

## Pick Of The Week

# RUBBER SPIRIT

**E**d Ruscha is unique in his facility with words that conjure concepts and concrete images. Although some of the recent works seem strained, most reveal the ironic humor and graphic simplicity that have become the artist's signature. Oils and pastels, produced within the last year, reflect newly-evolved political concerns. For example, extra-terrestrial views of a planet that one assumes to be Earth are arbitrarily labeled with such terms as "90% Devil, 10% Angel," "90% Angel, 10% Devil." One thinks of the equally arbitrary qualities associated with East and West, Soviets and Americans, blacks and whites. The rhetorical questions arise, "Who makes these distinctions; what is their relevance?" The questions are answered by a companion view of the planet divided idealistically with the words, "We're here," "We're there." The absurdity of man's need to parcel, package, and categorize is neatly summarized, a visual equivalent of the slogan, "One planet, one people, please." Ruscha's wry observations extend to more quotidian affairs in compositions of world weary romance. The line "One Night Stand" is superimposed over the contradictory "Forever;" The letters "R-O-M-E-O" sink into the sunset; ultimately, the work that expresses our contemporary malaise, shown above, is "Rubber Spirit." On view at Flow Ace Gallery, 8373 Melrose Avenue, through May 31.

—Hunter Drohojowska