

TAPE #1

First part unintelligible

.....Generally popular types of painting and sculpture in the country
That I think this will be a

This will help us

..... Comparable size and scope of your museum -

.....Its ridiculous

Its amazing for something like that
people take it for granted

Bathtub? Like up on Summit.

Can we talk about that first? Let's talk about that first.

O.K.

You have mentioned that the museum has had a great influence on both of
you. In what ways?

It's a quiet, pervading one really. Because for years you went on weekends.
When the museum was first on Summit, they used to have a large area behind
the house; it was down to the river. They used to have nature trails every
weekend; we used to go - I think Mother and Dad would get rid of us -
at least for most of Saturday. They had a few stuffed birds - everything
was more or less like some eccentric collector had piled it up in an old
house. It wasn't very organized or didn't seem so. When they moved to
their new quarters, then the stuffed birds and the cases

They had most of the same displays for years that they had on Summit.
The owl after the rabbit

Yeah.

There were a number of people that took us on nature walks behind the
old museum building. But some were interested and birds and
.....

Close to our house was also a hill that led down to the river and
we were always exploring. You know...along Crestline and Rivercrest -
we lived on Bryce - right across the street from the big columned house
big pink one with the lions in the front. I used to hunt with my BB gun
down there. Its funny - John Grace used to live and hunt in the same area
in the Trinity River bottom.

We had fortresses scattered all the way from Rivercrest all the way across the valley to Westover Hills - a whole chain of forts - and much of our- you know, we were just into nature. And the museum was the only place in Fort Worth where you could get that reinforcement any kind official way - people that really knew what they were talking about. Too, there was a lot more nature then than there is now. It wasn't unusual to see Roadrunners in your front yard on Crestline - or coons, or foxes. Possums all the time - or hornytoads - something you never see now. We used to catch them all the time. You never see butterflys anymore. Just a few. People put bug spray on their lawns - what is this going to do as far as long-range pollination But there was none of that development below the hill as there is now - none of it - it was all beautiful deep woods. And huge trees; some of the trunks half as big as this room it seemed to me at the time along the river. They had to cut them down when they put in the new levys and whatnot.

Are some of these reasons and some of these remembrances of the museum part of the reason you feel that the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History would be the best place for your paintings?

I feel the FWMSH would be the best place because its the place where most people go. Scott and I are interested in people seeing our work. The FW Art Museum has become such a rarified little club up there that its not interested....and I hope you say this....its really not interested in area artists or art scene from the standpoint of area artists. Its main interest seems to be in colletting classic quote, unquote, classic American works of the 1950's, 60's and early 70's. And perhaps when they concentrate on North Texas artists, or Texas artists.. but at the moment they have their directions oriented elsewhere. But the Museum of Science and History - one thing that our book deals with is important to know - all the stuff I tell people always promoting the book, what I say is really true, nothing like this book has ever been published in the history of Texas publishing - I know why after what we've been through - it really is an important moment in the history of Texas publishing. And right now there is a movement among Texas - not an organized movement at all - a real - you feel it - a number of new craftsmen and artists are coming into the field - and Texas printing is beginning to attract more national notice. We're not so much leading a vanguard of this but we're representing a kind of renewed energy in the publishing field in Texas. And a book of this size is historically important to begin with. So the history is a point. And regardless of the art, the fact that it does deal with the aspects of geology and geological history of Texas different regions, birds, animals, really fits it in with the whole natural history aspect of the museum and then the fact that it's art and I think a lasting collection, it really shows the museum's involvement of what's going on in Texas. I think that's what interested the Museum in the

collection. Oddly enough, the museum approached us, we did not approach them about the sale of the collection, and I think the people who approached us realized that this would be not only a drawing card, but does reflect what is going on by two area artists, and how they view the world around them, and putting it all in a very important publication.

And there is no sentimental reasons to talk about?

