

SOME LOS ANGELES PHOTOBOOKS:
ED RUSCHA AND THE CITY

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ABSTRACT

Ashley L. Clay: Some Los Angeles Photobooks: Ed Ruscha and the City
(Under the direction of Cary Levine)

Throughout the 1960s and 70s, Los Angeles-based artist Ed Ruscha began publishing mass-produced books of photographs that were a departure from the traditional form of the *livre d'artist*. Ruscha's photobooks serve as one of the progenitors of the conceptual art movement of the mid-to-late 1960s. While the subjects of the books vary, several of them relate to the city of Los Angeles. This thesis argues that Ruscha's interaction with the city of Los Angeles is a crucial element in both the process of the books' production and the objects themselves by drawing upon theories of "place" from the fields of philosophy and human geography. The photobooks serve as artistic evidence that the term "place" signifies something much greater than the merely physical. Ruscha's Los Angeles photobooks indicate that human participation, engagement, and connection with the city are all crucial to what it means to be in a place.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1966, Los Angeles- based artist Ed Ruscha was asked if the city in which he lived and worked influenced his work. He responded, “Being in Los Angeles has had little or no effect on my work. I could have done it anywhere.”¹ Ruscha arrived in L.A. from Oklahoma City in 1956 and began training in art and design at Chouinard Art Institute, now California Institute of the Arts, and studied there until 1960. By the time of this statement, Ruscha had established himself as an artist with solo exhibitions at the Ferus Gallery (1962, 1963, and 1965) and his inclusion in some of the first Pop art exhibitions, *New Paintings of Common Objects* at the Pasadena Art Museum (1962) and *Six More* (1963) at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.² While Ruscha was included in these early shows, earning acclaim early in his career for his Pop-style paintings, he did not retain the notoriety bestowed upon his peers in New York, Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and Claes Oldenberg. This was largely due to his categorization as a Los Angeles artist, which was seen as the “Second City” of art during this period.³ It is

¹Ed Ruscha, *Leave Any Information at the Signal*, ed. Alexandra Schwartz, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002), 3.

²Kristine McKenna, *The Ferus Gallery: A Place to Begin*, (Göttingen, Germany: Steidl, 2009), 84. Alexandra Schwartz, “ ‘Second City’: Ed Ruscha and the Reception of Los Angeles Pop,” *October* (Vol. 111, Winter 2005), 29. McKenna notes that the director of the Ferus Gallery, Walter Hopps, also served as the curator for *New Paintings of Common Objects*. The show included works by Ruscha along with those of East Coast (New York) artists like Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein. New York had yet to host an exhibition on Pop art until the following year when the Guggenheim mounted *Six Painters and the Object*. This show ignored Ruscha and all other Los Angeles artists, exclusively exhibiting works by New York artists. When the exhibition traveled to LACMA, L.A. artists were included in *Six More*, showing the work in an adjacent gallery.

³Schwartz, “Second City,” 24.

understandable that by 1966, Ruscha might have wanted to downplay his relationship to his adopted city, as it seemed to negate his seriousness as an artist.

In 1960, Kevin Lynch published *The Image of the City*, a text that examined the “legibility” of cities, which he explained as the clarity with which a city’s inhabitants understand their complex surroundings.⁴ According to Lynch, the legibility of a given city is not only determined by its built environment, but also by how its inhabitants interact with it and imagine it. Naturally, there is variation between each individual’s perception, but there are certainly commonalities between them. In looking at Los Angeles, Lynch found that citizens thought of their “spread-out” city as spacious, when viewed positively, or disorienting, when thought of more negatively.⁵ Lynch’s theory of legibility relates to both Tim Cresswell and Edward Casey’s theories of “place,” all of which explain how people experience their surroundings and what it means to be in a place. While Lynch considers how people mentally envision their city, Cresswell and Casey both focus on the bodily, lived experience of a place, whether it is a city, a specific building, or even a single room. Cresswell defines place as not only a social space but also a way of understanding and viewing one’s surroundings.⁶ This establishes place as a system; we understand our surroundings based on how we move through it: by car, by mass transit, or on foot. Casey theorizes place through the understanding of the distinction between “implacement,” his term for immediate, bodily placement, and displacement, which refers to being physically out of place or the feeling of disorientation

⁴Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1960) 3, 6.

⁵Ibid, 41.

⁶Cresswell, 15.

and/or alienation in a specific location.⁷ The perception of a city becomes an important piece in understanding it as a place, and Lynch found that in L.A. people often found it difficult to create a mental image of the city because of its sprawling, “anti-urban” layout.⁸

Mike Davis, a city planning scholar whose work has been influential in theorizing Los Angeles, notes that L.A. is perhaps one of the world’s most mythologized, “envisioned” cities.⁹ It was stereotyped, especially in the post-World War II period, as a sundrenched, carefree city, where seriousness fades away into the oblivion of materialism, standardized aesthetics, and suburban sprawl.¹⁰ The perpetuation of these myths can be linked to the depiction of the city through visual culture, particularly Hollywood cinema.¹¹ These myths certainly led to the overriding belief that midcentury Los Angeles could never achieve the status as a city with any kind of intellectual or cultural clout. Its identification as the “Second City” of the American art world can be read as surprising, at best, and condescending, at worst.¹² Cécile Whiting notes in her book *L.A. Pop* that Andy Warhol, visiting Los Angeles for the first time in 1963, remarked that the further west he travelled, the more “Pop” everything seemed to be.¹³ As

⁷Edward Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), xiii.

⁸Lynch, 41. In his article, “Los Angeles and the Anti-Tradition of the Suburban City,” Arthur Krim explains that the notion that L.A. was an “anti-urban,” suburban city was influenced by imagery from the media dating back to as early as the 1920s. (124)

⁹Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*, (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 20.

¹⁰Cécile Whiting, *Pop L.A.: Art and the City in the 1960s*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2006), 3, 63.

¹¹Davis, 23.

¹²Schwartz, “Second City,” 33-43.

¹³Whiting, *L.A. Pop*, 5.

the perpetuator of Pop, Warhol was likely not offering a negative critique but simply commenting on the prominence of popular culture and advertisement in L.A. Images of the commercial centers from the time showcase the high volume of billboards and other advertisements [Figures 1 & 2].

While the mythology of Los Angeles' love affair with popular culture and mass marketing did not emerge without any grounding in the reality of its visual culture, the city cannot be viewed as a mere simulacrum rooted only in this culturally limiting representation. Davis notes, "Beyond its myriad rhetorics and mirages, it can be presumed that the city actually exists."¹⁴ Whiting specifies that in the 1960s, this existence and the reality of the city itself was still trying to be better understood.¹⁵ She asks, "Was it nothing more than sprawling suburbs [...] or did it instead define a new form, decentralized or multicentered, of the city?"¹⁶ Whiting argues throughout her book that it is more of the latter, but that the two are paradoxically linked. Images from the time [see Figures 1 & 2] along with written accounts do prove that the clichés about L.A. held true, in some cases, but they ignore the complexities of what it was truly like to be an inhabitant of Los Angeles at the time.

While Ed Ruscha attempted to distance himself from his city in the aforementioned 1966 interview, his work did use Los Angeles as its subject matter, presenting the viewer with his artistic interpretations of the city. This is most apparent through his photobooks, a medium with which Ruscha began experimenting in 1963 with

¹⁴Davis, 23. *Whiting, L.A. Pop*, 5.

¹⁵Whiting, *L.A. Pop*, 5.

