

GILCREASE

JOURNAL

West by Southwest

*Southwestern paintings and
prints in the Gilcrease Collection*

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West by
SouthwestSouthwestern paintings and
prints in the Gilcrease Collection4 REFLECTIONS ON THE LIGHT
OF THE SOUTHWEST

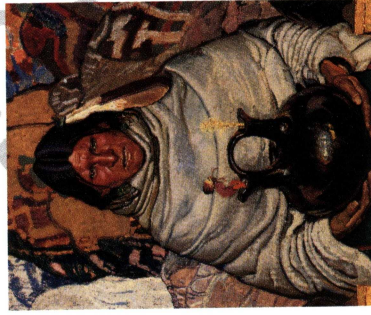
The light of the American Southwest has inspired generations of painters—including the founders and followers of the Taos school. Just *how* that light “melts the gold and pours it out for us” is the subject of Horace Judson’s reflective essay.

Horace Freeland Judson

THOMAS GILCREASE,
COLLECTING “COWBOYS AND
INDIANS”

“*Cowboys and Indians Thomas Gilcrease*” read the title of Aline B. Saarinen’s chapter on Gilcrease in her book on major American art collectors, *The Proud Possessors*. In this case, the title *doesn’t* say it all. Dean Porter mines the Gilcrease archives for a fascinating set of letters that passed between Gilcrease and the Taos artists whose work he collected from the end of World War II into the mid-1950s. Porter recounts the building of Gilcrease’s Taos painting collection, and the friendships that grew along with it.

Dean A. Porter



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Navajo Weaving

Portfolio showcases Navajo textiles from the Gilcrease collection, now on view in the Gilcrease Gallery of the National Museum of Wildlife Art in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

Daniel Swan and Cindy Hale

45

GENE KLOSS, A TAOS PRINTMAKER

The celebrated printmaker first came to New Mexico on a honeymoon trip with her new husband, poet Phillips Kloss, in 1925. For the next seventy years, with only brief absences, Kloss called Taos home and from the land she loved took the inspiration for hundreds of superb etchings and watercolors.

Robert R. White

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SOUTHWESTERN PRINTS AT GILCREASE:
SIX ARTISTS

A brief survey of selected prints by six artists from the collection using three of the major print processes: etching, woodcut, and lithography.

Robert R. White

PAGE ONE: Detail,
Banded Style Rug, Navajo.
Gilcrease Museum 9736.79

LEFT: Detail, Ernest L.
Blumenschein, *Superstition*.
Gilcrease Museum 0137.531.

ABOVE: Gene Kloss, *Turtle
Dance at Sunrise*. Gilcrease
Museum 1437.294.

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GILCREASE JOURNAL

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Reflections of the Light Southwest

Painters paint light. Painters paint colors, surfaces that in order to have color must selectively absorb and reflect and refract light. Painters paint atmosphere, in the literal sense of the power of the atmosphere to diffuse or pass clearly the colors, the light. Who was the greatest painter of light?

Perhaps Vermeer? *A la lumière de Vermeer*, in light of Vermeer, was the punning title of a splendid, revealing exhibition in Paris a quarter-century ago, which brought together a large number of Vermeers but also paintings by predecessors and immediate contemporaries—more of those seventeenth-century Dutch interiors luminous with light from a high, wide window. The subjects were similar—fine rooms, carpets and tapestries, glassware, musical instruments, pictures and maps, and always members of the high bourgeoisie clothed in stuffs of a richness only emphasized by the sober colors and cut. The similarities made stronger the contrast between what the other painters, each masterly on his

OSCAR E. BERNINGHAUS
American, 1874-1952

Chamiso Along the Roadside, 1947
oil on canvas, 25 x 30 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0137.2085



own, aspired to in the use of light and atmosphere, and what Vermeer achieved. The contrast educated the eye. The light of Vermeer seems soft and at first pearly, the atmosphere of the paintings calm, even serene, the people unaware of the painter catching them in a moment plucked from time; yet the light of Vermeer is merciless, for it illuminates with great subtlety the psychological tensions and mystery in those still moments. His celebrated exterior, the *View of Delft* from the far bank of the harbor, has that same stillness, that same timelessness full of wonder: here the light is limpid, the sky high, pale, and chased with clouds, shadows of clouds on the buildings in the foreground, the interior of the city in soft sunshine.

Or is Turner the greatest painter of light? The master of seascapes, surely, but on sea or land his exteriors have a focal point determined by light, a focal point that transcends the laws of perspective, where behind the atmosphere, typically behind swirling mists or above turbulent seas, is not the sight but nonetheless the radiant presence of the sun or perhaps the moon. Over years, Turner's paintings became more abstract, particularly those he did not exhibit, rendering the shapes of buildings, monuments, sailing ships at dock, people in the middle distance ever more indistinct, the juxtapositions of colors more daring, the atmosphere thickening yet glowing, even hot, with light. In his watercolors—he painted upwards of 20,000 watercolors, mostly not for show but as studies—he often seems to have been painting nothing but light.

In the American nineteenth century, the paintings of the Hudson River School display their own special relationship to light.

Monumental, characteristically looking out across a Hudson Valley landscape from a high vantage point, the view is heavy with forests, with vistas of rocky hillsides, glimpses of falling water, the hills rising to the worn-down mountains of the Catskills, the Adirondacks. The far distance is conveyed by a haze, a bluish cast to the atmosphere—a routine painterly technique, indeed, yet precisely appropriate here, for those forests on the hills are largely of evergreens, and summer's hot sun draws up from them a vapor of hydrocarbons, a pure (but pungent) wilderness smog.

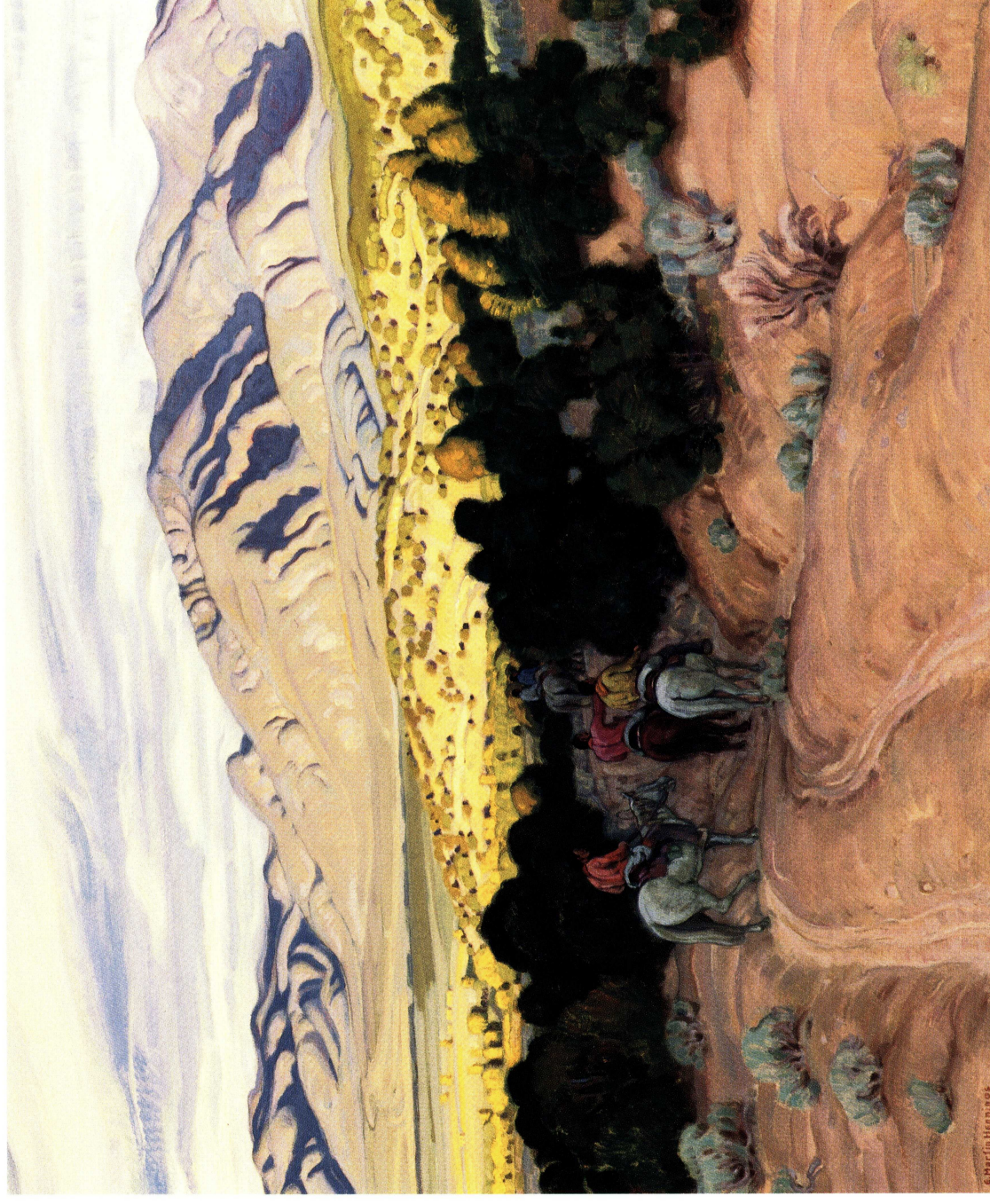
The impressionists, of course, were self-consciously painters of light. Think of Seurat, who with scientific, even clinical detachment broke light down into its elementary components which he laid on the canvas dot by dot in juxtapositions for the eye to recombine. Think of Monet, returning to paint again and again, in all seasons, at all hours, the cathedral front at Reims, or a simple field of haystacks, dissolving them—yet with a cool passion altogether unlike the analytical theorizing

FRIEDRICH, MONET, SEURAT—THEY

WERE PAINTERS OF LIGHT, OF

ATMOSPHERE. BUT NONE OF THESE

IS THE LIGHT OF THE SOUTHWEST.



of a Seurat painting—into strokes and dabs of complex gradations of color which the viewer resolves into meaning. A Monet puts one in motion, ten feet back to comprehend what's shown, then forward to see close up how it's done, then back again. Or, somewhat earlier, the German painter Caspar David Friedrich, hardly known in this country but beloved in Berlin, who captured as no one else what Berliners call the *märkische Himmel*, the elusive distinctive sky over the Mark Brandenburg, the province in which Berlin stands. Friedrich, Monet, Seurat—they were painters of light, of atmosphere.

But none of these is the light of the Southwest.

Perhaps artists themselves are only half aware of how the light they paint, that they accept almost without thought as the context and visual

E. MARTIN HENNINGS
American, 1886-1956

In Mountain Foothills, 1921
oil on canvas, 30 x 36 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0137.552

OVERLEAF

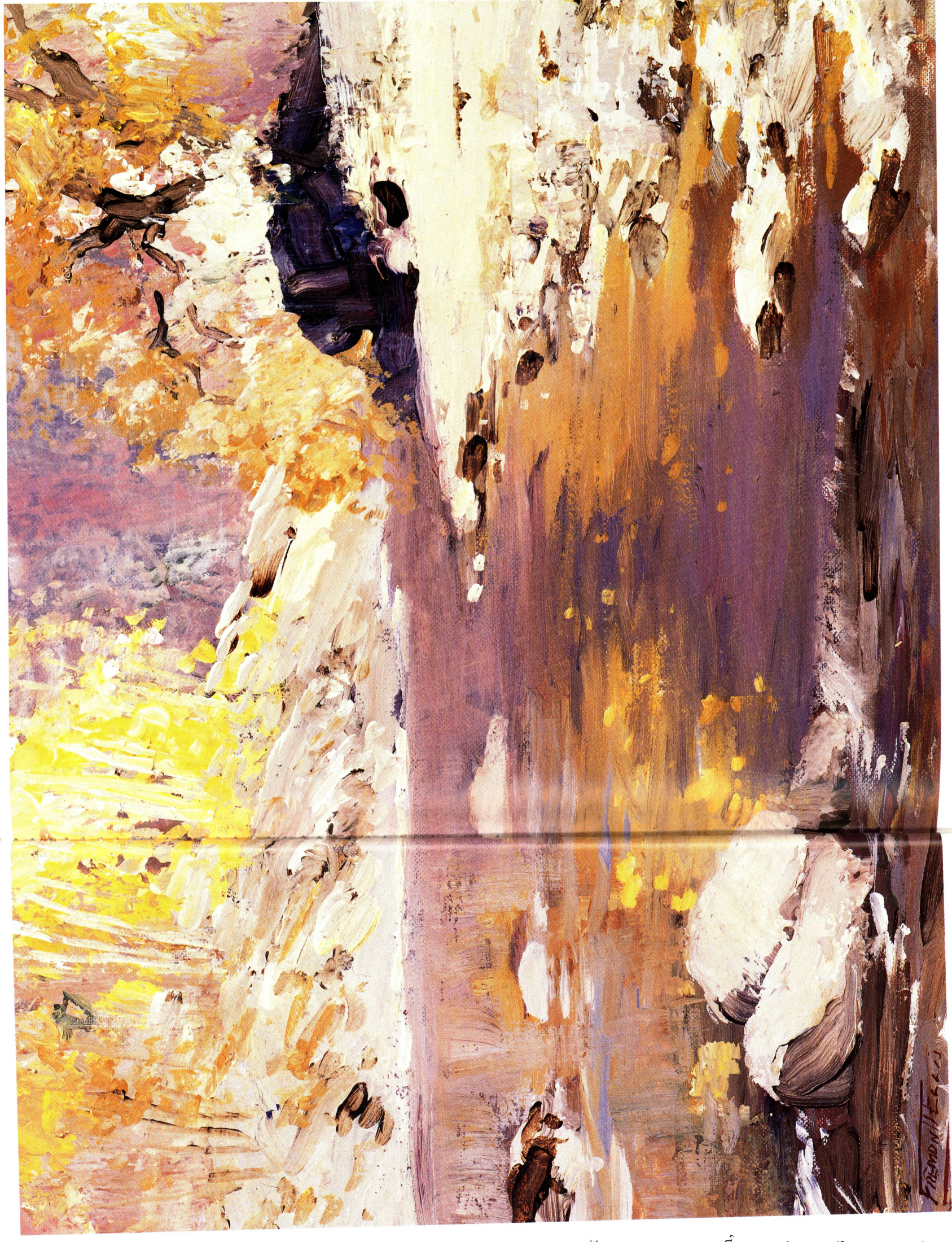
FREMONT ELLIS
American, 1897-1985

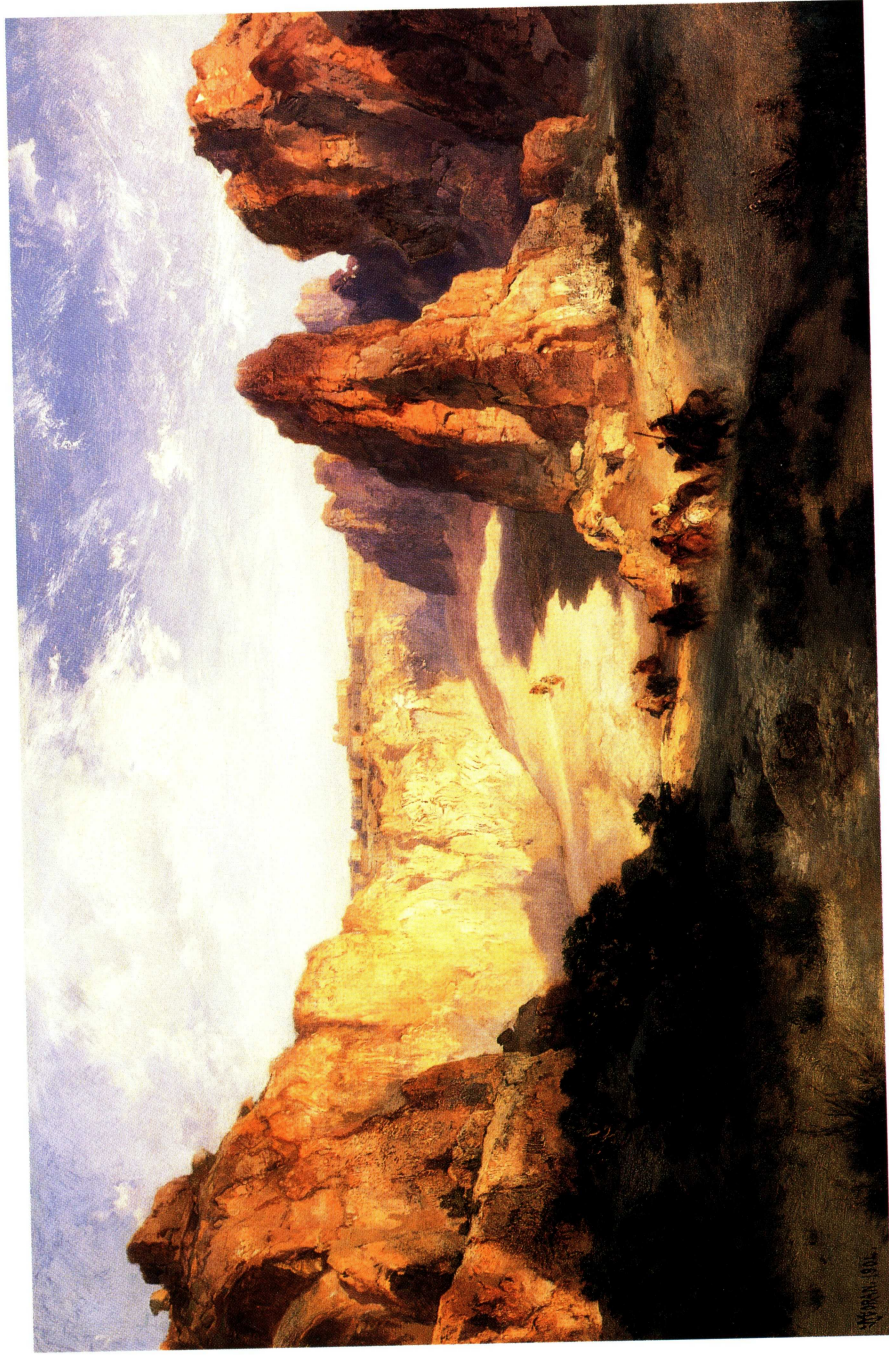
October Stream
oil on canvas, 13¼ x 17¼ inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0137.1135

