

THE ORIGINAL MANUFACTURER OF THE FORDS & LINCOLNS OF AMERICA

PANORAMA



BY MICHAEL JORDAN

SPEED LINES

Phil Gallagher's painstaking pictographs of historic Porsche engines create a feeling of timelessness.

PHIL GALLAGHER REMEMBERS the moment when the 1971 Porsche 911E Targa boomed through the first highway tunnel in the Feather River Canyon. "From the open cockpit, the engine sounded like a six pack of killer bees," Gallagher recalls.

It was the first time Gallagher had driven a car with the air-cooled Porsche flat six, and the amazing

orchestration of intake roar, cam-chain thrash, and exhaust boom filled the famous three tunnels of California State Route 70: 265-foot Arch Rock, 390-foot Grizzly Dome, and 1,187-foot Elephant Butte. As the echoes faded, Gallagher decided that the artistic heart of the matter with a Porsche was really its engine, not its bodywork.

Gallagher originally developed his mixed-media compositions as a way to portray the ancient petroglyphs he saw etched on lava flows in the Hawaiian islands, and his artwork is now seen in many homes and resort hotels throughout the Hawaiian islands and the Pacific Rim. Using this same, unique mixed-media technique, Gallagher magically

transforms historic Porsche engines into compelling pictographs that resemble rubbings of ancient petroglyphs. Each engine portrait becomes a kind of secret message from the Porsche craftsmen and engineers who have come before us.

Gallagher starts with a sheet of handmade Arches paper from the company's famous mill in Vosges, France, then uses a bristle brush to scatter tiny fragments of wood fiber across the surface. Calling on his years of training as an architectural draftsman, Gallagher then sketches a representation of the engine he's portraying. He fixes the result on the paper, then adds successive layers of the same wood fiber in different colors. It's a long process, and it can take a month to complete a single pictograph. (You can see a short video of the process on Gallagher's website.)

These pictographs indeed have a dimension of timelessness, a kind of rough, elemental permanence. It's as if Porsche engines are meant to be chipped out of granite, not cast and machined from aluminum, magnesium, and steel. It makes us want to drive to Gallagher's studio deep in the Sierra Nevada Mountains near Quincy, California, just so we can hear the sound of the flat-six engine in our own Porsche 911 resounding in those three famous highway tunnels. 🌀

To see or purchase Phil Gallagher's work:

Internet: <https://www.philgallagherart.net/porsche.html>

Internet: <https://www.philgallagherart.net/video.html>