¹⁶Ibid.

his publication of *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*. To create this work, Ruscha drove down Route 66 from Los Angeles, his adopted city, to Oklahoma City, his hometown, taking photographs of various gasoline stations. He published the twenty-six photographs that appealed to him the most in a mass-produced book; the images are in no particular order and their location is noted in the captions [Figure 3]. After the publication of *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*, Ruscha began producing numerous photobooks on various subjects: *Various Small Fires and Milk* (1964); *Some Los Angeles Apartments* (1965); *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966); *Thirtyfour Parking Lots in Los Angeles* (1967); and *Nine Swimming Pools and a Broken Glass* (1968), among others. The photobooks range in their subjects, but share many similar formal qualities. All of the books' titles are plainly stated on their cover, and the photographs contained within are all shot in a similarly "unartistic" manner.¹⁷ All of the books except *Nine Swimming Pools*, which is in color, contain only black-and-white photos whose captions simply state the subject of its respective photograph. Also contrasting with the books made in the 1960s and 70s is the artist's 2005 publication *Then & Now*, in which he aligns two bands of photographs of Hollywood Boulevard, one from 1973 in black-and-white and the other from 2004 in color. Several of these books document Ruscha's engagement with the city of Los Angeles and highlight elements of the city that are central to each work's conception, creation, and the final, aesthetic product.

In this thesis, I consider three of these L.A.-based photobooks, *Some Los Angeles Apartments*, *Every Building on the Sunset Strip*, and *Then & Now*, approaching each one through methodologies from human geography and city planning, in accordance with art

¹⁷In an interview with John Coplans in 1965, Ruscha stated that there is nothing "arty" about his photographs. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter One.

historical tenets of conceptualism and, to a lesser degree, Pop Art. I build upon Cécile Whiting's discussion of Ruscha's work as indicative of the complexity of the network that is the city of Los Angeles. Using Edward Casey's theory of place, I contend that Ruscha's work indicates the subjectivity of the artist's experience of a place through his Los Angeles photobooks. Through the photobooks, the viewer understands Ruscha's own immediate bodily placement and its deeper psychological implications, drawing upon Casey's definition of "implacement," in the places he photographs.¹⁸ Ruscha's implacement comes from more than just his status as the photographer of the images contained within the books, but what Margaret Iverson identifies as the performative elements of the books.¹⁹ Iverson views each of Ruscha's books as a "rule-governed performance," in which the artist set out a set of instructions (i.e. take photographs of every building on the Sunset Strip and make them into an artist book) and followed through with the task, the performance of which is a vital piece of the artwork itself.²⁰

The performative mode of photography that Ruscha employs in his photobook projects relates his work to the conceptual art that developed over the course of the mid-1960s and early 70s.²¹ Benjamin H.D. Buchloh points to three other qualities of Ruscha's work that artists such as Dan Graham have identified as influences on their work: "to chose the vernacular (e.g. architecture) as referent; to deploy photography systematically as the representational medium; and to develop a new form of distribution (e.g., the

¹⁸Edward Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), xiii.

¹⁹Margaret Iverson, "Automaticity: Ruscha and Performative Photography," in *Photography after Conceptual Art*, ed. Diarmuid Costello and Margaret Iverson (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 13-27.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 16-18.

²¹*Ibid.*, 18.

commercially produced book as opposed to the traditionally crafted *livre d'artiste*.”²² Buchloh identifies Ruscha’s photobooks as “proto-Conceptual” in nature, linking what Ruscha initiated in 1963 with *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* to works such as Graham’s *Homes for America* (1966). Ruscha’s navigation of Los Angeles in his photobooks situates him in both the place of Los Angeles and the developing artistic modes. In his writing on conceptual art in 1967, Sol Lewitt explains, “The idea becomes a machine that makes the art.”²³ Lewitt’s statement reveals the diminished importance of the sacred art object in favor of conception and process in much of the loosely-termed “conceptual art” movement of the mid-to-late-1960s. In the Los Angeles photobooks, Ruscha’s process of creating them was dictated by the complex system of the city, linking his movement and engagement with L.A. and his artistic production.

Each chapter of this thesis focuses on a different photobook and how it relates to Ruscha’s implacement, which is dictated by both his physical placement and his connection, within the city of Los Angeles. Chapter One analyzes *Some Los Angeles Apartments* and Ruscha’s use of deadpan photography to capture images of the vernacular architecture that characterizes some areas of Los Angeles. In this photobook, when the images are understood as a collection of like subjects, the idiosyncratic moments in the banality of the images are revealed.²⁴ Ruscha’s implacement in *Some Los Angeles Apartments* occurs through his selection of particular buildings, a sample of a popular type, in a way that functions similarly to how people create their own personal

²² Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, “Conceptual Art 1962-1969L From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions,” *October* (Vol. 55, Winter 1990), 119.

²³ Sol Lewitt, “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art,” in *Art in Theory: 1900-2000*, Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 846.

²⁴ Whiting, *Pop L.A.*, 102-5.

mental conceptions of cities. Chapter Two looks to *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* and the importance of mobility and the participatory nature of emplacement within the city. The car plays a key role in its the creation of this photobook, just as it does in the way inhabitants of Los Angeles navigate their city. Chapter Three examines *Then & Now* and how it illustrates movement through time and space. Time and space are critical elements in the creation of a place. The juxtaposition of images of the same site taken 30 years apart reveals how Hollywood Boulevard has changed over the years. *Then & Now* reveals the impossibility of place as a static concept and highlights its mutability.

Through these three photobooks of varying structures and sizes, the complexities of place and emplacement within a city are revealed through visual means. Each work helps to illuminate elements of Casey and Cresswell's theories of place by giving the theories visual forms. Ultimately, this thesis is centered around Ruscha's emplacement in Los Angeles and its influence on his work. In a 1981 interview, Henri Man Barendse asked Ruscha if the photobooks were in any way autobiographical. Ruscha responded:

I came here from Oklahoma when I was 18 and it was like romping around Los Angeles, seeing all these things, meeting all these people. The whole thing was a lasting experience for me. I still have it; I always will. That's why I'll never leave Los Angeles. [...] I can't stay away from this town. I love it. I still get lifeblood from this place. So the books are autobiographical, sure.²⁵

This statement should not be read as negating his 1966 proclamation, as each statement is indicative of two distinct points in his career. His ownership of his identification with Los Angeles slightly later in his career shows that, in retrospect, his work does indeed respond to his surroundings.

²⁵Ruscha, 213.

CHAPTER ONE: *SOME LOS ANGELES APARTMENTS*

As the title declares, *Some Los Angeles Apartments* (1965) contains photographs of various apartment buildings around the city of Los Angeles. Each image is captioned with the name and address of the building, with the caption appearing directly underneath the image on most pages [Figure 4]. As in most of Ruscha's paintings and books, language plays a key role in his work. The cover of the book proclaims what is contained within, while the captions specify the building's location. The images and captions give the viewer both photographic and textual information about each apartment, but the work is not ultimately about the photographs or the locations of the apartments themselves; it is about Ruscha's act of creating the book.²⁶ The indifferent, or "deadpan," style of the photographs serves as a device to distance Ruscha's work from the more aesthetically concerned examples of photography, such as those concerned with careful framing and cropping, diminishing the importance of the photographic quality of the images and emphasizing process. The apartments Ruscha chose to photograph are examples of common, vernacular architecture that can still—over 50 years later—be found throughout certain areas of Los Angeles, especially Beverly Hills, Hollywood, and West Hollywood. Ruscha's implacement in the city is indicated by two factors: the deadpan photographs privilege the process of creating the work over their aesthetic qualities and the types of buildings included in the book are part of the envisioned mythology of Los Angeles.

²⁶Margaret Iverson, "Auto-maticity: Ed Ruscha and Performative Photography," in *Photography after Conceptual Art*, Diarmuid Costello and Margaret Iverson, ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 13-20.

Some Los Angeles Apartments presents the viewer with a collection of photographs of architecturally similar structures whose banality is underscored by the photographic method that Ruscha employs. Ruscha's act of creating this photobook filled with images that emphasize the sameness of Los Angeles' vernacular architecture simultaneously documents Ruscha's own act of creating it and implaces the artist in the mythologized city of Los Angeles.

