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Gagosian Gallery

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PRESS RELEASE

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ED RUSCHA: METRO PLOTS

New York dates: Wednesday, January 27 – Saturday, February 27, 1999

New York opening reception: Wednesday, January 27, 6-8 pm

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings in the *Metro Plots* series by Ed Ruscha. The first works of the series were shown at Gagosian Gallery in Beverly Hills earlier this season.

Continuing his fascination with urban landscapes, these new works take simplified street maps of Los Angeles as their point of departure. Recalling the 1985-1986 "City Lights" series, which show the city at night, Ruscha's new paintings also depict a bird's eye view of Los Angeles.

The new works chart the various routes that transverse the city of Los Angeles by rendering schematized 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 *Thomas Guide* books known to virtually every driver in Los Angeles. The car thus becomes an unseen but implicit subject, just as it was in Ruscha's 1966 photographic panorama *Every Building on Sunset Strip*. The paintings create an unsettling juxtaposition of the calm and simple assurance of the map and the imminent and implied chaos of the city that exists 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.