medium of their work, depends first of all upon climate and geography. In the light of Vermeer one feels—like the vibration of a pure musical tone so faint one strains to hear it—the low, flat land, the cleansing damp wind off the North Sea, the sky, often gray, over that sea. That same influence of the North Sea is palpable in the sky of Caspar David Friedrich, in shapes of cloud or shades of blue, except that Berlin and its atmosphere and light lie at a fluctuating frontier between the climate of the coast and the continental climate of the steppe, the sea of grass that stretches back through Poland, Ukraine, and Russia to the Urals. The winter light and sky are especially unpredictable in Berlin—bracing bitter cold and clarity, or else misty day after day.

Of Turner, it's true but not enough to say that, of course, he was English—his climate benign but running to fog. Only after his first visit to Venice, when he crossed the English mist with the colors of Italy, did he begin to evolve his inimitable handling of light. Turner has been called an impressionist before his time. The impressionists, even one as sunny as Renoir, are painters of northern France. Or consider two who make the point most vividly because each contrasts most sharply with himself. Van Gogh in his Netherlandish youth was dour, dark, stolid; at Arles, way south, the high-key clarity and joy of his palette reflects the brilliance of the Provençal sun and dancing air. Gauguin on the Breton coast at Pont-Aven was already evolving towards the flat, hieratic figures and colors that characterize his late style, but in the move to Tahiti what changed and defines that style is the light.

The light of the Southwest is the creation of sky and sun. The land is southern and high, much of the plains over a mile high, sloping gradually from the continental divide. The sunlight streams down more directly here than it does up north, in the Hudson valley or in the New England of Winslow Homer, say, or in England or near the North Sea. Altitude makes a difference, too, the sun burning through a mile less of the dense air that in the lowlands filters the light through dust and vapor. The mountains to the west lift the clouds that cross them, wring the water out of the wind. Blazing sun and dry air—if not true desert, the land is arid and vegetation sparse. Thus the air has purity, the atmosphere remarkable clarity. Shadows are sharp-edged and deep. In the opening decades of





THOMAS MORAN
American, b. England, 1837-1926
Acoma, 1904
oil on canvas, 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 36 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0127.2301

the century, those qualities of warmth and dryness drew people from the East who suffered from tuberculosis or from desperate allergies. Then when one ascends into the mountains that thrust up unexpectedly from the tablelands, the air cools, moisture increases, verdant open forests flourish, as though one has been transported not a thousand feet higher but five hundred miles northwards.

Late in the 1920s, driven by a near-hopeless case of tuberculosis, a penniless Episcopal minister named Ross Calvin brought his family out to the Southwest. Idled by illness, yet told to spend all the time he could in sun and open air, Calvin walked and stopped to rest, walked again and sat to watch, for hours day after day, and fell in love with the landscape, beginning with astonishment about cactuses. As he got better and took up his calling again, he began to read and write about the topography and long history of the Southwest.

He wrote with care and historical precision, with an observant eye, with a sonorous cadence. In 1934 he published a lovely book, *Sky Determines*. In it he said, among much else,

So the pageant [of Southwestern history] has as its setting the intoxicating splendor of the desert, the green magnificence of the forest, the mystery of barbaric mountains, the serene openness of a sky whose eye is the desert-making sun. . . .

As source of the intense heat and frugal moisture, Sky Determines climate, and climate determines flora, fauna, and the general aspect of the country. The sky has, since long before the dawn of history, exercised compelling potency in shaping the destiny of the human inhabitants, and this fact permeates all southwestern anthropology, history, and economics. Indeed, the favorable or unfavorable alternation of sunshine and rainfall conditions everything.

Sunshine makes the land beautiful; rain makes it habitable. Calvin thought sky was destiny. Certainly it shaped the destinies of artists drawn to paint the distinctive light of the American Southwest.

Up behind the flatlands where that near-desert outpost, Santa Fe, has stood since about 1509, rise the Sangre de Cristo mountains. In them is the pueblo called Taos, another thousand feet above the arid plains.

This land of ravines and streams, of stands of evergreens and golden groves of aspens, where the light is yet brilliant, exhibits a different beauty. In the years before and the decades after the turn of the century, artists came to Taos, visiting then settling, by ones and twos, establishing a colony there. The founders of the school of Taos were six. Then they were ten. Scores more visited later. Taos in those days was hard to get to. Roads were few and unimproved, transport was by wagon, horse, or mule. Isolation was part of the beauty of the place.

Of the founders, most were trained in New York or Chicago, some in Europe as well. They will have known the movements in art of the day. They came west in large part to leave all that behind. Certainly their paintings show no influence of the impressionists, nor for example of the loosened forms and glaring colors of the painters, chiefly French, in the first years of the century, who coalesced briefly into the group whose work was so shocking that they were called the Fauves, or wild beasts. Cezanne, hinge as he was of the transition to modern art, is not a presence at Taos. Other relationships spring to the eye: these are with the artists of that time in Mexico, especially Diego Rivera, and certainly with the arts and crafts of the Hopi and Navajo pueblos. Sun and sky, the brilliance and clarity of color, are the obvious and overarching common elements. But in truth the artists of the school of Taos resemble most closely each other.



THOMAS MORAN
American, b. England, 1837-1926
Acoma, 1913
oil on canvas, 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 36 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0127.2302

First to visit New Mexico was Joseph Henry Sharp, in 1883. Sharp came to Taos for a season ten years later, and returned regularly. Arguably the most competent and interesting artist of the school, he also had a quasi-anthropological desire to record American Indian life before it was degraded by Anglo influences. Thus, in those years at the end of the century he painted a series of terrific portraits of plains tribesmen in Montana. These are classic in manner and somber, with strong lights and shadows. They convey their sitters' individuality and immense dignity and the painter's deep respect. Sharp it was who, back east and in Paris, preached to other painters the beauty of the Southwest and Taos; proselytes joined him. In 1912, he settled at Taos permanently. The light and atmosphere of the Southwest were good to Sharp. He was prolific and long-lived, painting with mastery well into his nineties.

Sharp came near to defining the canon of subjects for painters of the Southwest, particularly those at Taos. He returned again and again to the Indians of the pueblos. Early, he painted *Harvest Dance of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico*. As late as 1949, it was *Green Corn Dance* (pages 22-23). The brilliant sky controls such paintings at two levels. It determines the artist's technique, his palette, the high intensity of the yellows and ochres, heightens the frieze-like postures and placement of dancers and watchers. It determines the subject, the narrative the painter represents, for these are dances to propitiate the sky itself.

Inevitably, Sharp painted landscapes, panoramic views but also exteriors that might be called land still-lives—and with these, too, and not only because he was first in, his choices defined the canon. One of his most celebrated paintings is *The Enchanted Mesa*. The land is flat with mountains in the distance, the grasses in the foreground sere, and then the contrast of a band of intensely green underbrush—from all of which the mesa rises like a gigantic piston punched up through the hide of the earth, its top sunlit, the side that we see in shadow, mauve and tan, the rubble at the base in sun again, cream and rose. It's far from what Bracque or Picasso or Matisse were doing that day.

Comparable, though, is a painting by Thomas Moran, a man older than Sharp who came to New Mexico about the same time. *Acoma* is of a place he later revisited on canvas. The one he painted in 1904 (page 10) reminds us that one should see great vistas and great architecture not at noontime but in morning or evening: features are best brought out by a raking light. The light here is of the evening, the land more arid still, the escarpment and upthrust daggers of mountain not enchanted but hugely threatening, and made more so by the presence of a band of horsemen and other figures small in the valley below the painter's vantage point.

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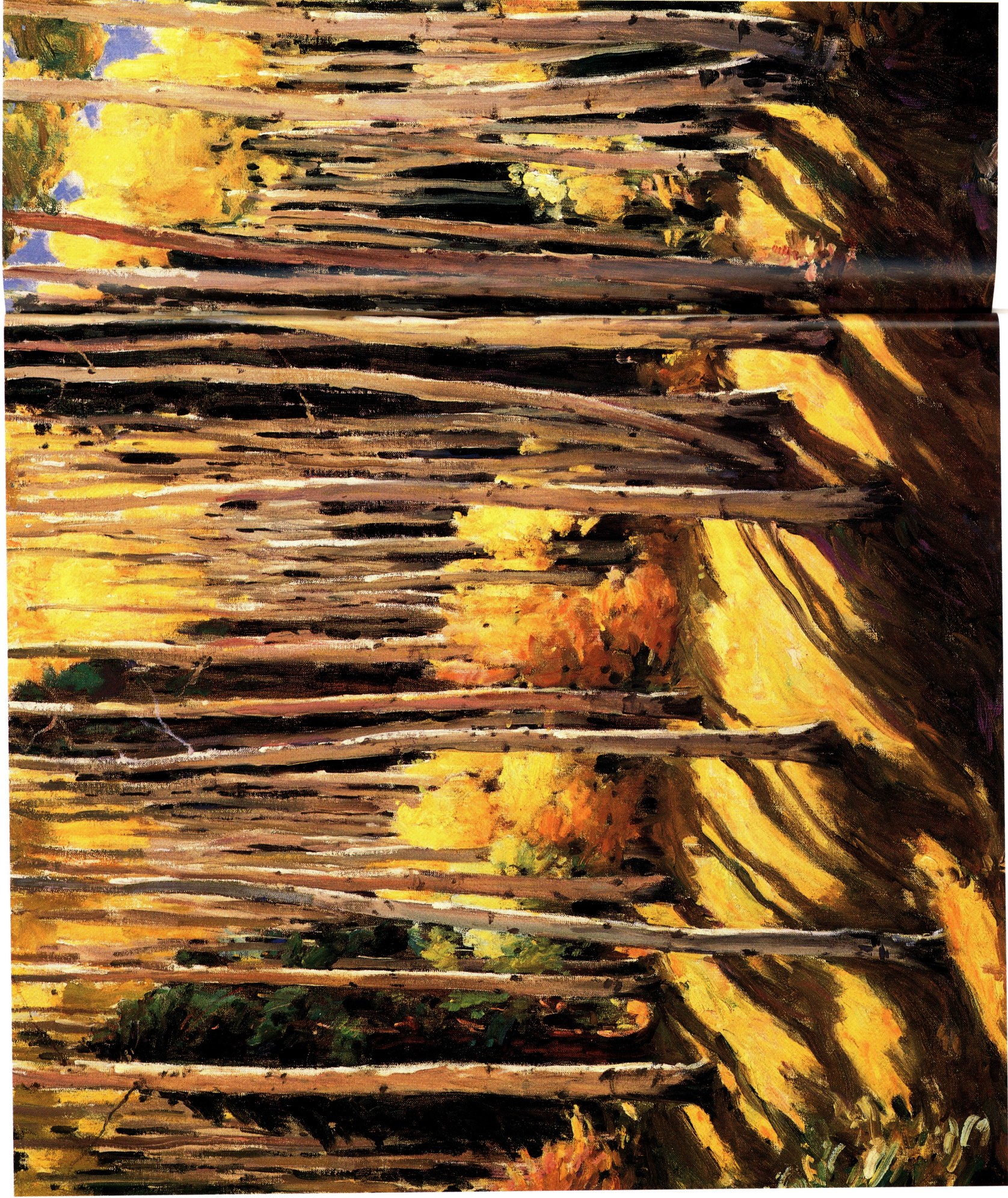
“The emotional and aesthetic effect of the sky is no less real than the practical one,” Ross Calvin wrote in 1934; and he went on,

Here one sees it all—180 glorious, colorful degrees of it. In any direction save downwards, it fills the larger part of the view and the eye cannot lift without being aware of its magnificence. All day long it offers for the efforts of nature, celestial colorist, a stupendous dome, which for weeks on end she hangs with curtains of the sincerest, heart-comforting azure, or tiring, frescoes with idle, pearl-white angels. But when the summer rains begin, she sits and, like a squaw weaving a blanket, splashes the evening firmament with bizarre patterns of crimson and ochre edged with orange flame. And then at twilight, she paints out the whole of it and begins again with a wash of tender, uncertain greys.

