

ED RUSCHA: HISTORY

International Symposium: March 11, 2015 (2:30 pm - 6:30 pm) and March 12, 2015 (11:00 am - 6:30 pm), Centre Pompidou, Paris. March 13, 2015 (2:00 pm - 5:30 pm), Centre de Création Contemporaine Olivier Debré, Tours.

Free admission, subject to availability. Simultaneous translation (English/French, French/English) at Centre Pompidou.

Spanning over fifty years, Ed Ruscha's artistic production has been variously discussed under the rubrics of Pop Art and Conceptual Art. However, the remarkable diversity of Ruscha's work eschews categorizations whether historiographical or medium related. Ruscha's example has been seminal not only in the field of painting, but also in printmaking, photography, graphic design, experimental filmmaking as well as architecture. It is this versatility and the interdisciplinary nature of Ruscha's art that the symposium intends to address. It is the first event of this kind in France to engage with the work of this major figure of contemporary art. The artist will be present at the Centre Pompidou.

Ed Ruscha was born in 1937 in Omaha, Nebraska. He lived in Oklahoma from 1941, before moving to Los Angeles in 1956, where he attended Chouinard Art Institute, from which he graduated in 1960. Ruscha's early paintings attracted notice as part of the Pop Art movement of the 1960s; his art also has antecedents in Dada, Surrealism, and Abstract Expressionism, and would be central to Conceptual Art.

Ruscha lives and works in Los Angeles.

**Wednesday, March 11, 2015, 2:30 pm,
Centre Pompidou, Level-1, Petite Salle**

2:30pm Introduction: Larisa Dryansky (Université Paris-Sorbonne/
INHA), Benoît Buquet (Université François Rabelais Tours)
and Jean-Pierre Criqui (Centre Pompidou)

2:40pm Robert Dean, Studio Ruscha, Los Angeles

RUSCHA'S INHERENT VICE

Art history has long placed Ed Ruscha within the 1960s Pop Art movement which has been a convenient assessment—especially with regard to his early well-known paintings. Likewise, he has been primarily known as a painter of words. This paper intends to reassess by means of text and illustrations how we regard Ruscha's œuvre and reveal aspects of his practice that have been by and large absent in critical discourse. It will examine Ruscha's work in the mediums of painting, drawing, prints, photography and artists' books to show a consistent and career-long concern with issues of change and destruction and most recently the depiction of the passage of time.

3:20pm Lisa Turvey, Studio Ruscha, New York

RUSCHA'S EARLY DRAWINGS

This paper traces the development of Ruscha's work in drawing. I will demonstrate how he engages and challenges the medium's conventions, among them notions that drawing is preliminary or peripheral, that it is tied to creative ideation, and that it betrays the artist's hand and process. A case will be made for the distinctiveness of Ruscha's drawings not only with respect to his work in other mediums, but also in relation to the art historical contexts they register—the Abstract Expressionism to which his art is a rejoinder, the Pop Art with which it was contemporaneous, and the Conceptualism to which it is now regarded as foundational.

4:00pm Cécile Whiting, University of California, Irvine

CITY OPTICS

Analyzing the ways in which the gunpowder ribbon drawings were exhibited at the Iolas Gallery in New York City in 1967, at the Irving Blum Gallery in Los Angeles in 1968, and at the Contract Graphics Gallery in Houston in 1971 brings attention to the means by which these drawings evoked the various perceptual experiences of being in the city, especially the city of Los Angeles, in the 1960s. The drawings and their display respond to both motorized and aerial views of the city, while also hinting at the politics of surveillance in the late 1960s.

4:40pm Jean Pierre Criqui, Centre Pompidou, Paris

WORDS IN THEIR BEST ORDER.
LE ROMAN DE RUSCHA

The scenario is familiar: In a future more or less close to our times, an explorer from a distant galaxy arrives on Earth, where human beings and virtually all traces of humankind have been wiped out by some cataclysm. He discovers a number of documents that have survived the disaster—in this case, the catalogue raisonné of Ed Ruscha. The question is now to bring the scattered plates together in order to reconstruct something of this lost world. For an instant, we try to follow the thread of this fantasy in order to explore the decidedly singular paradox of a body of work where paintings and drawings are largely devoted to words, while the books consist mainly of images.

5:30pm Closing Remarks by Ed Ruscha

**Thursday, March 12, 2015, 11:00 am,
Centre Pompidou, Level -1, Petite Salle**

11:00am Anne Moeglin-Delcroix, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

(D')APRÈS RUSCHA. SUR L'ÉQUIVOQUE
POSTÉRITÉ DES LIVRES D'ARTISTE
D'EDWARD RUSCHA

Published by Edward Ruscha in 1963, *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* was very early on acknowledged as the founding model of the artist book. And yet, in the course of the four decades that followed, only a small number of books were produced that paid explicit tribute to the founder of the genre. It was only in the 2000s that books based on Ruscha's models began to proliferate and that a veritable epigonic phenomenon emerged. This development recently reached a climax with the publication of *Various Small Books* (MIT Press, 2013), a compilation of over one hundred Ruscha inspired artist books. The model now seems at risk of turning into a cliché. This paper will question the legacy of Ruscha's artist books and its ambiguities, addressing at the same time the repercussions of this evolution on the artist's own work.