In her essay, "Auto-maticity: Ed Ruscha and Performative Photography," Margaret Iverson argues that the covers of the books themselves dictate a set of instructions, which Ruscha then follows in order to create his books.²⁷ She draws upon Ruscha's own statements on *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*, in which he explains that the work was entirely conceptualized before he took a single photograph. In an interview with A.D. Coleman, Ruscha explains:

I wanted to make a book of some kind. And at the same time, I—[sic] my whole attitude about everything came out in this one phrase that I made up for myself, which was 'twenty-six gasoline stations.' I worked on that in my mind for a long time and I knew that title before the book had even come about. And then, paradoxically, the idea of the photographs of the gas stations came around, so it's an idea first—and then I kind of worked it down.²⁸

Ruscha makes clear that *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* grew from specifications conceptualized by the artist before he even reached for his camera. By predetermining the parameters of the project before beginning, the creation of the work can be read as Ruscha performing his own instructions. This element of pre-instruction is present throughout the books, as Ruscha conceived of them in the same way—idea first, implementation second. This is what Iverson refers to as "performativity" and

²⁷Ibid., 13-27.

²⁸Ruscha, 23.

“performative photographs.” She distinguishes between “performance,” a unique event that cannot be repeated or documented, and “performativity,” which she sees as motivated by instruction and acknowledges that all gestures are repetitions or reiterations of others.²⁹ The act of creating the images was predetermined and now serves as visual “documents conveying the results of [Ruscha’s] experiment.”³⁰

Like *Twenty Six Gasoline Stations*, Iverson’s primary example of performativity amongst the photobooks, *Some Los Angeles Apartments* and *Thirtyfour Parking Lots in Los Angeles*, also have titles that give instructions but leave some elements of the works’ creation open-ended. *Some Los Angeles Apartments* is one of Ruscha’s more ambiguous titles. While the works with specific numbers in their titles or *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* in which the action is even more explicitly defined, *Some Los Angeles Apartments* is a title that allows for more interpretation during its production. The process of creating *Thirtyfour Parking Lots* required a helicopter and the images had to be shot on a specific day at a specific time—early Sunday morning—to ensure the parking lots would be mostly emptied of cars.³¹ Ruscha determined the number of parking lots that would appear in the book before the images were ever created. To create

²⁹Iverson, 15. For her definition of “performance,” Iverson draws specifically from Peggy Phelan’s *How to Do Things with Words*.

³⁰Iverson, “Auto-maticity,” 19. It must be mentioned that this, among several other qualities of the photobooks, tie Ruscha to a proto-Conceptual tradition in the many attempts to categorize the works. This is a discussion that is certainly being had, but one that will not be terribly useful here. I am less interested in how we can categorize Ruscha’s peculiar books, than what their relationship is to one another and to the city.

³¹There is some discrepancy in the scholarship about exactly how this work was created. Some claim that Ruscha hired a commercial photographer to shoot the photos, whereas others say that he only hired a helicopter pilot and took the images himself. I am inclined to believe the former, as it seems to be the more widespread belief. It is mentioned in David Bourdon’s article, “Ruscha as Publisher,” which appears in *Leave Any Information at the Signal* and was originally published in *Art News*, April 1972. The statement about the creation of *Parking Lots* appears in conjunction with Ruscha’s own statements, but it is not a direct quotation, so I cannot be positive that the author had the information completely correct.

Some Los Angeles Apartments, Ruscha drove around L.A., snapping photographs of the ubiquitous modernist, middle-class apartment buildings from various angles, both on streets and sidewalks.

The images in *Some Los Angeles Apartments* [Figures 5&6] exemplify a supposed neutrality and indifference with their flat, grey tones and have the look of images taken for a commercial purpose, perhaps for a real estate agent.³² The images, all of typical, middle-class apartment buildings in L.A., also suggest publicity material for a rental company advertising their various properties. The vernacular quality of the architecture, referred to as “dingbat” apartment buildings, speaks to the aesthetic of certain parts of Los Angeles, particularly Hollywood, West Hollywood, and Beverly Hills, during the 1960s. “Dingbat” describes to the shorter, two or three-story structures covered in stucco. Sylvia Wolf explains, “The surface details intended to give a sense of style to the exterior, these structures are mostly built to the edge of the lot, with carports or parking spaces and very little outdoor space.”³³ Whiting notes the consistently casual manner that Ruscha employs in each of the photographs highlights the mundane quality of all of the structures’ shared aesthetic.³⁴ The viewer becomes aware of the buildings’ sameness over their singularity.³⁵ Ruscha could have chosen any group of apartment buildings in Los Angeles and created a photobook of the same title. Even the use of the word “some” in

³²Sylvia Wolf, *Ed Ruscha and Photography*, 129. I use “indifferent” here not to suggest that the real estate agent who might use photographs like this has nothing invested in them. I mean an “artistic” indifference, related to the Ruscha quotation above.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Whiting, *Pop L.A.*, 96.

³⁵Ibid. Whiting goes on to argue that what the viewer searches for are the moments of idiosyncrasy amongst the collection of sameness.

the title insinuates the ubiquity of these structures; Ruscha presents us with some, a small selection, of many.

The matter-of-fact or “deadpan” style of the images, relates these works to Ruscha’s Pop works, while distinguishing them from the broad category of fine art photography being exhibited during the mid-1960s. In a 1965 interview with John Coplans, Ruscha insisted on a separation between the images in his photobooks and other forms of photography. He explains:

Above all, the photographs I use are not ‘arty’ in any sense of the word. I think photography is dead as a fine art; its only place is in the commercial world, for technical or information purposes. [...] Thus, it is not a book to house a collection of art photographs—they are technical data like industrial photography. To me, they are nothing more than snapshots.³⁶

Ruscha’s photographs are seemingly unconcerned with careful framing and meant to appear casual and amateurish. They are meant to present the depicted subject in the plainest way possible with no attempt to make the image seem unique, dramatic, or emotional; they are meant to appear neutral.³⁷ Discussing Ruscha’s work in his book *The First Pop Age*, Hal Foster notes that the term “deadpan” can be defined as “expressionless,” yet it is actually a particular kind of expression—to present humor in a straight manner.³⁸ Foster goes on to note that deadpan is similar to the French *blasé*, which translates to “blunted” and a term used by Georg Simmel to express the indifferent

³⁶Ed Ruscha in an interview with John Coplans, “Concerning *Various Small Fires*: Edward Ruscha Discusses His Perplexing Publications,” in *Leave Any Information at the Signal*, ed. Alexandra Schwartz (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002), 23. Ruscha is specifically discussing *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* (1963), but I believe this statement can similarly be applied to his other photobooks. I believe what Ruscha refers to as “arty” in the quotation is likely referring to documentary photographs like those done by Robert Frank and Walker Evans.

³⁷Aron Vinegar, “Ed Ruscha, Heidegger, and Deadpan Photography,” 854. Vinegar explains that the works are meant to “emphasize what might be called an evidentiary ‘condition.’”

³⁸Hal Foster, *The First Pop Age*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 234.

attitude that “the metropolitan type” adopts to defend against the overly stimulating urban environment.³⁹

Ruscha’s interest in the built environment, specifically vernacular, ubiquitous structures, was one he shared with numerous other artists working in the mid-1960s through the early 70s, such as Dan Graham. Comparing the work of these artists with that of Ruscha not only indicates an interest in architecture in the emergence of conceptualist art that used photography, but also helps to draw out the importance of Los Angeles in Ruscha’s work. Similar to *Some Los Angeles Apartments*, Graham’s *Homes for America* (1966) [Figure 7] consists of photographs of middle-class American homes built in the postwar period, though Graham’s work features tract-homes in New Jersey. As Jeff Wall argues in “Marks of Indifference,” both Graham and Ruscha’s work can be tied to the influence of Walker Evans’s photojournalism. While Graham’s *Homes for America* is a photo essay that juxtaposes its images with text and acts as a parody of Evans’ Depression-era images, Ruscha’s photobooks are also similar in their use of vernacular architecture.⁴⁰ Wall suggests that both Graham and Ruscha, reflecting a larger trend in photoconceptualist works, parody tendencies in Evans’ photojournalism. In Ruscha’s work, Wall argues that this functions as a way to draw attention to the alienation an individual feels toward his or her environment, which work like Evans’ dramatizes.⁴¹ Instead, Wall writes, “The pictures are, as reductivist works, models of our actual relations with their subjects, rather than dramatized representations that transfigure those

³⁹Ibid, 234-5.