Yes, there are. If you'll remind me, I'll give you the galleys of the book and you can read the introduction of the book where I bring this up. I can just about trace the beginnings of our art career, ~~xxxxxxx~~ we painted from the time we were little kids, from about the time I was 13 or 14, I had always done a lot of taxidermy work which was kind of directed from the Museum of S&H, and I was wandering one Sat. aft. in the

in the early days library, about where your office is, and I came upon a McMillan book of Audubon's birds of America; I knew about his birds, but I had seen no more than probably 20 of his reproductions in my father's medical magazines - sometimes they would print prints in them. Here I saw all 435 original Audubons, excuse me they weren't the originals, they were theprints - the original engravings made from Audubon paintints. To see all those things laid out in front of me, one bird after another, was very exciting, so I took the book home and we copied (traced) the wood ducks. I had never painted in watercolors except in large tempere paints, second grade, something like that, so I had never done real fine work, but my brother worked on a railroad model, they were wonderful.

The train never worked.

The train didn't work but you had to paint intricately and he painted little figures, and it wasn't anytime after the work was drawn, he said here, let me see, he could see I was having trouble with an old brush old watercolors, and he began to work on the picture and finished it. We then decided to do another painting of the American Eider. I still have that painting- the second painting we did. It was around Christmas or early in the year, we had a big roll of watercolor paper, and I spent a heck of a long time drawing it, but by the time I finished drawing it, I was exhausted and Scott said, here I will paint. We spent a heck of a long time on it.

Did you take drawing classes at the museum?

No, never took drawing, just nature trips. The teachers were always interested in what we were doing. I always felt I belonged down there. During this time we had built a fantastic collection of fossils, bones, animal bones. I was always wandering around in the countryside picking up old skeletons, boiling lizards up for my mother, making shrunken heads, the editors cut that out of my book.

So you can see we were always interested in nature, making models and drawing, I have been interested in birds from the age of 3 or 4. As far as I can remember. I don't know why, it was just something seems to have been with me all this time.1st, 2nd, 3rd grades, never focused on it, we weren't the class artists, we didn't think about being artists, it was just a means of transcribing what was in our minds. I did lots of sketching of birds, especially in the summertime. I drew all the time. Mostly herons and ducks, I don't know why. I could draw their bills easier. Our artistic instincts, interests were never focused until we settled on Birds. Scott was not particularly, he was interested in birds, but it was not a big thing with him. It was a problem how tothese paintings, how to make them look good. Scott has always been problem oriented - when it comes to painting - he loves to restore things. Many of thoserestored - I will show you what they look like before and after - you just won't believe it.

I started doing portraits and landscapes about the time we started this
~~and the copies got better and better and better until they were really~~

The copies got better and better and better until they were really
I had set out to do all 435 of them. at 14 or 15 years old -
impossible, but after a while I got bored with them and wanted to do
some originals. Stuart did the first original that I worked on.
them

The only thing I was drawing ^ and Scott was painting them.

You had painted on that first original.

But Scott bailed me out - he's been bailing me out ever since - don't print that.

I loved natural history - as indeed I do - very much then, but it wasn't when it came to art, it wasn't commanding. In Audubon's life they were much more interested in the function of nature than foreign artists. the actual appearance of it. His life and time corresponded with a period in American and Texas history that we are absolutely fascinated with - 1820's 1830's, and Scott and I are fascinated with it. It is one of the most interesting biographies. Our love of history is deeper than our love of nature.

Yeah, probably is.

Is that one of the reasons the book is dedicated?

Yes

My love of history, and my love of Audubon's work, it still has an elegance and a class - for better or for worse - he started our careers. That's one of the main reasons.

Scott & I began talking about a book on birds in 1966 maybe a little earlier than that but it all seemed so distant and we had other priorities at the time.

if he couldn't paint
Scott really wasn't interestedbackground which was really his style of watercolor painting. Much as we love Audubon style and much as his style is reflected in many of our paintings, Scott really wanted to begin to make our own statement reflecting the influence of Audubon, but trying to create something of our own. I had to invent a style that was suitable forand landscape, I was really interested in making the two work together and now copying anybody else's approach - making something that would state exactly what the title of the book does - Birds and Texas - The Texas part being just as important. Since I had been painting landscapes and portraits for 20 years why not let me do something I knew about - I couldn't paint birds very well - I still don't consider myself a wildlife painter in any sense. I go for different things than most wildlife painters do - And when I'm finished with this book, I doubt I'll ever paint another bird again unless we do another book.

