

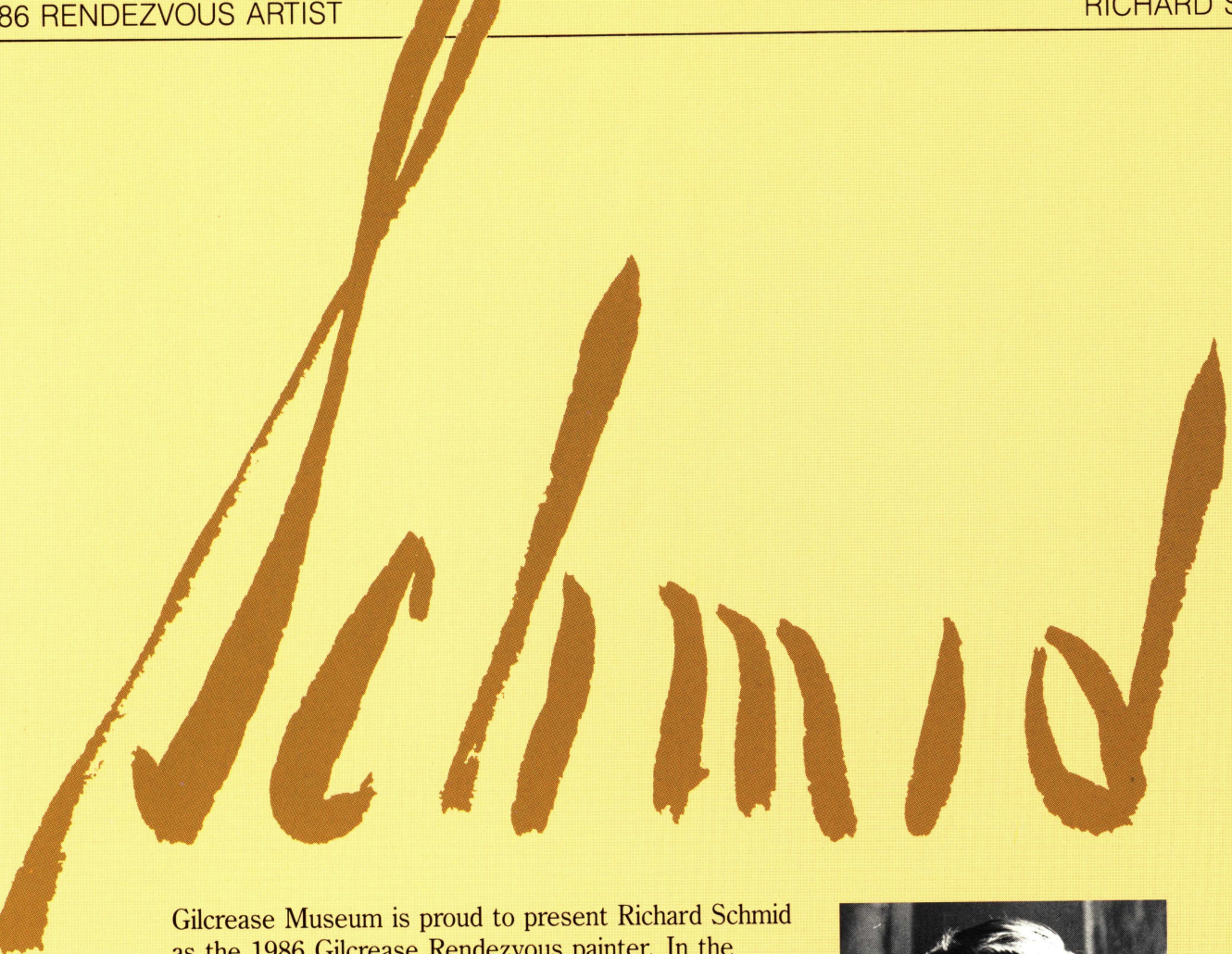
GILCREASE

MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND ART

1986
Rendezvous Artist:
Richard
Schmid



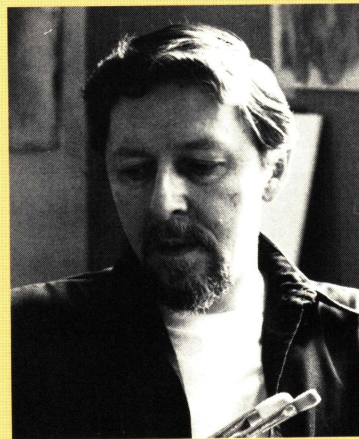
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Gilcrease Museum is proud to present Richard Schmid as the 1986 Gilcrease Rendezvous painter. In the exhibition of both new and retrospective paintings are 38 works in oil, gouache and conté crayon. They are paintings of great distinction, warm, glowing with color, alive with intricate detail and abstract pattern.

