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Gagosian Gallery

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PRESS RELEASE

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ED RUSCHA: New Paintings

Saturday, November 21, 1998 – Wednesday, January 16, 1999

Opening reception:, Saturday, November 21, 6-8 pm

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings by Edward Ruscha. Internationally renowned as *the* L.A. artist, Ruscha recently completed a mural-size painting for the new Getty Center. The Gagosian Gallery represents the artist exclusively and this exhibition will be his first in his hometown since 1985.

Continuing his fascination with urban landscapes, these new works depict simplified street maps of Los Angeles and are reminiscent of his "City Lights" paintings from 1985-86, which show the city seen from above at night, as though from an airplane window.

In Ruscha's new paintings, the city is again seen from above, but now in the form of street maps and blow-ups of its neighborhood sections. With a small curving line to represent a boulevard, set against a blankness that represents the city, the printed names of Los Angeles streets become particularly resonant and suggestive.

These street map paintings bring to mind the famous *Thomas Guide* books known to virtually every driver in Los Angeles. Therefore, the car becomes an unseen but referenced subject, just as it was in Ruscha's famous photographic panorama of 1966, *Every Building on Sunset Strip*. The paintings also strike a particularly zany balance between the calm and simple assurance of the map, and the chaotic and bewildering city lying somewhere beyond the printed page or, in this case, beyond the painted picture.

A fully illustrated catalogue will be available, with an essay by Dave Hickey, an early commentator on Ruscha's work. Hickey is also the author of a recent and acclaimed collection of essays entitled *Air Guitar*, and was the 1994 recipient of the Frank Jewett Mather Award for Distinction in Art Criticism.

For further information, please contact the gallery.