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## Theatre Review (LA): *bobrauschenbergamerica* by Charles Mee at Inside the Ford

By Robert Machray

Robert Rauschenberg lived in the artistic period between abstract expressionism and pop art. His painting and sculptures display his belief that there is no difference between art objects and ordinary objects. He believed that an object became art when he said it was.

How would his art reflect itself as a live performance? Well, one answer is being presented by the talented and edgy SpyAnts Company, which, with the help of the ubiquitous Bart DeLorenzo, has put on *bobrauschenbergamerica* by the controversial playwright Charles Mee as part of the shared season at inside the Ford Theatre.

Playwright Mee is no stranger to experimentation. Here he has written a play intended to represent Rauschenberg's view of America, presented as a play but also reflecting his paintings. Mee has stated, "In the mid 1980s, the whole world was Rauschenberg. We have lots of stories, and we are trying to figure out how to get along in a world where there are a thousand points of view." So Mee conceived of a series of loosely connected stories (though they all involve love) and more or less threw them together to see how they would make a connection. For Rauschenberg there is always a connection and it's always alive and vital.

I must admit I was totally puzzled about what the hell was going on in this show. I was not alone. But as the piece unfolded I found my mind, as well as the characters, making connections, and the message was one of hope and love. In the rehearsal process Mr. DeLorenzo let the cast more or less improvise how they wanted to present the individual stories. When he liked what he saw it stayed in. The result is a piece that seems almost improvised, but with a structure that emerges as the play develops. **The cast, Mee, and DeLorenzo are to be congratulated for this daring and provocative experience in the theatre.**

*bobrauschenbergamerica* plays at [Inside The Ford](#) until Feb. 28th.