Drive west across the Oklahoma panhandle, and you enter New Mexico at the top edge, climb into the hills, and approach Taos through ravines, from above and behind. In the autumn, the delight of these more restricted views is the aspens, glimmers of yellow-gold leaves, gold-leaf indeed, shimmering in sunlight and the lightest breeze. Sharp painted

JOSEPH HENRY SHARP
American, 1859-1953
The Enchanted Mesa, 1915
oil on canvas, 40 x 56 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0137.355





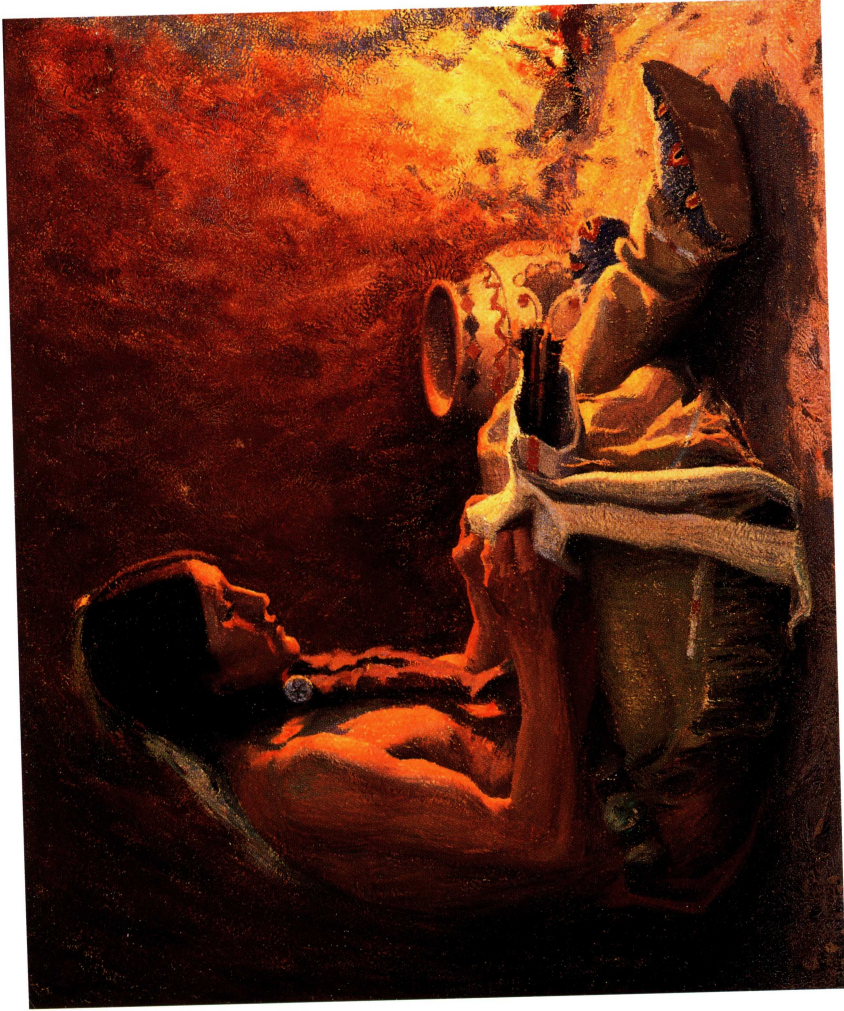
these, too, with effortless beauty, as in *Morning in Aspen Grove*. It's a sizable painting, a yard long and two-and-a-half feet tall. The simplicity of the work is subtly deceiving. The glowing leaves seem partially glimpsed, the slender white trunks predominating, until one realizes that it's the light that does it, the light that melts the gold and pours it out for us. Sharp painted this marvel in 1939, at the age of eighty.

The aspens of New Mexico were, of course, a popular subject. Fremont Ellis was not of Taos but Santa Fe, and born later than the Taos founders. His *October Stream* (pages 8-9) stands in pleasant contrast to Sharp's grove. Here is winter, snow, a stream, and aspens glimpsed in the middle distance and reflected in the stream. This a small painting, and though done in oils it could be a watercolor—all set down as though quickly and impulsively.

The other light of the Southwest painters, in a part of the world that as yet knew no electricity, was firelight. Typically, paintings lit by fire were portraits of individuals at work. Sharp painted a number of these. So did another of the charter members of the school of Taos, E. Irving Couse. He grew up in Michigan—interestingly, among Indians there—studied and painted in the east but visited Taos frequently before settling in 1927. *The Arrow Maker* is characteristic and handsome. It suggests what is in fact the case: Couse was a studio painter and an illustrator. For some years he

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JOSEPH HENRY SHARP
American, 1859-1953
Morning in Aspen Grove, 1939
oil on canvas, 30 x 36 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0137.320



E. IRVING COUSE
American, 1886-1936
The Arrow Maker
oil on canvas, 40 x 56 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0137.2193

had done the illustrations for calendars distributed by the Santa Fe Railroad. *The Arrow Maker* would fit seamlessly into one of those fine illustrated books for the young that were published in the 1920s and 1930s. Couse and others among the Taos painters were adept at visual storytelling—a trait greatly valued by the collector Thomas Gilcrease. In fact, Gilcrease consciously chose to collect pictures that told stories, especially about Native American life, even though those stories

might be told from the point of view of Euro-American artists trained in the East.

Bert Geer Phillips and E. Martin Hennings were two more of the founders. Phillips was one of those who met Joseph Henry Sharp in Europe. These men were accomplished technicians, skillful with the human face and figure, with the drape of clothing. A pair of paintings, one by each (and both at the Gilcrease Museum), poses similarities and contrasts. In *Corn Maidens*, *Taos Pueblo*, by Phillips, and *Pueblo Indians*, by Hennings, the air is clear, colors are saturated, sunlight is glaringly strong with its strength defined and intensified by the shadows—these things we expect in the Southwest and get in full measure here. Hennings directs our attention to women in the several stages of making bread. Phillips shows us four younger women each with a basket of corn on her head.

In the Phillips painting four girls walk by in a line so carefully spaced they could be in an Egyptian wall painting. They are dressed exactly alike, same white footwear, same white leggings glimpsed at the ankle, same long, rather Grecian tunics belted at the waist, same long shawls covering head and shoulders, same hair, what we see of it beneath the shawls, same baskets, and everything immaculately

clean—all that varies are the colors of tunics and shawls. These girls might be extras in an Italian opera about a pueblo, passing in front of a painted backdrop of sky and mountains. Hennings's figures are posed, too, and similarly dressed, though their actions differ and the variations in the colors of their clothing are not so formulaic. Here we have not an opera but a visual narrative eloquently describing the act of making bread from corn. In the Phillips one even may see a touch of Lawrence Alma-Tadeo, the English painter of the late Victorian era “best known,” the encyclopedia says, “for his scholarly and meticulous paintings of Greek and Roman life,” but actually best known for the high key of his coloring and the lush and languid eroticism of his women. And the Hennings? It would be comfortable in the *National Geographic* of fifty years ago.

One of Sharp's first recruits was Ernest L. Blumenschein. Trained in New York and Paris before the first world war, Blumenschein came to Taos permanently in 1919. He worked often in the open air, and had an enthusiasm for the life of action that reminds one almost of Teddy Roosevelt. In an encomium to New Mexico that he wrote as a letter to a newspaper, in 1939, he praised the mountains, the plains, the forests and streams and storms, all with a booster's enthusiasm, but brought the list to its climax with “the outdoor life of work and sports.” In a phrase unexpectedly sweet, he included “the sunshine that makes people happy.” Blumenschein's paintings, though he shares themes with other artists of the Southwest, are set off by a tough and welcome muscularity. *Afternoon of the Sheepherder*, for example, is a Southwestern panoramic landscape, yes—full moon rising in a cloudless sky, mountains ranging at the horizon, mesa uprearing closer in, the sheepherder and his flock. But the sharp-edged deep shadows, the rough vigor of the ochres and oranges, the arrangement of the elements, take on a power that is as abstract and patterned as a Navajo rug. In *Moon, Morning Star and Evening Star* (page 37) Blumenschein masses the figures in a huge oval, where again harsh yellows and oranges dominate. Though individual dancers are characterized by costume, stance, and expression, the people packed together in the crowd are deliberately faceless. The effect, in contrast to others' handling of similar material, is blocky, entirely individual: not beautiful, never pretty, but commanding.

The tragedy of our century is that we cannot help but spoil that which we found most beautiful. The Taos pueblo a hundred years after Sharp came is a greatly changed place. Native inhabitants struggle to maintain balance between their home as a sanctuary and as a visitors' attraction. The town of Taos still lays claim to being an artists' colony,

IN AN ENCOMIUM TO NEW MEXICO
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but this is shown chiefly by the shops selling local crafts, jewelry, pottery, weaving, hand-made clothing, prints. One might be on Mykonos, in the Aegean—where the tourists are as thick and the light as brilliant. The action has shifted to Santa Fe, which in the last quarter-century has grown to the third-richest art market in the country, after New York and Los Angeles. Dropping down from Taos on a fine fast highway to Santa Fe—but fine fast highways are the ruin of the isolation that characterized and protected these places—you perhaps stop at a roadside stand to buy a festoon of hot red chili peppers. Artesian wells brought irrigation. Water brought people, who draw down the deep

E. MARTIN HENINGS
American, 1886-1957
Pueblo Indians
oil on canvas, 44 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 50 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0137.2199



BERT GEER PHILLIPS
American, 1868-1956
Corn Maidens, Taos Pueblo
oil on canvas, 40 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 42 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0137.2197



HORACE FREELAND JUDSON is Research Professor of History at George Washington University and Director of the Center for History of Recent Science there. He has been editor, copywriter, book reviewer, theatre and art critic, foreign correspondent (seven years for *Time* as Arts & Sciences Correspondent in London and Paris), social historian, and author of a number of books. He is best known for *The Eighth Day of Creation*, a history of molecular biology and its makers from its origins to the early 1970s. He has been a fellow of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, in California, and a Mitgleder, or fellow, of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin; he is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In 1987, he was named a prize fellow of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Articles of his have appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Gene*, *Harper's*, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, *The Lancet*, *Nature*, *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker* (under the editor William Shawn), *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Sciences*, *The Spectator* (London), and elsewhere. He is now completing a book with the working title *Truth's Trumpet Cracked*, about fraud and other misconduct in science, and has another book ready for the press, *Give It Mouth!*, a collection of essays and reviews.

aquifers. Those who came for the fragile pristine air have been planting lawns, flower beds, flowering trees, and have been driving cars, importing the pollen and man-made smog they fled from. Turning away from the roadside stand, you look out in the direction of Santa Fe and Albuquerque, and towards Los Alamos somewhere off in the west, and get the first sense of that abrasion of the atmosphere.

Yet the light of the Southwest still burns.

At a dinner in Chicago recently with Cormac McCarthy and his companion, Jennifer Winkley, we talked of the light of the Southwest. He is a novelist of the Southwest, author among others of a trilogy that are cowboy novels, yes, but that soar beyond genre. She is a painter. They live in El Paso. He mentioned Ross Calvin's book. She spoke first of the clarity, purity, and variety of colors in the landscape, as one makes the great circuit of the horizon at dusk or dawn. The sky is high, the horizon low. He said, "The sky colors merge with the earth colors." She said, "Out here, the light makes it impossible for a painting to be melancholy."

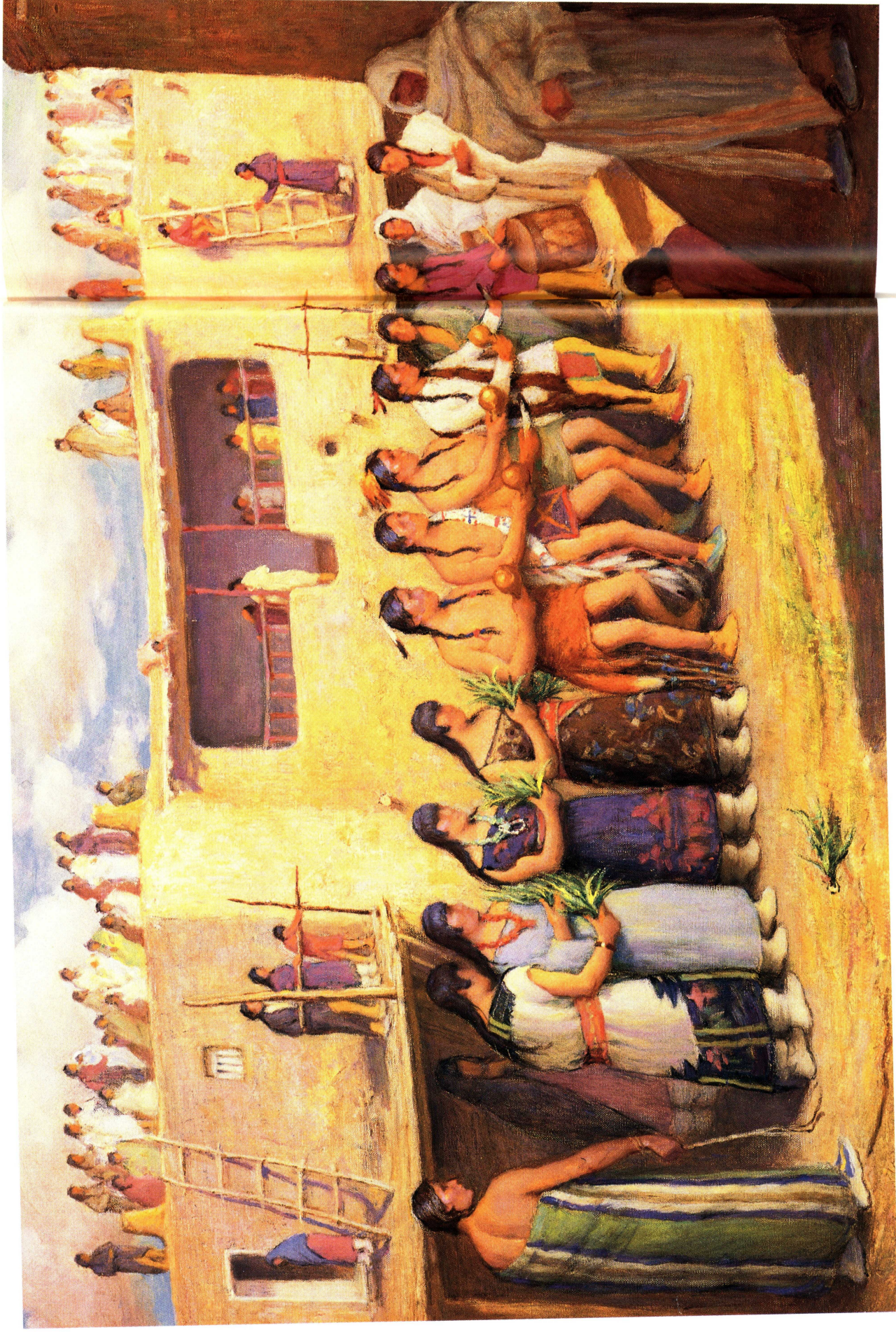
In 1958 Aline B. Saarinen wrote a book called *The Proud Possessors, the Lives, the Times, and Tastes of Some Adventurous American Art*

Collectors. Included in her text were collectors particularly well known in metropolitan art centers of the East. In fact, Saarinen assembled the “Who’s Who” of collectors — Isabella Stewart Gardner, J. Pierpont Morgan, John G. Johnson, Joseph H. Hirschhorn, the Rockefellers and Peggy Guggenheim, among others. All were consummate collectors, people whose names frequently appeared on museum facades or walls in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and other large eastern cities. Sandwiched between essays on Electra Havemeyer Webb and Peggy Guggenheim appears a chapter entitled “Cowboys and Indians Thomas Gilcrease.”

THOMAS GILCREASE

COLLECTING “COWBOYS AND INDIANS”





Although John D. Rockefeller, Jr. had bought fourteen paintings from Eanger Irving Couse and a group of works from Joseph Henry Sharp in 1926 (both were founding members of the Taos Society of Artists), Saarinen's assembly of celebrated collectors demonstrated little interest in American art created west of the Mississippi. What possessed Saarinen to include Gilcrease, a collector of western Americana, in the glittering ranks of extraordinarily wealthy individuals who surrounded themselves with Renaissance panel paintings, Chinese porcelains, Picasso

oils, or Medieval tapestries? The answer is found in the Gilcrease Museum, in its galleries and archives.

Gilcrease, a self-made man and proud collector, was one-sixteenth Creek and a native Oklahoman. Between 1939 and 1952 he assembled a collection of artworks containing over 112,000 objects. Saarinen traveled to Tulsa to interview the charming collector for her book because of what he represented—an individual and an era devoted to the American West. Unlike Saarinen's other subjects in *The Proud Possessors*, Thomas Gilcrease based his collecting on a single consistent priority—and it was not aesthetics. Reports indicate that he had an eye for quality, and certainly many of the works he collected are extraordinarily beautiful, but his primary interest was in images that told a story, that were true to nature and realistic. He collected objects with a passion, his primary motivation being the creation of a museum of American history and art.

Alfred Stendahl of the Stendahl Galleries in Hollywood, California, called Gilcrease one of the most purposeful men he ever met. Gilcrease's desire was "to preserve the evolution and history of frontier America." (Milsten, 206). One of his chief competitors for Western objects was the president of American Airlines, C. R. Smith, whose respect for Gilcrease was

shared by others engaged in collecting Western Americana. Smith credited Gilcrease with giving Tulsa and the nation "a western museum that will never be equaled elsewhere in the world." (Milsten, 206).

