

# Ted Turner's pinstripe art

*Beyond fenders, hoods and tailgates*

**T**ed Turner got his start as a pinstriper in his early teens. His father sold firetrucks, so he saw plenty of gold leaf lettering and striping while growing up. He remembers



poking at some failing lettering on a fire truck at about 13 years old. Someone joked that he would have to fix it now that he had flaked it off.

"I told them that I could, if I could find out what I needed to know,"

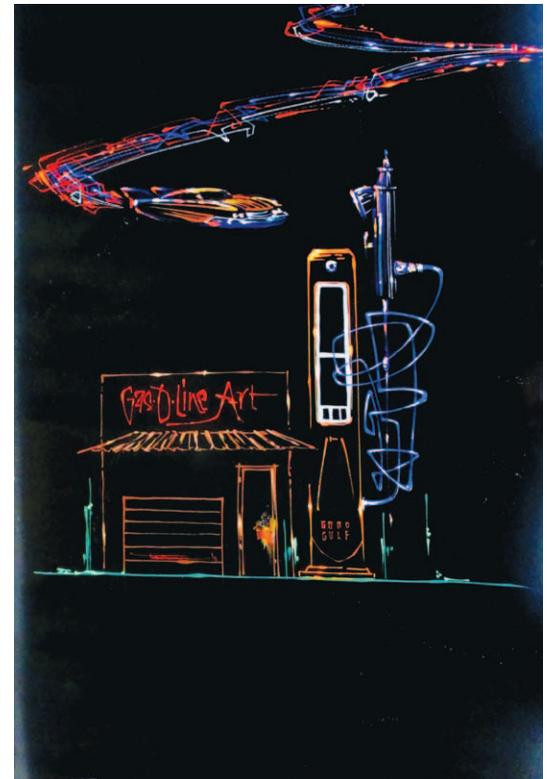
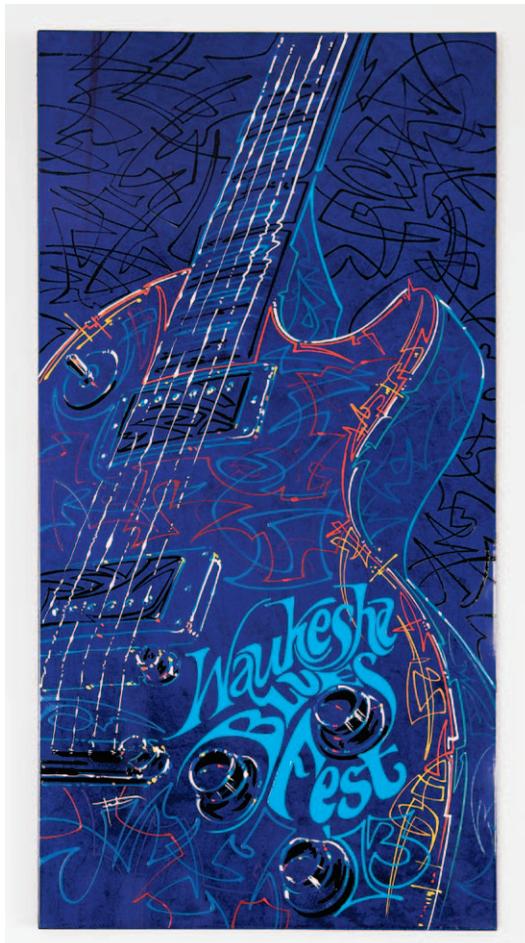
Ted said. "I got someone to take me to an auto body supply, where I bought some size and leaf and paint and brushes and started learning. The first pinstriping I did was on the back of my parents' garage door, and it's still there."

Eventually Ted wound up in the sign business. He hand lettered signs and did pinstriping for the better part of 30 years before moving into custom pinstriping.

"But I was always looking for something I could do with the striping brush beyond just working on vehicles. Gradually that became a creative endeavor all its own. That's what

A few years ago, Ted and Cathy, his wife, did a wall mural in downtown Waukesha, Wisconsin, with friends Dale and Brenda Manor. It was a 12-ft.-tall photorealistic image of a blue electric guitar on a gray wall.

