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ARTSY EDITORIAL

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Robert Rauschenberg, *Primo Calle/ROCI*  
*VENEZUELA*, 1985



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This giant painting is part of Rauschenberg's 1984–91 project "Rauschenberg Overseas Cultural Interchange (ROCI)," for which he visited 10 countries and produced new, site-inspired work and exhibitions in each nation, with the goal of promoting world peace through cultural exchange. Created during his time in Venezuela, the vibrant canvas is significant in that it marks the artist's return to silkscreening (which he had sworn off in 1964), includes prints made from his personal photographs (a new development at the time for the artist), and toured prominently in shows that celebrated the ROCI output, including exhibitions at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and the Museo Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo in Caracas. The massive piece speaks to the cultural climate of Venezuela in 1985. Rauschenberg incorporated locally sourced fabrics and topical motifs, like an image of Pope John Paul, who had visited Venezuela that year. —CL