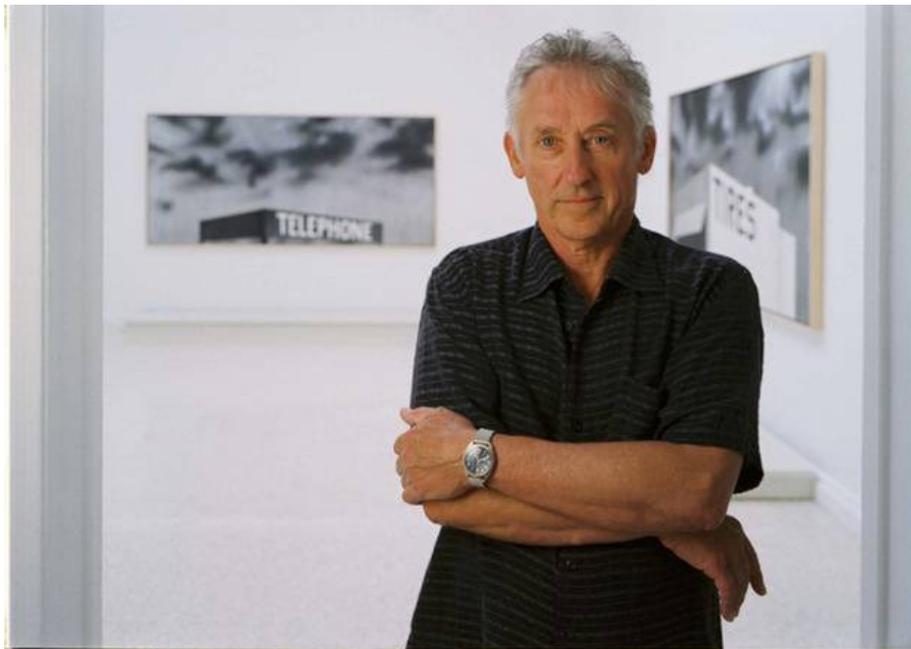


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Iconic artist Ed Ruscha to be named Oklahoma Cultural Treasure

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Iconic artist Ed Ruscha, who was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 2005, will be designated the 12th Oklahoma Cultural Treasure by Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma Arts Council at the 40th Annual Governor's Arts Awards on Wednesday, Dec. 2. Photo provided

Ed Ruscha, world-renowned artist and noted pioneer of the Pop art movement, will be on hand when he is designated the 12th Oklahoma Cultural Treasure by Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma Arts Council at the 40th Annual Governor's Arts Awards on Wednesday, Dec. 2.

Ruscha will be the first Oklahoma Cultural Treasure designated since John Hope Franklin in 2004, according to a news release.

A 1956 graduate of Northwest Classen High School in Oklahoma City, Ruscha spent 15 years in Oklahoma before moving to Los Angeles in 1956 where he became an innovator in the 1960s Los Angeles art scene, gaining fame for his unique, conceptual depictions of words and signs, film studio logos, and gas stations.

Among his most recognizable works are "Standard Station," a screenprint of a Standard Oil station along Route 66 near Amarillo, Texas, and "Hollywood," a lithograph of the famous sign in the Hollywood Hills.

Ruscha's "Bowling Ball" is part of the Oklahoma State Art Collection and can be viewed in the Betty Price Gallery on the first floor of the state Capitol.

In 1962, Ruscha was one of eight artists whose work was included in the seminal Pop art exhibition "New Painting of Common Objects" at the Pasadena Art Museum. The exhibition featured works by Ruscha's East Coast counterparts Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein.

"It's a surprise and an honor to be welcomed and recognized by the great state of Oklahoma that I love," Ruscha said in the release.

"Designating Ed Ruscha as an Oklahoma Cultural Treasure is a well-deserved and fitting honor for this world-recognized pop artist," said Fallin in the release. "He was raised in Oklahoma City and never forgot his ties to our state. Even though he left our state at an early age, Oklahoma's influence can be seen in much of his work, especially his horizontal landscapes."

Oklahoma Arts Council Executive Director Amber Sharples said in the release, "We have an incredible opportunity to designate Mr. Ruscha as an Oklahoma Cultural Treasure. Oklahoma has produced an abundance of talented visual and performing artists throughout the years, but because of Mr. Ruscha's significance in the world of art, he belongs among the select group of individuals who have received this designation. We are honored to welcome him back to Oklahoma for this occasion."

Ruscha will receive the designation during the Governor's Arts Awards ceremony, which begins at 4 p.m. Dec. 2 in the fourth floor rotunda at the state Capitol.

In addition to Ruscha, 20 honorees from across Oklahoma will be honored in various categories for their contributions to the arts in Oklahoma during the ceremony. To read the full list of honorees, [click here](#).

The event will feature performances by Oklahoma's Musical Ambassador and renowned violinist Kyle Dillingham, and Oklahoma's Grammy-nominated "Queen of Rockabilly" and 2009 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee Wanda Jackson.

A reception will follow outside the Betty Price Gallery in the Capitol's first floor rotunda. The event is free and open to the public.

An Oklahoma Cultural Treasure is an individual who is considered especially precious or valuable by a particular period, community, or population. He or she must be 70 years of age or older, a bearer of intangible cultural assets, and have outstanding artistic or historical worth.

Oklahoma Cultural Treasures are John Hope Franklin (2004); Wilson Hurley (2002); Charles Banks Wilson (2001); N. Scott Momaday (1999); American Indian ballerinas Yvonne Chouteau, Rosella Hightower, Moscelyne Larkin, Maria Tallchief, and Marjorie Tallchief (1997); Doc Tate Nevaquaya (1995); and Te Ata (1987).