

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

15 January 2008



PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

6-24 BRITANNIA STREET
LONDON WC1X 9JD
GALLERY HOURS:

T. 020.7841.9960
F. 020. 7841.9961
Tue – Sat: 10:00am– 6:00pm

ED RUSCHA: *Paintings*

Tuesday, 5 February – Thursday, 20 March 2008

Opening reception for the artist: Tuesday, 5th February from 6 to 8pm

"You take one painting as a kind of question and then the answer to that would be, they're look-alikes. They begin to look like one another and they do not look like one another, because they have to, or they're not going to be a proper answer. And then, when you look at them, they're no longer interpreted in a philosophical sense—or an apocalyptic sense. If you give the viewer something to compare, you don't have to interpret."

--Ed Ruscha (2005)

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of five pairs of paintings by Ed Ruscha.

From *Course of Empire*—the exhibition for the U.S. pavilion at the 51st Biennale di Venezia (2005), which traveled to the Whitney Museum of American Art--to photographic books such as *Then and Now* (2005) Ruscha has structured certain bodies of work as comparative studies. Revisiting sites, buildings, and views of Los Angeles that had formed the bases for previous works, he documented the effects of time in a manner that was both empirical and metaphorically charged. Ruscha describes this process as one of "waste and retrieval." Continuing in this vein of investigation, in the current exhibition he pairs one painting with another version of the same subject, to create finely nuanced exercises in perception and memory.

Similar in subject and form, each pair of related works reveals through close observation differences both subtle and dramatic. The effects of the passing of time or of visible decay, movement and corrosion, are at the core of these paintings, which reflect on how things are transformed by nature or culture, from a picturesque view of a mountain range that has been disrupted by the construction of a building, or a plank of wood that has perished and decomposed over time.

(continue to page 2)

Ruscha's singular art defies easy categorization. He has recorded the shifting emblems of American life in the form of Hollywood logos, stylized gas stations, and archetypal landscapes. His wry choice of words and indirect phrases mines the perpetual interplay between language as a physical thing and language as a transparent medium. Although his images are undeniably rooted in the vernacular of a closely observed American reality, his elegantly laconic art speaks to more complex and widespread issues regarding the appearance, feel, and function of the world and our tenuous and transient place within it.

Ed Ruscha was born in Omaha, NE in 1937 and studied painting, photography, and graphic design at the Chouinard Art Institute (now CalArts). His work is collected by major museums worldwide and has been shown extensively, most recently the drawing retrospective *Cotton Puffs, Q-Tips®, Smokes and Mirror*, which toured U.S museums in 2004-2005 and *Ed Ruscha: Photographer* at the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Musee National Jeu de Paume, Paris in 2006. Gagosian Gallery will publish *Volume Three* of the painting catalogue raisonné this year. *Volume One* (1956 to 1969) of the catalogue raisonné of works on paper will be published in 2008.

A fully illustrated catalogue, with an essay by art historian Briony Fer, will be available.

For further information please contact the gallery +44(0) 207 841 9960 or london@gagosian.com