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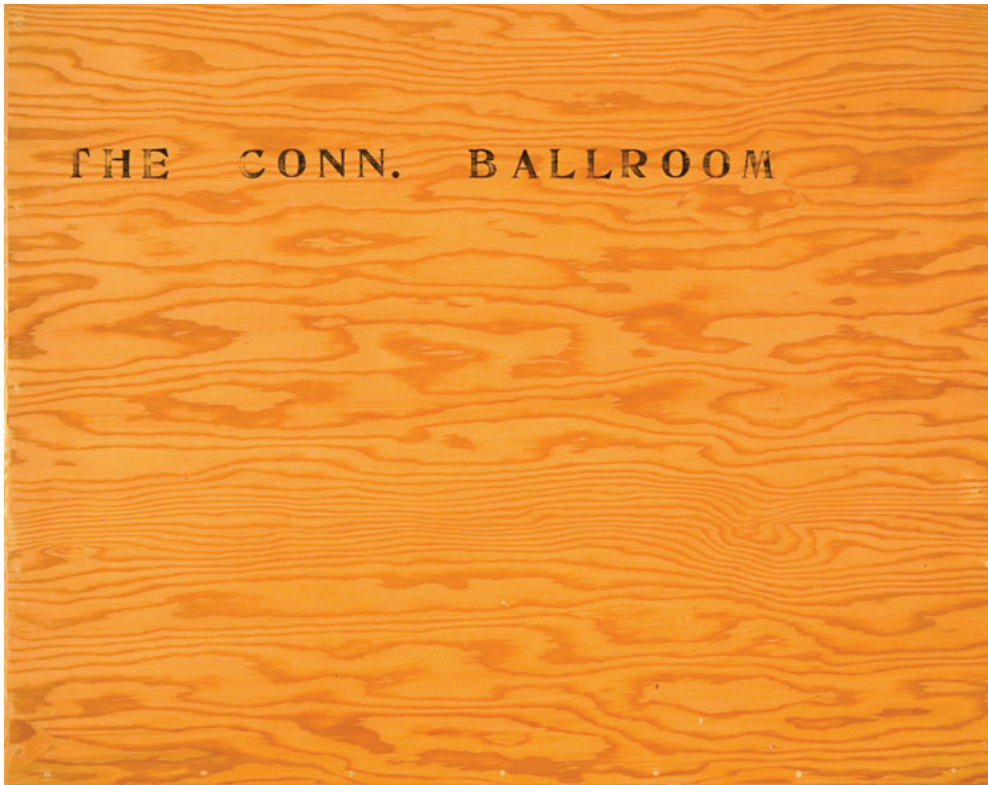
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H.C. Westermann (1922-1981, born Los Angeles, California; died Danbury, Connecticut), *The Connecticut Ballroom Suite*, 1975-1976, Holding box, plywood, Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas, Museum purchase: Peter T. Bohan Fund, Friends of the Art Museum, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Nadeau, Richard Belger, Hollander Family Foundation, in memory of Richard Hollander, 1993.0034.01-.08.

Conversations that Explore the Serious Side of Playfulness



H.C. Westermann (1922-1981, born Los Angeles, California; died Danbury, Connecticut), *The Connecticut Ballroom Suite*, 1975-1976, Title page, woodcut, Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas, Museum purchase: Peter T. Bohan Fund, Friends of the Art Museum, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Nadeau, Richard Belger, Hollander Family Foundation, in memory of Richard Hollander, 1993.0034.01-.08.

