

11 December 1996

Dear Alex and Gabrielle,

When you visited us at our Fort Worth studio you expressed an interest in a rather exotic painting I had done in Mexico after observing a complete solar eclipse there. I did not want to sell that picture at the time, but I told you that I would not sell it to anyone else before giving you the first chance at it. I now have an opportunity to purchase an important and rare piece of Aztec art for our growing collection, and I have decided to sell this work. See the enclosed photo and my description of the interesting circumstances behind the painting which is framed as you saw it and measures 12" X 12" when unframed. The price is \$4,500 plus sales tax.

I am now working on the watercolor study for your large Maine painting. The huge canvas has been made. It literally dwarfs my living room. I have no idea how long this painting is going to take, but I would like to have the work ready for shipment by early summer if the Bass theater does not completely swamp us. The subject Scott and I have chosen is a wonderful, hoary, encrusted rock located on the tip of the South Harpswell peninsula where Nancy and David live. From a certain angle the rock looks exactly like a giant Sperm Whale, a kind of granite Mobey Dick breaching by the sea shore. The rock is a favorite perch for sea gulls, but I have not yet decided if I want them in the picture. I will probably do the stone in sunlight, but it is also very moody and poetic in the fog. It is also covered with interesting little plants and lichens and bits of shells - as "scarred as Jerusalem's hills" - in Melville's words. It really is going to be a special painting if I can pull it off the way I have it in my mind. As soon as the watercolor study is complete, I'll send you a picture of it. If you like the study, I will require a deposit before the final painting is begun. I might add that because of the mural size of the work, the largest individual painting that we have ever undertaken and our theater project commitments, Scott may help with the actual painting.

By the way, I met with Kimbell Museum director Ted Pillsbury the other day and we have chosen April 15th 1998 for our show at that Museum. It is going to be a great honor, one that I still can't believe. No living artists have ever been so honored by that institution. And they are going to also give us another exhibition on our Aztec project in 1999!

Scott and I hope all is well with you, and we hope that you and your family have the best of all possible holidays, yes the best.