Special exhibitions and awards are not something new for Richard Schmid. His paintings have been featured in more than 35 one-man shows since 1958. Among the important group exhibitions in which he has participated are those of The Art Institute of Chicago; the Allied Artists of America; the National Academy of Design; the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; the American Watercolor Society; the Smithsonian Institution; the Connecticut Academy of Fine Arts; the Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio; Artists of America, Denver; the Frye Museum, Seattle; and the American Artists Exhibition in Peking, China.

His awards are equally imposing and include The Art Institute of Chicago Alumni Award (1956); Grand Prize, Greenwich Village (1958, 1959, 1961); First Prize, Greenwich Village (1960); Gold Medal, Hudson Valley Art Association (1966); Silvermine Guild of Artists Award (1966); Allied Artists of America Emily Lowe Award (1966, 1967); Allied Artists of America Gold Medal (1968); American Watercolor Society Award (1967, 1968, 1972); and the American Watercolor Society Gold Medal (1971).



RICHARD SCHMID







The Classic Art of Richard Schmid

BY LOUISA B. COLLETT

TALKING TO RICHARD SCHMID is an exhilarating experience for he speaks with such excitement and authority about his work. Most of his paintings are done in the historic Tree Studios in downtown Chicago, down in the artistic section of that city, right off Michigan Avenue.

Tree Studios is a venerable old building a block long with a lovely courtyard, surrounded by the studios of composers, writers, sculptors, dancers and, of course, other painters. In the summer one can find the courtyard full of artists painting, perhaps a model posing, or artists sharing wine or cooking out-of-doors.

Richard Schmid's own studio has a 20-foot ceiling with expanses of both north and west light. At one end a loft. Schmid likes it. He laughs and says,

RS: There are a lot of ghosts here, venerable ghosts of famous artists who lived and worked at the Tree over the years.

LC: *Do you do all your painting in your studio then?*

RS: Mostly, but not always. I travel a lot. and when I travel, I do a lot of sketching and I always have a camera handy to gather material. I do like to work from life as much as possible. Much of my work is done out-of-doors and I often bring up models or big bunches of flowers or objects to put over in the corner and paint. There is no comparable substitute to working from life.

I get here about 7:30 or 8:00 in the morning and I usually work until 5:00 in the afternoon. I just bought that bunch of roses, so today the painting is roses!

Louisa Collett is responsible for the Gilcrease Museum publications, most especially the *Gilcrease Magazine*. She lives, writes and artist watches in Tulsa.

"Iowa Spring" (1985), 8 inches by 12 inches, oil

LC: *Richard, tell us a little about your background. Are you a native of Chicago?*

RS: Oh, yes. I was born and grew up here in Chicago. I went to a parochial school and then to a Chicago high school where I was active in the art class.

LC: *Did you always want to be an artist?*

RS: That goes way back; I always liked to draw. Ever since I was a child, I was encouraged by my teachers all along and by my parents. My grandfather, Julian Oates, was a sculptor. Only they didn't call them sculptors in those days. They called them stone carvers. He did many, many buildings. His family had a limestone quarry in Indiana. They did all this beautiful lettering and figures and decoration on buildings. Most of it was architectural sculpture, memorial sculpture, that sort of things, back in the '20s, '30s, and '40s.

He died when I was just a child and his son, my uncle, carried on the tradition. My uncle was not a sculptor himself, but he imparted to me this ideal of classical training and good workmanship and all that sort of thing.



"Nude" (1985), 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches by 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches, conté crayon

Then, when I was about 14, I became a student of a landscape painter in Chicago. His name was Gianni Cilfone. He is still living in Chicago and just had his 75th birthday. I went to his birthday celebration and it was a thrill for both of us. Gianni gave me a solid beginning in landscape painting and color theory. Later my mother enrolled me in the Famous Artists course when I was 15, which gave a solid background in anatomy and drawing and that sort of thing.

