

Although the Gentlings have been Texas residents and painters of southwestern subjects for more than thirty years and are well-known for their exacting realism and drybrush watercolor techniques, they are students of many world cultures and histories. They have lectured at the Fort Worth Museum of Modern Art, the Dallas Museum of Art and the Kimball Art Museum on such varied subjects as 17th century Dutch painting, pre-colombian art and architecture of Mexico, and European drawings from the 14th to the 20th centuries. They have exhibited their portraits, landscapes and still lifes at the Kimball Art Museum as part of that museum's prestigious "Artist's Eye" program. Stuart Gentling served for five years on the Board of Directors of the Fort Worth Museum of Modern Art and currently serves as a board member of INTERCULTURA, the Fort Worth-based arts organization with many ties to Japan and which is currently working with the Japanese on several cultural exchanges and exhibitions. In 1977 the Kimball Art Museum asked the Gentlings to assist them in making Dr. Okochi Sadao of the Tokagawa Museum and Rand Castile of Japan House feel welcome to Fort Worth when the exhibition of Nô robes and masks from the Tokagawa Museum opened here. Also in 1987 the Gentlings hosted, at the request of the U.S. State Department, a small reception at their art gallery for Japanese art critics then touring the United States. Their own private art collection includes several examples of 18th and 19th century prints, screens and ink paintings from Japan.

In 1986 Scott and Stuart Gentling published what has been universally regarded by art and book critics as the most magnificent book of its kind ever produced in Texas. The Book is titled, "Of Birds and Texas." In their introduction to this massive 46 pound Imperial folio and in their commentaries to the color plates i.e. page XI and plate XXVII (the Barn Swallow) they write enthusiastically of the oriental influence on their work, especially such Japanese artists as Ito-Jakuchu, Sansetsu, Sotatsu, Korin and Utamaro. They dedicated their book to the great bird artist John James Audubon, an important influence on the Gentlings' painting style and an artist whose work has always been highly regarded in Japan because of its many stylistic affinities to Japanese bird painting.

As a result of Japan's increasing participation in international affairs, there has been a growing interest among the Japanese in the cultural histories of indigenous new world peoples, especially the high cultures of pre-

colombian Mexico. The Gentling twins are currently working on a massive new publishing project to reconstruct in their words and paintings the ancient Aztec capitol city of Tenochtitlan as it may have appeared to the first Europeans. The cultural repercussions of European contact with indigenous American peoples is of major interest to many Japanese in light of their own experience. The models and paintings of the ancient city created by the Gentlings in the course of their studies form a body of work without precedent or parallel in contemporary American art and has attracted the notice of the highest echelons of the Mexican Government. In fact the Gentlings have been asked by Jorge Alberto Lazoya, Mexican Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Relations, to participate with Mexico by showing their paintings of Tenochtitlan at a forthcoming exhibition in Madrid's new Museo de America organized by the king of Spain. The Gentlings have also been invited by the Dallas Museum of Art to show their Aztec works at the opening of their new \$30,000,000 Hammond "Art of the Americas" wing in 1993.

In 1989 Stuart Gentling was a guest of the government of Nepal and the World Wildlife Fund and traveled throughout Nepal on an Asian rhino study and capture program. He produced a poster to commemorate the project, painted in the style of Indian and Nepali miniatures. This cross-cultural poster has proved so popular, not just in this country but also in Nepal, that copies of it hang in Government offices throughout that country and even in the king's palace. Stuart Gentling also serves as board member of the Fort Worth Zoological Association and was also in Africa in 1989 to observe the capture of black rhinos there for an international program to rescue that species. These experiences in dealing with foreign officials and his considerable knowledge and empathy for other world cultures are the reasons why Gentling has so often been asked to assist Fort Worth and several Fort Worth institutions in dealing with foreign friends.

Neither Gentling has traveled to Japan except as a stopover on tightly scheduled trips to Nepal and India. They would very much like to travel in that country. Their older brother, Dr. Peter Gentling, a surgeon in Asheville North Carolina, is a garden enthusiast who has traveled extensively throughout Japan studying the gardens there. He is currently working on a book about adapting Japanese esthetics and gardening techniques to American environments, and both Scott and Stuart as well as their sister Suzanne are providing illustrations for this forthcoming book.

Inspite of the fact that their interests range far and wide, the subject matter of their most personal work — their drybrush watercolors of portraits, still lifes and landscapes — is primarily that of Fort Worth and Texas and the southwest. They are very much Texas artists, and yet the Gentlings and their artistic pursuits reflect well the growing international and cross-cultural influences that are affecting so many artists today.

The Gentlings have suggested four topics for lectures. Each lecture would be accompanied by a slide presentation, and two of the lectures could be enhanced by a small exhibition of art works.

1.) Representational painting and its place in contemporary American art. The focus would be on the Gentlings' own paintings, and an exhibit of fifteen to twenty original paintings could be made available.

2.) "Of Birds and Texas," a contemporary elephant folio and its curious relationship to John James Audubon and 19th century natural history publishing. The Gentlings will discuss their remarkable discovery of a long-lost original painting by Audubon, his first published work which disappeared in 1825. An exhibition of selected color plates from the Gentling book as well as the book itself could be a part of this lecture.

3.) Tenochtitlan, capitol of the Aztecs — a great new world city on the eve of European contact. A slide lecture only.

4.) A discussion of the great imperial gardens of Aztec Mexico, their form and purpose. A slide lecture only.

The Gentlings would require traveling expenses for two. If this is not feasible, then Mr. Stuart Gentling would represent the Gentlings. Such expenses for mounting an exhibit of art — shipping, handling and insurance etc. would be paid by the hosts, and the Gentlings would require technical assistance for their slide presentations. The Gentlings have offered to give to five Osaka libraries or cultural institutions a copy of their Imperial Folio "Of Birds and Texas," in the name of Fort Worth to commemorate our sister city relationship. The books are currently valued at \$3,500 each and are in many important libraries throughout Texas and the United States and even in the collections of the Kings of Nepal and Bhutan.