Other collectors challenged Gilcrease for images of Western art: Amon Carter, publisher of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*; the Phillips 66 "oil man" Frank Phillips; and H. J. Latcher Stark, a lumber magnate. Their love for art of the American West is evident in museums bearing their names in Fort Worth, Wootaroc, Oklahoma, and Orange, Texas.

ERNEST L. BLUMENSCHNEIN
American, 1874-1960
Superstition, ca. 1921
oil on canvas, 47¼ x 45 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0137.531

LEFT

JOSEPH HENRY SHARP
American, 1859-1953
Green Corn Dance, 1949
oil on canvas, 24 x 36 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0137.303

Sharp wrote to Gilcrease: "The Indian is slave to superstition and never dances or sings for pleasure or pastime. There is a hidden meaning to all his movements, and he sacredly obeys the ceremonial teachings of war, the chase, visits, prayers, and feasts. I have witnessed these chants and dances of the Pueblo Indians many times, and they always display a deep dignity and seriousness."



The Taos Society of Artists in the garden of the Couse home, summer 1932. From left to right, seated are Walter Ufer, E. Irving Couse, Oscar E. Berninghaus, William Herbert "Buck" Duntun, Kenneth M. Adams. Standing are E. Martin Hennings, Bert Geer Phillips, W. Victor Higgins, Ernest L. Blumenschein, Joseph Henry Sharp. Not shown is Catharine Crichter.

PHOTO BY C. E. LORD, COURTESY OF THE HARWOOD FOUNDATION, TAOS

No one can doubt their commitment to that part of America which was then—and continues to be today—largely ignored by scholars and museums of the East. Few collectors, however, equaled Gilcrease's obsession and courage of conviction, which even led him to overspend his substantial resources in forming the collection. He was dedicated to preserving and presenting an accurate picture of life in the West, at a time when more and more of the country was becoming urbanized.

Gilcrease's success is evident in the quality and scope of his holdings, including a modest, but superb, collection of paintings by artists working in Taos, New Mexico. Unlike so many collectors, Gilcrease couldn't be satisfied with simply having examples of each of their works—the paintings had to tell a story, and they had to be of the highest quality.

Gilcrease became a serious patron of four former members of the Taos Society of Artists, a formal organization of artists who came to Taos to create a uniquely American art form. A 1917 *Chicago Sun* article on

the Taos artists had as its title, "Real American Art—At Last!" Over the next decade this would be the theme of article after article discussing the Taos Society. Their work did not go unnoticed by Gilcrease, as they produced the type of imagery he was looking for. While few cowboys were to be found in Taos works, Native Americans were a favorite subject of the artists, who often portrayed them in their attempts to live as they had for centuries, prior to Anglo intrusion.

In 1945 Gilcrease and the Pottawatomie artist Woodrow (Woody) Crumbo went to Taos. They visited the commercial galleries and the artists' studios in the sometimes dusty, other times muddy, little town at the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. It wasn't unusual for Crumbo, the advisor, and Gilcrease, the patron, to travel great distances to fill out Gilcrease's collection. The two arrived at a time when surviving members of the Taos Society of Artists were in the waning stage of their careers. Irving Couse, William Herbert "Buck" Duntun, and Walter Ufer had died in 1936. Of the eleven full members, only seven remained: Joseph Sharp, Bert Phillips, Oscar Berninghaus, Ernest Blumenschein, Victor Higgins, Martin Hennings and Kenneth Adams. Catharine Crichter had left Taos in the late 1920s. Gilcrease would subsequently develop a relationship with four of these men—Sharp, Berninghaus, Phillips, and Blumenschein—that makes for one of the most fascinating stories in the history of American art.

For nearly two decades the artists' chief complaint had been about the increased number of tourists coming to Taos. "Worse than a plague of grasshoppers," Sharp called them. "They admire and want but no buy." (Sharp to Gilcrease, 16-17 July 1951) The years during and following the second World War were very lean. The work of the former members of the Taos Society of Artists had been out of fashion for nearly two decades and was failing to attract the attention of museums with acquisition budgets. Collectors with cash to spend on art had been discouraged by the uncertainty of world conditions. However, two patrons, the lumber baron from Orange, H. J. Lutcher Stark, and the "oil man" from Tulsa, Thomas Gilcrease, offered relief for several of the old timers. The artist who prospered most from their visits was Joseph Henry Sharp. Gilcrease bought 232 of the artist's paintings, as well as most of the Native American artifact collection he had used as props. Stark later bought more than eighty Sharp paintings.

From 1945 to 1953 a fascinating group of letters passed between Gilcrease and the Taos artists whose work he collected. The tone of the letters reflects the relationship of close friends. Although Gilcrease disliked writing letters, he valued his correspondence with Sharp and the

To aid in the diffusion of taste for art . . .

THE TAOS SOCIETY OF ARTISTS EXISTED AS A FORMAL ORGANIZATION FROM 1915 TO 1927. ARTICLE III OF THE ORGANIZATION'S CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS READS:

THIS SOCIETY IS FORMED FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES TO DEVELOP A HIGH STANDARD OF ART AMONG ITS MEMBERS, AND TO AID IN THE DIFFUSION OF TASTE FOR ART IN GENERAL. TO PROMOTE AND STIMULATE THE PRACTICAL EXPRESSIONS OF ART—TO PRESERVE AND PROMOTE NATIVE ART.

TO FACILITATE BRINGING BEFORE THE PUBLIC THROUGH EXHIBITIONS AND OTHER MEANS TANGIBLE RESULTS OF THE WORK OF ITS MEMBERS. TO PROMOTE, MAINTAIN AND PRESERVE HIGH STANDARDS OF ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE IN PAINTING, AND TO ENCOURAGE SCULPTURE, ARCHITECTURE, APPLIED ARTS, MUSIC, LITERATURE, ETHNOLOGY, AND ARCHAEOLOGY, SOLELY AS IT PERTAINS TO NEW MEXICO AND THE STATES ADJOINING.

—From *THE TAOS SOCIETY OF ARTISTS*, edited and annotated by Robert R. White, University of New Mexico Press, 1983

other artists almost as much as the paintings he acquired. In Sharp's case they clearly illustrate patron and artist working in harmony. Their letters show mutual support and utmost respect (each addressed the other as "Mister"), with never a hint of discord.

Gilcrease, like Stark and other western collectors, assembled a collection with the plan of creating a museum. Sharp knew his future reputation would be enhanced by having his work in a museum devoted to Western Americana. Sharp's paintings enabled his patron to represent over half a century of American history and influenced a reporter for the *Tulsa Daily World* to write, on 3 May 1949 under the headline "New Museum Opens Today": "The hardships of the Indians, along with festivities, religious rites and ceremonies are retold in the paintings."

Sharp first visited New Mexico in 1893, and over the next fifty years painted several hundred portraits of the most prominent Native Americans, their ceremonies and daily activities. Early in his career Sharp made large sales to Phoebe Hearst and Joseph G. Butler, Jr., as well as to collectors in his hometown of Cincinnati. Even so, this tireless worker still had many paintings in storage and on his walls when Gilcrease first appeared in his studio in 1945, and he continued to paint portrait after portrait of the first natives.

The aged artist must have been pleasantly surprised when Margaret Berg, owner of the Blue Door Gallery, located a few feet from Sharp's studio, showed up with Gilcrease and Crumbo. Before the visit ended, Gilcrease had purchased eighty-eight paintings for \$18,680. Sharp traditionally gave Gilcrease a fifty percent discount, and there is no evidence that Gilcrease ever asked for a larger reduction. He was a discerning buyer, particularly in his transactions with dealers. Gilcrease was also a fair and generous man, rewarding Berg for her effort with a check for \$1,000.

For eight years Gilcrease bought paintings. He requested that Sharp provide him with "a full description, place, and approximate time of each painting," as well as any other information "that might be of interest pertaining to each of the paintings so that we may have on file and display this description along with the painting." (28 August 1945, Gilcrease Archive) Sharp sent paintings, advising that "Condensed historic and anecdotal notes on back of each — tear off and have typed before any are lost." (Sharp to Gilcrease, 18 Sept. 1945)

Because Sharp wrote so many descriptions of his paintings and letters discussing everything from his art to more personal matters, he grew concerned that he was taking too much of Gilcrease's time. Gilcrease relieved Sharp's anxieties by requesting that the artist continue

It was, indeed, a great pleasure to visit again with you in your studio, also to view many of your works as well as in purchasing the very interesting paintings, thereby adding greatly to our collection of your good works. I am sure these paintings will be enjoyed by many people visiting our gallery in the future. I will mail your check as indicated in your letter of September 18. . . . When we receive these paintings in our gallery, it will give us more than 160 of your valuable works and will make a real display as the works of an individual artist. In fact, no greater display of one man's on the Indian can equal this work.

—From a letter from Thomas Gilcrease to Joseph Henry Sharp, dated 26 September 1945
(Gilcrease Archive)



JOSEPH HENRY SHARP
American, 1859-1953
*White Swan—Reno's Scout,
Brother of Curley*
oil on canvas, 14 x 10 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0137.390

Gilcrease acquired this portrait of White Swan with the Cole Collection; it was

accompanied by typical remarks that Sharp made on the verso of paintings:

Brother of Curley and Reno's Scout. Picked up on battle field, war club ding in forehead as big as an egg, full of bullet holes and knife cuts, but none in his back! Left hand and arm paralyzed.

Often came to studio. Taught me sign language, painted 2-3 yards white cloth of his

experience in Custer battle.

Think the Foundation has this pictograph. A good artist in Indian picture writing, jolly,

good natured and general

favorite. A full brother, though direct opposite in character of

Curley, Custer's scout.



JOSEPH HENRY SHARP
American, 1859-1953
Self Portrait, 1947
oil on canvas, 24 x 16¼ inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0137.323

The viewer can almost hear the words Sharp wrote to Gilcrease to accompany this self portrait: “Million Dollar Hat! . . . The only self portrait I have painted. Good model stays put. I thought you would care to have it for the Foundation. Had to do something different. Eyes like a Skye terrier—can’t tell if he is looking at you with a growl or smile. Couldn’t tell myself jokes all the time.” (Sharp to Gilcrease, 1947)

to write “long and interesting letters during the next fifty years.” (Gilcrease to Sharp, 23 Sept. 1947)

Gilcrease also sought Sharp’s advice on purchasing paintings by other artists, in particular, Frank Tenney Johnson. Sharp, not jealous of other artists (quite the exception), was a willing advisor and shared Gilcrease’s feelings for creating a museum which presented a full picture of the West. Unlike Sharp and the other members of the Taos Society of Artists (with the notable exception of William Herbert “Buck” Dunton), Johnson was a painter of the cowboy.

Always responding promptly to Sharp’s request, Gilcrease sent \$3,000 semiannually, giving him much-needed security during his later years. In 1947 Sharp presented him with his self portrait, the beginning of what would become a common practice between the patron and the other Taos artists. Sharp painted himself as a serious-looking artist staring out from under what has now become the famous “Million Dollar Hat.”

In a letter of September, 1948, Gilcrease thanked Sharp for “having done so many fine paintings of the Indians and early west and for having made it possible for me to preserve these great paintings for the pleasure of all those who pass this way.” (23 September 1948) Even after the opening of the Gilcrease Museum on 13 January 1949, he continued to support Sharp, giving him a one-man show in celebration of sixty years of painting Native Americans.

Sharp’s death on 29 August 1953, ended an amazing friendship. Gilcrease wrote to Mrs. Sharp: “It is with deep regret that I learn of the passing of my very good friend, Mr. Sharp, and it grieves me that I was unable to make the trip to California this summer to visit with him as I had intended. We are extremely fortunate in owning what we believe are some of his finest works, and are very proud of having been included as one of his many friends.” (Gilcrease to Mrs. Sharp, 31 Aug. 1953)

Letters documenting Gilcrease’s relationship with Phillips, Berninghaus and Blumenschein also suggest warm friendships. Gilcrease provided them with a

OSCAR E. BERNINGHAUS
American, 1874-1952
Self Portrait, 1951
oil on canvas, 19¼ x 15¾ inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0137.516

Gilcrease asked Blumenschein, Berninghaus and Phillips to provide him with their self portraits. “Blummy” and “Bernie” complied, while Phillips sent a canvas that John Young-Hunter had painted of him in 1941. Berninghaus commented on his self portrait, confessing that he was not a portrait painter, but succeeded anyway through the “aid of mirrors and photographs. . . .” (Blumenschein to Gilcrease, 1 May 1951)



ERNEST L. BLUMENSCHIEIN
American, 1847-1960

Self Portrait, 1948

gouache and ink on paper, 12 x 9 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0237.784

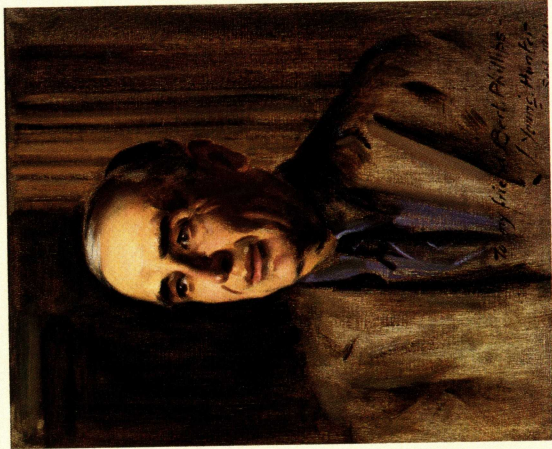
Phillips sent a canvas that John Young-Hunter had painted of him in 1941. Phillips simply did not feel that he was up to the task of painting his own self portrait, reasoning that even Rembrandt “did not do any too well on the one of himself and since most of the painters since his time are not or have not painted any better. . .” Blumenschein felt he did “a good job, taking me more than a month of actual work.” He painted it just before he had emergency surgery, which he felt made it less flattering. However, he was pleased with it “as a work of art. . .”

(Blumenschein to Gilcrease, 29 Aug. 1951)

JOHN YOUNG-HUNTER
American, b. Scotland, 1874-1955

Bert Phillips, 1941

oil on canvas, 20 x 16 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0137.563



receptive market, in addition to a place in his museum, for their images of historical, as well as aesthetic, value. Gilcrease acquired twelve paintings from Phillips in 1946 for \$5,370, a major sale for the seventy-seven-year old artist. Like Sharp, Phillips painted not only portraits of Native Americans, but scenes from their daily lives, as well. Phillips’s paintings, much like those of Sharp, have been appreciated chiefly for their ethnographic value — a record of a vanishing race. They are much more than a historical document, however. Phillips was a candid observer, going to great lengths to witness an event that could be recorded on canvas. Gilcrease seemed to favor outdoor activities, Native

Americans playing musical instruments and/or hunting. He acquired *Taos Deer Hunter* (page 35), probably because of having witnessed a similar incident. The Native American’s relationship with his surroundings was a theme favored by Phillips.

Of all the canvases by Phillips in the Gilcrease collection, *Penitente Burial Procession—Near Taos*, may be the strongest. Phillips, unlike Sharp, painted a great number of canvases of Hispanic life in New Mexico. *Penitente Burial Procession—Near Taos (back cover)* dramatically contrasts the long, winding procession and a threatening landscape. Led by a trio of cross-bearers, silhouetted by selective, intense lighting, the figures are in strong contrast to the sinister-looking mountains under an ominous dark sky. Phillips’s sympathetic treatment lends a feeling of the solemnity of the occasion.

Gilcrease also met Oscar Berninghaus in 1945, and throughout the following years the patron bought a dozen of the artist’s most important canvases. Berninghaus specialized in painting scenes of everyday life in and around Taos. In a sense, his approach to his subjects was not too unlike that of another member of the Taos Society of Artists, Walter Ufer. Both artists started their career as illustrators; traces of this tradition are evident in their later work. Ufer, at times, could be considered to be a social realist. This is suggested in *Hunger* (cover), a canvas purchased by Gilcrease after the artist’s death. Ufer’s canvas evokes a feeling of pathos, causing the viewer to wonder whether the artist is portraying physical hunger—represented perhaps by the mouse on the ledge—or spiritual hunger, represented by the praying Native Americans and the crucifix on the wall. Berninghaus also raises questions in his paintings. *Too Old for the Rabbit Hunt* (pages 32-33), is typical of Berninghaus’s approach to painting the Native American in what appear to be simple acts of making a living or enjoying a social activity. He frequently placed the main character of his compositions in the immediate foreground, contrasting them with the spirited activities of figures in the background. The setting for the action is almost always with the Sangre de Cristo Mountains as background, under a high sky, illuminated by the brilliant New Mexico light. Among his more effective paintings were his pseudo-portraits of Native Americans.