When I was 18 I enrolled at the American Academy of Art here in Chicago -- where I now sometimes go to lecture to the art students. But back then I was lucky enough to get into the advanced painting class immediately and to study under a man named William H. Mosby. Bill Mosby was a unique teacher. He knew everything there is to know about painting. He studied back in the '20s at the Royal Academy in Brussels and later at the Superior Institute in Antwerp. We had a kind of father-son relationship because I was one of the few students who took painting as fine art seriously. At that time the American Academy was primarily a school for commercial artists and the emphasis is mainly to learn to paint in order to become an illustrator. But I was interested in fine art from the beginning, so Bill Mosby and I hit it off right away. He simply taught me everything he knew.

LC: *Did you begin working as a painter when you finished at the American Academy?*

RS: I went into the Army and when I got out, I moved to New York, to Greenwich Village, and lived the life of a typical Bohemian for a couple of years. I enjoyed every minute of it. All the time I was selling my paintings in Washington Square and at art shows. I got my foot in the door of a couple of galleries. Shortly after that I moved up to Connecticut, and bought a house and lived for a while just painting and painting. By that time two galleries were representing me. When I was 28, I married my wife, Jan, and we started our family. I've just been painting ever since.

LC: *Richard, you paint so many subjects. When did you begin to travel?*

RS: I got involved in trips out to the Southwest right after my Army service, back in '59 or '60. I got interested in Taos and Santa Fe, the whole area out there. I exhibited at the Blair Galleries in Santa Fe and Taos and the Charles Reynolds Galleries in Taos. When Charles Reynolds died, his daughter, Jody Reynolds Kirberger, had a gallery in Bartlesville and



"Gretchen Sketching" (1985), 20 inches by 30 inches, oil

that's how I came to Oklahoma.

I've also shown in New York and traveled through Europe. I did a lot of traveling in South America by way of cargo freighter as well as in the Caribbean and to Mexico, and throughout the United States and Canada, painting all the time.

About 1963 I made a motion picture called "The Secret Squint," which involved stop action techniques. A neighbor of mine in Connecticut was a producer of documentary films. I had an idea for a training film, an educational film for student artists, to use stop action techniques to show a painting in progress. My neighbor's wife was a very talented gal who had done some work on Broadway and she wrote a little fairy tale about an artist who had the secret ability to squint at a painting and the painting would paint itself. So over one summer we did a 16-minute film in which we exposed film at various intervals during the making of a painting. When you

ran the film, the effect was like animation. The film was an official American entry at the Venice Film Festival and at the Edinburgh Festival that year and won a prize. In fact, the film is still shown on television once in a while and at art-y movie theatres. I'm pleased you are going to show it at Gilcrease.

LC: *I know you've also written some books.*

RS: Let's see, it was in 1970 that I started writing. I wrote a book on figure painting and then I wrote a book about landscape painting. They were published by Watson Guptil, and went into four printings. Both are now out-of-print.

LC: *What next?*

RS: I moved from Connecticut to Florida and lived there for a while. I went to Virginia in 1979 and three years later moved back here to Chicago, because my daughter was interested in art. I wanted to be closer to opportunity for her education. That brings me up to today.



"Carnations and Begonias" (1985), 20 inches by 28 inches, oil



"Des Moines House" (1985), 14 inches by 24 inches, oil

LC: *Richard, you paint so many things so well, yet your style is distinctive. What have been the major influences on your work?*

RS: I was fortunate to study here in Chicago, because the American Art School is only a block away from The Art Institute of Chicago, which is one of the world's finest art collections. I could go over to the Art Institute and the paintings were like my other teachers, my silent teachers. The earliest influences were, of course, Rembrandt and Goya and Velasquez, and all the impressionists and the Spanish painter Sorolla and the Swedish artist Zorn. Later, when I got out of school and was able to travel, I was fortunate to see the works of the Italians of the late nineteenth century like Antonio Mancini. So most of the principal influences were classical.

When I am asked to describe my own work, it's very difficult because I have been influenced by so many different artists and periods. I would say my color is very impressionistic in that it is clean color. But overall I think you would describe me as a classical painter.

LC: *How do you decide what to paint?*

RS: That's a hard one to answer. I'm not sure what the decision process is except that it has to do with my personal philosophy. It's just a feeling I have that today would be a nice day to try whatever I have in mind. I think that if I were ever able to pin that question down and say this is how I decide what to do, it would take some of the magic out of it. I just know.

