

The Fine Arts Gallery of the Buddy Holly Center announces an upcoming exhibition:

Painting the Aztec Capital: Tenochtitlán through the Eyes of Cortés

**Paintings and models by Scott and Stuart Gentling
and Aztec art from their collection**

DATES: September 22 – November 22, 2003

PLACE: The Fine Arts Gallery of the Buddy Holly Center, Lubbock, TX, and Texas Tech University

BACKGROUND: **Painting the Aztec Capital: Tenochtitlán through the Eyes of Cortés** was developed by Fort Worth artists Scott and Stuart Gentling, brothers whose fascination with the destroyed city led to their desire to create an educated artist's view of Tenochtitlán as it existed prior to the Spanish Conquest. The Gentlings' research on the Aztec culture spans ~~some 30~~ *Almost 40 years* years and has earned the recognition and assistance of the Honorable Ignacio Durán-Loera, the Director General of the Mexican Cultural Institute in Washington D.C. and Eduardo Matos Moctezuma, Director of the Templo Mayor Archaeological Project in Mexico City. The Spanish invader Diaz del Castillo responded to his first sight of the city saying, "These great towns and temples ... rising from the water, all made of stone, seemed like an enchanted vision...." In their efforts to provide accurate views of the greatest city of the New World, the artists have produced a series of paintings, drawings, and scale models of Tenochtitlán's temples, palaces, ballcourts, causeways, gates, and markets.

The paintings and models seek to recapture the extensive complexity and richness of Aztec architecture, landscape, and civilization as they appeared during the reign of Motecuhzoma II, before being destroyed by war and then covered by Mexico City. The artists choose specific views of the Aztec capital that cumulatively provide a keen sense of place and society. They invite us to study the brilliantly-colored frescos in Motecuhzoma's Palace, to enjoy the cool breezes rising from the shady canals that criss-cross the city, to witness a sacrificial ritual at the altar of the earth goddess Cihuateotl, and to explore the panorama of the twin cities (Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco) as their markets, ballcourts, skull-racks, causeways and buildings spread out before us.

Through their formidable intellects, research, and artistic talents, Scott Gentling and Stuart Gentling have produced the most extensive visual reconstruction of the Aztec world in 1519. With continuing input from the foremost scholars, they wish to make it the most accurate as well.

CONTENT OF THE EXHIBITION: The Gentlings' body of work includes 20 watercolor and oil paintings (ranging in size from 19 x 19 inches to 44 x 68 inches), 20 drawings (from 17 by 14 inches to 41 x 33 inches), and 20 beautifully detailed models of various temples and palaces of Tenochtitlan and the neighboring city of Tlatelolco. So that they could fit into the artists' studio, the models are very small, with individual temples as small as 4 x 7 x 1 " high. The Sacred Precinct model, complete with all buildings, measures 24 x 26 inches by 3 inches high. The amount of architectural detail present at this tiny scale is simply indescribable. Additionally, we

will display the invaluable sketchbook in which the artists drew and commented on the various plans for the Templo Mayor produced by other artists throughout history. It includes landscapes and views of other cities such as Cempoala, Zautla, Tlaxcala, and Cholula.

Accompanying the work of the Gentling brothers is their world-class collection of over 100 Aztec art objects, accumulated over decades. Their study of this collection has honed their understanding of Aztec design, proportion, and symbolism. It includes stone sculptures of several Aztec deities, ranging in size from 33 inches to 8 inches in height; stone effigies of animals, skulls, and humans; stone plaques, mortars, and vessels; objects of obsidian, rock crystal, gold, bone, and turquoise mosaic; and many ceramic objects fashioned into effigies, vessels, and ritual items and decorated with polychrome slips.

OPENING EVENTS: Under development:

An Aztec feast (by subscription)?

Aztec dancers ?

Lubbock Ballet Folklorico ?

Participation by Tech's Schools of Music and Theatre/Dance??

LECTURE SERIES: To introduce the citizens of Lubbock to the high cultural achievements of the Aztec, we propose a series of gallery talks by the artists Scott Gentling and Stuart Gentling, by Texas Tech art historian Carolyn Tate, and by graduate students in art history at Texas Tech. These slide lectures, open to the public, will be delivered weekly for the duration of the exhibit, forming a short course coordinated by Professor Carolyn Tate.