In an interesting note Berninghaus, who expected time payments, thanked Gilcrease for sending “payment in full” which was “very pleasant to have.” (Berninghaus to Gilcrease, 23 June 1946) As so often happened between the artists and Gilcrease, Berninghaus, in appreciation and recognition of the significance of what Gilcrease was doing, made a gift of ethnographic objects from his own collection. Gilcrease acknowledged the gift to his



Foundation, exclaiming how “generous and thoughtful” the gift was and how the costumes would “be appreciated by many visitors to the museum.” (28 June 1946)

In the 1950s, particularly after Sharp died, Blumenschein and Gilcrease carried on an active correspondence. Even though Blumenschein created canvases that could have been considered stylistically progressive, the conservative-minded Gilcrease purchased five of his paintings. Victor Higgins and Kenneth Adams, members of the Taos Society of Artists, also showed progressive tendencies in their paintings; but, they—on the other hand—were not favored by Gilcrease.

Their paintings were probably too “modern” for the patron, and choice of subject matter was also a problem. After the teens, Higgins was essentially a painter of landscapes and not of Native Americans. He didn’t provide Gilcrease with the type of story-telling image that suited his program. It wasn’t until the 1987 acquisition of *The Race* (page 34), that a work by Higgins appeared in the Gilcrease collection. Adams created images that were influenced by Cubism, brought to Taos by Andrew Dasburg, as was Adams. Subjects of his paintings parallel those of Higgins.

Blumenschein’s paintings are characterized by their intense color, feeling of rhythm, movement and patterned images. Gilcrease was quite attracted to Blumenschein’s Native American ceremonials. Blumenschein’s incredible memory enabled him to recapture the mood and feeling of these sacred events, since the participants refused permission for the artist to record them at the time. Familiar with Gilcrease’s tastes, Blumenschein proposed several paintings, some of which the collector rejected, five of which he purchased. In 1948, Blumenschein’s persistence and grooming of the patron produced results. In a now-classic letter to fellow-artist

OSCAR E. BERNINGHAUS
American, 1874-1952
Too Old for the Rabbit Hunt,
1948

oil on canvas, 35 x 40 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0137.524

In *Too Old for the Rabbit Hunt*, the seventy-three-year old Berninghaus invites the viewer to share his compassion for a once-proud hunter reduced by age to the role of a spectator. With a single rabbit slung over his shoulder, the melancholic old man watches as the drama of the hunt develops without him. Is he displaying a trophy from his hunt, or is her merely serving as a retriever for the younger men? The title of the painting suggests the latter.



WILLIAM VICTOR HIGGINS
American, 1884-1949
The Race
oil on canvas, 24 x 27 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 01.37.2424

Howard Cook, Blumenschein described the surprise knock on his door one morning and the appearance of three visitors: Woody Crumbo, Thomas Gilcrease, and his secretary, Eudoria Teanor. “They were in [an] affable mood and wanted to see paintings. They looked particularly at the one of the Deer Dance I called ‘Moon, Morning and Evening Star’ on the walls of La Fonda Gallery and asked me what price I would give to their museum. I cut off 20% quickly — and gasped, as the price was \$2500. ‘Put that down’ said one gentleman quietly to the lady, who I discovered was his secretary. He said: ‘Put that down,’ four times! — then added, ‘what does that come to?’ She used her pencil and calmly said

‘\$7000.00.’” (Blumenschein to Cook 29 Aug. 1948) Gilcrease bought *Mojave Desert, Enchanted Forest, Superstition*, and *Moon, Morning Star and Evening Star*.

Blumy told Cook he would use some of his money to take a trip to New York City, perhaps his last, to “enjoy a few splurges.” He would “take in all the museums in a city, especially nat’ history; play cards; listen to concerts, especially orchestra; and all the painting shows—and if any thing is left of the cash, buy me a suit of clothes.” (Blumenschein to Cook, 29 Aug. 1948)

Shortly after Gilcrease purchased the paintings, Blumenschein sent a lengthy and fascinating document, “Story of Painting Entitled ‘Moon Morning Star and Evening Star.’” Blumenschein not only described the painting which depicted the Taos Deer Dance, “one of the really great events of the Pueblos,” but also what he had to do to create an image of an event from memory—without the assistance of preliminary, on site-sketches, or a camera. In his studio, Blumenschein made an oil sketch, attempting to be as faithful as possible to what he had seen. However, he admitted to Gilcrease that he altered some facts in response to his emotions, “the genuine feelings aroused in the creative man.” Without these emotions, Blumenschein felt “a picture becomes just a mere statement of a reporter and not a work of art.” He followed the sketch with a series of drawings of the participants, again from memory. Armed with all this information, Blumenschein turned to the large canvas, incorporating all of the information he had gathered into a composition which “must in itself be a beautiful structure in form and color.” (Blumenschein to Gilcrease) Judging from his comments, Blumenschein eliminated certain images, notably the Deer Mothers, “a bold sacrifice,” adding the Moon, Morning Star and Evening Star, because he needed “those forms and lines to play against the big oval.”

In some respects, this must have been an unusual document for Gilcrease to read. He had grown accustomed to the more factual, although sometimes dramatized accounts provided by Sharp and Phillips. He was not used to statements of historical content with a generous mix of experimentation and artistic theory.

Blumenschein described *Superstition* (page 21) as his most important painting. It led to the writing of another artist-to-patron document which is of major significance. The winner of the 1921 First Altman Prize



BERT GEER PHILLIPS
American, 1868-1956
Taos Deer Hunter
oil on canvas, 27 x 27 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 01.37.2084

All correspondence quoted resides in the archives of the Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

David Randolph Milsten. *Thomas Gilcrease, Founder of The Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art*. Tulsa: Coman and Associates, 1969.

Fred Myers. *Thomas Gilcrease and His National Treasure*. Tulsa: Thomas Gilcrease Museum Association, 1987.

Aline B. Saarinen. *The Proud Possessors, the Lives, the Times, and Tastes of Some Adventurous American Art Collectors*. New York: Random House, 1958.

ERNEST L. BLUMENSCHIN
American, 1847-1960

Moon, Morning Star and Evening Star, 1922

oil on canvas, 50 x 40 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0137.2192

and \$1,000 at the National Academy of Design, it had as its subject the Medicine Man. Blumenschein wrote:

Enough to say, is that the Indian's mind is partly made by Medicine Men who are often fakers who play on all superstitions that have come into his life—and in addition he has the religion of the white man which he gets from a priest that is not always conscientious. Add to that his own Indian religion in which the Beautiful Indian dances are so important, and the result is even more confusing than I can depict in my picture with its vivid colors and shapes.
(Blumenschein to Gilcrease 18 Dec. 1952)

Blumenschein created *Superstition* reflecting his own suspicions about the Medicine Man who “used his religious power to make a little money outside of his salary.” (Blumenschein to Gilcrease 18 Dec. 1952) Blumenschein was relying on the intelligence of the viewer to interpret what he had painted. Obviously he found a sympathetic supporter in Thomas Gilcrease.

By the later 1940s Thomas Gilcrease had become an integral part of the Taos Art colony and was, in fact, treated almost like family. When he opened the museum, he hoped that all of his Taos friends would attend the celebration. Their poor health prevented that, unfortunately. In 1952 he learned from Blumenschein that Joseph Henry Sharp had died. Berninghaus died the same year, Phillips in 1956 and Blumenschein in 1960.

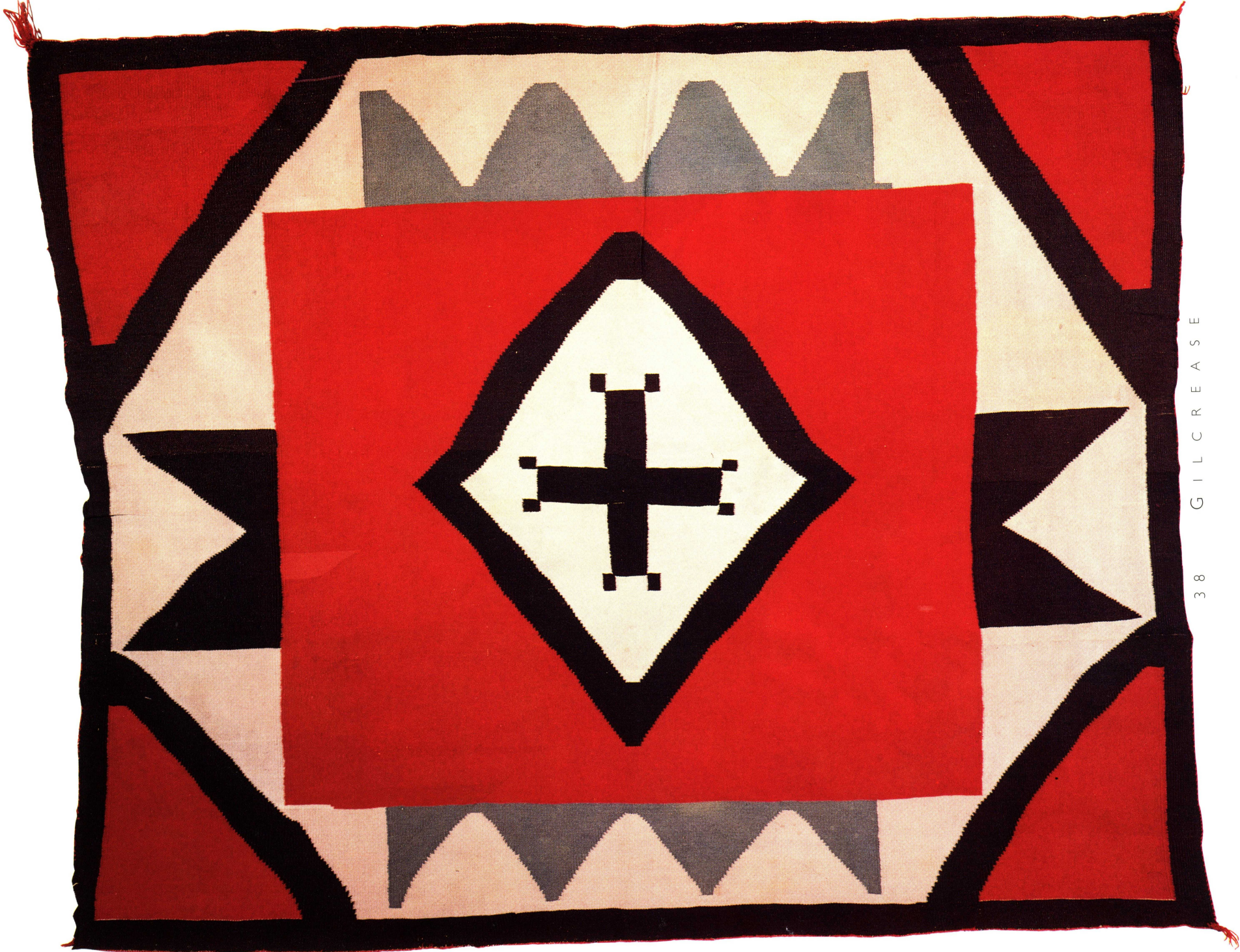
Up to the end Gilcrease maintained steady and supportive communication with the artists. Thomas Gilcrease was a valued patron, keeping their dreams and aspirations alive so that they could, as Blumenschein said, “die in harness.” As a result of his generosity and discerning eye, he, in partnership with the artists, created a fine collection of paintings by Taos artists. Through his museum he succeeded in bringing to the public an important part of American art and history.

At a time when there was little interest in Western art, Aline Saarinen acknowledged Thomas Gilcrease's pioneering spirit. He truly was the patron who brought life in the American West into focus for a national audience. Seen in this light—and the brilliant one of New Mexico, and even though the images of cowboys are fewer in number than those of Native Americans, Thomas Gilcrease has indeed earned his position in Saarinen's *The Proud Possessors*.

DEAN PORTER is director of the Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame, a position he has held since 1974 (he was curator of the Notre Dame Art Gallery from 1966 to 1974). He earned his bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in art history at the State University of New York at Binghamton. Dr. Porter is a specialist in southwestern art history and the author of *Victor Higgins, An American Master* (Peregrine Smith Books, 1991).

This article is drawn in part from his work on a more exhaustive project, a forthcoming book and traveling exhibition entitled *Art Patronage in Taos, New Mexico 1898-1950*. His co-author and colleague in this project is Teresa Hayes Ebie, curator of the Roswell Museum and Art Center. Porter and Ebie are working with other members of the Southwest Art History Council and Southwest Scholars.





Ancestral Navajo people, the *Dine*, migrated to the southwestern United States sometime before the middle of the sixteenth century. They settled in northwestern New Mexico and established a lifestyle based on hunting, gathering and farming. They also engaged in lively cultural and economic exchange with their Puebloan neighbors, and through them learned to herd sheep and to weave with native cotton. In 1863 the majority of the Navajo were interned at Fort Sumner, New Mexico, the result of increased pressure to secure the region for Anglo settlement.

Five years later the Navajo were given legal title to a reservation and were allowed to return to *Dinetah*, their beloved homeland among the red rocks and canyons.

Despite the difficult circumstances of reservation life, the Navajo rebuilt their flocks of sheep and revitalized their communities.

Increasing trade with the outside world brought commercial dyes, yarns and foreign design concepts to the Navajo, contributing to major innovations in weaving practices.

Two major elements influenced Navajo weaving in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. One was the introduction of government licensed traders on the reservation which brought a ready supply of trade blankets and western clothing into the area. The other was the extension of the railroad which brought travelers and tourists. Both were critical in the transition from the weaving of blankets to the production of rugs for use by people outside the Navajo communities.

Between 1890 and 1910, J.B. Moore, C. N. Cotton, Lorenzo Hubbell, and other traders on the Navajo Reservation influenced the style and quality of Navajo textiles, most importantly introducing the bordered style rug and oriental inspired designs. The interaction between trader and weaver led to the emergence of clear, regional styles, as each trader encouraged the use of specific colors, designs and compositions. Reservation traders not only met the demands of an increasing tourist market but also introduced the art form to wider audiences through the publication of mail order catalogs.

DINE
BE'L-DLAD'-I
A-TL'OH

Navajo Weaving

Daniel Swan and Cindy Hale

The period of 1920-1940 is referred to as the revival period in Navajo weaving, based on the return to older techniques and styles. Most important was the replacement of commercial dyes with traditional vegetal pigments. Older design elements from the classic period of Navajo weaving were incorporated into regional styles developed during the reservation period.

Weaving remains an important economic and cultural element in modern Navajo society. Tribally sponsored weaving classes and a ready market have

Navajo Border Style Blanket

Commercial wool with cotton warp, natural and aniline dyes

c. 1890

72 x 58.5 inches

GILCREASE MUSEUM 9736.93



helped increase the number of weavers. Modern Navajo weavers bring distinctive and individual expression to their work. Navajo textiles have become one of the most recognizable and collectable forms of Native American art, with an international audience. The future of Navajo weaving is inherently tied to the spiritual and cultural survival of the Navajo people.

Navajo Terraced Style Blanket
Handspun wool, natural and aniline dyes
c. 1890
70 x 50 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 9736.91

This three-paneled, banded blanket has a terraced diamond motif. Such designs are common to serapes in the transitional period of Navajo weaving.



Navajo Yei Pictorial Rug
Handspun wool, natural and aniline dyes
c. 1920s
74 x 48 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 9737.50

Navajo pictorial weavings often reflect landscape formations, natural elements, animals or sacred images. In the weaving above, the design elements represent a single Yei, or holy person, with the rainbow diety wrapped around the border.



