EVOLUTION

REVOLUTION

ED RUSCHA (b. 1937) Evolution Revolution D2013.03

Signed lower right, "Ed Ruscha 2013" acrylic on museum board 24 x 36 in. (31 3/4 x 43 5/8 x 1 1/2 in.) 2013

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Private Collection, Europe Private Collection, Albany, New York Private Collection, California

Ed Ruscha is one of the most distinguished American artists due in part for his explorations of the symbols of Americana and the relationship between language and art. He is perhaps best recognized for paintings incorporating words and phrases, or for his many photographic books, all influenced by the deadpan irreverence of the Pop Art movement.

Ruscha employs words as images, taking phrases out of their original context and transforming them into subject matter. As with his East Coast Pop counterparts Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, Ruscha's initial artistic training was in commercial art – a background evident in his iconic typographical works. In this painting from 2013, the words "Evolution Revolution" overlay a serene mountain silhouette. Describing his inspiration, Ruscha once said, "I like the idea of a word becoming a picture, almost leaving its body, then coming back and becoming a word again."

Edward Ruscha was born December 16, 1937 and is an American artist associated with the Pop art movement. He has worked in the media of painting, printmaking, drawing, photography, and film. Ruscha lives and works in Culver City, California. He achieved recognition for paintings incorporating words and phrases and for his many photographic books, all influenced by the deadpan irreverence of the Pop Art movement. Ruscha's textual, flat paintings have been linked with both the Pop Art movement and the beat generation.

In 2004, The Whitney Museum of American Art organized two simultaneous exhibitions: Cotton Puffs, Q-tips®, Smoke and Mirrors: The Drawings of Ed Ruscha, which traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and then to the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and Ed Ruscha and Photography. Also in 2004, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney mounted a selection of the artist's photographs, paintings, books and drawings that traveled to the Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo, Rome and to the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. Another exhibition of Ruscha's photographs was organized for the Jeu de Paume in Paris in 2006. Ruscha was the United States representative at the 51st Venice Biennale in 2005. In 2009, the Hayward Gallery, London mounted a retrospective of the artist's paintings.

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