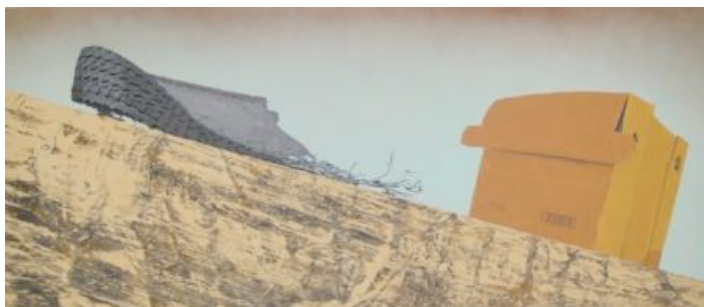


GAGOSIAN GALLERY

PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY
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Tue – Sat: 10:00am-6:00pm



ED RUSCHA

PSYCHO SPAGHETTI WESTERNS

Friday, February 25th – Saturday, April 9th, 2011

Deterioration is a fertile area to explore.

--Ed Ruscha

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of ten new paintings by Ed Ruscha, his first painting exhibition in Los Angeles in twelve years.

Psycho Spaghetti Westerns are a surreal extension of the ideas that motivated the *Course of Empire* series, with which Ruscha represented the US at the 2005 Biennale di Venezia. *Course of Empire* was inspired by the five paintings by Thomas Cole, depicting the same landscape over time as it declines from a pristine natural state into desolation. Similarly, Ruscha has documented the effects of time on landscape in a manner that is both empirical and metaphorically charged, creating finely nuanced exercises in perception and memory that he describes as “waste and retrieval.”

In these wide horizontal paintings, landscape becomes a mental construct of abutting abstract surfaces -- one a *sfumato* backdrop, the other a representational ground (grass, scrub, rock). This structure -- a strong diagonal that cuts the picture plane, dividing background from foreground -- is a pictorial device that Ruscha has often used, dating back as far as the *Standard Station* paintings of the 1960s. Here it provides a near- neutral picture plane for meticulously rendered still lifes in which incidental trash -- tire shreds, beer cans, construction materials, packaging, and discarded mattresses -- provide for reflection on the transformation of things by nature or culture.

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G A G O S I A N G A L L E R Y

Ruscha's singular vision 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, Nebraska in 1937 and studied painting, photography, and graphic design at the Chouinard Art Institute (now CalArts). His work is collected by major museums worldwide. Major museum exhibitions include the drawing retrospective "Cotton Puffs, Q-Tips®, Smoke and Mirrors", which toured U.S. museums in 2004-2005; "Ed Ruscha: Photographer", Whitney Museum of American Art and the Musée National Jeu de Paume, Paris (2006). "Ed Ruscha: Fifty Years of Painting", Hayward Gallery, London (2009, traveling to Haus der Kunst, Munich and Moderna Museet, Stockholm in 2010). "Ed Ruscha: Road Tested" opened at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, TX in January 2011. The Hammer Museum in Los Angeles is preparing an exhibition with Ruscha inspired by Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* to open later this year.

The forthcoming *Edward Ruscha: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Volume 5: 1993-1997* will be published in April 2011.

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