

SUBJECT

20 October 2003

Mr. Peter A. Young, editor-in-chief
Archaeology
36 33rd. Street
Long Island City, NY

Dear Sir:

My twin brother Scott and I thought that you might be interested in an exhibition of our work now showing at the Fine Arts Galleries of the Buddy Holly Center in Lubbock, Texas. On display are our paintings, drawings and scale models based on almost four decades of our study of Aztec civilization and the Aztec capital city of Tenochtitlan.

The exhibit is curated by Mayanist Dr. Carolyn Tate, author of the book "Yaxchilan" and many papers on both the ancient Maya and the Olmec. She has been a Dunbarton Oaks fellow and recently lectured at Harvard. The show is sponsored by the Texas Commission of the Fine Arts, Texas Tech University, the city of Lubbock and other cultural institutions in the area.

Enclosed is a copy of the handsome catalogue published for the show. It offers a fair sampling of our paintings, but only a few of the more than sixty drawings and just one of Scott's models (Tenochtitlan's Sacred Precinct) of the more than twenty examples of Aztec Temples, palaces, skullracks, ballcourt, zoological gardens etc. Some of our works were exhibited at the Denver Museum of Natural History's blockbuster show "Aztec" in 1993. Three of our paintings were displayed as photo blow-ups at the Museum and were published in their catalogue.

Scott's model of Tenochtitlan's double temple of Huitzilopochtli and Tlaloc later toured the country in 2001 as part of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's ambitious "Road from Aztlan" exhibit curated by Virginia Field. I had the honor and pleasure of walking through the exhibit with Mrs. George W. Bush when it was displayed at the Austin Museum of Art. Mrs. Bush came secretly to Scott's and my book signing party honoring our recently published "Of Birds and Texas". It just happened to be by sheer coincidence that the L.A. County Museum's Aztlan show with Scott's model was on display there at the time.

Perhaps I should mention that Mrs. Bush had invited us to show our paintings two years earlier at Mrs. Bush's office gallery in the Texas State Capital Building and Scott later painted two portraits of George W. Bush as governor to hang in the

capital rotunda and later as president at his Crawford ranch. In fact Scott has been asked by the president to paint his official portrait and that of Mrs. Bush for the White House. Currently two of our large landscapes of the Bush ranch are hanging in the family quarters of the White House.

Scott and I make our living as painters of still lifes, landscapes and portraits. The sales of these works as well as our paintings of birds have financed our many years of Aztec studies. It has been a time-consuming, expensive pursuit, especially since none of our Aztec paintings, models or drawings are for sale.

Although we enjoy a genuine friendship with the Bushes, we do not share the president's political philosophy. Scott is just as proud of his friendship with and portrait of Jane Goodall which is now in the collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. And he has just completed an important portrait of Alison Richards for Yale University. Dr. Richards recently retired as Provost of Yale and is now in England to assume her duties as the Vice-chancellor of Cambridge University. She is the world's authority on lemurs.

As far as our Aztec studies are concerned, our aim is to depict the Mexica capital and other aspects of post-classic central Mexico as they might have appeared to the first Europeans in 1519. Though far from complete, our work I believe offers an utterly unique view of that world and a real sense of place. Such work, to the best of my knowledge, has never before been attempted in such depth by serious artists with an extensive knowledge of the culture. It is very much an ongoing project that is all too frequently interrupted by our other obligations. Although we have already completed about 25 paintings, some are old and out of step with current research. Even these works are interesting in the way they have recorded our knowledge at the time. The University of Texas Press who produced our book "Of Birds and Texas" is an important publisher of books on pre-Colombian cultures. The UT press has been patiently waiting for us to satisfy ourselves with enough paintings to do some justice to the project. And they have not said "no" to our request to publish our project in two volumes - one for scholars - and the other for the general public.

Our show in Lubbock is offered in homage to Dr. Tate who has been a good friend and supporter of our studies since she was curator of pre-Colombian art at the Dallas Museum of Art in the early nineties. We have kept a rather low profile in allowing our work to be displayed or published since our efforts are very much a work in progress and, we have not felt ready for a major exhibition. However, there have been special