucent costumes designed by Rauschenberg. The set, a geometric construction on which newsreel footage is projected, hovers above the dancers, creating a vibrant environment, a living spectacle, that is full of activity and engagement. *Set and Reset* was hailed by *The New York Times* as “surely the most beloved and irresistible work of postmodern dance.”

Travelogue, which premiered at the Minskoff Theater in New York in 1977, marked the first time Rauschenberg, Cunningham, and John Cage collaborated again after their split in 1964. The piece features an aggregation of scenic elements entitled “Tantric Geography” that the dancers use in their series of antic encounters and deadpan entanglements which include bits of ballroom dancing and a high-stepping cakewalk. Cage’s original score, *Telephones* and *Birds,* uses recordings of bird songs from the Australian National Collection of Bird Calls along with calls dialed live during the performance to pre-recorded messages of various kinds.

“The Trust is thrilled to help celebrate Bob's work and his close relationship with Merce by reviving *Travelogue*,” said the Merce Cunningham Trust. “Performed more than 25 times around the world after its premiere in 1977, the work left the repertory and has not been seen for 45 years. Merce credits his work with Bob, particularly on *Summerspace* in 1958, for opening his eyes to the possibility of collaborators working separately in a common space and time that became a hallmark of Merce's work. *Travelogue* perfectly plays into Bob's resourcefulness and inventiveness in creating the environment and necessary physical tools for Merce and his dancers to bring Merce's vision to life.”

The Company’s tour currently includes performances in the following cities with additional cities including New York to be announced:

Durham, NC: American Dance Festival June 12, 13, 2025 — The performances at ADF will also feature the Paul Taylor Dance Company performing *Tracer* (1962) and *3 Epitaphs* (1956), two iconic works with sets and costumes by Rauschenberg.
Iowa City, IA: Hancher Auditorium, University of Iowa, November 7, 2025
Minneapolis, MN: Venue TBA, November 11, 2025
Washington, D.C.: The Kennedy Center, December 3, 4, 5, 2025
Columbus, OH: The Wexner Center for the Arts at The Ohio State University, February 6, 2026
Beverly Hills, CA: Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, April 16, 17, 18, 2026

In addition, the Menil Collection in Houston, TX will present a series of performances in their galleries featuring a selection of choreography from both works, November 13-14, 2025.

Dancing with Bob: Rauschenberg, Brown and Cunningham Onstage is generously supported by Dance Reflections by Van Cleef & Arpels, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, The Dedalus Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies and the James E. Robison Foundation.

Trisha Brown (1936-2017)
Trisha Brown (Founding Artistic Director and Choreographer) was born and raised in Aberdeen, Washington, graduated from Mills College in Oakland, California, and studied with Anna Halprin before moving to New York City in 1961. Brown, along with like-minded artists, pushed the limits of choreography and changed modern dance forever. In 1970, Brown formed her company and explored the terrain of her adoptive SoHo. She engaged collaborators who are themselves leaders in music, theater, and the visual arts, including visual artists Robert Rauschenberg, Donald Judd, and Elizabeth Murray, and musicians Laurie Anderson, John Cage, and Alvin Curran, to name a few. With these partners, Brown has created an exceptionally varied body of over 100 dance works. Brown is also an accomplished visual artist; her drawings have been seen in exhibitions, galleries and museums throughout the world, she is represented by Sikkema Jenkins & Co. in NYC. Trisha Brown is the first woman choreographer to receive the coveted MacArthur Foundation Fellowship "Genius Award." She has been awarded many other honors including five fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the NY 'Bessie' Lifetime Achievement Award, the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize, and the Dance/USA Honors Award. She has been named a Veuve Clicquot Grande Dame, Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres by the government of France.

Merce Cunningham (1919-2009)
Merce Cunningham was a celebrated dancer and choreographer renowned for his groundbreaking work and his profound influence on generations of dancemakers and artists. Born in Centralia, Washington, he attended the Cornish School in Seattle where he was introduced to the work of Martha Graham and met the composer John Cage who would become his closest collaborator and life partner. In 1939, after relocating to New York City, Cunningham began a six-year tenure as a soloist in the Graham company, and soon began presenting his own choreography. In the summer of 1953, during a teaching residency at Black Mountain College, Cunningham formed a dance company to explore his innovative ideas. The Merce Cunningham Dance Company remained in continuous operation until its closure in 2011, with Cunningham as artistic director until his death in 2009. In collaboration with John Cage, Cunningham proposed a series of radical ideas including the separation of music and dance, the use of chance operations, and novel ways to utilize film and technology. Over the course of his seventy-year career he choreographed 180 dances and over 700 Events, collaborated with such renowned artists as Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, David Tudor and Christian Wolff, and earned some of the highest honors bestowed in the arts. Today his work continues to be performed by professional and student dancers worldwide.

Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008)
Born in Port Arthur, Texas, Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008) attended Black Mountain College in North Carolina and the Art Students League in New York where he developed creative relationships and methods that proved to be formative. His nearly sixty-decade career was

characterized by an irreverent and innovative approach to images, mediums, and disciplines and a love for artistic partnerships. Rauschenberg realized his first Combine in 1954, eschewing established artistic boundaries and hierarchies; he introduced the materials of everyday life while hybridizing aspects of painting and sculpture. Collaborations with composer John Cage and dancer/choreographer Merce Cunningham spurred Rauschenberg to add performance to his wide-ranging palette, including costume and set designs for the Cunningham and Paul Taylor dance companies. Rauschenberg's *Combine Minutiae* (1954) occupied the stage, serving as the set for its namesake Cunningham choreography, initiating over two dozen collaborations in an over five-decade period, culminating in a set and costumes for Cunningham's XOVER (2007). Rauschenberg's affiliation with the Judson Dance Theater motivated him to choreograph his first performance, *Pelican* (1963), and it led to a lifelong friendship with dancer/choreographer Trisha Brown, highlighted by numerous artistic collaborations. Brown performed in a number of Rauschenberg's experimental works including *Spring Training* (1965), *Map Room II* (1965), and *Linoleum* (1966). An avid admirer of Brown's choreography, Rauschenberg in turn designed costumes, sets, lighting, and, on occasion, music for her performances. These collaborations were mutually inspiring. Rauschenberg's set design for Brown's *Glacial Decoy* (1979) led him back to photography, which became a driving force for his own work over the next decade and a half. Using his own photographs to silkscreen the costumes for Brown's *Set and Reset* (1983) reintroduced a vital technique that Rauschenberg would employ in numerous series over the next dozen years. During the Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange (ROCI, 1984–91), he arranged for Brown to preview *Astral Convertible* (1989), precursor to *Astral Converted* (1991), for which he designed set and costumes, at the Cultural Palace in Moscow at the time of the opening of ROCI USSR. In 1990 he again designed sets and costumes for *Foray Forêt*, which premiered at Biennale de la Danse in Lyon.

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.

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