Spencer Museum of Art
The University of Kansas
1301 Mississippi Street
785-864-4710
Lawrence
20/21 Gallery
Conversation VIII: Serious Play
June 1-August 1, 2010

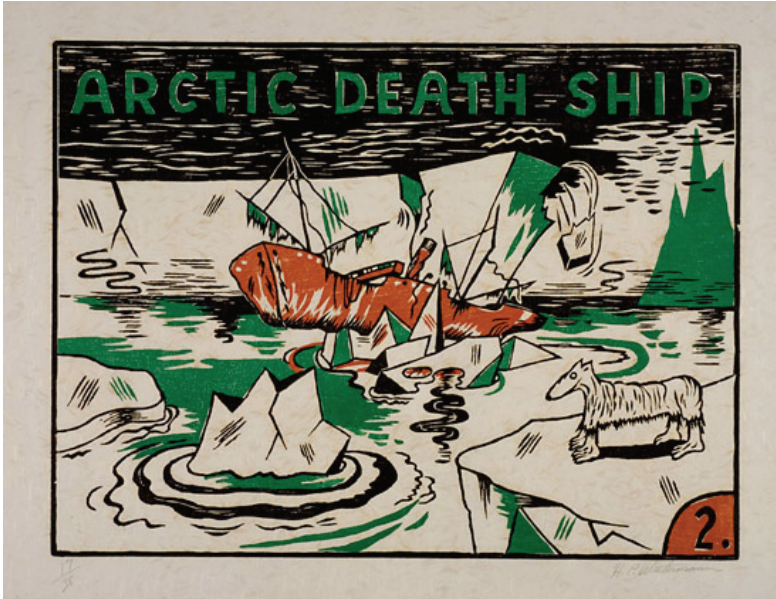
Summertime is perhaps the season most associated with play and playfulness, so it seems the perfect time for a fresh "conversation" in the Spencer's 20/21 Gallery that goes beyond mere fun and games to explore the topic of play in a variety of ways. *Serious Play* features Randy Regier's *Impending Future Bus*, a recent acquisition that uses the vocabulary of toys to create a memorable sculpture that may change one's thinking on several topics, both playful and serious.

As curators Susan Earle and Kate Meyer write in the installation's introduction, "When we play we have fun. If we are just playing, we do not 'mean it' — we are not serious. But play may not always be light-hearted. When we watch two teams play a sport the athletes are committed to their activity. The ability to play a musical instrument requires years of hard practice. Cartoons can be playful but a political cartoon uses an accessible visual style to comment on society. Anyone who has been teased by someone who was 'just playing' can still be hurt by those words."

On the east side of the Conversation Wall, Regier's *Impending Future Bus* is joined by a portfolio of woodcuts by H. C. Westermann called *The Connecticut Ballroom Suite*. Regier and Westermann both explore American mass culture from the 1950s, including children's toys and cartoons, to comment on the interaction of



H.C. Westermann (1922-1981, born Los Angeles, California; died Danbury, Connecticut), *The Connecticut Ballroom Suite, 1975-1976, (The Green Hell)*, color woodcut, Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas, Museum purchase: Peter T. Bohan Fund, Friends of the Art Museum, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Nadeau, Richard Belger, Hollander Family Foundation, in memory of Richard Hollander, 1993.0034.01-.08.



H.C. Westermann (1922-1981, born Los Angeles, California; died Danbury, Connecticut), *The Connecticut Ballroom Suite, 1975-1976, (Arctic Death Ship)*, color woodcut, Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas, Museum purchase: Peter T. Bohan Fund, Friends of the Art Museum, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Nadeau, Richard Belger, Hollander Family Foundation, in memory of Richard Hollander, 1993.0034.01-.08.

Americans with their landscape, race, death, disaster, and an uncertain future. The artists share a commitment to craftsmanship, an engaging, playful style, and an unquestionable seriousness of purpose. The Conversation Wall's west side features a video by Pipilotti Rist on the big screen, paired with related works on the theme of serious play, including several artists' books.

H.C. Westermann was one of the most influential, yet under recognized, figures in postwar American art. Born in Los Angeles, Westermann began crafting imaginative objects from scavenged materials at an early age. He pursued such diverse activities as acrobatics, woodcutting, and masonry before enlisting in the Marine Corps in 1942 and again in 1950. While on active duty during World War II and the Korean War, Westermann witnessed kamikaze attacks, the sinking of ships, and other atrocities that would resurface years later as thematic elements in his art. Between tours of duty and after his discharge, Westermann studied graphic and applied arts at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. There he began a very productive art career and enjoyed commercial and critical success until his death in 1981. Although he remained highly individualistic and somewhat unconcerned with the mainstreams of American art, the Pop Art movement often embraced him as one of its most quixotic and eccentric members.