11:40am Benoît Buquet, Université François Rabelais, Tours

LA LIQUIDATION D'EDDIE RUSSIA

Between 1965 and 1969, Ed Ruscha, working under the pseudonym "Eddie Russia," designed the layout for the magazine *Artforum*. This fact, which has not drawn much attention until now, is just one of the many clues to the artist's complex relationship with graphic design, one made of displacements and avoidance strategies. This paper will address both Ruscha's now canonical books and his more obscure work as a graphic designer (for student publications, magazines, record sleeves, catalogues, and posters), in an attempt to gain a fuller understanding of the artist's endeavor to suspend meaning and of his intelligence of graphic issues whose subtlety did not escape the attention of some of his contemporaries.

12:20 am Briony Fer, University College, London

RUSCHA'S ANTI-WORLD

This paper engages with the relation of world and work in Ruscha's recent paintings, in particular in his deployment of component parts which might conventionally be seen to belong to the category of still-life. It takes as a starting point Proust's notion of still-life as anti-world in order to imagine what it might be like, or even if it is still possible, to think now about the interior of painting. Drawing on a range of references from Walter Murch to Andrew Wyeth, Ruscha's psycho-still-lives are considered from the point of view of the question: where does the inside of painting end and the outside begin?

**Thursday, March 12, 2015, 2:30 pm,
Centre Pompidou, Level -1, Petite Salle**

2:30 pm Screening of *Miracle* (1975, 30') by Ed Ruscha.
Color film, 16 mm, restored digital copy.
Starring Jim Ganzer, Michelle Phillips, Dana Derfus.

3:00 pm Linda Norden, Malmö Art Academy, Lund University

**SOME AMERICAN MYTHOLOGIES:
THOUGHTS ON ED RUSCHA'S *MIRACLE* (1975)
AND *COURSE OF EMPIRE* (2003-5)**

Ed Ruscha's Venice Biennale project, *Course of Empire*, the artist once said, has to do with "the way change comes over things," something he has touched on in earlier works as well. The Venice paintings trade specifically on the 1992 cycle he called the *Blue Collar Paintings*, but Ruscha's 1975 film, *Miracle*, shares a preoccupation with the way that change works its damages and miracles. The film tracks a different moment and metamorphosis, but it does so from a similarly local, acutely historical vantage.

3:40 pm Michel Gauthier, Centre Pompidou, Paris

**ED RUSCHA ET LA
*PICTURES GENERATION***

When it comes to the history of the *Pictures Generation* and the Californian artists who composed it, people usually talk about the key role played by John Baldessari. Indeed, Baldessari taught at CalArts while several members of this generation were students there: Troy Brauntuch, Jack Goldstein, Matt Mullican, David Salle and James Welling. And yet these simple facts and the shared Californian background do not suffice to account for the emergence of this movement. We also need to assess to what extent the poetics of Ed Ruscha might have informed the axiomatics of the *Pictures Generation*.

4:20 pm Elizabeth A. Kessler, Stanford University, Palo Alto

MAKING NONSENSE OF HISTORY:
ED RUSCHA'S *TIME CAPSULES*

Time capsules gained new status in 20th century American popular culture as a means of reflecting on high-speed technoculture. With "234 Things from the United States" (1974), an unrealized proposal for La Défense, Ed Ruscha used the form and contents of his time capsule to explore permanence and impermanence, the everyday and the privileged, gravitas and humor. By calling attention to historical archives, the piece prefigures the now-frequent comparison of Ruscha's work to time capsules.

5:00 pm Margit Rowell, art historian, Paris

A STUDY OF STYLE

Ed Ruscha's recent exhibition (Rome: Gagosian, November 2014-January 2015) may be seen as a sequel to three earlier cycles devoted to the decline of western consumer society: *Course of Empire*, shown at the Venice Biennale in 2005, *Aztec/Aztec in Decline* of 2007, and *Psycho Spaghetti Western*, begun in 2010 and extending into the present. However, rather than discussing the content of these paintings, which is quite obvious in its representation of discarded objects and exploded tires, this paper will focus on Ruscha's stylistic treatment of these subjects and how it enhances the impact of his images.

**Friday, March 13, 2015, 2:00 pm,
Centre de Création Contemporaine
Olivier Debré, 55 rue Marcel Tribut, Tours**

2:00 pm Lecture by John Tain, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

EVERY BUILDING: GENÈSE D'UN LIVRE,
HISTOIRE ET AVENIR D'UN PROJET

Followed by a roundtable discussion moderated by Benoît Buquet, Larisa Dryansky, and John Tain, with the following artists:

Jérôme Saint-Loubert Bié
Pierre Bismuth
Anne-Valérie Gasc
Yann Sérandour.

John Tain will discuss the photographs by Ed Ruscha in the collections of the Getty Research Institute in light of the remakes that these works have inspired among a younger generation of artists. The artists will present their Ruscha-inspired work: *Sunset Hollywood Los Angeles California* (J. Saint-Loubert Bié, 1999), *Thirtysix Fire Stations* (Y. Sérandour, 2004), *Some Belsunce Apartments and Various Small Sparks* (A-V. Gasc, 2008 and 2014), and *Where is Rocky II?* (P. Bismuth, 2015).

ED RUSCHA: HISTORY

Organizers: Centre Pompidou, Centre de Création Contemporaine Olivier Debré de Tours, Université François Rabelais de Tours (EA 6301, InTRu), Université Paris-Sorbonne (UMR 8150, Centre André Chastel).

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The symposium is convened by:

Benoît Buquet (Université François Rabelais de Tours)

Jean-Pierre Criqui (Centre Pompidou)

Larisa Dryansky (INHA/Université Paris-Sorbonne)

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