⁴⁰ Jeff Wall, “Marks of Indifference,” in *The Last Picture Show: Artists Using Photography, 1960-198*, exhibition catalogue, ed. Douglas Fogle. (Minneapolis, MN: Walker Art Center, 2003), 38, 43.

⁴¹ Wall, 43.

relations by making it impossible to have such relations with *them*.”⁴² Wall suggests that the indifference with which Ruscha frames his shots, along with the low-contrast of their grey scale, convey a sense of familiarity with the buildings depicted within the photographs. Exemplifying the *blasé* attitude that Foster points out in the meaning of deadpan, *Some Los Angeles Apartments* is a collection of the familiar for Ruscha as a Los Angeles inhabitant.

Drawing upon Wall’s argument, deadpan images represent a closer relationship of one’s lived experience in the built environment of the city than photographs that dramatize and aestheticize the cityscape. Considering all of the images as a collective whole instead of a collection of individual images, the photos also remind the viewer of Ruscha’s performative process of creating the work. As Whiting noted above, the photobooks are not about singularity; they are meant to be taken as a whole and as a part of a process. The selection of each image is a significant part of Ruscha’s performative process in the creation of *Some Los Angeles Apartments*. The title is not specific in how many apartments are featured within the book, and Ruscha’s curation of the images when he assembled the book is also more similar to how one’s memory of a place, especially a city, tends to work.

By selecting some examples of a one type of architecture, Ruscha relates his photobook to the way in which individuals select what is significant about a city. Tim Cresswell writes, “Here ‘place’ is not so much a quality of things in the world but an aspect of the way we choose to think about it—what we decide to emphasize and what

⁴² Ibid., emphasis in original.

we decide to designate as unimportant.”⁴³ This selection process is echoed in the way Ruscha assembles the images in *Some Los Angeles Apartments*. The buildings are all extremely similar, but Ruscha chooses specific ones for inexplicable reasons. His selection of this collection of architecturally banal structures gives the sense of place that mirrors how one might create a mental image of a city. As Whiting argues throughout her chapter on Ruscha in *Pop L.A.*, the banality of the architecture coupled with the deadpan mode of photography seemingly avoid subjectivity, but the moments of oddity and idiosyncrasy are pronounced instead of deemphasized.⁴⁴ When the “dingbat” architecture of Los Angeles is envisioned, the similarities of all these buildings are pronounced, but implacement comes from specific connections. Lynch notes that every individual’s mental image of a place can differ greatly, which is a result of the varying experiences of implacement within a city. In *Some Los Angeles Apartments*, Ruscha makes this selection based on his own engagement with and implacement in L.A.

The prescribed instructions that Ruscha set for himself before undertaking *Some Los Angeles Apartments* were less restrictive than in some of his other photobooks. The books considered in Chapters Two and Three differ from *Some Los Angeles Apartments* in their reliance upon the structure of specific streets in Los Angeles, the Sunset Strip and Hollywood Boulevard. When Ruscha decided to undertake these projects, the buildings that would be depicted and their locations in relation to one another were predetermined by the city itself.

⁴³ Cresswell, 11.

⁴⁴ Whiting, *Pop L.A.* 102-5.

CHAPTER TWO: *EVERY BUILDING ON THE SUNSET STRIP*

Every Building on the Sunset Strip (1966) is a work unlike Ruscha's previous photobooks. Instead of photographing a set of similar buildings or spaces, as in *Some Los Angeles Apartments*, he chose to set himself the task of meticulously capturing the façade of every single building on the Sunset Strip, aligning the images in the order in which they appear on the street, and printing them in one continuous strip. This stands in stark contrast to the traditional spinal-bound form of *Some Los Angeles Apartments*. The accordion-style folding of the pages allows the work to be condensed to the size of a small book or unfolded into a 25-foot-long continuous plane [Figure 8 & 9]. The images included in the work were taken with a camera that Ruscha attached to the bed of a pickup truck, automated to take an image every few seconds.⁴⁵ The images are shot in Ruscha's typical deadpan style, and taken together, the Sunset Strip becomes simply two monotonous rows of grey-scale images. Ruscha's navigation of the Strip through driving is central to the process of the work's creation, and the performative elements of the work are even more specific than in *Some Los Angeles Apartments* and are directly linked to Ruscha's implacement.

Ruscha created *Some Los Angeles Apartments* by taking photographs from various positions: across the street, out his car window, down the street. In contrast, he photographed each image in *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* from his car positioned parallel to the building. His predetermined instructions dictated precisely the buildings he

⁴⁵Wolf, 139-40.

intended to photograph, while the images used in *Some Los Angeles Apartments* could have been any of the innumerable apartment buildings in Los Angeles. The specificity of these qualities in *Sunset Strip* implaces Ruscha in the depicted place through his action of driving and use of the car as the mediator through which Ruscha experienced the work in its creation. Ruscha's choice to drive down the street reflects a midcentury interest in the automobile, which was particularly pronounced in Los Angeles.

Throughout the middle of the twentieth century, the U.S. saw a rise in the popularity of the automobile. The billboard industry, advertising that arose specifically to appeal to motorists, grew by nearly \$156,000,00 between 1940 and 1960.⁴⁶ By the 1950s and 60s, the ubiquity of cars shaped middle-class American life and characterized much of the visual culture of the period. Not only were cars themselves the subjects of art and advertising alike from this period, but the very means of transportation and mobility was altered by their presence. This was perhaps more pronounced in Los Angeles than in other American cities. As Reyner Banham elaborates, "Mobility outweighs monumentality [in Los Angeles] to a unique degree [...] So like the early intellectuals who taught themselves Italian to read Dante in the original, I taught myself to drive to read Los Angeles in the original."⁴⁷ Banham sees driving as the truest way to experience Los Angeles. It was through driving that Ed Ruscha created *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966) [Figures 10 & 11], and the work illustrates how the system of the city of Los

⁴⁶Peter Blake, *God's Own Junkyard*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Wilson, 1964), 12. Blake takes these figures from a *Reader's Digest* article, which points to an increase in the industry's revenue from \$44,700,000 to \$200,000,000 between 1940 and 1960. He also points to the fact that the advertisers pouring the most money into billboard advertising were General Motors and Ford (with Anheuser Bush Inc. in third); car companies were doing the most advertising to those already taking to the road.

⁴⁷Reyner Banham, *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*, 5.

Angeles, largely dictated by roads and automobiles, was an integral part of the performativity Ruscha enacted to create the work.

Ruscha is able to “make place” and implace himself by driving to create *Sunset Strip*. As Banham’s above quotation makes clear, the automobile is the mode of transportation most associated with Los Angeles and is a way of “reading” the city. Whiting notes that Ruscha’s paintings, such as *Standard Station* (1962), visually imply the fleeting perception one has of his or her surroundings while driving, but he moves even further into his examination of the built environment from behind the wheel of a car in his photobooks.⁴⁸ By performing the task of driving, Ruscha integrates the process of art-making with the way one experiences L.A. He joins the car and the camera together as a singular apparatus, allowing the automobile to become part of the technical means of production of *Sunset Strip*, just as it is the means by which many people, both in the 1960s and in the present day, view the L.A. environment around them. In her article, “Ed Ruscha: One-Way Street,” Jaleh Mansoor theorizes that *Sunset Strip* situates the car as the “apparatus of engagement,” the mechanism that becomes the mediator through which one views the city.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Whiting, *L.A. Pop*, 83.

