

Gentling Watercolors Donated to Museum

FOUR PAINTINGS have been donated in full and 17 others pledged to the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History in its drive to acquire the 40 watercolors of the Gentling Bird Collection, *Of Birds and Texas*.

The 40 paintings, which were exhibited at the museum January 10 to February 2, were created by Scott and Stuart Gentling, Fort Worth artists who became interested in painting while they were children attending museum school classes.

Executive Director Donald R. Otto said the collection is the first art by living artists that the museum has ever purchased. "Obviously, our ability to acquire the collection depends directly on the willingness of museum patrons to purchase the individual paintings for the museum," Otto said.

Donors wishing to ensure the museum's acquisition of the paintings may make contributions to the museum, which will in turn purchase the paintings from the artists. Cornelia Blake, former museum trustee, and John Roby Penn, current board member, are leading the drive to acquire donations for purchase of the paintings.

In 1984 and 1985, Otto said, the museum redefined its primary focus to Texas. "The museum made a commitment to quality acquisitions and public programs, and we believe the 40 paintings of this collection exemplify that commitment."

Both museum officials and the artists want to keep the collection intact, in Fort Worth, and preferably at the Museum of Science and History, Otto said. "Individually, Scott and Stuart's paintings are very special; as a collection, they are spectacular. We believe, as do the artists, that all 40 paintings of the collection should remain together," Otto said.

"We want the museum to have the paintings because we were students here when this institution was the Fort Worth Children's Museum," Scott Gentling said. "I began my painting career when I checked out one of the museum's books of reproductions of Audubon prints and started making copies."

Those who have made outright purchases of the paintings for the museum are the following:

Mrs. Ralph H. Cummins, *Mourning Dove*, in memory of Ralph H. Cummins; Mrs. Watt S. Kemble, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. R. E. L. Batts, Jr., and Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Stephens III, *Lichtenstein's Orioles*, in memory of Watt Kemble; Price-Thomas Ranch, Post, Texas, *Roadrunner*, in memory of Guy Price and Philip Knox Thomas; and the Mary Potishman Lard Trust.

Those who have pledged paintings are as follows:

Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Bass, in honor of the Museum School staff, 1981-85; Mrs. Eugenia Bailey Benedum and Frank Bailey, Jr., in memory of Eugenia and Frank Bailey; Museum of Science and History Board of Trustees, *Bufflehead Ducks and Scaled Quail*, in memory of Mr. William McFadden and Mrs. Ella C. McFadden; Mr. and Mrs. William S. Davis, *House Wrens*, in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth William Davis, Sr.; First Texas Council of Camp Fire Girls, Inc., *Mockingbird*; Fifth Avenue Foundation; Mr. and Mrs. Mark L. Johnson, *Cardinals*, in memory of Christina Arnold Mitchell; Mr. and Mrs. Garland Lasater, Jr., *Bobwhite Quails*, in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Garland Lasater, Sr. Also, Mr. and Mrs. Phillip J. Meek, *Cliff Swallows*; A. M. Pate, Jr. and Sebert L. Pate; John Roby Penn, *Canvasback Ducks*, in memory of Barney Bowie Holland; Mr. and Mrs. Harry Tension, in memory of Mrs. C. A. Lupton; Mr. and Mrs. Harry Tension, in memory of Shirley Holmes; and the Walsh family (three paintings).

Contributors to a joint purchase of a painting in memory of Dorothea Leonhardt include:

Mrs. Robert M. Bass, Mr. and Mrs. James R. Blake, W. V. Bradshaw, Jr., M.D., Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Flood, Theodore P. Gorski, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Gutierrez, Mark L. Hart, Jr., Mary Lu Highnote, Mr. and Mrs. Garland Lasater, Jr., and Reginald L. Robinson.

Other contributors toward a painting include:

Elizabeth Ryan Bond, Mrs. H.H. Brittingham, Mrs. Sam B. Canteley III, Mrs. Hedrick Fender, Mr. and Mrs. Eric Hyden, Onah Barwise Penn, Grady Shropshire, and Hazel Burnett Vernon.

Probing Halley

WHILE MANY persons try to catch a glimpse of Halley's comet in early March, an armada of spacecraft will fly right by the famous comet. This multinational fleet—five craft in all—will rendezvous with Halley between March 6 and 13, one month after the comet's closest approach to the Sun.

The Soviet Union launched two Vega spacecraft to study Halley after a visit to Venus, where they each dropped a balloon probe and lander into the planet's atmosphere. On March 6 Vega I will fly by Halley's comet at a distance of 10,000 kilometers (1 kilometer equals 0.62 miles). Cameras onboard will photograph the comet's nucleus, while spectrometers analyze the chemical composition of the comet tail. Three days later Vega II will swing within 3,000 kilometers of the nucleus.

Japan launched its first two interplanetary spacecraft last year. MS-T5 will come within 1.5 million kilometers of

the comet in March, where instruments onboard will sample the local environment. On March 8, Japan's Planet-A will pass by the nucleus of Halley at a distance of 100,000 kilometers. The spacecraft's ultraviolet camera will examine the tenuous cloud of hydrogen gas that encompasses the nucleus.

Finally, the European Space Agency's Giotto spacecraft will traverse the coma of Halley and fly within 500 kilometers of its nucleus on March 13. Giotto will measure the gas and dust composition of the comet tail and monitor the interaction of the comet with the solar wind (a constant stream of particles emitted by the Sun).

These space missions represent an international scientific effort to study Halley's comet as it has never been studied before. Each mission will provide important data to assemble a clearer picture of comets.

New Planetarium Feature Opens in April

THE BIRTH and evolution of our solar system, solar flares, meteorite bombardments, and changing weather patterns are all explored in the new Noble Planetarium feature, *The Violent Universe*, opening April 5. Narrated by Vincent Price, the program begins with a look at the nighttime sky, but soon progresses to the more catastrophic events that affect our universe.

Novae and supernovae will flash in violent stellar death, eventually turning into white dwarfs, neutron stars, or black holes. A journey to the heart of the Milky Way uncovers intense energy dominating the region. Could

a supermassive black hole be the powerhouse of our galaxy? Traveling back in time and across vast distances of space, the program discusses quasars and presents an account of the birth of the universe: the Big Bang.

Lively narration and stunning visual effects make *The Violent Universe* exciting and informative. It will play in the Noble Planetarium on Saturdays at noon, 1, 2, and 3 p.m., and Sundays at 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8 p.m. through June 15. Weekday matinees at 2 and 3 p.m. begin Memorial Day. Tickets are \$2.50 per person. Due to the subject matter, children under age 4 will not be admitted.

IN OUR COLLECTION

STERLING SILVER EWER Early 1900s

The ewer, which is a vase-shaped pitcher or jug, is composed of four parts: the angel (which is not silver), the 'grave boat' top section, the base, midsection, and handle. The ewer has several low relief designs, which include the Alamo, a temple named "The Constitution," and the quotation, "The Thermopylae had their messenger of death, the Alamo had none."

The museum staff is currently researching this ewer, whose origins remain a mystery. The most recent piece of information was found in *Texas Highways* magazine, which attributed the quotation to Gail Borden of Harrisburg, Texas, in March 1836, shortly after the Alamo had fallen. The ewer has a hallmark, which has been obscured.

If you have any information regarding this new acquisition,



please contact the museum history department.

TREES

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