Navajo Woman's Dress
Handspun wool, natural and aniline dyes
c. 1940s
42 x 28 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 9737.255

Two-piece dresses are referred to as "best wear" or "fancy manta." The terraced elements on this Navajo woman's dress represent cloud formations referred to as "hokha" figures.



Navajo Bordered-Style Rug
Handspun wool, natural and aniline dyes
c. 1930
73 x 49.25 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 9737.68

The complex repetition of geometric designs on a gray background, often scattered with stylized feathers and arrows, is characteristic of Two Grey Hills style.

F O R F U R T H E R I N F O R M A T I O N

Garrick Bailey and Roberta G. Bailey, *A History of the Navaho, the Reservation Years*, School of American Research, 1986.

Alice Kaufman and Christopher Selser, *The Navaho Weaving Tradition: 1650 to Present*, E.P. Dutton, Inc., 1985

Marian E. Rodee, *One Hundred Years of Navajo Rags*, University of New Mexico Press, 1995.

Ruth Underhill, *The Navaho*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1956.

Text for this Portfolio was adapted from an exhibition of Navajo textiles in the Gilcrease Gallery of the National Museum of Wildlife Art in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. The exhibition runs through May 1997.

Navajo Diyugi

Handspun wool, natural and aniline dyes
c. 1910
64 x 41.75 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 9737.54

D*iyugi* in Navajo means “soft, fluffy weave,” used to refer to a striped blanket for everyday use. Traders customarily paid for blankets and rugs by the pound, and weavers would pack these loosely woven textiles with dirt to create heavier products and ensure a higher price at the markets.

Navajo Twill Double Saddle Blanket

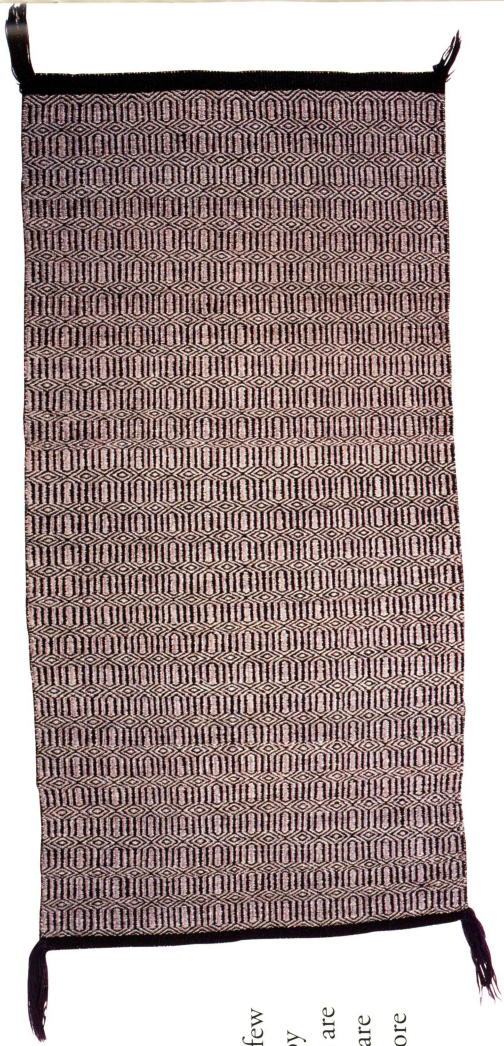
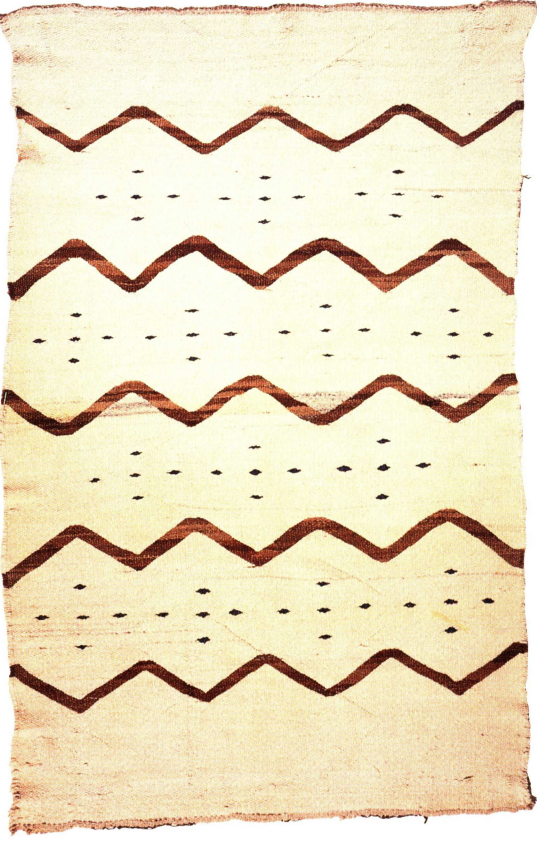
Handspun wool, natural dye
1900-1910
28.5 x 57 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 9737.240

Saddle blankets remain one of a few types of weavings still used by Navajos today. Twill weaves, which are used primarily in saddle blankets, are produced by floating wefts over more than one warp at a time.

Navajo Moki Style Blanket

Handspun and raveled wool, natural and aniline dyes, c. 1880
74.75 x 49.25 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 9736.129

The term “moki stripe” refers to the designs found in the original Hopi/Pueblo striped textiles that were adopted by early Navajo weavers. Bold terraced or serrated designs over stripes marked the zenith of this style in the 1870s. By 1890 Lorenzo Hubbell had revived the pattern among Ganado weavers.



Navajo Child's Blanket

Handspun wool, natural dyes
c. 1880
41.75 x 37.5 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 9736.42

Since the beginning of weaving among the Navajo the *manita*, or wearing blanket, has been an important type of Navajo textile. Used by the weaver and her family, the *manita* was also an important source of income through trade and sale. This blanket was likely intended to keep a Navajo child warm and dry.

GENE KLOSS

A TAOOS PRINT- MAKER

Gene Kloss, an extremely talented and greatly loved and honored artist, died in Taos on June 24, 1996. She began working in Taos in the 1920s. For seventy years she portrayed the heart and soul of northern New Mexico in watercolor and oil and in a large collection of etchings that made her nationally famous.

Gene Kloss first visited New Mexico in 1925 on a honeymoon trip with her poet husband, Phillips Kloss. She was later to write: "We entered the Magdalena plain at sunset—one of those incredible ones (to a Californian) that was a miracle of color. I was a New Mexican from then on." The couple visited Las Cruces in southern New Mexico, where Phillips had once gone to school, and then worked their way northward to Taos. They camped in Taos Canyon for two weeks while Gene painted and worked on etching plates. Amazingly, she even printed her etchings, for the newlyweds had brought along Gene's sixty-pound etching press which they secured to a large rock in the canyon (she afterward laughed about this and was somewhat at a loss to explain why she felt the need to print her etchings on the road).

In Taos, Gene and Phillips had found the place where they wanted to live. They returned the next summer, and successive summers, paying ten dollars per month for a small adobe home (with an extra two dollars for firewood), but they returned each year to Berkeley, California, to spend the winter near their elderly mothers.

Born Alice Geneva Glasier in California in 1903, Kloss chose to be called Gene after her marriage, preferring the simplicity and sound of the shortened name. She graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in 1924, and in the following year took classes at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco and the College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland.

Her only formal training in etching was a class taught by Perham Nahl during her senior year at Berkeley. After a short description of the technique, Nahl told students to come to the next class with an etching plate ready for printing. Gene was the only one who came to class with a bitten plate, and when it had been printed, Nahl said, "Well, if this is your first etching, you are going to be an etcher."



Gene Kloss in 1922

PHOTO BY E.J. MCCULLAGH, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA.
COURTESY OF CAROLYN PALMER

FACING PAGE

GENE KLOSS
American, 1903-1996
Elk Woman (detail)

watercolor on paper, 20 x 14 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 0237.989

GENE KLOSS
American, 1903-1996
Turtle Dance at Sunrise, 1944
etching, drypoint, and aquatint, 11 x 14
inches

GILCREASE MUSEUM 0237.989
KLOSS CAT. NO. 391, EDITION 50

SO THEN AT SUNRISE
A LINE OF MEN
CAME FROM THE KIVA,
FROM WINTER'S DEN,
AND FACED THE EAST
AND LIFTED THEIR FEET
IN SLOW LOW RHYTHM
TO THE SLOW
DRUMBEAT...

—PHILLIPS KLOSS,
GENE KLOSS ETCHINGS

Gene Kloss did indeed become an etcher. In the following year, 1925, she devoted most of her time to etching and completed fifty-four plates. With the aid of E.S. Lumsden's book *The Art of Etching*, she expanded her knowledge of the form, gradually experimenting with drypoint, soft ground, aquatint, and even mezzotint. Eventually she ordered a 350-pound Kelton press for her Berkeley studio, and in Taos purchased a 1,080-pound Sturges etching press Ralph Pearson had used at his Taos card company.

The Klosses spent most of World War II in Berkeley, where Phillips was involved in war work at the ship yards. After the war, they gradually acquired forty acres of mesa land about a mile southeast of the Taos plaza. There they built a three-bedroom adobe house and set up housekeeping with water hauled from a creek and light provided by kerosene lamps.

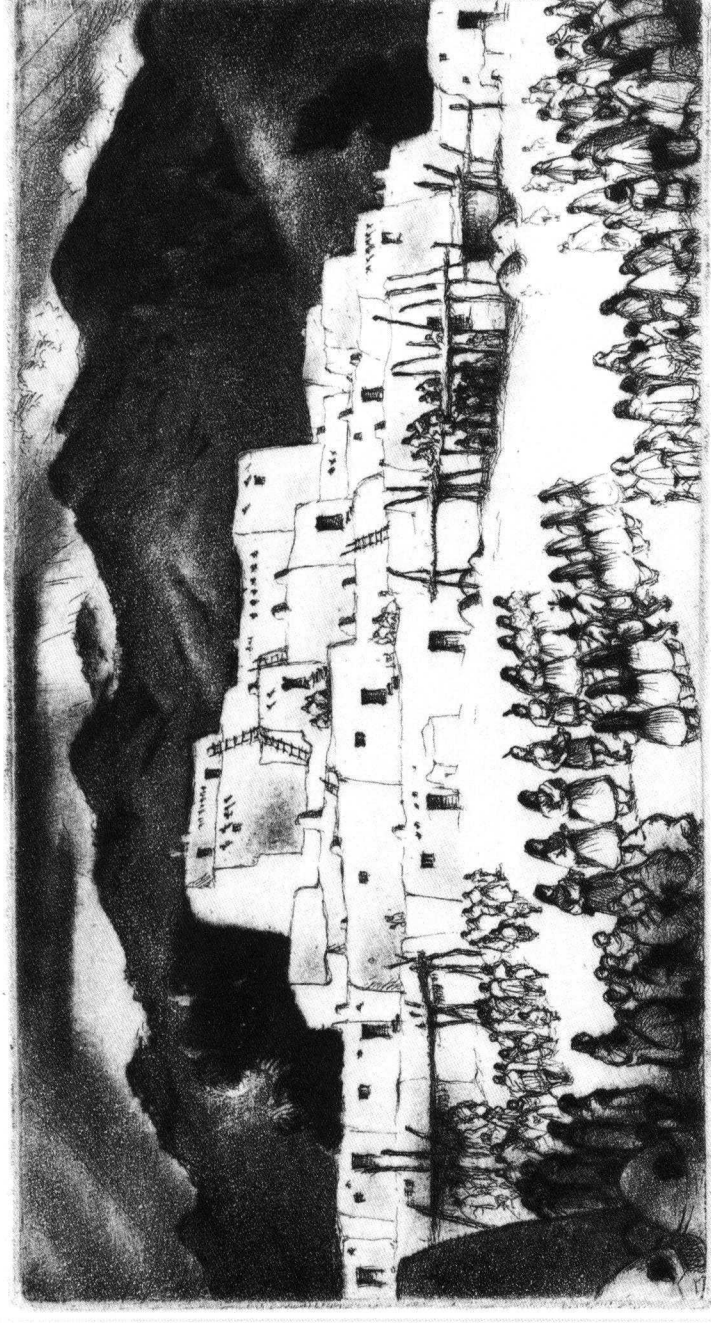
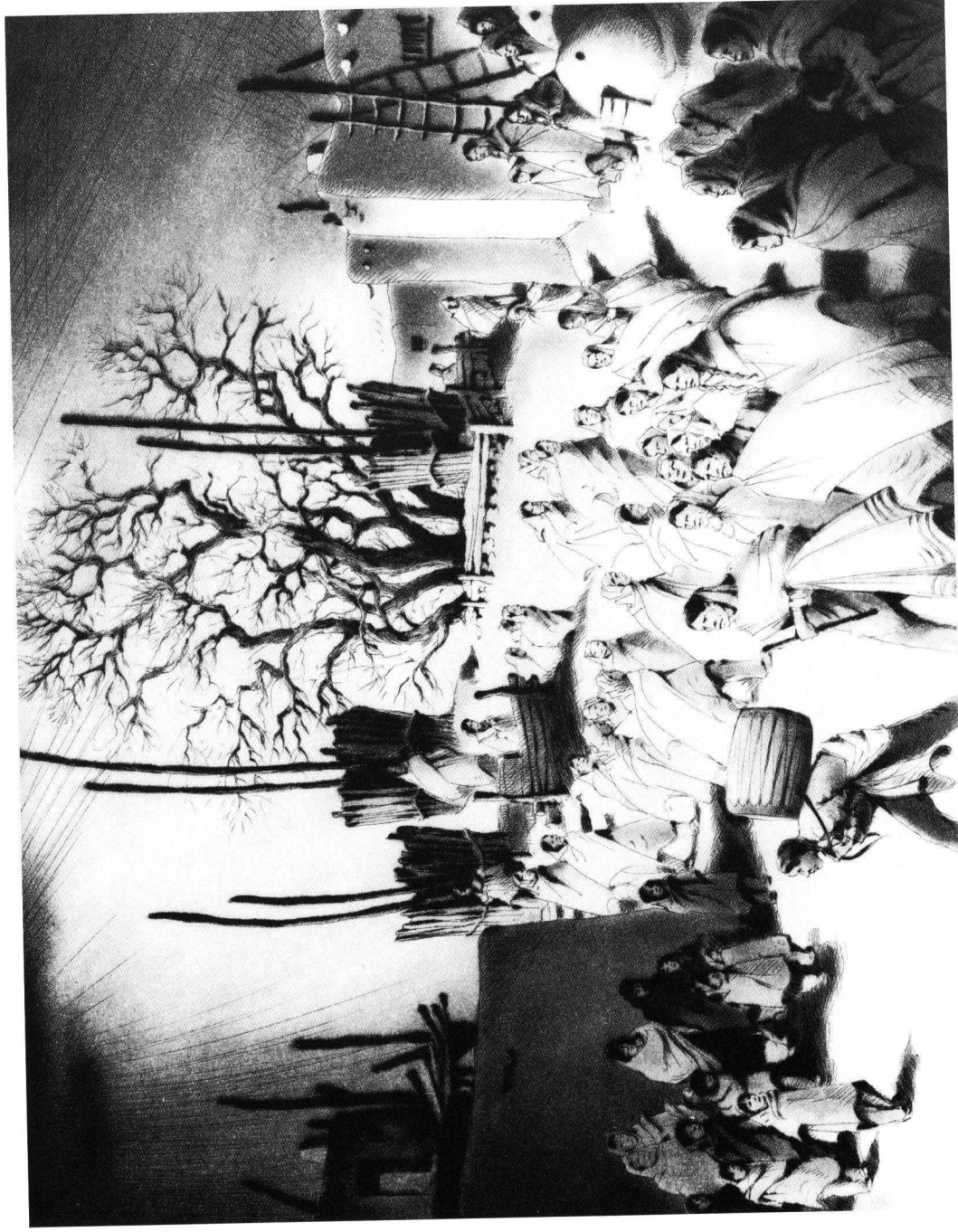
Building their home of earth symbolically bound Gene and Phillips to the land of New Mexico. Phillips Kloss conveyed the intellectual and emotional response to their new home in a poem called "Mahualukimo" in *Cadenza: The Selected Poems of Phillips Kloss*.



