



KIRK PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Monday, June 22, 1987

Mr. Bill Moran, Sr. Producer
"CBS Sunday Morning"
524 W. 57th St.
New York, NY 10019

Dear Mr. Moran:

I have learned that a Washington friend of twin artists Scott and Stuart Gentling of Fort Worth has suggested them for feature consideration on Charles Curalt's Sunday program. Indeed, it will make a fascinating story with great visual impact and audience appeal--a tale of art discover and art rescue, unusual coincidences and unnerving ironies.

Whether or not one believes in fate, kismet or some other kind of cosmic destiny, it is difficult to explain how dramatically the Gentlings' artistic hero came to their rescue.

They had been working for nearly eight years (in 1984) to complete a Great Imperial Folio (22 x 28 inches) titled "Of Birds and Texas." Not only were they struggling with the shared malady of cataracts (subsequent operations were successful), but they had exhausted their funds in the collaborative undertaking eventually costing \$550,000.

At that critical moment, they received a catalog from a Philadelphia print dealer offering a watercolor "attributed to Audubon" for \$18,000. They authenticated it with the help of the New York Historical Society (who may just be the new owner!?) and it became their collateral to finish the project. It was auctioned May 28 by Sotheby's for \$253,000, eclipsing the 1981 record of \$110,000 for an Audubon. The auction has been well covered, but little of the strange coincidences or of their own book, a feat of art publishing that experts say will probably be unsurpassed in the 20th Century.

The "book," receiving glowing critical acclaim, weighs 46 pounds in its two linen-bound folios & box. And although costing \$2,500, only about 100 of the 525 limited edition copies remain, with the museum/library grapevine heating up demand, and book and print dealers acquiring copies to "strip out" the mammoth color plates. (The prints are going for \$200 each and the dealers can make a \$7,500 profit on the 50 color plates!)

Among the other coincidences:

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- o At 13, the Gentling boys discovered an edition of Audubon's "The Birds of America" in the Fort Worth Children's Museum. They were inspired to copy his work and a few years later borrowed the family car to retrace Audubon's sothern travels. That same museum, now known as the Fort Worth Museum of Science & History, is purchasing the 40 bird paintings from their book for \$300,000 and is currently exhibiting the works. (Your Dallas affiliate, KDFW Ch. 4, has interviewed them. Jack Brown was the reporter.)
- o In 1976, at age 33, they began the massive project, dedicating it to Audubon. And the introduction to the book, written in 1984, mentioned the lost artwork six months before they discovered the painting. Even the Phil. print dealer can't explain how they got the catalog on a Saturday afternoon in Fort Worth barely 24 hours after he mailed it. And he had only returned to his usually closed shop that afternoon to pick up an item. (An older brother in the Carolinas had put them on the mailing list months before without their even knowing it.)

And now the somewhat eccentric 44-year-old twins are moving into their next major adventure: the artistic reconstruction of the Aztec empire!

Thank you for your attention to this lengthy summary. The enclosures--clippings, critics comments, etc.--provide more details. I would be pleased to arrange an interview. I look forward to a response from you or your staff.

Sincerely,

Preston F. Kirk

Preston F. Kirk, APR

PFK/

Encl.

cc: S&S Gentling ✓