That's one of the questions.

You wanted to declare that you're not wildlife artists.

Yeah.Most are market painters, they are geared - most are ex-commercial artists. There's nothing wrong with being a commercial artist - but it teaches you a faster way of transcribing things so you can have as rapid an output of work as possible. I can spot any number of pretty good artists in our area that are no longer commercial artists.

Why did you say you wanted them in the museum so all these people can see them? That's part of what commercial artists want too.

A commercial artist is a job-oriented artist. Certainly they put their own expressive visions into their work, but talk to them and they feel they have a yoke around their neck. Because they are required to correspond to what some.... I also have a feeling that they paint how they were taught to paint -

They learn techniques and it is hard for them to overcome these techniques. It shows over and over again, and it's hard to wean that out of your system once you've been taught that. I can spot it a mile away.

So you think they're mostly interested in technique.

There are some very good ones out there that are very poetic. But a large body of them believe that the subject is the most important thing - background is and will be subservient. Not but really subservient.

Even the best - I wanted to paint paintings - Do you know Robert Bakeman's work?

Yes.

Even a major talent like him - he knows how to draw - he has taste for the most part. Quite frequently taste is lacking. Mistakes are small ones, but when he's so good at everything else, the small mistakes stick out like sore thumbs. Unfortunately, even his best work come close to looking like magazine illustrations for Field & Stream or something. These are for all practical purposes illustrations, but every painting is an illustration. I don't know of anythings that aren't illustrations, even though it is not illustrating a precise state of mind it is an illustration of contemplation through

I think the heart of it really gets back to something you said about your concern about the function of nature.

I was wondering if you might pick up on that. It is extremely difficult for me to explain that to somebody, and I'm pretty articulate at times. It's not the appearance of nature, its the function - its how- it has to do with an organic inevitability. The painting has the same kind of life - inner life no matter if its realistic, abstract or whatnot. I call it an indefinable spirit that - a violin - a musical instrument really shows it - a marriage of function, materials, of expression, all of that working organically. The spirit of the piece is what you put into it and that has to work with every little atom of that organic

Its this spiritual essence of both its function and its purpose, its reason for being and its precise defining principal. Make it an individual object or an individual thing and yet part of realism of the whole thing.

An integration, literally.

...the other visual elements in the picture..

It has to function on the canvas the same way.

As a pure abstraction - not visual - but organic -

I love Mozart's music - I study music; I write it - what I love about his - he has taught me so much, the most important esthetic answers to esthetic questions are extremely simple. But these are hardest to get at. Very, very simple.

Journey to wisdom.

What I think - sometimes that many major illustrators don't know what to show sometimes. I am not talking about feathers. They want to be explicit in the dramatic setting. There is not room for a wide range of interpretation. They are trying to be more specific. And I have a feeling it has a lot to do with ~~beast~~ Knowledge of history, past

taste

achievements, music, art.

A lot of it has to do with.....

It implies you are meeting some sort of standards - what is good and what is bad. What I mean by taste is a poetic insight into things. And insight to be profound is still a work of art and can go beyond manifestos. You can have all the manifestos in the world and painting really has its own principals. And many of these artists are simply practitioners of the trade. But it is poetry. Actually it is what the artist brings to the work that makes it important. Though I am not a wildlife painter, it doesn't matter what the subject was. I am actually painting what I am myself. Whether it is a or a bird or a portrait or a landscape. It really doesn't matter much. I have come to this point now. I didn't always used to think this way. It is actually, I am painting something that has nothing to do with the subject. Its just there.

Whatever is your own personal.....

I think that is what I am trying to say. It doesn't matter what the subject is. It is what you bring to it. Certain images touch off certain remembrances of other images and there will be certain illusions that only you will react to. Private little things not meant to be shared so much. A lot of it is the more you paint the more you rely on intuition. On educated instinct. An educated instinct. It becomes instinctive. Sometimes you can tell when a painting isn't right. The education comes when you can tell precisely what makes it not right. I know a lot of artists have a good feel for that sort of thing. But they are not particularly capable of weighing the subtle differences in weighing what is almost successful, really successful, or successful. - most of these people - Scott and I are accepted because we are making a lot of money at what we do and we have been very successful all our lives at what we do as painters and we paint for the market which there is nothing that could be further from the truth. If Scott and I wanted to make a lot of money making a book, we could paint for the market if we could allow ourselves. But it is an instinct that is also a sort of burden - it won't allow us just to knock out things that don't mean anything.