GENE KLOSS
American, 1903-1996
Sundown Dance, 1944
etching, drypoint, and aquatint, 11 x 14 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 1437.296
KLOSS CAT. NO. 389, EDITION 50



Here Come the Singers, 1944
etching, drypoint, and aquatint, 11 x 14 inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 1437.297
KLOSS CAT. NO. 390, EDITION 50,
COMPANION PIECE TO *SUNDOWN DANCE*



GENE KLOSS
American, 1903-1996
Corn Dance, Taos Pueblo, 1943
aquatint and etching on paper, 2½ x 5½
inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 1437.300
KLOSS CAT. NO. 383, EDITION 50

This dance is taking place at the "north pueblo" at Taos Pueblo. The Sangre de Cristo—"Blood of Christ"—Mountains rise to more than 13,000 feet in the background.

We built our house on the mesa's edge overlooking the Taos valley, Taos Mountain to the north lifting the eye day or night,

A steadfast contour, a massive pyramid always there even in sandstorm, rainstorm, snowstorm, or mist-magic,

Even where you couldn't see it down in the deep Mahualukimo arroyo behind our house.

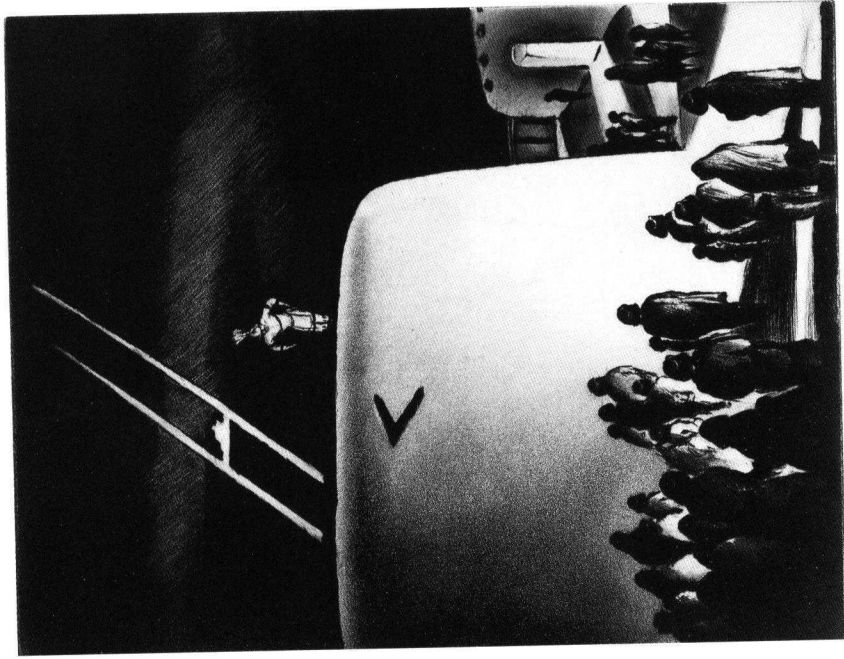
The old Indian trail over to the buffalo plains dipped down in that arroyo, so the Indians called it the Place-Where-You-Lose-Sight-of-the-Mountain.

They referred to us as living at Mahualukimo although we had a constant view of the Mountain from our north windows.

As a letterhead address we couldn't equate the Place-Where-You-Lose-Sight-of-the-Mountain with Carmel-by-the-Sea or Stratford-on-Avon but we accepted it as a local distinction.

And we attached a poetic moral to it, resolving not to lose sight of the Mountain of basic beliefs and lofty ideals no matter what Trail we took. . . .

In 1965, Gene and Phillips decided to sell their home in Taos and move to Colorado. They lived near Delta for five years, exploring the canyons, mountains, and old mining camps, but eventually the call of Taos became too strong and they moved back. They built a house north



GENE KLOSS

American, 1903-1996

Eve of the Green Corn Ceremony, 1934
drypoint and aquatint, 11 x 14 inches

GILCREASE MUSEUM 0237.989

KLOSS CAT. NO. 306, EDITION 130

Phillips Kloss described this etching in *GENE KLOSS*

ETCHINGS: "The Corn Dance at the Keresan pueblo of Santo Domingo... on the Fourth of August is a fervent, meaningful, powerful event, a prayer for rain, prayer for growing corn, prayer for life. It is said to be the greatest native dance of any people anywhere in the world. It consists of two long lines of dancers, a huge male chorus, a lone drummer, and a ceremonial wandbearer. Woman is matched with man in the dance, following his footsteps, girl with boy... In this etching a Koshari, or so-called Delight Maker, Ancestor Spirit, stands on top of the Turquoise Kiva giving instructions the evening before the great dance."

of Taos on the piedmont slope of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and moved Gene's Sturges press into her 16 x 20 foot studio. The Sturges was placed in semi-retirement in the garage a few years later, however, after Gene ordered a Charles Brand motorized press;

advancing age had made the hand-operated Sturges too difficult for her to use. Gene Kloss always printed her own etchings. The magnitude of this achievement can be seen by studying the list of her etchings in Phillips Kloss's book, *Gene Kloss Etchings*. Between 1924 and 1981 (when the book was published), she did 600

intaglio plates. From 1981 until 1985, she etched 27 additional plates. Because health problems limited her travel, these plates completed late in life were done from sketches made many years earlier. After 1985, she did not do any additional plates, but she continued to complete the editions of some of her earlier plates. In the late spring of 1992, she told me that during some weeks, she was able to print as many as ten etchings to send to Gallery A in Taos, the only gallery she was then dealing with. By that November, however, poor health forced her to stop printing, and she did no more thereafter.

The etchings of Gene Kloss have always been very popular, and it is a revealing fact that her work has been collected by a number of other artists. Her work was given recognition by her peers in 1950 when she became an Associate of the National Academy of Design. In 1972 she became one of the twenty-five graphic artists who are full members of the Academy. After Gene was honored with membership in the National Academy, she began writing "N.A." after her name on her prints. By the late 1980s, however, she had stopped using this designation because she became displeased with the Academy when some of her work was returned in a damaged condition from an exhibition.

She stopped sending her work to juried exhibitions years ago when the juries became dominated by those whose vision could not extend beyond abstract art.

Gene became grouped with the Regionalist artists of the 1930s, which heightened the interest in her early work but did not give proper credit to her later work. When an exhibition of American graphic art of the period between 1920 and 1950 was organized at the Pratt Graphics Center in 1977, its original title referred to "the lost generation" of American art. Gene objected, saying that they were not lost but knew where they had been all along. They were certain of their vision of American art, and they had not abandoned this vision for the sake of what someone else considered to be an acceptable doctrine. The title of the exhibition was subsequently changed to "Forerunners of the American Print Renaissance: 1920/50."

GENE KLOSS

American, 1903-1996

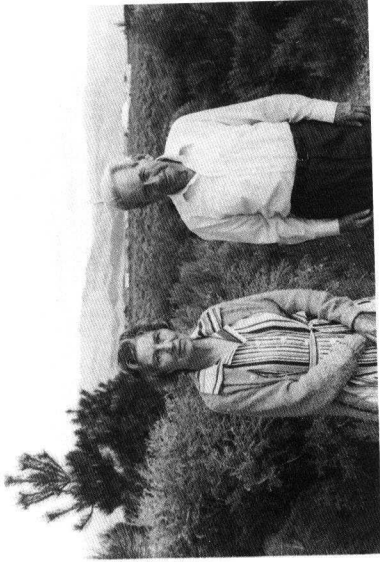
Christmas Eve—Taos Pueblo, 1934
drypoint and aquatint, 11 x 14 inches

GILCREASE MUSEUM 0237.989

KLOSS CAT. NO. 295, EDITION 30

Among the Taos Indians, Christian rituals often merge with ancient religious beliefs and practices. On Christmas Eve the Indians carry a litter with the canopied patron saint from the church to the dance ground in front of the kivas. Bonfires blaze on the ground and on the dirt roofs of buildings. Christmas Eve fires are meant to light the way to the Christ child.





Gene and Phillips Kloss at their home in Taos on June 3, 1979.

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Gene Kloss's vision of art was an intimate personal response to the landscape of the Pacific coast, the southwestern mountains and villages, and the American Indians with whom she formed close friendships. But her ideas and approach are best expressed in her own words:

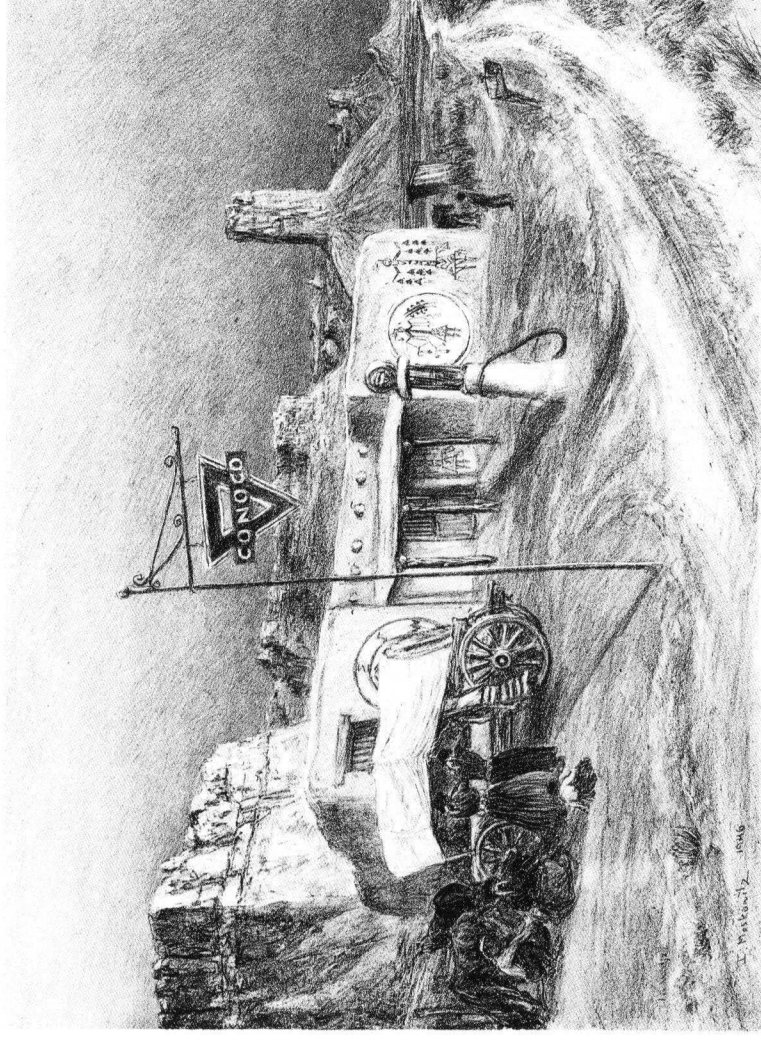
Those of us with convictions do not change. I am equally divided in attention to subject and to the abstract considerations of picture making—rhythm, line, mass, design, values, texture—development and emphasis of qualities inherent in each media. In the purely abstract work of today, these are the complete considerations, and works become pure decorations. Using subject matter, all this is there plus meaning, the problem then being to seek the essence, the spirit therein, and attempt expression of it in the most meaningful way. The working out of this is both deliberate and intuitive, the latter impossible to explain, but it is most definitely there. (Nelson, p. 69.)

In the work of Gene Kloss, the medium was not the message. Technique was not an end unto itself but rather a means of conveying to the viewer the emotional and intellectual response that the artist experienced while the picture was being done. The image served as a means of drawing the viewer into the work of art to experience its layers of meaning.

Through the years, Gene and Phillips Kloss worked quietly at their modest home. While Gene was producing 627 etchings, many watercolors, and a lesser number of oil paintings, Phillips wrote and published more than a dozen books. Their lives were self-contained, and when honors came their way, they were accepted quietly. I once talked to Gene about her practice of pricing her work artificially low—much lower than the market demand. She replied that she wanted the prices of her etchings to be sufficiently low that people could afford to buy them. In this she was highly successful. I have been in at least a dozen homes in New Mexico in which one of Gene's etchings was the only piece of original art in the house; even those people who did not really know what they had still cherished these pictures. I cannot think of a more fitting legacy for an artist who gave so much of herself to the place she loved.

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- Phillips Kloss. *Cadenza: The Selected Poems of Phillips Kloss*. San Antonio: The Naylor Company, 1975.
- Phillips Kloss. *Gene Kloss Etchings*. New Mexico: Sunstone Press, 1981.
- Mary Carroll Nelson. "Intaglios by Gene Kloss," *American Artist*, vol. 42, February 1978. This is an excellent review of the technical aspects of Kloss's work.



IRA MOSKOWITZ
American, b. Poland, 1912
The Trading Post
lithograph on paper
11¼ x 15½ inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 1437.824

Southwestern Prints at Gilcrease: Six Artists

The southwestern United States has a long history of prints and printmaking. John Mix Stanley was the official artist with General Kearny's Army of the West when the region was conquered in 1846. The lithographs he made of people and places in New Mexico and Arizona gave Americans their first glimpse of the new territories. During the next decade, railroad surveys and military reports often contained lithographic illustrations of the area. (Although photography was invented in 1839, many years passed before the development of a practical method of using photographs to illustrate books and periodicals.)

After the Civil War, artists such as Thomas and Peter Moran traveled through the Southwest, finding inspiration for their work in the deserts and mountains. After the founding of the Taos art colony in 1898, many of the artists who worked in northern New Mexico were involved in printmaking at various times.

Thomas Moran is best known for his paintings of Yellowstone and Grand Canyon, but he made several trips to New Mexico. In 1881 he took the train to Denver where he met his old friend William Henry Jackson. Moran and Jackson planned to tour the Rocky Mountains together while Moran worked on

a commission for a Colorado periodical. They traveled by rail southward to Colorado Springs and Pueblo, then to La Veta Pass and to San Luis Valley. Crossing the border into New Mexico, they went to Espanola and San Juan Pueblo and then to Taos Pueblo. Later in the year Moran made an etching of the church at San Juan Pueblo but he based it on a photograph by Jackson rather than on his sketches.

William R. Leigh's introduction to the Southwest came early one morning in September 1906, when he stepped off the train at Laguna Pueblo, New Mexico. He later wrote (in a manuscript now in the Gilcrease archives) that he felt he had come to "the land I had dreamed about so many years." The experiences of that summer would so deeply affect Leigh that he devoted most of the remainder of his life to portraying the Southwest. He made many paintings of Zuni subjects; the woman who was his painting model also served as the model for his etching *Zuni Girl*.