SYMPOSIUM: To benefit the intellectual community of Lubbock, Texas Tech University will host a day-long symposium of papers by international scholars. Tentatively titled *Reconstructing the Aztec Capital: New Approaches and Insights*, it will allow scholars from a variety of disciplines, including art, architecture, religious studies, archaeology, ethnohistory, and art history to share the insights into historical reconstruction that their particular approaches have provided.

A second day of the meeting will provide a forum for visiting scholars to participate in informal discussions with artists Scott and Stuart Gentling in the galleries. We hope that the paintings kindle a scholarly debate concerning the specific placement, decoration, and significance of the art and architecture of the Aztec city. Based on this feedback, the artists will have the opportunity to revise their work before its subsequent exhibition in Mexico and its planned publication by University of Texas Press.

OUTREACH: We hope that the Visual Studies Program of Texas Tech University will help create teacher training materials and will offer programs for students in Lubbock.

THE ARTISTS: Scott Gentling and Stuart Gentling are perhaps best known at the moment for Scott's recently-completed gubernatorial portrait of George W. Bush. Other portraits include Jane Goodall and members of Fort Worth's Bass family. However, their interests and talents are much more wide-ranging than portraiture. They created the frescos for the Great Dome of the Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass Performance Hall in Fort Worth. Another major project is an

elephant folio volume entitled *Of Birds and Texas*, universally hailed as the most magnificent book in Texas publishing history. For their achievements the Texas Audubon Society recognized them as the Official Artists of its Sesquicentennial. The forty original bird paintings around which the book was centered are owned by the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History. The University of Texas Press recently republished the sold-out folio at *half scale* with some new paintings and with an essay by John Graves. Graduates of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the brothers are scholar-artists—people who establish and express expertise through observation, research, and visual expression.

THE CURATOR: Carolyn E. Tate is Associate Professor of Art History at Texas Tech University. She began her distinguished career as a student of the late Mayanist Linda Schele and went on to write a highly-regarded book that reconstructs the ancient Maya city of Yaxchilan. For five years she was Curator of the important collection of 2,500 Pre-Columbian objects at the Dallas Museum of Art. She has curated several important exhibitions, including *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership* (with Kent Reilly) at the Art Museum, Princeton University and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and *Human Body, Human Spirit: A Portrait of Ancient Mexico*, at the Carlos Museum, Emory University, and the Royal Ontario Museum. Her work has been awarded grants from the Fulbright-Hays Foundation, the Getty Grant Program, the NEA, the NEH, Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections in Washington D.C., and of course, Texas Tech University. She met the Gentling twins in 1991 and has enjoyed a scholarly connection ever since.

BUDGET:

Installation of Exhibition

Shipping	
Fine Arts Express	\$2500
Supplies	
Materials for fabrication of cases	\$1800
Security	
Gallery guards during open hours	\$2500
Printing	
Announcements	\$ 750
Didactic materials (map, wall panels, etc)	\$1800
Opening	
Food	\$1500
Professional fees	
Artists 2 @ 1000	\$2000
Curator	\$2500
Total	\$15,350

Most of the above (\$15,000) has been generously funded through the CH Foundation.

Remaining to be funded:**TOTALS**

Opening Events		\$3000
Music	\$1000	
Dancers	\$2000	
Printing		\$8,000
Catalogue	\$8000	
Symposium		\$9,100
Honoraria: 5 speakers @500	\$2500	
One speaker @ 1000	\$1000	
Travel for symposium speakers and artists		
6 speakers and 2 artists @ 700 each		
(500 air, 150 room, 50 food)	\$5600	
Educational outreach for 1000 children		\$5400
slides, workbooks, art supplies	\$5000	
Honoraria for student teachers 4 @ 100	\$400	
Adult Ed class through Buddy Holly Center		\$1520
Fee will be \$80 for 8 classes. Proceeds will pay instructors.		
Instructors \$100 per class x 8	\$800	
Slides 45 per class x 8 @ 2.00 each	\$720	

FUNDING:

The CH Foundation has generously contributed \$15,000 to the exhibition's installation, planning, opening events, and security.

We hope that Texas Tech University will assist with the Symposium, providing a place, \$10,000 in funding, and an audience!

We also hope it will assist with the funding of Project's School and Community Outreach components.

Additional Sources to be solicited:

Lubbock Arts Alliance
 United Supermarket
 Plains National Bank
 Wells Fargo Bank