You see, the thing for me is painting even with this tremendous handicap. I have adjusted to it. and I can say what I want to in painting and I can almost always get what I am after.

Unintelligible comment or question

It is hard for me to know what it's like not being a twin. Painting is a way you have been looking at things and reacting to things since you were a child. It is not your total life by any means. It is not a total commitment - because you are committed to other things - you are committed to some people in your life, other ideas, other interests, I hope; Painting isn't simply applying paint to a surface - it is what goes on

behind here.

It is like having a sense - a faculty - something so natural that you don't tend to look at it apart from yourself.

Also you want to deal with pure aesthetics- my greatest love by far and away is music. It just sweeps us away from things. I think most of the influence in my way of thinking and painting comes from music.

I don't want to belabor this point, but I think it is crucial what you are saying about these particular paintings is what you define nature as. This is difficult. Particularly complex. It is the heart of these paintings.

I would almost say as a process - as a function. Constantly changing. and so geared to a unity. That is a poem which Scott and I love which expresses the feeling of what you are trying to get - but it is very hard to put into words. A metaphor - In this dewdrop world, it may be dewdrop - and yet, and yet, and yet.... You begin to get beyond what you can describe and what we are looking at in our lives and you can quite describe and what we are looking in our lives - most of us are not oriented to astrophysics or something like that- is really a minute vision of a tremendous all-encompassing process - we are only looking at only one little

The process of ground and change.....

There is something.... it ultimately ends in some kind of mysticism. And I cannot put it into words.

And probably the artist concerned was nature... in that regard as to how he perceives it.

Yes

How this affected him. Because what is out there is probably far greater than he will be able to perceive at one time, even tho philosophically it is based on reletious system or a personal philosophy or belief. It is greater than he is. But he is an artist - he is the focal point for these phenomenon comint through and how he reacts to them and how he perceives them. And what it does to his own life and his own destiny. They are big questions. People have been asking them since the beginning and have come up with various answers. So it is the process of questioning and searching that is really the neat thing. This is really an offshoot of your quest. A lot of people don't really thing too much after a certain point in their lives and they want answers and who doesn't.

This is a strange point. I don't really ask too many questions in a painting. I don't question much..Its almost as if I stand aside and let the painting do its work.

Maybe because of trust you.....

I am only aware when I am working when I make a mistake. And then I focus in on the problem. Otherwise, I will be listening to TV, Sturat reading to me, or music with tremendous attention. And after many years of asking questions. That is the terrible thing about the beginning painter - all a beginning painter does is ask how to, how to, how to. If you are interested, you will be asking certain how to questions. But there is a point beyond which you will absorb a lot of the answers so you wouldn't have to be the self-conscious

You have even forgotten the answers. Its just there. Neat Party. 18th Century Costumes....he called one night and was in a talking mood and he was talking about painting which we rarely talked about - mostly about history and things and he said "how is your work coming?" And I said, "well, I haven't done much work lately. I said I am not a bad painter, but when I sit doèn to that piece of paper, It looks up at me and says "Gentling" you can't draw, can't paint, you are not going to do anything good, anything you do is not going to work. Your first decision will be lousy ones. Whatever you do is not going to work. Just leave me alone. And laughing, he said, I will tell you what - as long as I have been painting I still have that problem now and then. What I usually do is make some minor error in composition or drawing, mainly technical and focus in immediately to forget my self-conscious questioning and I begin to work. It usually dispells that. When I finish my work it looks up at me and says "you can't paint."

You come at it very differently don't you?

Yes

That was in one of your interviews.

I always had a question with Scott because Scott is a better painter than I am. And he has always bailed me out when I get into a problem. And in a way it has been to my benefit and to my detriment because he is there if I run into something that is difficult.

