

# GAGOSIAN GALLERY

June 29, 2016

## ED RUSCHA PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

JULY 28–SEPTEMBER 9, 2016

OPENING RECEPTION:  
THURSDAY, JULY 28, 6–8PM

GAGOSIAN GALLERY  
456 NORTH CAMDEN DRIVE  
BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90210  
WWW.GAGOSIAN.COM



Gagosian Gallery is pleased to present “Ed Ruscha Prints and Photographs,” a survey of Ruscha's prints over forty years, together with rarely seen photographs produced since 1959. It is organized by Gagosian director Bob Monk and follows earlier iterations at Gagosian New York and Paris during the last two years. The exhibition will be presented in conjunction with “Ed Ruscha Books & Co.”

Ranging freely across materials both traditional and unconventional, Ruscha's printmaking is a fluid forum for his spirited investigation of what a limited-edition artwork can be. Attracted to the reproducibility and happy accidents specific to the medium, Ruscha began making lithographic editions in the early sixties, infusing the Pop and Conceptual sensibilities of the time with vernacular wit and melancholy. His exquisitely refined prints engage a breadth of formal themes, from text and typography to still life and quotidian architecture, played out in a spirit of rigorous yet restless experimentation.

The quartet of gas stations *Standard Station*, *Mocha Standard*, *Cheese Mold Standard with Olive*, and *Double Standard* (1966–69) merge Euclidean space with Renaissance perspective and word-play, while depictions of the Hollywood Sign and its surrounding hills convey an attitude to the region's landscape, at once scientific and romantic, natural and artificial. “‘Hollywood’ is like a verb to me,” Ruscha once commented. “It's something you can do to any subject or anything”: his prints of the past four decades are random yet refined expressions of this unrestricted approach.

In the screenprint portfolio *News, Mews, Pews, Brews, Stews, Dues* (1970), rhyming words appear in Gothic typeface, printed in edible substances such as pie-fillings, Bolognese sauce, caviar, and chocolate syrup. Each word alludes to Ruscha's impressions of England: *News* symbolizes “a tabloid-minded country,” while *Stews*, made from baked beans, strawberries, chutney, and other foodstuffs, sums up British cooking. During the production of his second short film *Miracle* (1975), Ruscha used photography as the basis for prints for the first time: the incongruously titled *Tropical Fish Series* of the same year presents banal tabletop still lifes against lustrous fabrics, from *Air*, *Water*, *Fire* with a bicycle pump, seltzer bottle, and Satan statuette to the chocolates, raw cuts, and bedsheets of *Sweets*, *Meats*, *Sheets*.

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In richly colored lithographs, catchy yet meaningless terms, such as WALL ROCKET (2013), JET BABY (2011), and SPONGE PUDDLE (2015), are set against dramatic mountainscapes in scenic confluences of linguistic and visual appropriation. Unique color trial proofs and cancellation proofs are presented alongside prints from the editions to show the evolutive process by which Ruscha decides on a final image.

Ruscha's early photographs also provided foundations for his broader artistic practice. Isolating overlooked quotidian subjects, he used the camera to "flatten" the images he intended to draw and paint, from apartment buildings to commodities and comestibles, such as raisins and bottles of turpentine. Exercises in the ambiguity of scale, such as *Untitled (Newspaper Sculpture)* (1959–60/2005) and *Dodger's Stadium* (1967/2013) reveal a common abstraction in both small objects and large-scale architecture. *Roof Top Views* (1961) depicts local streets from a high vantage point, which Ruscha revisited in *Roof Top Views 50 Years Later* (2003), revealing neighborhoods only subtly changed by the pace of time, economy, and demographics.

Ruscha's deadpan representations of archetypal signs and symbols distill the imagery of popular culture into cinematic and typographical codes that are as accessible as they are profound. His wry and sometimes obtuse choice of words and phrases draws upon the moments of incidental ambiguity implicit in the interplay between language and image. Although his inspirations are undeniably rooted in his close observation of American vernacular, 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, Nebraska, in 1937. His work is collected by museums worldwide. Recent solo museum exhibitions include "Cotton Puffs, Q-Tips®, Smoke and Mirrors: The Drawings of Ed Ruscha," Whitney Museum of American Art (2004, travelled to The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. in 2005); "Ed Ruscha," MAXXI, Rome (2004); "Course of Empire," the U.S. pavilion for the 51st Biennale di Venezia (2005); "Ed Ruscha: Photographer," Jeu de Paume, Paris (2006, travelled to Kunsthau Zürich, and Museum Ludwig, Cologne); "Ed Ruscha: Fifty Years of Painting," Hayward Gallery, London (2009–10, travelled to Haus der Kunst, Munich; and Moderna Museet, Stockholm in 2010); "Ed Ruscha: Road Tested," The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas (2011); "On the Road," Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2011, travelled to Denver Art Museum, Colorado and Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami in 2012); "Reading Ed Ruscha," Kunsthau Bregenz, Austria (2012); "Ed Ruscha: Standard," Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2012–13, travelled to The Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA in 2013); "Ed Ruscha-Los Angeles Apartments," Kunstmuseum Basel (2013). In 2012, Ruscha curated "The Ancients Stole All Our Great Ideas" at Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; and "Ed Ruscha: Mixmaster" at Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli, Torino (2015–16).

In July 2016, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco will open a major solo exhibition of Ed Ruscha at the de Young museum. "Ed Ruscha and the Great American West" will feature more than eighty works spanning the artist's career, exploring his attachments to the sights and scenes of the iconic landscape.

For further information please contact Alexandra Magnuson at [alex@gagosian.com](mailto:alex@gagosian.com) or at +1.310.271.9400. All images are subject to copyright. Gallery approval must be granted prior to reproduction.

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Image: *Double Standard*, 1969, screenprint on wove paper, 25 3/4 × 50 inches (65.4 × 127 cm), edition of 40. © Ed Ruscha.

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*Gagosian Gallery was established in 1980 by Larry Gagosian.*