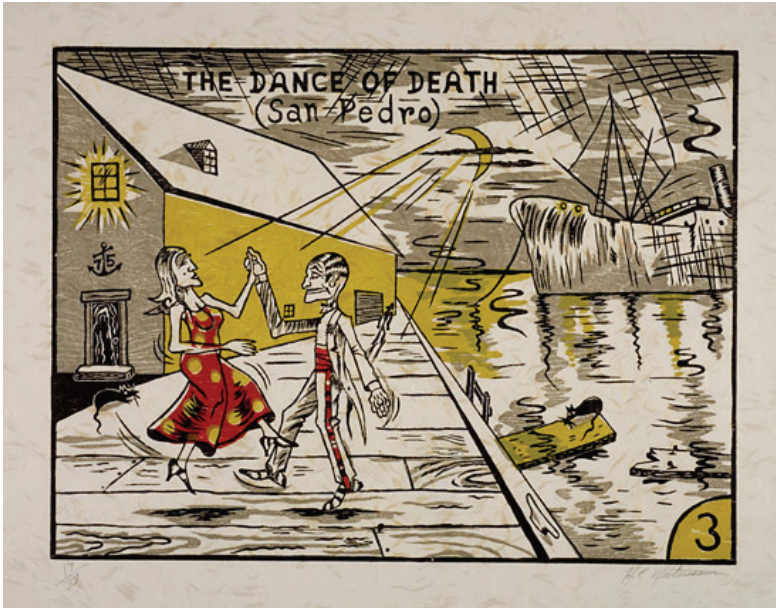
Often characterized as an American original, Westermann earned the respect and admiration of peers through his innovative art and the tough, no-nonsense persona he created for himself. His indefatigable work ethic and love of fine craftsmanship lead Westermann to invent an entirely new genre of sculpture that combined the surrealist practice of assemblage, traditional sculpting methods, and the elements of design with carpentry and woodworking techniques and materials. Although perhaps more widely known for his sculptural work, Westermann's accomplishments as a printmaker are the stuff of legends among devotees. His often colorful, always intriguing images continue to pique the viewer's curiosity with their intensely personal, political, humorous, and provocative themes.

At the age of 33, the closest Randy Regier came to being an artist was painting auto bodies in Salem, Oregon. Realizing he was being depleted emotionally and physically, he moved with his wife and two small children to Abilene, Kansas "because we had visited for two days one year prior and had felt a sense of peace." He became a sculptor, and his provocative works of metal, wood, and paint have since earned considerable recognition. His resume includes a long list of gallery shows, solo and group exhibitions, installations, awards, and presentations. To pay the bills, he has installed water meters, repaired furniture, wrote and illustrated a daily comic strip - and managed an art gallery.

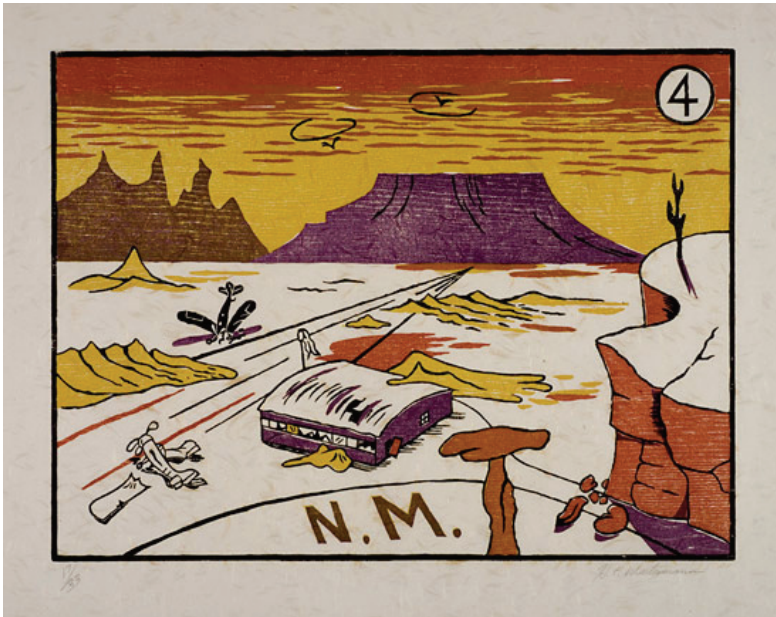
Randy learns and shares life lessons with bold, dramatic actions. In 2004, he and his wife and now-teenage children walked 500 miles together over an ancient pilgrimage route beginning in the south of France and crossing northern Spain. At home, Randy taught an art class one day a week to, as he says, "at-risk (who isn't, I wonder?) middle school children. I see our pilgrimage experience in their eyes and in their work, a mixture of wonder, of exploration of the unknown, a longing for something better."

