

23 June 2001

Theresa May  
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Dear Theresa:

I have just received a letter from Mary Margaret Farabee, Chairman of the Texas Book Festival, inviting Scott and me to participate in their next gathering November 15 -18. Ms. Farabee mentioned in her letter that I will be asked to either participate on some sort of panel discussion or do a public reading from "Of Birds and Texas."

I have also been asked, as you know, to have a book signing at the Austin Museum of Art. The date for that event has not yet been determined, but I have the feeling that the Museum would also like to have it in November. Beth Wilson told me the other day she was immensely pleased that I had been invited to the Book Fair, but she warned me that Book Fair officials would not want me to formerly debate the book before the fair. The problem is that I was asked to do the Museum signing by Laura Bush and Mollie Hipp, the museum's Director of Development.

I talked to Mollie a couple of weeks ago, and she reconfirmed the Museum's enthusiasm. When Laura Bush approached me on the subject she said that she would do her best to be present for the book signing since it would be to raise money for the Laura Bush Endowment at the museum. Now that Scott is painting the President's portrait, and the fact that Mrs. Bush asked me before I was asked to do the Book Fair, you can see that I am in a quandary. Especially since the Austin Museum has not formally scheduled me for their fete. If at all possible, I would like to do both.

Talk about a coincidence! While I was writing this letter a package arrived containing your absolutely stunning brochures for "Of Birds and Texas." Scott and I are not only ecstatic - we feel deeply honored that you would put forth such an outstanding effort to promote our book. It is a tremendous show of support.

Please forgive my immodesty, but I really believe that your absolutely wonderful design and production quality, which not only pays homage to our original elephant folio but surpasses it in many ways, may actually become a Texas classic. Theresa, I don't think you have any idea how pleased Scott and I are with what you have done. It is a fantasy come true. It also sets a high standard for the books we are contemplating for the future.

Your brochure and the wonderful two-page advertisement in your recent catalogue - beautifully designed and presented, I might add - have depicted our book so spectacularly that,

if the book does not sell well, it will not be your fault. Scott and I have nothing but the highest praise for how you have handled our project. I do hope that we can do something as exciting for our planned book of our still lifes, portraits, landscapes - along with a selection of our birds, Aztec paintings and Bass Performance Hall designs. I do believe that such a book will offer a unique perspective on our various artistic interests. I still like the title, "From Time to Time, the Art of Scott and Stuart Gentling." What do you think?

Writer Michael Thomas is flying in from New York on August 13th to interview us for his part of the new book. As a guest curator for the New York Historical Society, he also wants to organize an exhibit of our bird paintings to hang with the original Audubons from "Birds of America" all of which belong to the Historical Society. As an executor for the Lehman Fund he says that he can get the necessary funding for such a show. If it happens, what a coda for our whole Audubon experience!!!

I am also delighted to be able to tell you that Dave Hickey has at last confirmed that he will contribute an essay, perhaps on the place of representational painting in contemporary art. Hickey is in such demand these days as a critic and curator. He is now, as you know, considered one of the top commentators of the contemporary art scene. Like Michael Thomas his comments are likely to be controversial - and certainly witty. Along with Ted Pillsbury's contribution, the new book will not be a puff piece, but almost certainly a very lively and interesting read. Scott and I, of course, will also write brief remarks about each of the illustrated paintings.

When you and I last spoke, you mentioned that it was nearing the time to make a contract for the new book. Sometime ago I sent you an outline. Now that everybody is committed, I believe that the original outline still stands up well and would make a good reference for a contract. Scott and I have been so pleased with the "Of Birds and Texas" contract that I see no reason not to model the new agreement on that document.

Finally,

1. I would like to know when I can get an early copy of the new book to send to Cina Alexander Forgunson? She is one of the three ladies to whom Scott and I dedicated the book. She is also one of the owners of the King Ranch, a board member of the Texas Nature Conservancy, and a very good friend of one of the most important book reviewers on the New York Times. She is certain that she can get him to review it.

2. When may I have my bird painting transparencies returned? I would like to produce some new prints to help with the book promotion, especially the remarques which are scattered all over the U.S. and would be difficult to have re-photographed.

3. When do you need to be paid for the thousand copies that I am going to have specially bound to sell as artists' copies?

4. When can I expect delivery of these thousand copies?

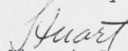
5. Does your October 8th publication date still hold?

6. I would also like to know if we could copy your catalogue advertisement to send to our patrons. Many of these

people are not only going to buy the Artists' Copies, they also seem to want copies of the regular printing as gifts for family members and as Christmas presents. I do not want to handle this business, but would like to use your beautiful ad to accompany our book offer and to refer them to UT Press where they can get regular copies. I plan to have a single page cover letter attached to your ad which I will present to you for your approval. This would save me money and would reach new customers for UT Press as well.

Sorry about the length of this letter. I have already talked to Beth Wilson about some of these issues. In closing I want to say again how truly impressed, excited and grateful Scott and I are about the taste and quality you are bringing to the production of our "Of Birds and Texas." I really believe that it is a classy book, beautiful to look at as well as a lively and interesting read. You have made it, I think, an important book.

Sincerely yours,



Stuart Gentling  
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