

26 March 1987

Dear Wyeths,

You haven't seen the last of us yet! One thing that we may have forgotten to tell you was that accompanying every Artists' Copy of our book OF BIRDS AND TEXAS is an original watercolor study of a Texas bird. Scott wanted to do something special for you both, but he didn't have the time to paint it before we sent you your book. We discussed several bird species which are also residents of Chadd's Ford country, and we settled on the Screech Owl in its gray phase. Scott drew and painted what I think is a particularly witchy looking owl. We hope you like it.

I am also enclosing a couple of pages containing comments which we have gleaned so far from important art and book people. The response to the book has been universally favorable, even ecstatic. You would think that promoting such a book would be relatively easy, but far from it. I am constantly amazed at the timidity of some people who, though plainly impressed by our book, will not commit themselves to an opinion until they have heard what others have to say whose opinions they respect. It's a very frustrating Catch 22 situation that is finally being overcome. Ted Pillsbury, the director of the Kimbell Museum, has been very helpful in breaking the ice for us, and now a number of very scholarly publications have at last scheduled stories on the book. When I tell people of your reaction to the book it does help. We hope that you don't mind about this, but we have included a remark which you made on the phone a few weeks ago. We do not use it in any publication or in any official capacity — just personal correspondence on a page with other commentaries.

Scott and I would be very grateful if we could continue to use this remark or if you or Betsy could write a brief comment or two which we could use in some official capacity. I realize that this can be a rather sensitive request, and ordinarily I would not ask except that the book which we have created is already so highly regarded, even considered one of the most beautiful books of its kind produced in America in this century. The book may never become widely-known to the general public, but it certainly will become better known to book collectors and the like, and I don't think that being one of the first to recognize the book's quality and what's more important — to say so, that your opinion will be anything but complimented by being on the record in supporting the publication. If you are reluctant to do so, Scott and I

will understand, and we will in no way be offended by it. It certainly would be of help on a labor that has occupied us on and off for a decade. However, just knowing that you have the book and the accompanying Screech Owl study and that you are delighted with them will provide us with a great deal of private pleasure.

Fondly

Stuart Gentling

PS.

We hope to see you both at the September opening of your Dallas show. Openings are always chaotic and awkward, but we will try our best to say hello.