Randy is now an acclaimed sculptor and a Jack Kent Cooke Scholar, with a graduate degree at the Maine College of Art. His goal is to continue creating and exploring new territory artistically, to use his art to "challenge people to think actively and independently and live their lives with conviction and purpose."

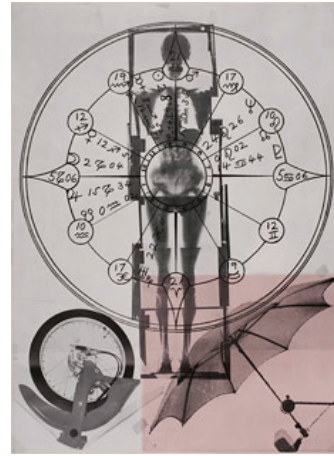
On the south wall of the 20/21 Gallery, we bring together a group of objects focused on a single topic of conversation. Among these objects we hope you will hear not only the voices of individual artists and interpreters, but also enter into the discussion with your own thoughts and questions. Just as conversations move fluidly from one topic to the next, so too does this installation change with relative frequency.



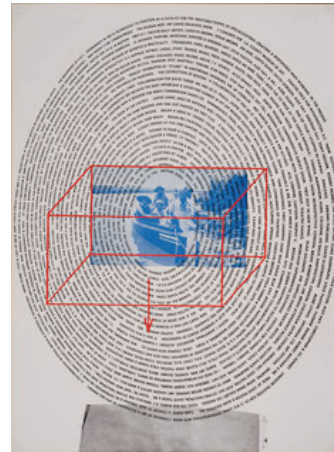
H.C. Westermann (1922-1981, born Los Angeles, California; died Danbury, Connecticut), *The Connecticut Ballroom Suite*, 1975-1976, (*Dance of Death [San Pedro]*), color woodcut, Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas, Museum purchase: Peter T. Bohan Fund, Friends of the Art Museum, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Nadeau, Richard Belger, Hollander Family Foundation, in memory of Richard Hollander, 1993.0034.01-.08.



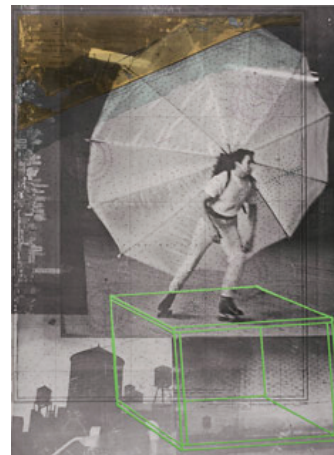
H.C. Westermann (1922-1981, born Los Angeles, California; died Danbury, Connecticut), *The Connecticut Ballroom Suite*, 1975-1976, (*"N.M."*), color woodcut, Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas, Museum purchase: Peter T. Bohan Fund, Friends of the Art Museum, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Nadeau, Richard Belger, Hollander Family Foundation, in memory of Richard Hollander, 1993.0034.01-.08.



Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008, born Port Arthur, Texas; died Captiva, Florida), *Autobiography*, 1968, offset lithograph, Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas, Gift of Marion B. Javits, Robert Rauschenberg, and Milton Glaser through the auspices of the Yale University Art Gallery, 1996.0188.a,b,c.



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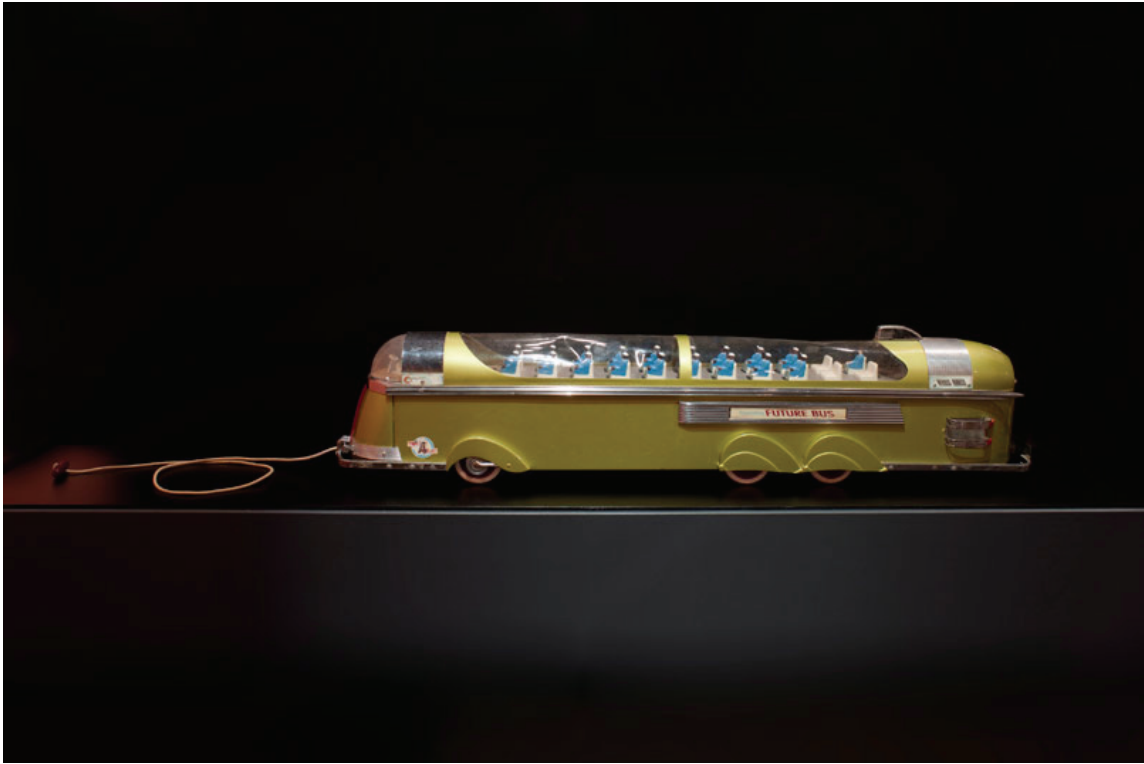
Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008, born Port Arthur, Texas; died Captiva, Florida), *Autobiography*, 1968, offset lithograph, Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas, Gift of Marion B. Javits, Robert Rauschenberg, and Milton Glaser through the auspices of the Yale University Art Gallery, 1996.0188.a,b,c.



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Randy Regier (born 1964, Omaha, Nebraska), *Impending Future Bus*, 2004, steel, mixed media, cast plastic, automotive finish, Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas, Museum purchase: Peter T. Bohan Art Acquisition Fund, 2010.0003.

Roger Shimomura
 (born 1939, Seattle,
 Washington)
 Lawrence
 Lithography
 Workshop,
 publisher, *Memories
 of Childhood*, 1999,
 artist's book; color
 lithograph, Spencer
 Museum of Art, The
 University of
 Kansas, Museum
 purchase: Lucy
 Shaw Schultz Fund,
 2002.0045.h.

