

THE CRITICS COMMENT

"A triumph of beautiful design, fine printing and original scholarship. There was nothing in Paul Mellon's incomparable collection of 18th and 19th century illustrated books from Britain of greater appeal and sheer beauty."

— Edmund Pillsbury, Director
Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

ABOUT THE BOOK

"Of Birds and Texas," by artists Scott and Stuart Gentling with an essay by John Graves, was printed in a limited edition of 500 by David Holman, Wind River Press. Both plates and text (hand-set type) are printed in the Great Imperial Folio size (22 X 28) — a rare format in contemporary publishing and one of the largest fine art publications in the 20th Century.

The unbound pages of the two folios, like the fine handmade linen-covered box containing them, are of the best PH neutral (acid-free) materials available. The "book" weighs 46 pounds. The offset color lithographic plates include 40 plates of Texas birds depicted in various regions, seasons and weather, as well as ten plates dealing with the land and people of Texas. The colophon page of each book is numbered and signed by the artists and the author, and each plate will bear the same edition number as the book and will be signed by one or both of the Gentlings.

A limited printing of 250 copies of each color plate was published. Individual prints are available for \$200 each.

"Of Birds and Texas" can be purchased for \$2,500 from: Gentling Publications, 902 Boland St., Fort Worth, Texas, 76107. Telephone: (817) 332-7059 for additional information or preview.

"Marvelous; a simply overwhelming book."

— Andrew Wyeth, Artist
Chadd's Ford, Pennsylvania

"...a glorious work...a moving homage to Audubon, to Texas and to American natural history. This book will give untold pleasure to lovers of art and science...."

— Carole Anne Slatkin, Assistant Director
The New York Historical Society

"The most stunning and prodigious book in Texas History.... The color printing is breathtaking...there is no question the investment possibilities make the price reasonable. The beauty of the Gentlings' paintings is delivered so stunningly...."

— A.C. Greene, Coordinating Director
The Center for Texas Studies

"In OF BIRDS AND TEXAS, Stuart and Scott Gentling...have produced a breath-taking tour de force, rich with vitality, luminescence and a sense of place. The style...purposely echoes Audubon's romantic, lively style...."

— Mary Durant and Michael Harwood
Authors, "On the Road with James Audubon"

"...OF BIRDS AND TEXAS probably is the most magnificent book ever produced in Texas...destined to become a classic of ornithology and fine printing. Mere words cannot describe the accuracy and delicacy of their attention to form or the brilliance and subtlety of their colors.... Change that probably to *definitely*."

— Lee Milazzo, Book Critic
The Dallas Morning News

"(A) colossal artistic achievement of interest to all Americans and not limited to collectors of Texana...."

— James E. Mooney, Librarian
The New York Historical Society

"OF BIRDS AND TEXAS has no counterpart in Southwestern printing history. It has few peers in scope, content and fidelity anywhere in America...this is printing artistry at its finest. The results, *in toto*, constitute a landmark achievement.

— Al Lowman, Author
"Printing Arts in Texas"

"One of the most important books published in Texas. Anyone who loves Audubon, birds, Texas or books would be well-advised to invest in this book."

— Ron Tyler, Director
Texas State Historical Association

"It took a bold sense of derring-do to have even attempted a project of this magnitude. The Gentlings have accomplished it with such quality and taste...a shining achievement. I know of nothing in the history of Texas arts and letters to rival it."

— Bill Whitliff, Author, Film Director,
Publisher of Encino Press, Austin

Jerry Falwell, Prince William, Gregory Peck, Liza & Liz

JUNE 15, 1987 # \$1.50
People weekly

EXCLUSIVE

DONNA RICE

Her pal Lynn Armandt was there throughout the Gary Hart affair. Now she tells what really happened



People weekly

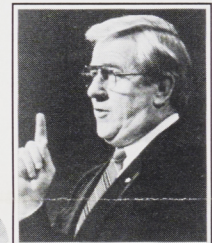
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Cover photograph by Woodbury/Sygnia.
Inset by Harry Benson.
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TWINS SCOTT AND STUART GENTLING SELL OFF A HIGH-PRICED AUDUBON AND GIVE WING TO THEIR OWN BIRD BOOK

Two records were under siege last week when a standing-room-only crowd converged on Sotheby's auction house in New York. Outside, an early heat wave was threatening to push the mercury over 97 degrees, an all-time high for the date. Inside, brisk bidding closed in on, and soon surpassed, the highest price ever paid for a work by the naturalist painter John James Audubon. When the gavel fell, a New York dealer had paid \$253,000 for an 1824 watercolor of two boat-tailed grackles—known to most people simply as blackbirds.