⁴⁹ Jaleh Mansoor, “Ed Ruscha’s One-Way Street,” *October* (Vol. 111, Winter 2005), 133. It is worth noting that Ruscha’s work never takes cars as the subject of the work itself. While other vehicles are present in some of the images, it is apparent that cars are not meant to be the focus of the work’s subject. Because car culture was so pervasive in L.A. at this point, other artists, such as Kenneth Anger, take on the car as their subject. In *Kustom Kar Kommando* (1965), a short film segment, a man wearing tight jeans polishes his hot rod’s shiny surface. The low position of the camera, framing the man’s lower body and the vehicle’s curves, eroticizes the vehicle, and this is pushed even further by a 1964 recording of the Paris Sisters’ *Dream Lover* playing in the background. The sensual tune emphasizes the erotic undertones of what occurs in the video. While work like this speaks to L.A. car culture and its social implications, *Sunset Strip* stands in contrast by using the car as the field of vision through which the city is navigated, rather than the object of desire or fascination. (Whiting, 85)

By using a car as part of the means of production, Ruscha is not only physically in a place, but he is also enacting it. The creation of place and one's implacement within it is not static or stagnant, nor is it, as Casey states, "a mere backdrop for concrete actions or thoughts."⁵⁰ Instead, implacement involves an incorporation of these thoughts and actions as a part of place.⁵¹ Ruscha's implacement is not a symptom of his simple location on the Sunset Strip on the day he photographed the images for the work, instead he is implaced because he does more than simply exist in the space. He engages with it by photographing it, and more importantly, by capturing these images through the utilization of the automobile, the means of transportation most frequently used in Los Angeles. Of course, this is not to suggest that every time a photograph is taken, the photographer is implaced in that location; though, it is always a possibility dependent upon an individual's physical, mental, and psychological relationship to his or her surroundings. Regardless of the act of photography, implacement and the creation of a place are both contingent upon the feeling of connection one has to a given locale. As Kevin Lynch notes, the way in which an individual creates a meaningful mental image of a city is dependent upon how one participates in the moving elements of the city.⁵² He notes that this cannot be merely an observatory act, but one in which everyone mutually and simultaneously participates.⁵³ *Sunset*

⁵⁰Casey, xiii.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵² Lynch, 2.

⁵³ Ibid.

Strip illustrates how one engages with the built environment, a city's stationary elements, through automobile movement.

Casey theorizes place at its most basic level as space that has become familiar.⁵⁴ To be implaced is to fight against the disorientation of being in an unfamiliar space, and one does this by navigating and becoming oriented within his or her surroundings.⁵⁵ Ruscha's navigation of L.A. and its status as "place" in *Sunset Strip* is related to Iverson's definition of performativity through the act of driving. Iverson views the photographs in the photobooks as the result or a record of "a rule-governed performance" in which Ruscha pursues his self-prescribed instructions.⁵⁶ She explains, "Performativity signals an awareness of the way the present gesture is always an iteration or repetition of preceding acts."⁵⁷ The images in *Sunset Strip* can be understood as performative photographs because they are directly related to the act of driving through the conflation of the car and the camera into a singular apparatus by which the work was created. Ruscha's act of creating the work repeats this act that he, along with every other inhabitant of Los Angeles, performs daily. His participation in this type of mobility while creating the work provides a firm connection to the place of Los Angeles, at least in its mythologized version, and the resulting images not only document this process but further illustrate the importance of mobility and automobiles in L.A. Of course, the work is not about cars themselves; Ruscha treats them as banal aspects of everyday life. In an interview with Paul Karlstrom, Ruscha explains:

⁵⁴ Casey, 28.

⁵⁵ Casey, 28-9

⁵⁶ Iverson, 18.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 15.

I'm more interested in the function of getting around than I am in the stylistic happenings of cars. [...] It just goes without saying that I like a car as a cultural symbol, a cultural implement; and yet I'm not glorifying the idea of the car. The car's probably soon to be a dinosaur. Motion is certainly always going to be around. We'd all fizzle up if we had to face life and not move around.⁵⁸

Ruscha's movement through the city is not only a practice of participating in the city, but it is also an act of familiarization. In order to capture these images,

Ruscha had to navigate Los Angeles, an act of implacement.

Tim Cresswell argues that a crucial aspect of place is that it is not merely a "thing" but also a way by which we understand the world.⁵⁹ How we move through our surroundings and make connections with it are elements of place that make it more than simply the backdrop of human experience. *Sunset Strip* reveals that automobility is a way of seeing and understanding Los Angeles and is part of its identity as a place. Ruscha's own implacement comes his participation in this. Traveling down the Strip by car and visually traveling down the two bands of images that make up *Sunset Strip* reveal a consistency in perspective but one that is also fragmentary. Whiting writes, "The isotropic sequence of facades in *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* delivers no change, climax, or conclusion, instead emphasizing the uniformity of the driver's visual and spatial experience of the urban landscape."⁶⁰ Throughout her chapter on Ruscha's work, Whiting argues that the sameness of the architecture, emphasized by the deadpan photographs, reveals to the viewer what was characteristic of Los Angeles during the 1960s. The individual images isolate each of these buildings from a perspective that a

⁵⁸Ruscha, , 161-2

⁵⁹ Cresswell, 11.

⁶⁰ Whiting, *Pop L.A.*, 95.

driver would only have from the moment the car is directly parallel to the building. These views are fleeting and Ruscha's alignment of individual images into the two bands of each side of the street emphasizes this.

The fragmentary quality that the individual images give the work is heightened by the numerous cars that appear in the work; many of them are bisected by the edge of the photograph. Some of these cars appear to be parked on the side of the street, and Ruscha's indifferent approach to framing his images results in only a piece of the car appearing in the image. Others are closer to the camera, indicating that they too are cruising down the Sunset Strip, and Ruscha's camera catches them as they pass. The view from the road is always fragmentary, temporary, and obscured by other cars.

Car travel was (and continues to be) the dominant form of transportation in Los Angeles, a city whose sprawling area prevents inhabitants from relying on walking as one might be able to do in an East Coast or European city. In Lynch's survey of Angelenos, when asked how they viewed their city, the response was overwhelmingly related to its layout.⁶¹ In a more positive view, people saw it as spacious, whereas the negative perspective characterized L.A. as disorienting and constitutive of weariness.⁶² The expansiveness of the city is made possible by its vast freeway system that is perhaps one of the features most readily imagined when thinking of Los Angeles. Banham aptly points out, "Paris is not famous as the home of the Metro in the way Los Angeles is famous as home of the freeway."⁶³ The freeways connect the various areas of the vast

⁶¹ Lynch, 41.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Banham, 196.

city, and the other, smaller roads are “tributaries.”⁶⁴ Ruscha’s use of these roads, even if they are not the freeways themselves, reinforces the centrality of this system of roadways to how Los Angeles functions. They serve as a characteristic of L.A. when it is envisioned, and they are the system through which the city is seen when one is physically there.

Ruscha’s traversal through the urban space, relayed to the viewer through the fragmentary images, is a performative project in which his documenting of the Sunset Strip is a key piece of the work. By aligning the images according to their addresses on the street and positioning them in the final book in two long bands of images, Ruscha reconstructs the Sunset Strip into a smaller, simulated form. Iverson’s definition of performativity as a “rule-governed performance” extends beyond just the act of Ruscha snapping the images.⁶⁵ In order to align the images in the order that the buildings would appear on the actual street, Ruscha must submit to this already established system. The positions of the images are already decided for him.

The relationships of camera to car, driving to photographic, and position on the street to position on the page indicate the combining of two systems: the city and the photobook. Creating *Sunset Strip* required Ruscha to engage with the city while allowing it to dictate elements of the work. It was not simply the artist’s act of photographing every building on the Sunset Strip that indicates his emplacement but his participation in the city’s system.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Iverson, 18.

