



NEWS RELEASE

2200 Dodge Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102 Phone: 402-342-3300 Fax: 402-342-2376 www.joslyn.org

For Immediate Release
December 4, 2018

Contact: Amy Rummel, Director of Marketing and Public Relations
(402) 661-3822 or arummel@joslyn.org

Joslyn Art Museum Announces Major Gift by Ed Ruscha of Multiple Works

(Omaha, NE) – Internationally-renowned American artist Ed Ruscha (b. Omaha, NE, 1937) has made a major gift to Joslyn Art Museum, including 18 paintings, drawings, prints, and sculpture spanning his career from 1961 to 2017. Also included is a collection of Ruscha's original artist books. The gift is complemented by an additional gift from Ruscha of 20 works by his colleagues and friends in Los Angeles, including Terry Allen, Richard Artschwager, Joe Goode, Ed Moses, and William Wegman, dating from the 1960s through 2015. The gift comes following *Word/Play: Prints, Photographs, and Paintings by Ed Ruscha* at Joslyn, the first major exhibition to feature the artist in his home state of Nebraska.

About his gift, Ruscha noted, "Joslyn Art Museum stands in the heartland of America. Being an Omaha native, it is important for me to contribute to this great and growing flagship institution." The newly-acquired works will create an important core collection of Post-War West Coast artists at Joslyn and together they represent the single most important body of work ever gifted to the Museum by a living artist.

Jack Becker, Joslyn's executive director and CEO, noted, "This gift by Ed Ruscha of his own work, in tandem with the works of other fixtures of the West Coast art scene over the past several decades, is one of the most significant gifts of contemporary art in Joslyn's history. Ruscha's work is renowned for his capacity to cleverly transform the mundane into the extraordinary. Fluent in painting, photography, and printmaking, he continues to influence contemporary artists worldwide as he makes new work into the seventh decade of his career. It is nothing short of extraordinary to receive more than three dozen works, selected personally by this renowned American artist, to be showcased in Omaha as part of Joslyn's collection. We are forever intrigued by Ed Ruscha's view of America and immensely grateful for his generosity."

About Ed Ruscha

The promised gift of Ruscha's work is a compact retrospective of his practice. As an important early figure in conceptual art, Ruscha demonstrated a talent for deftly combining imagery and text during his student years, when planning on a career as a commercial illustrator. His use of varied and often unusual materials and printmaking methods also reflects the practical nature of his early training, suggesting an embrace of finding the right tool for the task at hand, rather than limiting himself to a more traditional process. Together, his combination of technical finesse, an imaginative

-more-

add 1-1-1-1

Joslyn Art Museum Announces Promised Gift by Ed Ruscha

use of materials, and the array of subjects he found – from the graphic design of cans in the kitchen cupboard to neon billboards and the Hollywood sign – led to the broad acceptance of the modern world itself as subject.

Gift Highlights

The gift is anchored by a body of Ruscha's drawings from the early 1960s onward, employing oil, acrylic, tempera, pencil, and even gunpowder that reveal a hand equally adept regardless of medium. Renowned for his printmaking, the gift includes several of Ruscha's recent etchings from 2014, as well as the 7-color screen print, *Standard Station* (1966), which is arguably the artist's most iconic image. Based on an early snapshot he made along Route 66, Ruscha transforms the profile of a filling station into a dynamic silhouette braced against a flaming horizon. In a single image, he both tips his hat to the majestic history of western landscape painting, and undermines it with his elevation of the most mundane of landmarks. The gift is bookended by two paintings, *Automatic*, from 1966, and 2007's monumental *Figure It On Out*, which layers its eponymous text over a heroic alpine landscape. These works are joined by a boxed set of the artist's groundbreaking photographic books, including *Royal Road Test*, *Every Building on the Sunset Strip*, and *Some Los Angeles Apartments*.