Just two and a half years ago the same painting had been offered in the mail-order catalog of a Philadelphia print dealer for \$18,000—and was snapped up by two Audubon fanatics who recognized it as one of the master's long-missing early works. Not long afterward the new owners, 44-year-old twins Scott and Stuart Gentling of Fort Worth, decided to use their treasure to help bankroll their own Audubon-inspired masterwork, *Of Birds and Texas*.



COURTESY OF SOOTHEBY'S

A massive boxed portfolio of 50 paintings of birds and landscapes, it was 10 years and \$550,000 in the making and might never have seen the light of day without the grackle windfall. "We literally ran out of money," says Stuart, like his brother a full-time artist since college, "and we had to use the grackles as collateral." Most of the \$210,000 profit the brothers expect to clear from the sale will go toward clearing up their grackle-backed debts.

Stuart also hopes the publicity sur-

rounding the auction will produce some national recognition for him and his twin. "It's so difficult to get people to take us seriously," he says. "They don't think that something like *Of Birds and Texas* could be created in the boondocks."

They may now, however, since the Gentlings' opus has been getting rave reviews. The *Dallas Morning News* described it as "destined to become a classic of ornithology and fine printing," and painter Andrew Wyeth declared it "overwhelming." It

is certainly that: Two feet long and weighing 46 pounds, it could pass for a coffee table without legs. The price is Texas-size too: \$2,500 for one of a limited edition of 500 books.

Two of four children of an anesthesiologist then working at the Mayo Clinic, the twins were born in Rochester, Minn. in 1942. "Scott and Stuart had a

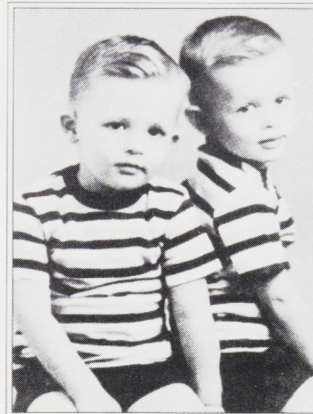
Audubon's long-lost blackbirds (above) helped Stuart (left) and Scott realize their literary flight of fancy.

CONTINUED



special language they talked when they were 18 months old that no one else understood," recalls their mother, Barbara. "In the family we're all good friends, but we're outsiders. They're a closed corporation."

Dr. Benjamin Spock, who predicted they'd be high achievers, studied Stuart (left) and Scott as twins from age 1 to 4.



COURTESY OF SCOTT & STUART GENTLING

When the boys were 5, the family moved to Fort Worth. Stuart was 13 when he first came across Audubon's *Birds of America* at the library of the local natural history museum. Inspired to draw a bird of his own, he prevailed upon Scott, the younger twin by 15 minutes, to fill in the sketch with watercolors. Three years later the boys took the family station wagon and retraced Audubon's journey through the Mississippi and Ohio river valleys.

Schooling temporarily put an end to their collaboration. Stuart picked up his B.A. in English at Tulane in 1965, then spent a year at the University of Texas School of Law. Scott had spent four years at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts by the time he persuaded Stuart to join him there in 1966. "I really learned painting from Scott," admits his twin. "He's the better painter." Scott's portraits of Texas titans, such as Dallas real estate developer Trammell Crow, fetch up to \$25,000, while Stuart's landscapes and still lifes top out at \$10,000.

It was Stuart's idea to do the book, and when he first mentioned it, Scott was unenthusiastic. "I haven't painted a bird for 17 years," he said. But Stuart convinced him, proposing the same

collaborative approach they had tried as kids. Some pictures took three or four years to produce as both twins struggled to find a dramatic moment in the life of a scissortail flycatcher or a roseate spoonbill and then worked out the picture's composition.

For their next project, the brothers would like to do a visual history of the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán from 1519 to 1521, when it fell to the Spanish conquistadors. "It's never been done before," says Scott, "I'd like to finish by 1992."

None of the brothers' future undertakings are as likely to be touched by such rare good fortune as *Of Birds and Texas*, which is dedicated to Audubon, the brothers' inadvertent benefactor. Writing the introduction to the book in 1984, Stuart made mention of the long-lost grackles; six months later they suddenly turned up and improved the project's finances, though not, as it turns out, Scott's attitude toward his fine-feathered subjects. "To be honest," he says, "I don't care if I ever paint another bird again."

MARY VESPA

"I think Scott is a more spontaneous painter than I am," says Stuart (right) working with his twin near home.