Usually it is technical.

I am a better composer of pictures than Scott. That is because Scott taught me early on to approach painting by laying out problems fairly well. Scott does that to this day. Most of the time - especially when he is painting outside, he really normally will, but on the area of the paper that he thinks is about right, You know, and then he will begin working in that one area, regardless of what is going to happen. He has a vague idea of what he wants, but he isn't sure its going to work. Heme early on to cut little windows in pieces of paper and hold them up in front of you - It is a very good practice. Study paintings, look at paintings, - all kinds - abstracts, expressionists, Greek base painting - all - the problems are so similar all down through history you get the visual repiore of what a good painting looks like. Cezanne used to say he wanted to paint paintings like they had in the museum paintings. It is an extremely perceptive key to his painting style.

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What you have described is that he struggled with the paintings and

Yes, I like that

You intellectualize on things.

Its hard you know - in any interview you are forced to expand on things.

Some of these things I don't want to put in the interview, but you paint so differently from many painters. Because it is just there.

I want to make certain that -- I do start from a small area. Of course you have got to start somewhere but when I look at a subject - and I don't have to go far to find one -

You are pushing things away so you can look at them and he is pulling them in.

I look at the subject and I can feel it. - I have the ability to visualize something. A good example of that that I never saw was one thing - I can see on that paper what the picture will be. Very clearly in color - I dream in color. I see everything very clearly in my mind's eye. So I am not starting from this feeble beginning.

I don't say that - you just don't think it out ahead of time. I have seen Scott fight with problems that he doesn't need to fight at all. Because he doesn't think ahead. He is not the kind of person that thinks ahead. On other things too I believe. When he tones, the tonation is fascinating because I can see he had something in his mind. He will start working on one area. Tonating implies that you have a grasp of the tone of the whole, entire work and he will start on one area on the tonating when there is only blank paper around it.

Most of our painters start with a color ground - with watercolor you don't start that way - you start with white paper. Many watercolorists work over the surface and then rework the tonality back and forth kind of juggling a little bit. Scott does by the time the feature is established and yet you could not prove it.

I know it is there. Again, as I see the entire finished work in my mind so that no matter where I begin with the picture, it is all going to be pervaded by the

I am just merely doing it

That is interesting.

Some discussion regarding a portrait.

Do you know the work?

Yes.

He is a friend of ours. Scott did some the most beautiful portraits of him. He is a charismatic person - very difficult to describe to anybody what Ed is like. Early in the morning - hair tousled up, blue shirt and jeans and cup of coffee in his hand - early morning look on his face - enigmatic. Wonderful person - one of the few really major artists in the country who is willing to talk about nuts and bolts. Truly unpretentious. But he has a kind of poetic charisma about him.

You wouldn't know who he was if he walked into a room. He is not a very tall man - it is not his look - there is just something about him - and Scott caught it! This wonderful thing-he gave the painting to his son. Scott doesn't have a very deep penetration into people's character. I don't think he looks at a portrait in terms of pulling their character out but he is without adoubt one of the very best portraitists in the country. He has this ability to make the person if he is older - not younger, if it is a woman, not to do any plastic surgery by the paint, though he has been asked on several occasions. He has a way of making you look the very best you are ever going to look at your present age.

I think it is because I respect the subject.

But I have often mentioned this - it has really pissed a lot of painters off - I don't really need to know..... I don't want to say egotistical or self-centered - the likeness and all that. I am going for something I sense about them. Whether it is there or not. I once painted a portrait.

Maybe that is what people are defining in his character.

Yes.

But you know I think all that is a bunch of B.S. anyway because you are going to get character - Akins portraits. They all have Akins about them. They are all self-portraits in a way. They put these painters together and had them all paint a single person but in separate rooms. They brought them all together and most were self-portraits.

I think portraits are a good example of self-portraits.

Unintelligible

It is self-centered but selfish way.

It is...I don't know what the proper word for that is. It is your analysis, your own perception about the face - whether this person has been ill or suffered great privation or anything like that. You are not really looking at that

I certainly want to do them right. What I feel is right and what they feel is right I have no idea.