It has a lot to do with the quality of light on any given day, and the time available. If I have an opportunity to paint from life, as opposed to painting from a photograph, I will always paint from life. If the light in my studio is good that day and I can set up a still life, I'll always paint from a still life instead of working from sketches. In one sense you are painting from life, even when you use your sketches or a photograph you've taken, because you have the picture in your head. But I much prefer to paint directly from life as much as possible.

LC: *Richard, this Rendezvous exhibition is so exciting, not only because it is a retrospective of the best of your work, but also because so many of the paintings are from your own family's collection. How did you decide what to include?*

RS: When I thought about assembling this show, I thought that it would be fascinating for people who follow my work, as well as for those who haven't seen my work before, to see my own personal collection. First of all, these paintings have never been displayed for the public. You would have to be invited to my home to see them. Secondly, people who view these paintings enter a really very personal world of mine. Many of the paintings represent intimate family moments. They were important to me when I painted them and that is one of the reasons I kept these paintings. I have been able to put aside two or three paintings a year over the last 25 years or so. Looking at the show as a whole, these retrospective paintings, together with the new works, really represent a selection of my best efforts over that quarter of a century. Each painting represents a particularly successful technical achievement and each also has a special emotional meaning for me.

LC: *Do you feel that your style has changed over those 25 years?*

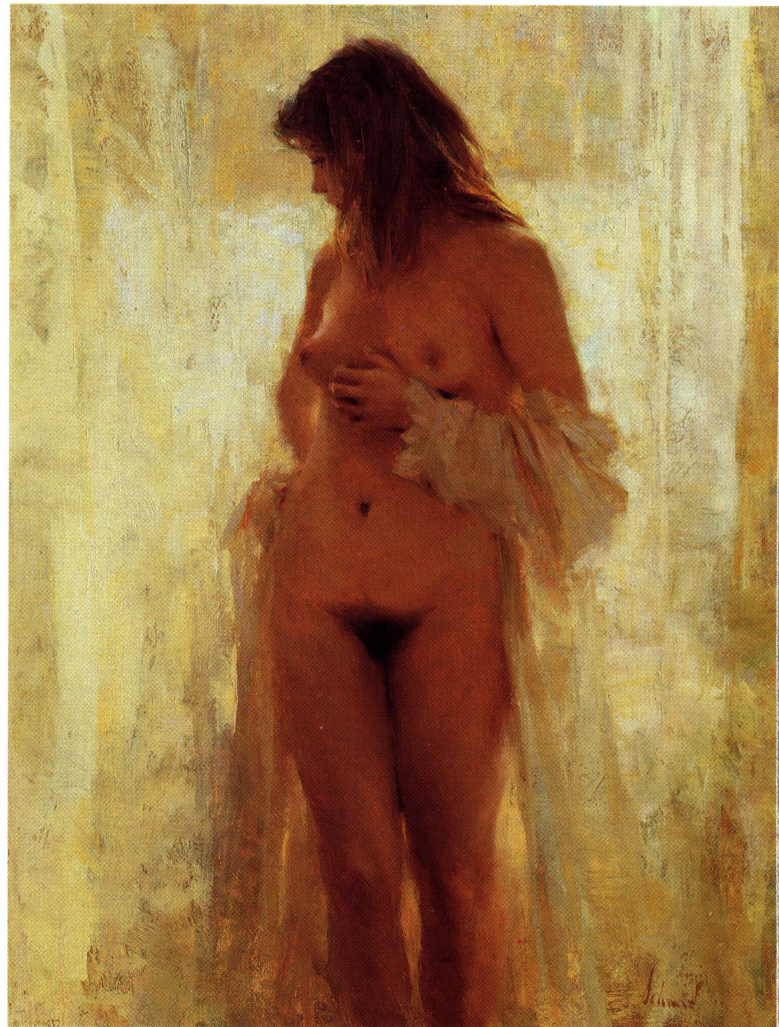
RS: You wouldn't be able to notice the changes unless I did the exact same subject in the same style again right now. The reason for that is that I have a number of techniques that I use to paint. You couldn't point to any one particular painting and say that one represents my work. I will go from impressionism in one painting to very loose brushwork in another painting. In still another the emphasis will be on drawing, and in another on value. Looking at them all, I believe that the reason that all the paintings stand up to my current work is that the principle that underlies all of my techniques for 30 years is reliance on solid drawing and accurate values, clean colors and a variety of edges. These were the ideas which were hammered into me by my teacher, William Mosby. I find that the only time I have ever gotten into trouble with a painting is when I neglected these principles in favor of some kind of extravagant technique.