"I really liked the lines of that guitar body," Ted says. "It inspired this 12-by-24-in. piece, built from different types of pinstriping. It was really my first effort to do this type of stylized pinstripe pictorial."



"I love vintage automotive art," says Ted "and that whole culture. I worked in a gas station as a kid, pumping gas. My own story is buried inside some of these art pieces."



12-by-36-in.



12-by-48-in.



9-by-32-in.



7-by-21-in.



Occasionally Ted clear coats the design, then paints additional details on top of the clear. "I like that look," he says. "It gives you a tactile effect that keeps the piece from looking too manufactured, which clear coating can do."



12-by-36-in.

excites me now—doing pinstripe art. Pinstripe technique has been done forever, but I want people to look at these pieces and see first the design, then realize that it was done using this traditional art of pinstriping.

"My big inspiration has been working around guys like Bob Behounek, Paul Martin, Ray Drae and Steve Chaszeyka. That's been so important. They are both friends and mentors. They've influenced me in so many ways and have opened my eyes to what can be done with a design."

Over the past five years, his approach to these panels has evolved quite a bit. He's put together a portfolio and is starting to get his work into a few art galleries. Some of the pieces are done on plywood and others are done on aluminum but fabricated to be an architectural installation. Ted says he leans towards birch and maple plywood panels because he likes to use translucent colors that let the grain show through.

"Some are done in one sitting," he says, "but others I come back to over a few days. I work with mostly 1Shot enamel. I just did a signature series of brushes called the Drag'n Fly with Andrew Mack & Son that were designed to my specifications, too. They handle the way I want a brush to handle, which is ideal.

"I know this is a bit of an unusual approach—I'm not on the path of being a traditional pinstriper. As far as the more abstract art I'm doing, there's a foundational part of each design that sort of tells the story

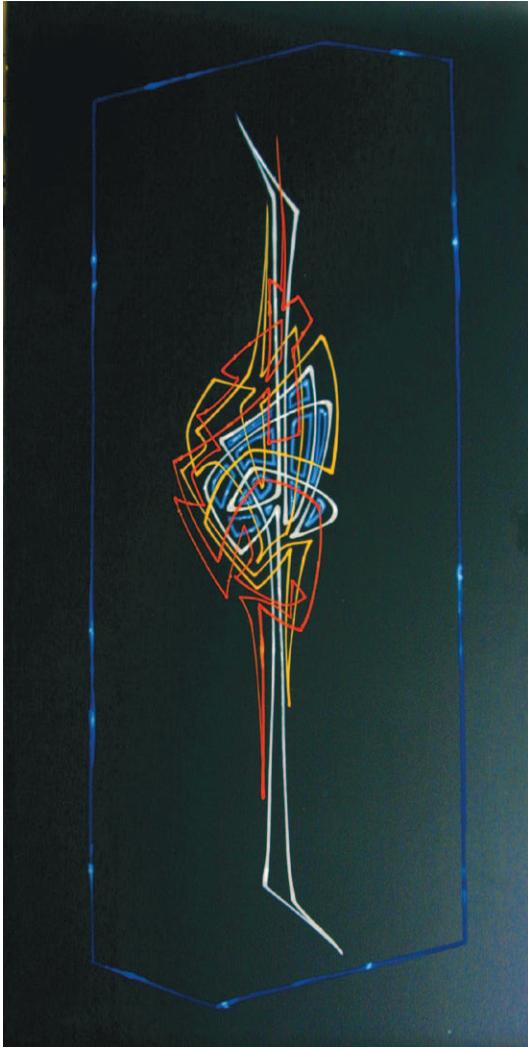
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12-by-24-in.

of the design. It's the result of what's going through your mind as you create a design and the influences that shaped it.

"I believe there has to be a philosophy behind a design. You have to think about what you're doing and the mood of it. It's not just about making a bunch of lines on there. There's something going on inside you and that's what's going in the design.

"I want people to look at my work and say they haven't seen anything like this before. I want them to get drawn into it and take a really close look. To me, that's a success." **SC**

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