That is a good example of how Scott..... Everyone expects him to be in a pinstripe suit andWill be there exactly like that.

Within that tremendous restriction, to do something special. I did a portrait of a bank president. I was approved by his son and daughter. He did several years ago and I didn't know the man. They only had one slide of him, so I took that. I liked the problem of it. And I did a portrait from that and several months later I called them over and I don't recall, but I said something about what I had to work from and they both gently cried when they saw it., and I thought.....They said I had caught an expression in his face and to this day I don't know what that expression is, but they were terribly moved by it and it is an interesting story. But if you get the person's face technically correct, the nose in the right place and whatnot. If they are a sunny person - a lot of sunny people are not really sunny - I would tend to go to the thoughtful side because of

Some look unhappy.

Yes, and sometimes they show that because of the physical situation of sitting for a portrait. They become more and more natural. And I may very well go after that and not the projection they like to have for other people. I did Jim Blake's portrait and when he is not animated, he is he was awfully tough.

You know whatsaid about the definition of a portrait?
It is a painting of a person with taste with a little something wrong with the mouth.

I hate portrait commissions because you are holding the brush, but they are painting the portrait. I don't like that kind of pressure. It doesn't produce good work.

Is there anything you prefer to paint then?
Or just visually you have all these paintings in your mind or wherever - portraits, or landscapes, or birds..?

It doesn't matter much - the subject. I think life interests me....
Personally - I could take a year and just do portraits - not commissioned or anything.

Is there just a passion to interpret it?

Now just a second Scotty...It's not that...Scott is not that aloof from what stirs him to painting.

That is what I am interested in.

The very act of painting has many disassociations from the subject matter but Scott and I are discussing subjects for paintings all the time. and one of the great things that Scott and I have is the relationship that a lot of people don't have - the advantage of constant sharing of ideas and paring down to some of the more appealing things. I usually go for the more romantic things and Scott almost always pulls me up short and tones me down. My attitude or my point of view in a picture -

sometimes I want to tell too much. and sometimes cannot leave well enough alone.

I prefer to show the affect of something rather than the thing itself. And I am more like that now than I ever was. Stuart and I have a similar experiential background.

That was what you said in that interview - that your senses of experience are identical.

They are not identical.

That bothers me.

Our experiences are very similar. Stuart and I are basically very different and what affects him - and sometimes we are affected the very same ways by the wame things. It kind of makes the collaboration on these paintings really unique in a sense because it is very difficult for Scott and me to sit down and talk about what and who because quite

frequently we are starting with a few - just sketches for birds and workout some basic juxtaposition of the birds in the picture and then begin to suggest background. Sometimes they are rather explicit. And I will actually draw alot of it out. Sometimes only the poses - and then we begin to discuss what we want for the background. Scott will have an idea and I will not be real sure what he is talking about. So we unite the drawing with the backgrounds and he will take my drawings sometimes and alter it slightly or draw the overall pose and

Some paintings we have had in mind to paint for years and haven't had the opportunity to put them into a bird painting until we caught the subject or the bird or had the time.

I guess we should make this interview on the level that more people will understand.

You ask the questions and we will answer.

Getting to the bird thing - you just brought up a question I think might be good. About the parings - Do you need to discuss a little more about the parings between the landscapes and the birds? Were there some you just sensed would go together better?

A lot of it was some have to be specific backgrounds because of the environment.

Were they a major concern in these paintints?

Well, we didn't want to get the wrong one. There is one bird in summer plumage with a winter field in the background.

there are errors in some of them.

You want to tell us what they are?

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TheWoodpecker is in a Sycamore tree and they rarely get into that kind of tree. This was one of the very first bird paintings we ever did. I have known about it for a long time, but I don't care - I like the painting so much. I have never had it brought up to me. And we have a Magnolia Warbler in mating plumage, which is just a little but different than the regular plumage. A bird person would know it.

This painting that you like the best..

It is one of my favorites; it is not necessarily what I would say I like the best. One of my favorites.

Why do you like that painting so much?

I love the way she says it. I like it because it has a minimum of drama to it.

