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Exhibition: *Ed Ruscha, Robert Frank, Walker Evans* December 9 – January 29, 2004

The Yancey Richardson Gallery is pleased to present ***Ed Ruscha, Robert Frank, Walker Evans***, an exhibition of photographs that juxtaposes three of the most important photographic scribes of the American scene. The exhibition will include a selection of photographs from Ed Ruscha's *34 Parking Lots* portfolio along with his *Rooftops* portfolio, *Vacant Lots* portfolio and copies of his seminal books. Additionally, photographs by Robert Frank from *The Americans* and *Lines of My Hand* books and images by Walker Evans dating from as early as 1941 and as late as his 1973 series of color Polaroids, will be on exhibit to exemplify the two artist's influence upon Ruscha.

Ruscha began photographing early in his career; originally releasing photographic images only in the form of inexpensively produced conceptually based artist's books such as *34 Parking Lots* (1967) or *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966). In 1989, Ruscha began to produce limited edition portfolios of his photographs. Included in this exhibition are his *Rooftops* portfolio (2004) containing four photographs taken in 1961 but never published in book form; the *Vacant Lots* portfolio (2003), composed of four photographs originally made for, but not used in, his book *Real Estate Opportunities* (1970); and a selection of images from the *34 Parking Lots* portfolio which are printed from the same negatives as the 1967 book but sometimes display fuller croppings.

The recent Ed Ruscha retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art highlighted the importance of photography in Ruscha's output and in the accompanying exhibition catalog, Ruscha acknowledges in particular the impact of Walker Evans and Robert Frank on his own work. Frank's dour take on America includes many symbols of American car culture such as automobiles, the open road, urban streets and drive-ins. Much of Ruscha's work also references these subjects such as his aerial views of parking lots, the street views seen from rooftops and even the images of vacant lots, which place the photographer and the viewer in the street.

Ruscha has described Walker Evans as "...a profound influence...You could tell that he gave thought to the abstract qualities of a picture..." (Ed Ruscha and Photography, Whitney Museum of American Art, 2004). The elevated and oblique perspective of *Main Street, Saratoga Springs* is echoed in Ruscha's *Rooftops* and its abstraction of form in *34 Parking Lots*. In addition, both Ruscha and Evans have responded to words as a kind of visual poetry. Evans' interest in words and lettering evolved from his 1940s straight-on views of vernacular buildings with signage to the 1973 tightly-framed Polaroid images of just the signs themselves or a single typographic letter.

Ed Ruscha is considered one of the most significant contemporary American artists. He was the subject of a full-scale retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art in Spring 2004 and his work is represented in many major museums worldwide. In 2006, Ruscha will represent the United States at the Venice Biennial.

Press images are available upon request

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