



Edward Ruscha

Born:

Omaha, Nebraska, 1937

Since 1965 Edward Ruscha has maintained the same Hollywood studio not far from the HOLLYWOOD sign in the Hollywood hills. Like his friend Joe Goode, Ruscha came to Los Angeles from Oklahoma City, where he had lived since early childhood. In 1956, hoping to become a commercial artist, he enrolled at the Chouinard Art Institute. However, his interest grew toward the fine arts, and after a brief exploration of abstract expressionism, Ruscha found the calculated and ironic quality of Jasper Johns' flags and targets a more compelling inspiration.

Ruscha's glorification of the commonplace in his early Standard gas station images led to his association with pop art. He explored assemblage and collage, often using material from old books. Letter forms, words, and phrases continue to play a central role in Ruscha's oeuvre, frequently functioning as the main visual element. The artist's deadpan literality consistently explores elaborate metaphors and double entendres.

Ruscha has produced a large body of paintings and drawings, as well as two films (*Premium*, 1970 and *Miracle*, 1975). He is in the forefront of the artists' book movement, having published almost twenty titles between 1963 and 1980. In addition to making prints at Gemini, Ruscha has collaborated with several other printers and publishers, among them, Editions Alecto, Cirrus Editions Ltd., Crown Point Press, Bernard Jacobson Ltd., Kanthos Press, and Tamarind Lithography Workshop.

Ruscha has been the subject of numerous museum retrospectives that have traveled internationally, including those organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1982, the Centre Georges Pompidou in 1989, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in 2000, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in 2002, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney in 2004. Also in 2004, The Whitney Museum of American Art organized two simultaneous exhibitions: "Cotton Puffs, Q-tips®, Smoke and Mirrors: The Drawings of Ed Ruscha," which traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and "Ed Ruscha and Photography." In 2005, Ruscha was the United States representative at the 51st Venice Biennale. The traveling exhibition "Ed Ruscha, Photographer" opened at the Jeu de Paume in Paris in 2006.

In 2001, Ruscha was elected to The American Academy of Arts and Letters as a member of the Department of Art. *Leave Any Information at the Signal*, a volume of his writings and interviews, was published by MIT Press in 2002, and the first comprehensive monograph on the artist, Richard Marshall's *Ed Ruscha*, was published by Phaidon in 2003.