

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

Ed Ruscha, Welcome to L.A

California and the American dream drive the work of this West-Coast hero who mixes pop art and conceptual art. A revered pioneer.

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How do we recognize an Ed Ruscha? By a stretch of flat and uniform city, identical to the Los Angeles of the film noirs, or by the gas station, vibrant as a dragon set against a black night in *Standard Station, Amarillo, Texas*, 1963, a cult painting that gave the tone and title of “Pacific Standard Time” – to the vast wave of exhibitions that swept onto the Californian scene in Los Angeles museums during the winter of 2011-2012.

Or is it by the nine towering letters of *Hollywood*, seen from behind, as if to specify that there is an unseen facet of the world of cinema glamour. Or by the nine giant letters of *Halloween* that take the place and position of those to better evoke a lugubrious carnival. *Maps to the Stars* promised the Canadian filmmaker David Cronenberg with his fierce satire that came out in 2014.

Ed Ruscha’s land is black and white, lots of grey, the colours of advertisement. The highway is a landscape, that of an old New World. In the clouds of a sky that is often pacific blue, Ed Ruscha paints with masterful skill *Cold Beer Beautiful Girls*, the formula for Californian happiness, or Mark Twain quotes. The detached houses of an endless suburbia are exercises of repetition, like algebra or mantras.

Mid way between pop art and conceptual art, this son of the *beat generation* born in December of 1937 in Omaha, Nebraska, keeps the beauty of the American Dream always within reach of his gun. The combination of his critical spirit and neat, symbolic typography gave birth to

paintings, photos, etchings, lithographies and artist books. In short, an extensive selection of multiples that should seduce Parisian collectors, after having enticed those in New York (300 references for a price range of \$3000 to \$50,000). The Pompidou Centre dedicated two days of a discussion panel to Ed Ruscha. He passed by, like a shooting star.