



Marble, Olive

Date

1969

Primary Maker

Edward Ruscha

Medium

Lithograph

Description

As the title promises, not without irony, *Marble, Olive* depicts a glass marble and a pimento-stuffed green olive floating or bouncing within an undefined gray space in which each casts a shadow, although no flat surface is clearly articulated. In 1969, the artist, Edward Ruscha, created a number of trompe-l'oeil oil

paintings that set objects in ambiguous surroundings that negate the potential for realism, such as *Bouncing Marbles*, *Bouncing Apple*, *Bouncing Olive* (The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO). In the Wellin's lithograph of the same date, the marble and olive are isolated and presented as weighty objects capable of velocity—which, as printed images, they are inherently not. By insisting on the materiality of an immaterial depiction, Ruscha's work comments on the nature of representation itself. Ruscha helped to establish the robust West Coast art scene of the second half of the twentieth century. He moved to Los Angeles from the Midwest in 1956, intending to train as a sign painter, and was deeply influenced by the California streetscape and atmosphere. Like many artists now classified as Pop, he was attracted to unrefined types of media, such as comics, advertisements, and scraps of found paper, and used them when he began making collages in 1960 and 1961. His images are often described as deadpan in their extreme straightforwardness, sly humor, and irreverence with regard to artistic tradition. Ruscha's work has come to be considered an important precursor to conceptual art. The artist began creating prints early in his career; his first lithographs date to 1962. *Marble, Olive* was printed at and published in an edition of twenty by Tamarind Lithography Workshop, founded by the artist and visionary June Wayne in 1960 to encourage artists to explore the medium. Michael E. Shapiro, Class of 1971, H2016, curated an exhibition of Ruscha's early prints and books at the Root Art Center in 1974. He gave this print to the College upon the opening of the Emerson Gallery in 1982. (SOURCE: Alcauskas, *INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS*, 2017)

Dimensions

Composition: 4 15/16 x 7 in. (12.5 x 17.8 cm) Sheet: 9 11/16 x 12 in. (24.6 x 30.5 cm)