

Gentling Biographies

For twins Stuart and Scott Gentling the practice of art has always had to share top billing with their life-long passions for nature study and their fascination with the arts of ancient and modern cultures of both the East and West and of the New World. Add to this their superb and wide-ranging library, their collections of pre-Colombian art, Greek and Roman vases and sculptures, African carvings, Audubon prints and prints by Japanese masters and by Motherwell, Miro, Gottlieb and others which fill their studio and their houses, and one can get an idea of the rich world they have created for themselves.

They also have built a unique collection of authentic 18th and early 19th century clothing which they say has helped put them intimately in touch with the past. These costumes and objects from their other collections have often appeared in their drybrush watercolors. Because of his interest in wildlife - birds in particular - Stuart began to learn taxidermy at the age of ten. He and brother Scott began their first "serious" art by painting birds at age fourteen. Also, in the next few years they and their friends built an aviary for an exceptional collection of ornamental pheasants which they had to give up when college beckoned.

Stuart and Scott were born on December 31, 1942 in Rochester, Minnesota. They have an older brother Peter, a retired physician who lives with his wife in Asheville, North Carolina. A younger sister Suzanne, also an artist, lives near Glen Rose, Texas. When the twins were five years old the family moved to Fort Worth, Texas. Their father Dr. Allen Gentling had been hired to head the new Department of Anesthesiology at Harris Hospital. Both Dr. and Mrs. Gentling (Barbara to her many friends) fell immediately in love with their new Texas home. Mrs. Gentling was fond of mentioning that the twin's pediatrician had been Dr. Benjamin Spock who had studied them for his famous twin study begun in the early 1940's.

Stuart and Scott are products of the Fort Worth Public School system. They attended Tulane University. Stuart graduated in 1965, but Scott, anxious to follow his love of art left after one year at college. By a rather serendipitous turn of events he was invited to come and study at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the nation's oldest art school. Stuart went on to study law for one year at the University of Texas Law School. He then abandoned practicality and followed Scott to the Academy. The twins eventually returned to Fort Worth and have lived there ever since.

As a result of their love of books the Gentling brothers have always wanted to produce books of their own. Their first was the highly praised elephant folio "Of Birds and Texas," written in collaboration with John Graves, one of the state's greatest writers. A trade edition of the bird book will be available in bookstores in the fall of 2001. They are currently at work on their next publication, a book of their still lifes, portraits, landscapes and other art to be titled "From Time

to Time." This will be followed by a massive work, possibly in two volumes. It is about the Aztecs and their capital city of Tenochtitlan on the eve of the conquest of Mexico. It will be called "The One Reed Year" and will feature Gentling models, paintings and drawings and their collection of original Aztec and Mixtec art.

For more than thirty years the Gentlings have participated in the cultural life of Fort Worth. They are probably the only artists ever to have exhibited their art in all of the city's major museums. They have served on many of Fort Worth's cultural boards including the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, the Van Cliburn Foundation and the Fort Worth Zoological Association. They have lectured at all the nearby museums and universities and those of Dallas as well. Last year Stuart was invited to lecture in Mexico City to a special gathering of archaeologists, anthropologists and art specialists. He was introduced to the audience by Eduardo Matos Moctezuma, Mexico's most famous Aztec specialist and director of the Templo Mayor Museum.

In 1998 the twins were honored as the official artists for the Fort Worth Sesquicentennial and the Texas State Audubon Society's Centennial. The Audubon Society launched their year long festivities at Fort Worth's new Bass Performance Hall whose great concert hall dome, main lobby ceiling and entrance domes by coincidence were decorated with Gentling murals commissioned specially for the theater. In 2001 Scott received another very special commission when newly elected President George Bush chose him to paint his portrait for the Texas State Capitol dome.

In spite of the wide range of their many interests, it is not difficult to see the strong thread of artistic continuity in their art. Their special brand of realism, mostly drybrush watercolor, has been a perfect means to record their spiritual connections to nature and to the peoples of the world, past and present.

Their paintings can be seen in several museums and libraries in Texas. The Fort Worth Museum of Science and History owns and regularly displays all of the forty original Gentling bird paintings created for their folio "Of Birds and Texas." The new University of Texas Press trade edition of the folio will make its debut in November 2001 and will bring their art for the first time to a wider public. Both twins also belong to the Gerald Peters Gallery in Santa Fe and New York and the Pillsbury - Peters Gallery in Dallas.

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