

THEN & NOW™

Welcome to **Then & Now**, a virtual tour of Venice and Playa del Rey told through the paintings of JoAnn Cowans in the 1960s.

This is an Urban Archeology Project based on personal memories and written by two friends who lived there at the time and knew it well.

Artwork of "Then" by JoAnn Cowans.

Photographs of "Now" by Thomas Pollack.

With special thanks to:

Loyola Marymount University Department of Archives and Special Collections;

Thomas L. McMahon, Playa del Rey Archivist;

and Connie Underhill.

Connie, whose son published my book, "*Black Gold*", said:

"When I look at these paintings and photos of today I can feel the difference between what things are now and what they were, and see that development has completely obliterated the past."

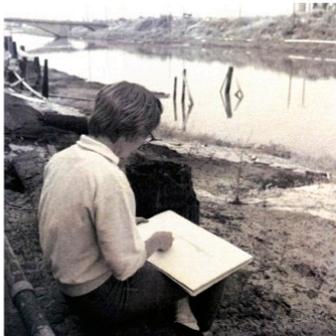
City of Night



CITY OF NIGHT by JoAnn Cowans, oil on canvas, 40" by 70" ©1962

Venice and Playa del Rey in the 60s —
— where past and future met.

A view from the Canal Banks near Reef St. and Pacific Ave.



Grand Canal at Reef St. photo ©2019 T. Pollack



By day you can see the city of Los Angeles from Beverly Hills to Santa Monica. This view through the derricks is over the Marina del Rey, then under construction. Boat wharfs back up to the small ridge behind the oil pumps and tanks.

By day, the broken bridges, partially dismantled derricks and once grand homes that have been converted to frat houses and apartments are scattered among aged and peaceful cottages. Wide open spaces of sand give sights and sounds of the ocean.

By night this view becomes a scene of unmatched beauty.



From the Artist

Tom Pollack said to me:

“I wish I could walk through the streets of Venice and Playa del Rey in the 60s one more time”.

Come join us on this virtual trip to the past of 1957-1969.

Come join us as we go once more into “once upon a time” and a unique land that was like no other.

—coming soon—

- A preview of our journey.
- A changing virtual exhibition of JoAnn’s artwork of the time.

About the Artist

JoAnn Cowans has had a long and varied career as an artist, arriving in Los Angeles in 1957. With degrees in Art and English, and design skills honed working in an advertising and art studio, she quickly was drawn to the popular surge in mosaics. Her first mosaic piece was exhibited in a showroom in Beverly Hills and purchased by actor James Garner for his Westwood home. Commissions and publicity followed.

She continued her study of painting at UCLA and with private lessons by classical portrait artist Charles "Carlo" Buonora. These skills merged with those learned in her undergraduate study at Barton College where her art professor had been a student of Hans Hoffman. The combination gave her the tools she needed to paint Venice and Playa del Rey.

Monet said: "The reason for painting is to learn to paint."

Posters

This project originated as posters for museums, historical societies and schools to sell. Some of these **Then & Now** sets of paintings with locations will begin with formatting for 11"x17" or 12"x18" posters.

If you are interested, please email a request to _____ and we will email you a PDF file at no charge.

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—More to come—

- New sets of "Then & Now" paintings and photos will be published.
- Stories of Playa del Rey and Venice to match the paintings will be published here.