



**ROBERT COTTINGHAM (b. 1935)**

**ME**

oil on canvas

77 1/2 x 77 3/4 in. (79 3/4 x 79 3/4 x 2 1/4 in.)

1972

28227

Although recognized as one of the most important photorealist painters, Robert Cottingham prefers to align himself with artists of the American vernacular, such as Edward Hopper, Stuart Davis, and Charles Demuth, as well as those interested in text and advertising like Robert Indiana and Andy Warhol. Cottingham began a career as an art director for an advertising firm after graduating from Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, in 1963. He moved to Los Angeles the following year, embracing the urban landscape of Southern California and began painting full time.

Cottingham received his first solo exhibition in 1968 at the Molly Barnes Gallery in LA. His work at this time demonstrated the photorealist style and tight cropping for which he is best known. His process includes a meticulous grid system, expanding upon images derived from photographs. The vibrant and detailed signs that feature prominently in his paintings, inspired by visits to Times Square as a child, present mid-century Americana while accentuating both typography and commerce to a degree approaching Pop art. From the 1970s to 1990s, Cottingham's imagery expanded to broader urban scenes of city blocks, buildings, and railroads. His work in recent years includes depictions of vintage typewriters. He now lives and works at a farm in Newtown, Connecticut.

The Smithsonian American Art Museum organized a retrospective of Cottingham's work in 1998. He is represented in major museums worldwide, including the Art Institute of Chicago, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Hamburg Museum in Germany, and the Tate Gallery in London.

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