Ruscha's complementary gift of works by other artists charts the course of Post-War art on the West Coast, which was a significantly different enterprise in Los Angeles than in New York City. During this fertile period, L.A. artists quickly embraced new approaches, subjects, and techniques for art making, including experimenting with the materials and processes of the booming aerospace industry, as well as the influence of surf and car cultures. L.A. Fueled by the glimmer of the space program and the emerging presence of a consumer culture poised to mine a prosperous middle class, California felt like the leading edge of the continent. The sense of racing headlong into the future was balanced, however, by the sun and surf of the Pacific Ocean, whose breezes filled artists' studios, and California's emerging hippie culture. It was this environment that inspired a group of young artists who had made their way West in the late 1950s and 1960s, many drawn from the Midwest. While Ruscha is recognized as perhaps the most influential California artist of the era, this gift is very much an acknowledgment of the friendships and collaborations that helped him establish his career.

Complete List of Works by Ed Ruscha Included in Gift:

Automatic, 1966, oil on canvas, 20 x 22 inches

Figure It On Out, 2007, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60 inches

Bicycle Sign, 1961, oil on paper, 12 9/16 x 9 3/4 inches

20 - 20 - 20, 1962, tempera on paper, 13 3/4 x 17 inches

Clamp Drawing, 1963, pencil on paper, 10 7/8 x 8 1/8 inches

Evil, 1973, gunpowder on paper, 11 1/2 x 29 inches

Miracle, 1974, ink on paper, 8 1/2 x 11 inches

Endless Landscape, 1979, pencil on paper, 10 7/8 x 8 1/8 inches

-more-

add 2-2-2-2

Joslyn Art Museum Announces Promised Gift by Ed Ruscha

Three Companies, 1983, dry pigment on paper, 23 x 29 inches

Bison Study (#3), 1989, acrylic on paper, 26 1/2 x 40 1/8 inches

Your Space, 1991, acrylic on museum board paper, 15 x 15 1/8 inches

Artists, 1998, acrylic on paper, 30 1/4 x 39 7/16 inches

Standard Station, 1966, 7-color screenprint, edition number 11/50, 25 5/8 x 40 inches

Pick Pan Shovel, 1980, 4-color lithograph, 22 1/4 x 30 1/8 inches

Rain Gain, 2014, flat bite etching, edition number 24/40, 36 1/2 x 31 1/2 inches

Real Deal, 2014, flat bite etching, edition number 24/40, 36 1/2 x 31 1/2 inches

Zoot Suit, 2014, flat bite etching, edition number 24/40, 36 1/2 x 31 1/2 inches

Wen Out for Cigaretts N Never Came Back, 2017, cast bronze with hand-applied patina, 19 3/4 in. diameter x 2 inches high

Boxed set of Ruscha's photographic books, plus other books and catalogues



JOSLYN
Art Museum

Our Mission – Joslyn Art Museum collects, preserves, and interprets the visual arts of the highest quality, fostering appreciation and enjoyment of art for the benefit of a diverse audience.

Our Vision – To be cherished and respected as a premier art museum.

Joslyn Art Museum showcases art from ancient times to the present. The Museum was a gift to the people of Omaha from Sarah Joslyn in memory of her husband, George, who made his fortune as president of the Western Newspaper Union. The Museum's original 1931 building is one of the finest examples of Art Deco architecture in the nation, with 38 types of marble from seven countries. The Walter and Suzanne Scott Pavilion, a 58,000-square-foot addition built in 1994, was designed by renowned British architect Norman Foster as his first U.S. commission. The Museum features galleries, a 1,000-seat concert hall, fountain court, education technology gallery, lecture hall, classrooms, sculpture garden, café, shop, and Art Works, an interactive space for art exploration.

General Museum Admission: Free (additional charge for selected special exhibitions).

Regular Museum Hours: Tuesday through Sunday, 10 am–4 pm; late 'til 8 pm on Thursday; closed Monday and major holidays.

www.joslyn.org | (402) 342-3300 | 2200 Dodge Street | Omaha, NE 68102