



Ted Cowart, *Limestone Field*, mixed media and collage on canvas, 48 x 60 in. Ted Cowart in his home in Houston.
Photo by Arthur Demicheli

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A MADMAN,
A DREAMER,
A HOMEGROWN ARTIST,
TED COWART,
IS HERE TO STAY.

AS A YOUNG PROFESSIONAL, A RECENT graduate, and a dreamer, I often place too much pressure on myself to reach my goals instantaneously. However, Ted Cowart, world renowned painter, inspired and assured me, with his life story, that everything will fall into place at its own time.

From a young age, very young age, Ted began drawing. He mimicked scenes from movies, such as *Fantasia*, and at the age of 5, his drawings were recognizable. It was clear from the beginning that this right sided brain of his was going to get him far. Cultivating the debut of his rich education in the arts all happened right here in Houston, as he went to Lanier Middle School and Lamar High School. He got a scholarship, very young, that lasted 10 years, where he was privileged enough to go, every day after school, to the Museum of Fine Arts' art school, led by Ruth Pershing Uhler. With a developing and curious mind, roaming the

halls of the MFAH was a dream and set him apart from the mass. This early passion for the arts sparked the desire to be a full-time painter when he grew up.

After graduating from Lamar High School, Ted moved to California to start school at the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles. These high-level courses were demanding yet rewarding as he found himself turning down job offers in an effort to complete school first. This degree allowed Ted to get one step closer to his dream. He was now an expert in differentiating "what was for painting, design, or promotion".

Right before graduation, Ted found himself in Germany, completing his mandatory military service for 18 months. A slight hiccup in his preconceived trajectory. However, he was gracious for the opportunity since he felt "like a kid in a candy store" as he travelled all across Europe, from





From left: Ted Cowart, *Urban Canyon I*, *Urban Canyon II*, *Urban Canyon III*, *Urban Canyon IV*.
Opposite page: Ted Cowart, *Urban Canyon V*, all mixed media on canvas, 48 x 60 in.

“ THE PASSION I HAVE FOR MY ARTWORK IS INFECTIOUS. ”

Paris to Nice to Barcelona. He painted everything he saw, from landscapes to portraits of officers. He always stayed consistent in the effort put into his skills; practice makes perfect and tenacity allows for practice.

After a brief return to Houston, Ted's luck with connections continued bolstering. In 1963, he had landed a marketing job with Revlon on Madison Ave in New York City. Then was introduced into a whole new world after receiving a letter from Cynthia Rathbone, daughter of famous English actor, Basil Rathbone, and a reputable art dealer, working for Hockaday Associates. Shortly after, Ted also got a job with Hockaday, which was one of the most popular and reputable advertising agencies that had a long, diverse, and happy list of clients. Ted worked with all the new models, fashion, and photographers. Don Draper was a carbon copy of Ted in the *Mad Men* drama television series. His view from his corner office of the New York skyscrapers has now become an inspiration for his new painting series “Urban Canyons”.

Ted balanced his time between New York City and Beverly Hills while still working on advertising and design. In New York, off of Park Avenue, Ted had an art dealer that continued to put his name out and succeeded in making him powerful connections. He would do interviews of celebrities for the magazines and then, with his art always in the back of his mind, draw their portraits which were

then printed in magazines, like *Vogue* and *Bazaar*.

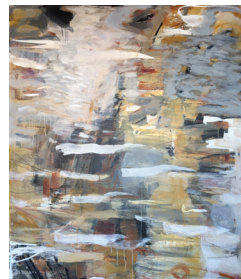
Ted was nonstop working in the bustling cities from coast to coast. This stressful and demanding work life began to wear on him and burned him out. He wanted to be in New York full time, in order to start his own business and do what he really wanted, paint. At the end of the 60s, Ted downsized in New York in order to be fully devoted to his own business. Years of advertising and networking all the right people allowed Ted to build a very successful client list to sell his artwork. Ted started out and continues to this day to generate a following solely based on word of mouth.

At 40 years old, Ted wanted out of New York and moved back to Houston for a short while. Ted worked as an advertising consultant for Neiman Marcus and painted out of his dining room. Painting full-time started to get closer and closer. After all of his gracious success, he was still envious of the painters that were able to be free with their art.

Ted moved to Palm Springs, where he took all that he learned from art school to ad agencies on Madison Avenue, to paint full time, while still running his advertising business remotely. He was surrounded by inspiring artists, such as Ed Moses. He learned new concepts about art such as the benefits of experimentation. This new, beautiful location allowed Ted to detach himself from the logistical side of work and truly allow the creative juices to flow. Ted was finally free to paint.



Ted Cowart in his Houston's studio.
Photos by Arthur Demicheli



With luck still on his side, Ted's Palm Springs neighbor, Jane Behman, came over for a cocktail and saw Ted's artwork hanging on the walls. Without him knowing she had an art gallery in town, she fell in love with his work and showcased it shortly after their first meeting. This relationship sprung him into his lifelong dream of being a full-time painter, after he had waited patiently for decades before his dream became a reality.

The 90s were the beginning of Ted's successful and admirable career. After years of envisioning himself being a painter, starting as a young boy, he was finally living his dream. He said: "I am waking up some days having to pinch myself, how in the world did I get here? Every day is a dream!" Ted recognizes that he would not be the accomplished artist that he is today without each steppingstone of his life. Ted's work is shown in numerous galleries nationally, but he prides himself as being an independent artist, as he values freedom. His life story taught me that things happen for a reason, to never give up on your dreams, and that patience is key.

Ted Cowart is represented by Off the Wall gallery and will have his first exhibition at the gallery in March 2020.

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Top: Ted Cowart works *Via Monte Vista* (left) and *Black + White* (right) fills the walls of this cozy study.
Bottom: A trio of colorful paintings by Ted Cowart enlivens the neutral palette in this living room.
Photos by Arthur Demicheli