I think it is very dramatic. Look at it! A violent scene.

It is not violent.

Those are very large waves.

That was Lake Benbrook - it was supposed to be the open sea. But I studied water constantly. Everytime a program came on TV that had waves in it, I would study them. I got book on them. Finally, we went out to Lake Benbrook on a windy day.

Black is the queen of color.

That is a dramatic color. Black

People are not used to the shape of that duck's head. It is unusual - its thein that that makes it feel very dramatic. Too dramatic. That is interesting that you think its not dramatic.

No, it is quiet to me. It is the

I have been out in a boat under those kind of conditions and it is extremely dramatic. - when you are about ready to turn over. Everytime I see something like that it scares the hell out of me.

Well, that is your problem. It is a painting that is simple to me compared to the other paintings. That is a painting of an oyster catcher - it is the study of formality. Very formal - it is meant to be. The oyster catcher has a weird shaped head, bright almost lacquer colored orange red bill, bright yellow eyes, and their colors - the browns and blacks are so marked on them that they don't look real. Even out on the beach. They are very elegant and extremely wary. Almost impossible to approach on foot. I have tried many times. It is meant to be a very formally arranged picture. In fact, we don't necessarily ...

Scott and I are not really interested in naturalism per se in many of these bird paintings. I guess we should have brought down the

What are you interested in?

I like formal pictural arrangement, I like the mood. Allow a certain kind of elegance. Very much shows the influence of Audubon on me.

Is that more in line with what you call taste?

Yes. That is a good description for it.

I like classy looking pictures. I am not interested too much in anecdotal paintings or the story of paintings.

Some is necessary.

Yes, I also like the painting of the purple gallion on the alligator head out there. That to me is perfect 19th century.

We had that very much in mind.

(Unintelligible bit of conversation here.)

I am very sympathetic to Young's point of view. And I think there is something to it because I am interested in archeology and anthropology and(some reference to archaeology).

Scott and Ithese people - and they are educated people who will come and look at these paintings and say "they just had to have been there."

You tell people that bullshit.

Will, I was just kidding - in our former life. I say that very sarcastically.

But somebody might take you seriously.

I took you seriously.

Would you really?

(Reference to Robert)

Ester believed when we got this Audubon painting original - the only one in private hands - we bought it at the beginning of the Audubon Bicentennial year, the year we were printing our 3rd book, 1985, and all the stars must have come together.

I forget sometimes when I meet somebody that doesn't know me or Scott that Scott and II really hope we don't take ourselves too seriously.

You take yourself very seriously.

What I am talking about....when you meet people you sometimes ,,,,,,,,,

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We were at the Kimbell a couple of months ago and this particular group of people came down byt you should have watched them- they were soaking up everything you say - Scott and I were hoping that they would bail us out by asking questions. And they never said anything.

You can imagine - we had them for two hours.

What about the statement that you are not really wildlife painters?

No, wer're painters.

Why did you decide to do this picture?

Because of my interest in wildlife. I told you the question was a little hard for me to answer. I would like following in Audubon's tradition, of producing an important big book that people would think That is why it hasn't been done. I would have to have a printing press and a color press for the prints. I wanted to do something that would be as our first publication because I have 3 or 4 other ideas if we ever get around to it. I wanted it to be the best. One of the main reasons I did it was because Stuart wanted me to. It is as simple as that. Also, I loved painting birds as a kid - I hadn't painted birds in 20 years. The problem to us was intriguing and I would be painting pictures. There wasn't anythign about the subject matter or the landscape that was foreign to me. I thought also that I could bring something to it that I hadn't seen.

There aren't many contemporary bird books out that are very interesting. But that is not the reason you wanted to do it.

No, I wanted to do something elegant, anything that would launch any future publication we would do.

But why? Because first of all I like to do birds, and when Scott began to do the backgrounds - I would never again do backgrounds for birds -with its white background. I thought it was a good way of showing people what we did as artists. Little different in style from our landscape backgrounds - it is very much a part of our work.

I intended very early on in this project to accompany these 40 bird paintings with 10 prints of our other paintings which would let our audience see our other work. They weren't done for the book. That will give you an example too, Linda.