CHAPTER THREE: *THEN & NOW*

In 1973, Ed Ruscha repeated his actions from 1966 on the Sunset Strip, photographing both the north and south sides of another iconic Los Angeles street, Hollywood Boulevard. He used the same method as before, with a Nikon loaded with a continuous strip of black-and-white film in the back of a pickup truck. Equally as engrained as the Sunset Strip in popular consciousness as a representation of L.A., Hollywood Boulevard is a major tourist destination and commercial free-for-all, with the Hollywood Walk of Fame and Grauman's Chinese Theater attracting hoards of tourists. Ruscha's photographs from 1973 remained unpublished in his personal collection until 1996 when they were published in the literary magazine, *Grand Street*.⁶⁶ This first appearance only included the 1973 photographs and went rather unremarked.⁶⁷ However, in 2004, this series of photos received renewed attention when the artist re-shot Hollywood Boulevard using the same method once again but with 35 mm color-negative film. In 2005, Ruscha published his first self-published book since 1978, entitled *Then & Now*. In it he aligned the 1973 photographs alongside those from 2005 [Figure 12]. That same year, the images were exhibited at Gagosian Gallery Beverly Hills, installed around the gallery space in continuous strips juxtaposing the black-and-white with the color photos [Figure 13]. Both the installation and the book incorporate the same photographs

⁶⁶ Edward Ruscha, "From 'Hollywood Boulevard,' 1973/1995," *Grand Street*, No. 56, Dreams (Spring 1996), 260.

⁶⁷ It should be noted here that *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* represents only the beginning of Ruscha's interest in photographing sides of the road in this manner. Among other roads, he shot a section of the Pacific Coast Highway in 1974. I mention this only to perhaps explain why this was not widely discussed in 1996; it was not a unique project for Ruscha.

in dialogue with one another in similar ways, however they differ with regard to the viewer's experience. The installation provided a continuous flow of images around the gallery space; viewers were able to follow the progression of the images presented on serpentine displays that filled the gallery. Contrastingly, the book has a traditionally bound spine, so each page contains sections of four bands of images facing the middle of the page. The images correlate to their respective sides of the street and addresses. The flow between each section of images is broken by the viewer having to turn the page.

While there is significant scholarship on the subjects of both Ruscha's other books on the subject of Los Angeles and his paintings, *Then & Now* has not received that level of attention. No scholarly articles have been published on the work, nor is it mentioned in any of the monographs on Ruscha. Indeed, even *Leave Any Information at the Signal*, Ruscha's collection of his own writings and interviews, contains no mention of the 1973 photographs, and it was published before *Then & Now*. Hunter Drohojowska-Philp briefly reviews the exhibition version of *Then & Now* in his article, "Vanishing," published on Artnet.com. His cursory paragraphs about the work appear to be the only attention paid to it. In spite of this void in the scholarship, the work is related to Ruscha's other photobooks through its engagement with Los Angeles. The juxtaposition of images from different time periods reveals flexibility of the conception of place and its inevitable instability.

Throughout *Getting Back into Place*, Edward Casey analyzes the relationship of movement with his conceptions of place and how one is implaced. Actions and the systems through which we interact with the world play a crucial role in how people understand their own implacement. As *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* elucidates,

place is not a stagnant location but is intimately tied with the means by which we move through it. In *Sunset Strip* the car and its relationship to Los Angeles supports this point. Ruscha's repetition of the use of the car to photograph yet another Los Angeles street in *Then & Now* reiterates the significance of the car, and the 30 years separating the sets of images both taken in this way indicated the sustained prominence of automobility. *Then & Now* allows the viewer to examine the changes (or lack of changes, in certain areas) of Hollywood Boulevard between 1973 and 2004.

In the final chapter of *Getting Back into Place* entitled "Homeward Bound: Ending (in) the Journey," Casey discusses how one can be re-implaced and the relationship one has to previously significant places. Places are constantly in flux and it would be impossible to return to a place and for it to remain entirely unchanged.⁶⁸ Casey presents the idea of "homecoming" to further explain this idea. When we return home after being away, whether we are returning to our physical residence after a short vacation or visiting a place we previously thought of as "home," it is inevitable that the relationship between person and place will be different.⁶⁹ As places change physically and people change emotionally and psychologically over time, connections and associations with places become inevitably altered.

By juxtaposing the two sets of images of Hollywood Boulevard, *Then & Now* visually demonstrates the mutability of a given location. Ruscha uses the same method of photographing from his car while driving down the street in both sets of images in *Then & Now* as he does in *Sunset Strip*. The repetition of the same action to photograph both

⁶⁸ Casey, 274.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 290.

the black-and-white and the color images, along with how Ruscha arranges the images according to their addresses, allows for a direct visual comparison of each section of Hollywood Boulevard. The images all appear to be taken from the same distance, and they are all shot with the same deadpan indifference as Ruscha's other books that feature Los Angeles' architecture. By keeping these elements of the work the same between the two sets of photos, Ruscha is able to draw attention to the changes between them, which he heightens by choosing to use color film for the 2004 set. Drohojowska-Philp describes the effect of comparing the two images, "It is mesmerizing to see the ways that one of the city's most notorious boulevards has been treated by time, like the proverbial movie star preserved in her youth on celluloid and then appearing in a matronly role at the end of her career."⁷⁰ This analogy, particularly apt in its reference to Hollywood cinema, highlights the inevitability of change, even in a location as envisioned and famous as Hollywood Boulevard or a person as mythologized as a movie star. The popular imagination often fights against the ability of pop culture icons to change.

The forward movement of time and the inevitable change that comes with it is linked to Casey's definition of place through its instability in *Then & Now*. *Then & Now*, like *Every Building on the Sunset Strip*, is a product of movement through space, but unlike *Sunset Strip* it is also a result of the marching on of time. Casey explains:

Movement is therefore intrinsic to place-- thus to what is often taken to be the very paradigm of the lasting and the unmoving in human experience. As holding and marking the stages of a journey, places exhibit notably stationary virtues. But as the loci of engaged motion--both the more conspicuous motion of moving-between-places and the more subtle motion of being-in-place -- places show

⁷⁰Hunter Drohojowska-Philp, "Vanishing," <http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/features/drohojowska-philp/drohojowska-philp11-28-05.asp> , accessed April 12, 2014.

themselves to be remarkably nonstatic. They are the foci of flow on the pathway of the journey.⁷¹

Ruscha's return to the same street to photograph the buildings of Hollywood Boulevard illustrates how the assumption that any given place is stagnant is easily refuted.

The thirty years separating the two sets of photographs presents changes in the architectural landscape of Hollywood Boulevard, calling into question the envisioning and mythologizing of Los Angeles described by Mike Davis.⁷² *Then & Now* points to the absurdity of the stereotyping of a city's elements, because they are sure to change over time and each individual's experience with the city differs a great deal. The changes in architecture alone, thoroughly emphasized by the use of color in the 2004 images, indicates that the nature of cities is to be constantly in flux. Drohojowska-Philp describes the buildings present in the 1970s photos as "tackier" than their 2004 comparators that have been remodeled in "good taste."⁷³ These opinions, of course, reflect this author's particular reaction to the work and its relation to the actual Hollywood Boulevard, and he speaks from his own engagement and understanding of the city in 2005. Drohojowska-Philp's implacement and conception of Los Angeles as a place is distinctly his, just as Ruscha's is particular to him.

In *Then & Now*, the subjectivity of implacement is even more fully articulated than in Ruscha's other photobooks. He incorporates the automobility and vehicular engagement of the city of *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* and the deadpan images from *Some Los Angeles Apartments*. The aligning of the images reveals the performative

⁷¹Casey, 280.

⁷² Davis, 9.

⁷³ Drohojowska-Philp.

elements of the work, and Ruscha's actions and process of creating the work are brought to the fore. The two distinct times reflect different periods of Ruscha's career, in 1973 he was still a relatively young artist and by 2005 he was one of the most well-known and established living American artists. As Ruscha's statements quoted in the introduction of this paper reveal, the evolution of his career has led him to embrace the influence of Los Angeles as the subject matter of his work. *Then & Now* visually presents his continued engagement with Los Angeles as it changes over time.

CONCLUSION

Cécile Whiting notes in her book *Pop L.A.*, “Ruscha’s art, much like his self-presentation as a Hollywood playboy—flirting knowingly, perhaps dangerously, with stereotypes about Los Angeles—managed to do more than merely reflect the surrounding city.”⁷⁴ As the photobooks discussed in this thesis reveal, Ruscha drew upon the stereotyped images of Los Angeles, choosing to photograph dingbat apartment buildings, the Sunset Strip, and Hollywood Boulevard, all of which are associated with Los Angeles in the popular imagination. The books discussed here specifically depict Los Angeles through the built environment, but Ruscha produced other photobooks that also engaged stereotypical Los Angeles imagery. *A Few Palm Trees* (1971) and *Nine Swimming Pools and a Broken Glass* (1968) are also full of imagery associated with the West Coast. Indeed, even his paintings and their association with Pop Art, mass marketing, and popular culture can be related to the visual experience of midcentury L.A.

