

GENTLING

6 October 1985

Edmund P. Pillsbury, Director
Kimbell Art Museum
3333 Camp Bowie Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76107

Dear Sir:

I have tried to write this letter on several occasions over the last couple of years, but every time I sat down to do so, the words of praise which I had in my mind and which you and your staff have so richly deserved seemed to me to sound very patronizing. Thus I have somewhat shamefully avoided an important duty which is so often ignored by those of us who may be too quick to criticize and too slow to praise. I am not particularly proud of the fact that I would probably still be silent had not Dave Hickey and the Kimbell Museum extended an invitation for my brother, Scott, and me to speak on the 26th of this month. We are certainly looking forward to it. One of our most enjoyable experiences at the Kimbell was while working with Ruth Sullivan and lecturing on the drawing exhibition from the Fitzwilliam Museum several years ago.

The truth of the matter is that the Kimbell Museum is a far better museum today than it has ever been, and it appears that it will continue to grow in the richness of its permanent collections, in the range and interest of its visiting exhibitions, and in the vigor of its educational programs. There is no doubt in my mind that the directions in which the museum has moved in the past few years has made it an institution that has become even more indispensable to this region than ever before. As an ensemble of collections, important traveling exhibits, educational programs and scholarship the Kimbell Museum has, in all the best ways, become a work of art in itself, and it would be very difficult to imagine what the city of Fort Worth or the Southwest, for that matter, would be like without it. Such thoughts bring to mind one of my favorite quotes by

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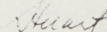
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Louis Kahn. He said, " Great art does not simply satisfy a need; it creates one." It does seem ironic that of all Fort Worth's art museums, the Kimbell which is a treasury of the arts of the past, should through its lectures, symposia, films and dramas and informal gallery talks by area artists be the most alive and, dare I say " relevant ", art museum that we have in this city. I am afraid that the Fort Worth Art Museum which should be our most " alive " art institution is inspite of certain improvements destined to remain a rather icy and remote enclave.

Scott and I are going to discuss the use of magic, mystery, ambiguity and poetic resonance in many of the art works that are on display at the Kimbell, and we will discuss as much as possible in the time allowed how we apply our perceptions of these principles to our own work. Because this is a very wide-ranging topic for a single talk, our lecture will not be tightly organized. The museum has outstanding examples which illustrate these qualities in all of its collections, and it is our hope to spend some time with works of art from the Asian and pre-Colombian collections which are too often ignored by artists I have seen lecturing at the Kimbell. Our discourse will probably be spontaneous and somewhat rambling with Scott and me frequently interrupting each other. We do not always agree with each other.

I am enclosing a list of the works of art which we will try to talk about in the time allowed. I will also be contacting Mrs Booker to arrange a time for us to deliver some examples of our work for display prior to our lecture. Again let me say that Scott and I are looking forward to the lecture. I think it will be interesting. Perhaps we will have a chance to meet and talk at last.

Sincerely yours,


Stuart W. Gentling

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The following list of art works is rather extensive, and I am not certain if we will be able to talk about all of them. Many of the works will only be lightly touched upon while others will be discussed in much greater detail. It will not actually be necessary to cover all the items listed, since the elements of mystery, ambiguity and poetic resonance are present in most of the best works from any age and culture. Our personal exploration and appreciation of these qualities is what keeps works of art alive for us and makes the search for understanding of the human experience through art a life-long and enriching experience.

In the following list I have underlined the art works that are not currently on view.

ASIA:

Yuan Dynasty painting of lotus blossoms
Yin Hong, Birds and Flowers of Early Spring
Cheng Hsieh, Bamboo
Koryusai, Courtesan playing the sanisen

PRE-COLOMBIAN:

The Tlaloc vessel from El Chanal
Huehuetectl (Aztec)
Teotihuacan Fresco
The Maya carved panel showing presentation of prisoners

EUROPEAN:

Duccio, The Raising of Lazarus
Bellini, The Risen Christ
Holbein, Portrait of Sir Thomas Le Strange
De la Tour, Cheat With the Ace of Clubs
El Greco, Portrait of Giacomo Bosio
Rembrandt, Portrait of a Young Jew
Van Dyck, Portrait of an Unknown Soldier
Van Goyen, Distant View of Arnhem
Ribera, Saint Matthew
Velasquez, Portrait of Don Pedro de Barberana
Murillo, A Family Group of Peasants
Salvator Rosa, Pythagoras emerging from the Underworld
Watteau, The Happy Age, the Golden Age
Chardin, Young Student Drawing
Goya, Portrait of Pedro Romero
Stubbs, Lord Grosvenor's Arabian

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Lecture List (continued)

Corot, Small Town Near Rome — plein air landscape
Friedrich, A Mountain Peak with Clouds
Daubigny, River Scene
Sisley, Fishermen Drying Their Nets
Manet, Portrait of Georges Clemenceau
Courbet, Self-portrait, man with a pipe
Cezanne, Peasant with Blue Smock
Landscape Near Chateau Noir
Picasso, Man with a Pipe
Miro, Meriberto Casany's portrait

ASIA MINOR:

Roman Bust of Marcus Aurelius

Egypt:

Portrait of Ramses II
Portrait of an Official from the reign of Queen Hatshepsud

Kimbell Art Museum
Fort Worth

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Six Warblers
Cliff Swallow
Scissor tailed Flycatcher

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