

SPRÜTH MAGERS

Ed Ruscha

Metro Mattresses

03/11/2015 – 16/01/2016

"The mattresses become not just litter in the landscape but more like scary animals."

- Ed Ruscha

Ed Ruscha has been casting his eye across the landscapes of the American west for over 50 years, taking in everything from gas stations to swimming pools to sublime mountain ranges. With their clarity and deadpan wit, his photographs, drawings and paintings impart a mood of playful awe on everyday monuments. The motifs for his new series *Metro Mattresses* were found, like so many of the subjects of his work, on the streets of Los Angeles. In each of the twelve works in the series we encounter a mattress, or mattresses, isolated and in various states of neglect, all depicted against a neutral backdrop.

Mattresses are evocative objects: repositories of dreams, essential yet private, at once mundane and lush with possibility. When a mattress wears out, it becomes a cumbersome slab of raw intimacy that needs to be discarded. Ruscha noticed the mattresses cast aside on the streets of LA and began photographing them systematically before translating the images into pictures on paper-like museum board. The consistent neutral background emphasises the typological nature and the heightened formality of the series, transforming the boxes of springs and padding into geometric abstractions. Yet the rhomboids and rectangles slump and fold with age, while the jagged rips and occasional trickles of fluid remind us that the mattresses have absorbed countless intimate experiences. The serial nature of the *Metro Mattresses* works might also bring to mind some of Ruscha's earliest work, such as *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* (1963) or *Every Building on Sunset Strip* (1966).

In addition to the mattresses, three 'word' pictures – as important to the artist's oeuvre as landscape – also feature in the exhibition. Spelling out the title 'Metro Mattresses' or 'Metro Matt', and blazing across the paper like advertising slogans, the drawings on paper underline the melancholy humour of the series. If the word metro evokes a big city teeming with anonymous people, nothing offers a more intimate corner of daily existence than a mattress.

The artist book *Metro Mattresses* is being published on occasion of the exhibition.

Ed Ruscha (1937, Omaha, Nebraska) lives and works in Los Angeles. Upcoming solo shows include *Ed Ruscha: MIXMASTER*, Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli, Turin (7 November 2015 – 8 March 2016), and *Ed Ruscha And the Great American West*, de Young Museum San Francisco (16 July – 9 October 2016). Recent solo shows include *In Focus: Ed Ruscha*, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, *Ed Ruscha – Los Angeles Apartments*, Kunstmuseum Basel (both 2013), the ongoing

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exhibition *Ed Ruscha: Books and Paintings* at the Museum Brandhorst, Munich (since June 2013), *Reading Ed Ruscha*, Kunsthaus Bregenz (2012), *On the Road*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2011) and the major retrospective *50 Years of Painting*, Hayward Gallery, London, Haus der Kunst, Munich and Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2009-10). Current group shows include *La vie moderne*, 13th Biennale de Lyon (2015-16) and *Various Small Fires (Working Documents)* at LACMA, Los Angeles (2015-16). In 2012 Ruscha curated the group show *The Ancients Stole All Our Great Ideas* at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

Sprüth Magers Berlin is concurrently presenting the solo exhibition *Parallel Planar Panels* by Andrea Zittel.

For more information and press enquiries, please contact Silvia Baltshun (sb@spruethmagers.com).

Exhibition Opening: 31.10.2015, 5 – 8 pm.

Opening Times of the Gallery: Tue – Sat, 11 am – 6 pm