

TALLEY DUNN, Director
GERALD PETERS GALLERY
2913 Fairmont
Dallas, TX 75201

5 October 1994

Dear _____:

My twin brother Scott and I have recently been commissioned by the Bass family to create all the paintings and sculpture for the new Fort Worth Performing Arts concert hall. This is certainly one of the most important commissions ever offered Texas artists for this the last great concert hall to be built in the United States this century. Our work which has already begun is expected to last for at least three and one-half years. Because of this and another major commitment which I will mention later, we have decided to seek suitable dealer representation. It has been suggested that Gerald Peters might just be the Gallery to meet our needs. I am familiar with the Gallery, have been on its mailing list for several years and have seen and admired a number of your exhibits. I especially admire the fact that you show a wide range of art and art styles.

Since I don't know who you are, there is a good chance that you do not know who we are, though I do believe that Gerald Peters is familiar with us and/or our work. For the last seventeen years we have handled our own paintings out of our office gallery in Fort Worth near the Kimbell Museum. We have never been open to the public except for an occasional Gallery Walk night which we did as a favor to the Fort Worth Art Dealers Association. We have always operated by appointment only.

Our problem is that we can no longer manage the demands of showing our art, meeting prospective clients etc. and still meet the requirements of the huge concert hall commission and the production of our next art book which will be a unique and massive work of paintings, drawings and models depicting the Aztec capitol city of Tenochtitlan on the eve of the conquest of Mexico. That book is at least four years away, but the incredibly enthusiastic response by Aztec scholars, museum people, the general public who have glimpsed our project (see Janet Kutner, Dallas Morning News, June 29, 1991) as well as the Mexican Government, makes us confident that our forthcoming book and accompanying exhibition will be as successful as our last book, a Great Imperial Folio entitled Of Birds and Texas (1986).

That Folio edition of 525 copies sold out, earned more than \$1,000,000 and was a unanimous critical success. Lee Milazzo, book critic for the Dallas Morning News (March 22, 1987) and a host of other critics and museum curators throughout the country declared Of Birds and Texas to be the most magnificent book ever produced in Texas and one of the most beautiful books of its kind published in the 20th century. We also sold the entire collection of original paintings for the folio to Fort Worth's Museum of Science and history for \$350,000. Those paintings have been exhibited at five important Texas museums. The project also resulted in quite a bit of national media coverage, notably on CNN TV, a two-page spread in People

Magazine -- and a cover story for the Morning News' Dallas Life Magazine.

You have probably guessed by now that Scott and I are representational painters. We are both alumni of the Pennsylvania Academy of the fine arts. We work primarily in drybrush watercolor. While realism is not for everyone, it is surprising how many of our paintings have been purchased by collectors of "avant-garde" art. In fact the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth has not only exhibited our work, it just recently purchased a major portrait by Scott of the great naturalist Jane Goodall, a painting that museum director Marla Price declared to be "one of the great 20th century American portraits."

Scott and I also have a reputation for art scholarship, and our interests in the art of civilizations past and present are well known to those who have attended our lectures over the years. We have spoken many times at the Modern, the Amon Carter, and the Kimbell Art Museum. We were invited by contemporary art critic Dave Hickey and Kimbell director Ted Pillsbury to exhibit our paintings for their highly successful "Artist's Eye" series. We had the largest crowd in the history of the program show up for ~~that~~ lecture. I have also spoken at the Dallas Museum of Art on topics ranging from pre-colombian art to symbolism in 17th century Dutch painting.

Scott and I have served on the boards of many of Fort Worth's cultural organizations, the Opera board, Painted Spaces, the Van Cliburn Piano Competition, and the Fort Worth Museum of Modern Art where I served for five years. In the last few years I have cut back on board service, but I am still a board member of the Fort Worth Zoological Association and Intercultura, the Fort Worth based arts organization responsible for many major art exhibits in the U.S., Mexico, Europe, Russia and Japan. We have brought to our area the "Blood of Kings" exhibit of ancient Maya art at the Kimbell, "The Art of Holy Russia" at the Dallas Art Museum, the Retablo show at the Meadows, the "10 + 10" show of Russian and American painting at the Fort Worth Modern, and "The Sacred Art of Ethiopia" at the new Museum of African American Art at Fair Park.

Although my brother and I have never cared to participate in juried art shows etc. where prizes are awarded, we do have an outstanding record of success with our own exhibitions. From 1964 to 1977 Scott showed exclusively with Valley House when it was by far the finest art gallery in Dallas with many landmark shows such as its Henry Moore and Georges Rouault exhibitions. Valley House director Donald Vogel declared many times that Scott was the gallery's most successful artist. Infact over five thousand people visited his gallery in one month during Scott's second show there, a gallery record by far. Every one of the many shows that Scott had at Valley House was a complete sellout, usually on opening night. On one occasion he sold out the entire exhibit of nearly thirty paintings in twelve minutes at prices that were quite substantial for the time. Just ask critic Janet Kutner. Since 1977 when Scott left Valley House to join me in handling our own work out of our Fort Worth gallery office we have had many sold out shows. Infact our overall sales

record is better than 95%. Our prices currently range from \$3,500 to \$40,000 for large portraits. *Average 7,500 to 12,000* 6

Our Aztec project has opened a great many doors to important art collectors in Mexico. We are currently putting together a large collection of our paintings and models which, when our book is published, we will offer for sale in its entirety to a major corporation or individual to use for public relations purposes in doing business in Mexico. The collection will be a unique business resource. It has tremendous public appeal. The Dallas Museum of Art is going to do an exhibit of the Aztec material as well as Scott's and my paintings on contemporary Mexican themes as soon as we are ready. The Kimbell Museum is also interested. I can't help but think that the Gerald Peters Gallery would be a beneficiary of our increased involvement in what is becoming an exciting market of Mexican collectors.

I apologize for my immodest trumpeting of our virtues.

A letter is a poor vehicle for explaining us or our art, but I do believe we would make a valuable addition to the Gerald Peters Gallery, because of the acknowledged quality of our work, our large and devoted following and the uniqueness of our current project ~~work~~. Our shows have justly earned their reputation in the art press for elegance, scholarship, public appeal and, dare I say it, their remarkable commercial success. Your gallery also has a good reputation for ~~honesty~~ *honesty* and for displaying a wide range of quality 20th century art in all styles.

We have avoided offers from New York galleries, because we have done well without some of the excess baggage that goes with that art scene. But with your galleries in Santa Fe and New York, as well as on our home turf in ~~Dallas~~ *Dallas*, you just might offer the best of all possible worlds, an opportunity to widen the public exposure of our art and still allow us to remain close to it. You are the only gallery that I have contacted, and I will not get in touch with any others until I have heard from you. If you would like to discuss our work with other people to get their opinions, might I suggest that you talk to Richard Brettell, Ted Pillsbury, Marla Price or Jan Muhlert. All are good friends, and they know our work. If you would like to talk further, please give me a call. My number is (817) 738 - 4427.

Sincerely yours,

Stuart W. Gentling