



# Ed Ruscha: Reading Ed Ruscha

*Beatrice von Bismarck, Douglas Coupland*

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*Reading Ed Ruscha* focuses on California-based artist Ed Ruscha's (born 1937) interests in books, writing and the act of reading--and his particular relationship with artist's books--which he has pursued over the course of five decades. Ruscha created his first word paintings--with oil paint on paper--in Paris in 1961. While words and phrases often function as symbols and motifs in his work, books as objects also make a substantial appearance, and the artist has deployed an astonishing range of visual means to explore the act of reading as a meaning-generating process. The 16 small artist's books Ruscha produced between 1962 and 1978 (*Twentysix Gasoline Stations, Various Small Fires*, et al.) remain definitive classics of the genre. The texts written especially for *Reading Ed Ruscha* by Douglas Coupland and W.S. Di Piero explore Ruscha's use of text through the lens of literary and poetic form, while Beatrice von Bismarck, in her essay, examines the book as work, medium of publication and exhibition format. The catalogue's editor, Yilmaz Dziewior, presents an overview of Ruscha's engagement with artist's books and the written word. Published to coincide with an exhibition at the Kunsthauus Bregenz in Austria, *Reading Ed Ruscha* includes large-format illustrations of exhibitions and installation views, with 400 images in color.

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