WILLIAM R. LEIGH
American 1866-1955
Zuni Girl
etching on paper
9% x 7% inches
GILCREASE MUSEUM 1427.134

o n e t c h i n g

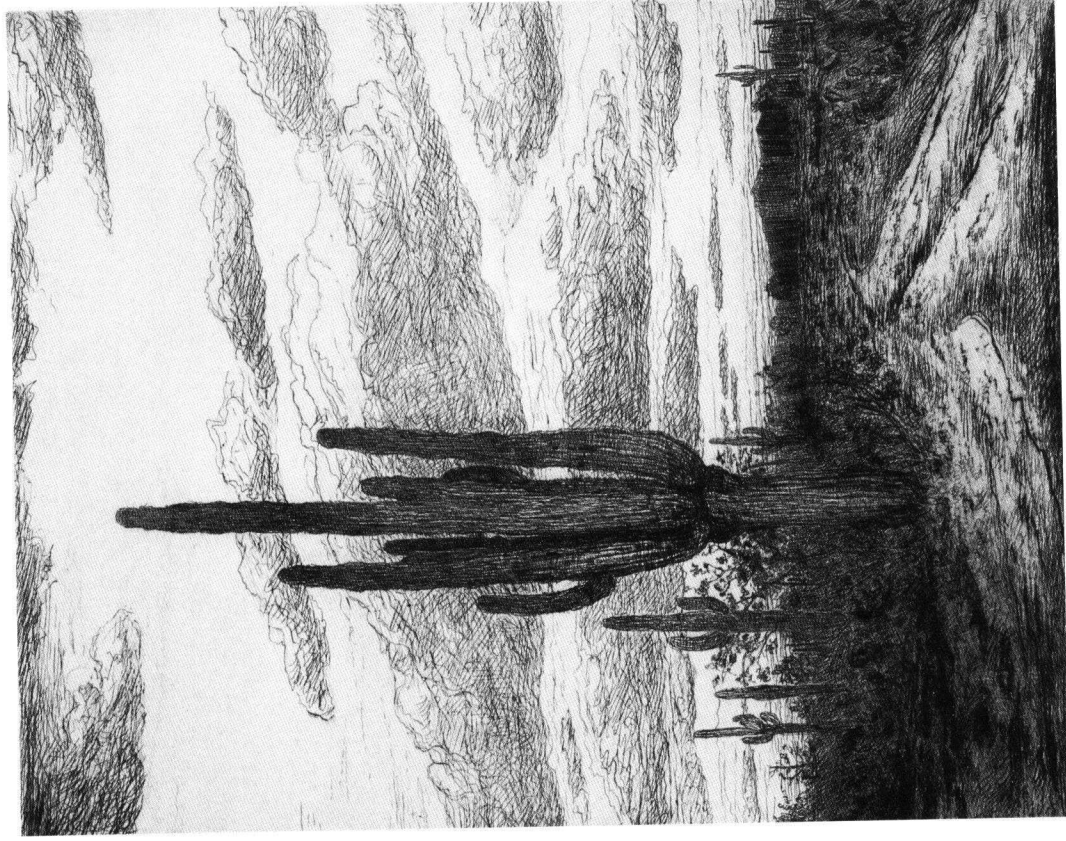
The etching process Leigh used in this print was developed during the Renaissance. A copper, or sometimes zinc, plate is covered with an acid-resistant wax "ground." The artist, using a sharp steel tool (or "needle") draws the design on the plate, making sure that the needle cuts through the wax ground to expose the plate. When the image has been drawn, the plate is immersed in an acid bath. Acid eats into the plate where the lines have been drawn but elsewhere the ground protects the plate. After the plate is properly "bitten" in the acid, the ground is cleaned off. A stiff ink is

rubbed into the lines on the plate, the plate is placed on the bed of an etching press, a piece of damp paper is placed atop the plate, thick felt blankets are laid on the paper, and the entire assemblage is run through the press. Pressure forces the paper into the lines on the etching plate, where it picks up the ink. The entire process is time-consuming and requires considerable practice to perfect. Each print pulled from an etching press is considered an original work of art. Normally only 100 to 200 prints are pulled.

In the variation of etching called aquatint, powdered rosin is

dusted onto the plate before it is bitten to prevent the action of the acid, creating areas of tone. In the variation called drypoint, acid is not used. Instead a hard steel or diamond point is used to draw on the plate. Drypoint lines are generally thinner and more delicate than etched lines and the metal burr turned up on the plate by the needle holds extra ink and imparts a rich, velvety black to the prints. These etching processes—and all processes in which the design is incised below the surface of the plate—are called intaglio.





Albert Groll, an artist friend of Leigh's, had invited him to Laguna that summer. Although Groll spent most of his career in New York, he lived in Santa Fe for a period after the turn of the century, and several times he visited the Hubbell Trading Post at Ganado in northeastern Arizona (many artists were guests of Lorenzo Hubbell and repaid his hospitality with paintings). Groll's *Giant Cactus—Arizona* is one of several prints by the artist in the Gilcrease Collection. Considering the subject of this etching, he must also have spent time in central and southern Arizona, where the giant saguaro grows. Groll was so closely associated with the Southwest that on July 11, 1919, he was made an associate member of the Taos Society of Artists. He regularly exhibited with the Society until it disbanded in 1927. Groll, described by one critic as a "painter of the silent places," painted landscapes of the southwestern deserts that were very popular during his lifetime.

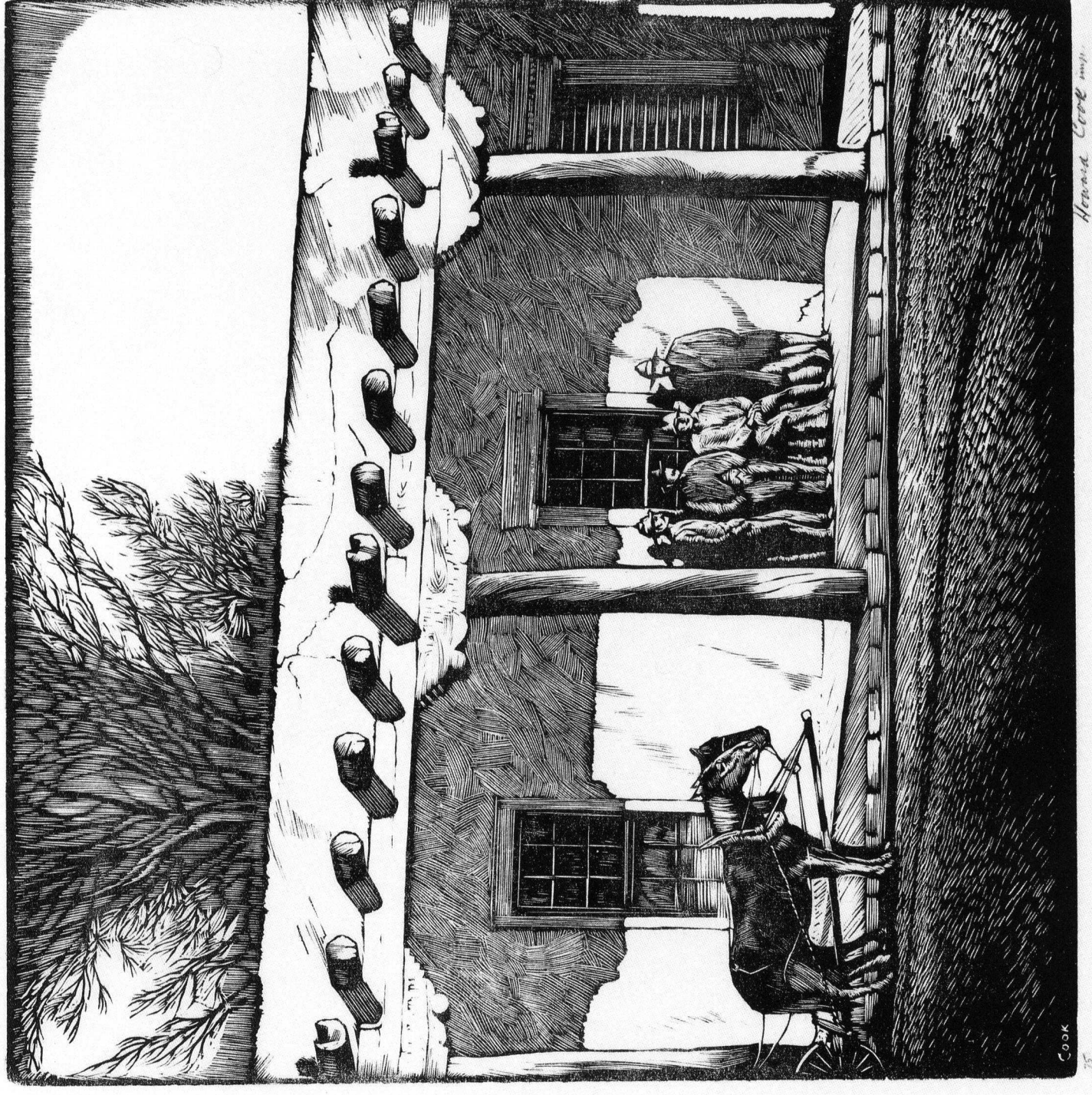
ALBERT GROLL
American, 1866-1952
Giant Cactus—Arizona
etching on paper
8 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 7 inches

GILCREASE MUSEUM 1437.177

FACING PAGE

HOWARD COOK
American, 1901-1980
*Governor's Palace,
Santa Fe*
woodcut on paper
8 x 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

GILCREASE MUSEUM 1437.312



Howard Cook

GILCREASE

57

56 GILCREASE

HOWARD COOK
American, 1901-1980
Walpi, Arizona
woodcut on paper
10 x 12 inches

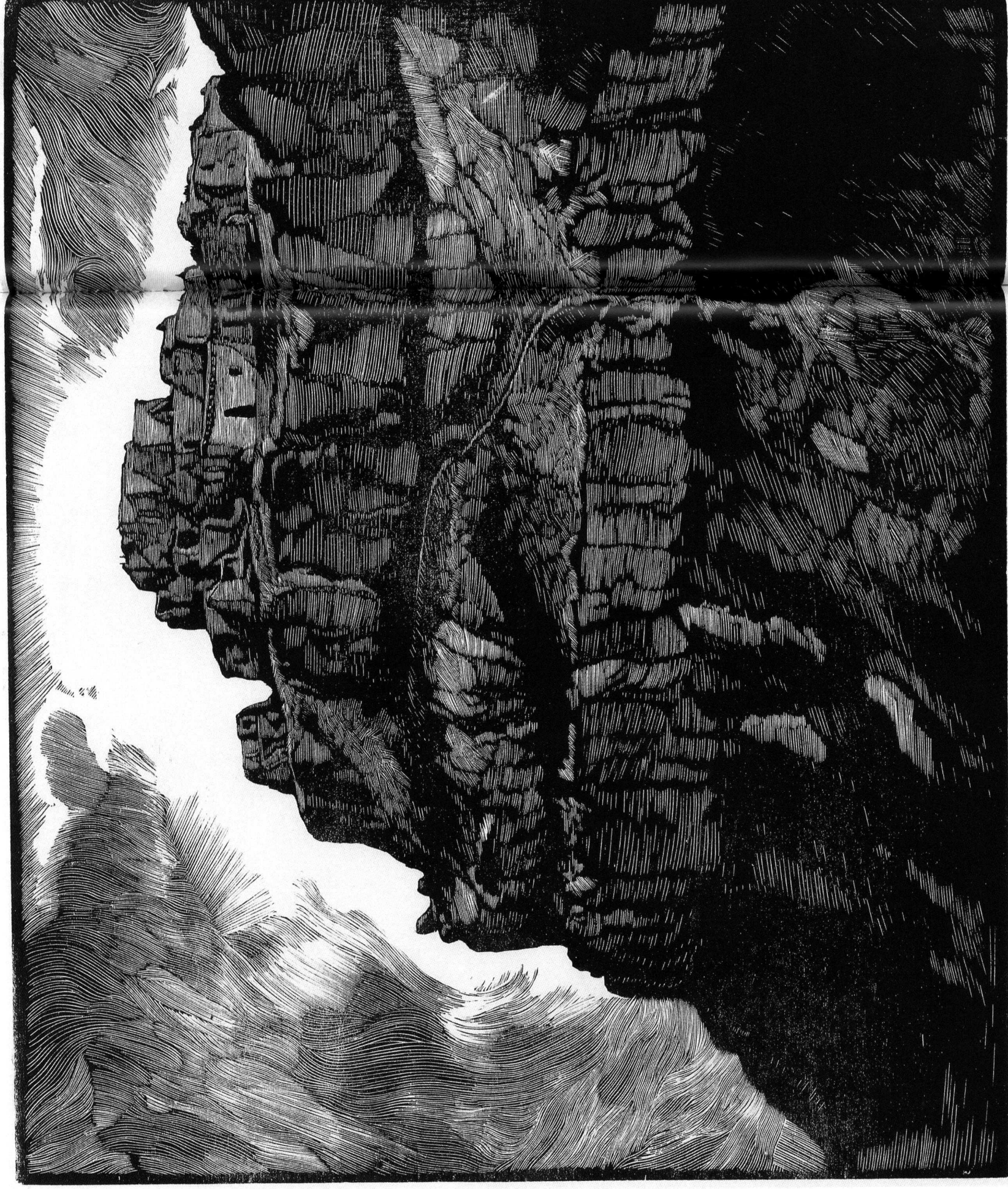
GILCREASE MUSEUM 1437.316

Howard Cook, who trained at New York's Art Students League, came to Santa Fe in the autumn of 1926 on assignment for *Forum Magazine* to produce a series of woodcuts depicting images of the Southwest. Two of Gilcrease's Cook woodcuts, *Governor's Palace* (1926) and *Walpi* (1927) date from the time of Cook's introduction to the area. For the next decade Cook and his wife, the artist Barbara Latham, traveled extensively in the United States, Europe, Africa, and (after Cook was awarded the first of two Guggenheim Fellowships) Mexico. During World War II, Cook served as Artist Correspondent in the South Pacific, continuing the tradition of communicating faraway places and important historical events through the eyes of artists. After their many travels, the Cooks eventually settled in Talpa, New Mexico, near Taos.

o n w o o d c u t s

The woodcut process is very old, having been used in Europe before 1400. To make a woodcut, the artist cuts away the areas of the design that are not to be printed. The raised areas left behind are inked for printing. Woodcuts are usually printed in a press, but as

little pressure is required they can sometimes be printed by laying the paper on the inked block of wood and pressing the back of it with a burnisher.



JOSEPH IMHOF
American, 1871-1955

Deer Dancers

lithograph on paper
16¼ x 12½ inches

GILCREASE MUSEUM 1437.147

DR. ROBERT R. WHITE is a historian and writer living in Albuquerque, New Mexico, who specializes in the history of New Mexican art of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

He holds a B.A. degree in geology from the University of Texas. Following his service with a Military Intelligence unit in Vietnam, he obtained an M.S. degree in hydrology from the University of Arizona. He worked for many years at various places in New Mexico with the Water Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey.

Dr. White's interest in New Mexican art dates to the early 1970s when he embarked on a study of the life and work of E. Martin Hennings that resulted in a number of published articles. In 1983 his book *The Taos Society of Artists* was published.

Since the late 1980s, White has worked full-time as an historical researcher and writer. He received his Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of New Mexico in 1993. His latest book, published in 1994 by the University of New Mexico Press, is *Bert Geer Phillips and the Taos Art Colony*, co-authored with Julie Schimmel.

Dr. White was president of the Historical Society of New Mexico from 1991 to 1993 and is currently executive director of the New Mexico Book League.

Ira Moskowitz also came to the light-drenched lands of New Mexico from New York. He was born in Poland in 1912 and studied at the Art Students League in New York. In the 1940s he made his home in Santa Fe, where he created a series of 115 drawings and lithographs of Indian ceremonials that were published in John Collier's *Patterns and Ceremonials of the Indians of the Southwest*. His *Trading Post #2* (page 53) depicts a scene from the Navajo Reservation.

Joseph Imhof, whose lithograph *Deer Dance* is in the Gilcrease Collection, portrayed American Indian ceremonials in many of his works. Imhof first became interested in American Indians in 1890 when he met Buffalo Bill and saw his Wild West Show. Imhof lived in Albuquerque from 1907 to 1912, and he returned to New Mexico in 1929 and settled in Taos, where he built a studio at the edge of Taos Pueblo lands. Not until 1950, at the age of seventy-nine, did he complete his work of many decades, a series entitled *Corn in the Life of the Pueblo Indians*. After his death, his widow presented the sixty paintings that comprise the series to the University of New Mexico.

o n l i t h o g r a p h y

Invented in 1798 by Alois Senefelder, lithography is a process in which the image is

neither cut in relief nor etched below the surface. The design is drawn with a grease crayon on a thick slab of polished limestone. After the design is "fixed" by a chemical process, the stone is thoroughly dampened and ink is applied to it with a roller. The ink adheres to the grease pencil drawing but not to the stone. Thus, when paper is placed on the stone and pressure is applied by a press, the image is transferred to the paper. Color lithography involves repeated

printings of the sheet with newly drawn stones and inks of varying color.

Each lithograph printed by hand is considered an original work of art; no other "final" work of art exists for that particular image. By contrast, images printed via commercial offset lithography are *not* originals but are reproductions of original artworks such as paintings.



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