Implacement is not limited to simply the built environment. Casey and Cresswell’s definitions of place accommodate for more than roads and buildings. Personal, subjective associations and connections with given locations create places, so Ruscha’s use of other kinds of imagery beyond just architecture could also be understood as a part of place. One could argue that these other works also play on stereotypes of Los Angeles in order to indicate Ruscha’s implacement within the city; palm trees and swimming pools are also part of the mythologized, sun-drenched, relaxed Los Angeles.

⁷⁴ Whiting, *Pop L.A.*, 71.

These works could certainly be brought into a larger discussion of Ruscha's presentation of place in his photobooks.

The way implacement and place have been applied to Ruscha's work in this paper are specific to the artist's engagement with the city. While outside the purview of this paper, the viewer's relationship with the work is also significant and these theories can also be used to analyze the works from this perspective as well. Are these works implacing to the viewer? To what extent does the viewer's relationship with the actual city of Los Angeles affect his or her subjective experience with the works? Can the works be implacing for some, while displacing for others? These questions open up a much larger discussion regarding the relationships between place, the viewer, photography, and displacement. While not discussed in any detail in this thesis, displacement is also a term used by Casey in *Getting Back into Place* that describes an entirely different relationship between people and place—one characterized by alienation and disconnection that can be physical, mental, or both.

These other perspectives and artworks not analyzed in this thesis are areas where this research could continue to create an even larger project. The subjectivity and flexibility of place itself allows for multiple, simultaneous perspectives on the same subject. Suggesting that these readings are the only way to understand how Ruscha's photobooks relate to place and the city would be antithetical to the very nature of implacement itself. Subjectivity and personal connection are at the very heart of what is at issue here.

IMAGES



Figure 1

Three Youths Hitchhiking on the Sunset Strip, Los Angeles Calif., 1966

Originally published on November 20, 1966 in the *Los Angeles Times*

Los Angeles Times photographic archive, UCLA Library

Original caption: "Sunset Strip Scene- How do you dress up a neighborhood?"



Figure 2

Night scene of the Sunset Strip in Los Angeles, Calif. 1965

Originally Published on January 31, 1965 in the *Los Angeles Times*

Los Angeles Times photographic archive, UCLA Library

Original Caption: "For High Livers- Bright lights, entertainment and wealthy residential areas of Sunset Strip draw hordes of nation's criminals and hangers-on seeking easy money."

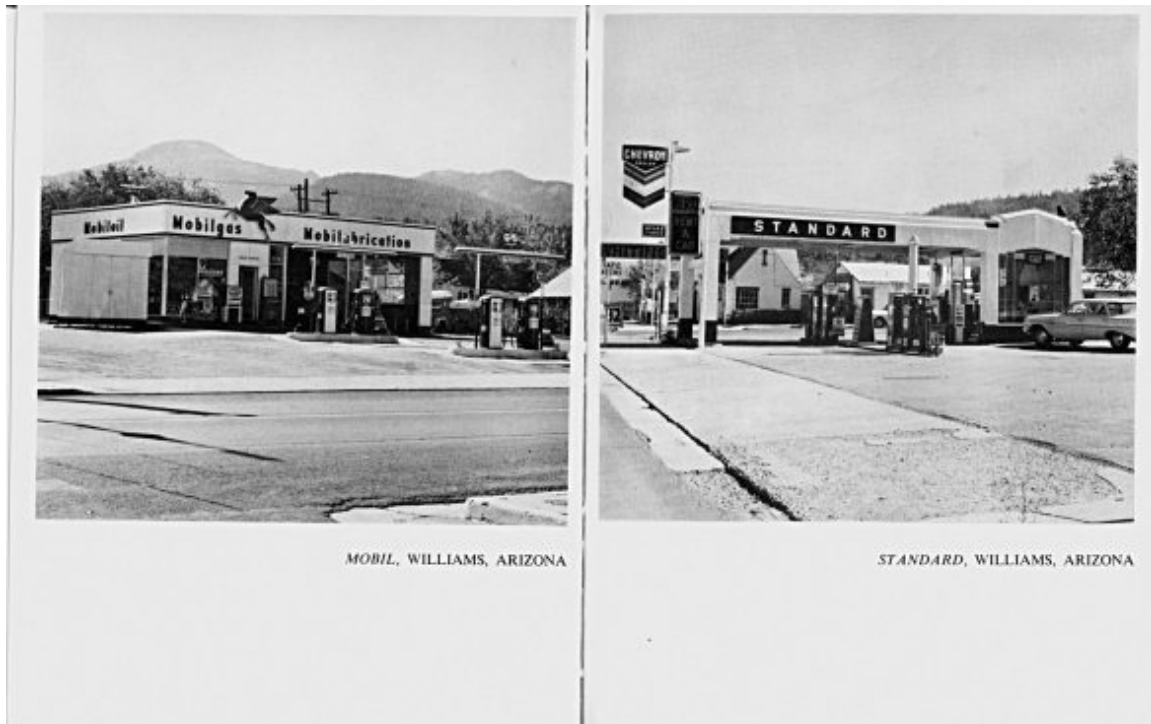


Figure 3
Detail of *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*, 1963



Figure 4
Detail of *Some Los Angeles Apartments*, 1965



Figure 5
Detail of *Some Los Angeles Apartments*, 1965



Figure 6
Detail of *Some Los Angeles Apartments*, 1965



Figure 7
Dan Graham, *Homes for America*, 1966



Figure 8
Every Building on the Sunset Strip, shown partially unfolded, 1966

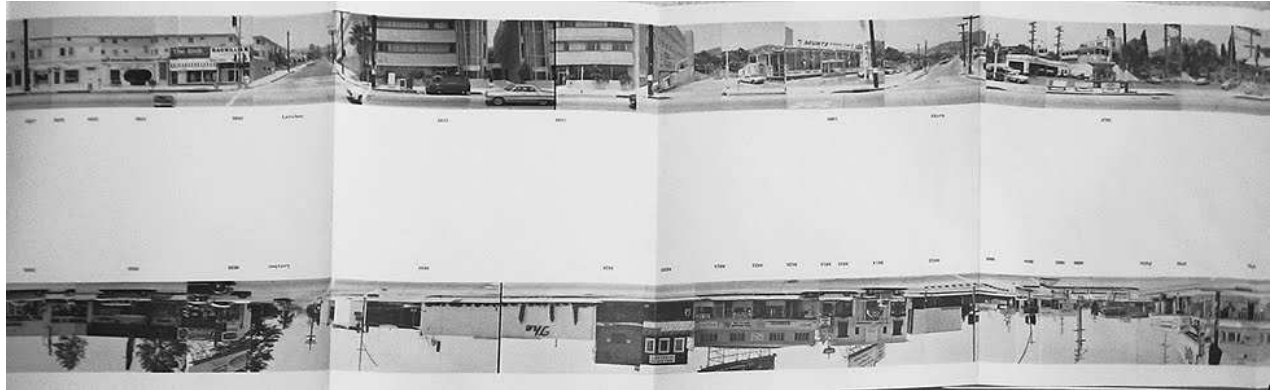


Figure 9
Detail of *Every Building on the Sunset Strip*, 1966

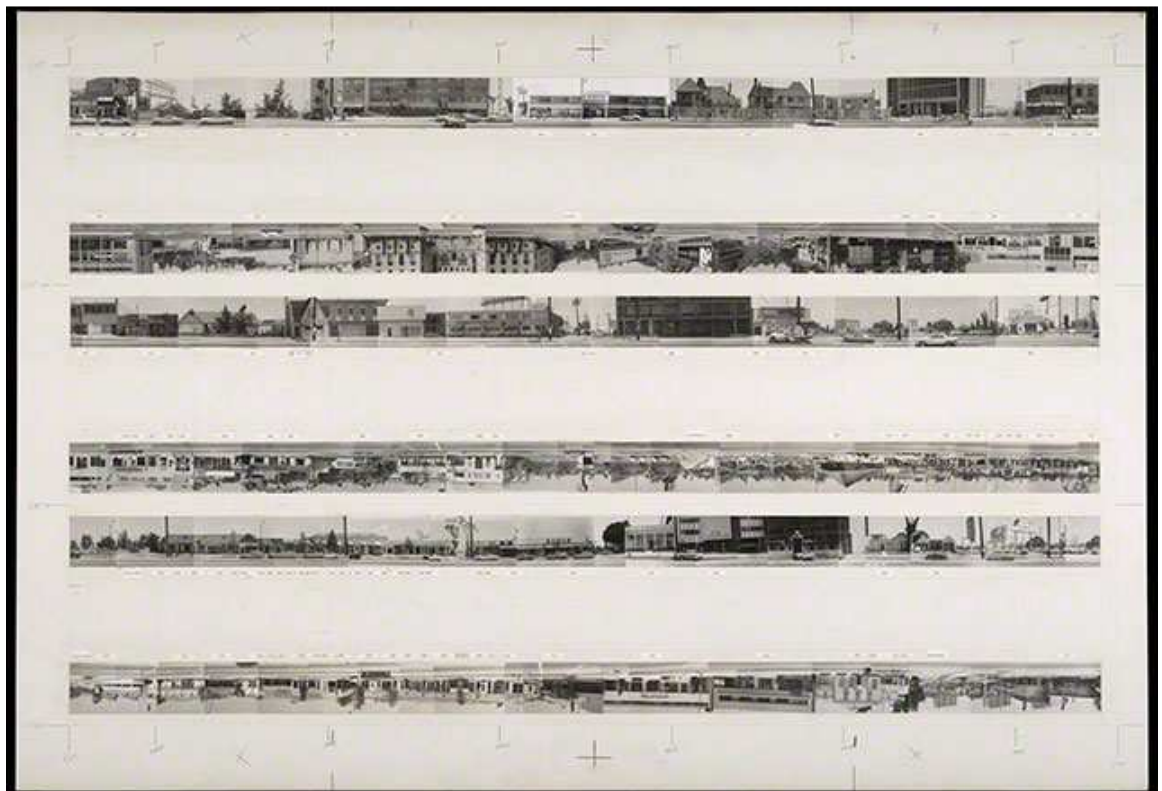


Figure 10
Maquette for *Every Building on the Sunset Strip*, 1966, gelatin silver prints and labels on board with annotations, The Getty Research Institute

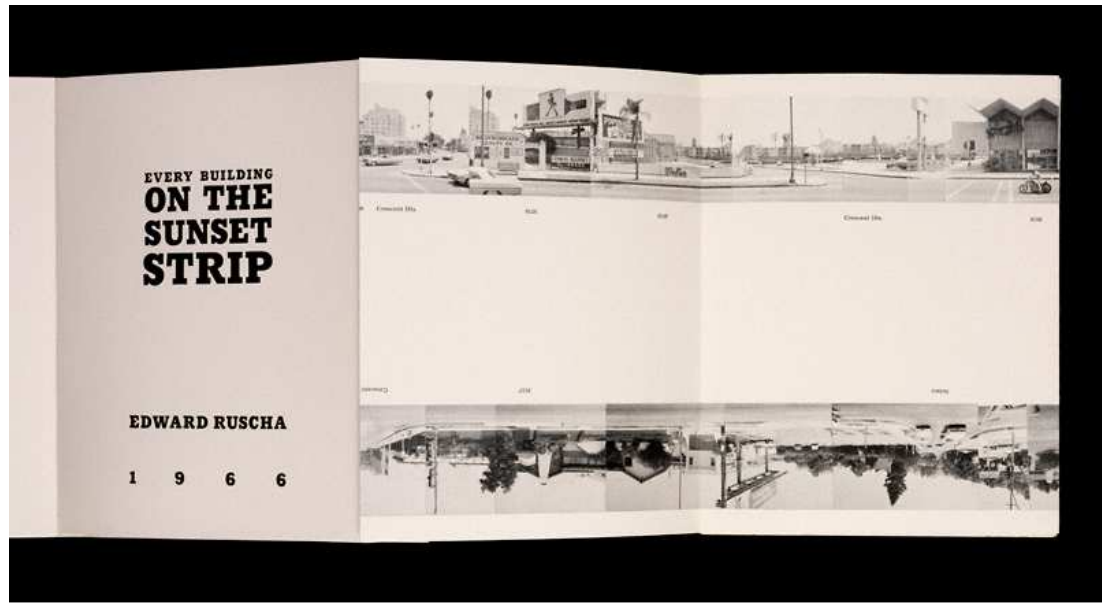


Figure 11
Detail of *Every Building on the Sunset Strip*, 1966

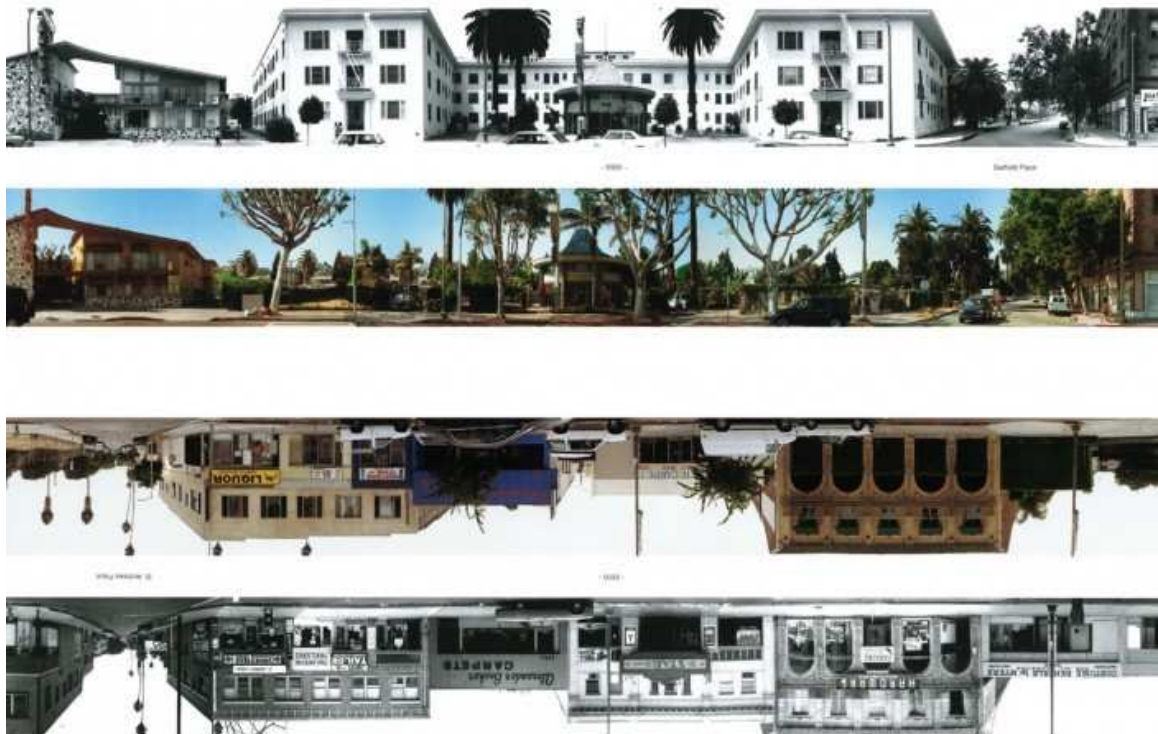


Figure 12
Detail from *Then & Now*, 2005



Figure 13
Then & Now installed at Gagosian Gallery, Beverly Hills, October 27- December 23,
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