LC: *I notice that you often seem to paint the same people. Are they friends?*

RS: Some of them are my children — Jan and I have three daughters. Bettina, the oldest, is named after Bettina Steinke. Bettina and I are great friends! My daughter Tina is now 21 and recently married. The second is Gretchen and she is 19. The youngest is called Molly and she is 17. She was the model for "Molly Sleeping."

LS: *One painting in the Gilcrease exhibition is of a very different kind of subject, a Bengal tiger. Do you often do animals?*

RS: That tiger was done in 1971. I got into animals because I had the ambition as a youngster, a 17 year old kid, to do some kind of illustration. I wanted to be another N. C. Wyeth or Howard Pyle-type painter. Just for my own amusement I illustrated Kipling's *Jungle Book*. In order to do that I had to learn comparative anatomy and so I spent all my spare time for almost a whole year at the Lincoln Park Zoo and at the



"Standing Nude" (1985), 18 inches by 14 inches, oil

Field Museum in Chicago. And that's the story of how I got into animals.

LC: *Do you have a favorite subject matter for your work?*

RS: Well, I think that I enjoy painting my children more than anything else.

LC: *You are doing these wonderful conté drawings and they seem mostly to be of people. Do you do other subjects in that medium?*

RS: A few animals. Somehow that technique does not lend itself to still life or landscape. I've tried it and it just doesn't work for me. I've done a few still lifes of dolls in conté, but still dolls are like little people. I enjoy painting dolls because of the symbolism inherent in dolls as little people and as personalities in themselves, and also because of what they mean to children. For children dolls are real people. And for adults with a little imagination they are real, too. The painting, "Jody's Dolls" is of the collection of a true doll collector.

LC: *Looking down the road, do you see new directions for your work?*

RS: I'll probably slow down and concentrate more on the content of my work, rather than on any kind of virtuoso technique. I think I'll probably tend to use people more in my paintings. I also want to get into more teaching and instruction. I've started lecturing at the American Academy of Art and I find it very, very stimulating and rewarding. I feel that given the kind of receptive students we have now regarding serious painting as opposed to those when I was in school, I can pass along the good word a little more strongly than just through my paintings alone. I believe that at some point it is an artist's responsibility to share what he has discovered through teaching.

LC: *Tell us a little about some of these paintings. Richard, like this study of the two girls.*

RS: That's Jamie, a former student of mine, and the other girl is my daughter, Gretchen. That was painted in a big old mansion in Virginia, a plantation house near Hot Springs. It's one of the new pieces that I especially like, though I am trying to get back more into painting more loosely than that, more like the style of "Jan and Bettina," the painting of my wife and daughter.



"Berkshire Forest" (1985), 16 inches by 20 inches, oil



"Tea Roses" (1985), 10 inches by 18 inches, oil

LC: *Like "Iowa Spring?"*

RS: Yes, "Desmoines House" is painted very tightly, with attention to color and detail, but now I'm trying to get back to the way I was painting in my 20s and 30s.

LC: *The still lifes are magnificent. Do you particularly enjoy doing them?*

RS: In still life painting, I'm definitely going for color as in "Tea Roses." The opportunity for that is much greater in still life than with any other subject matter. You can spend as much time as you like concentrating on clean color, because still lifes don't move. With other subjects, the time element is so important that the color does not always come out exactly the way you wanted it to. Painting a still life is like sitting down to a magnificent German meal without worrying about calories.

LC: *The color is wonderful in "Gift to Gretchen."*

RS: All those flowers were sent to my wife when she was in the hospital having our second child. I took the flowers home and painted that picture, believe it or not, in one afternoon. I gave the painting to my newborn daughter as a present for her future.

LC: *The new still life, "Carnations and Begonias," seems to be a much more complicated painting.*

RS: Yes, that's right. That's a very abstract picture. It's a picture you really have to look at for a while before everything becomes apparent. It's a deliberate decision on my part to keep the picture not only interesting at first glance but to keep the viewer looking at it, so they see more and more. If it was all spelled out for you, painted literally, the picture would lose its charm after a while.

This is a good example of my way of putting down fairly

abstract color and putting something realistic next to it which gives meaning to that abstract color, which turns that abstract color into a flower or something else. I'm trying for a transformation in the viewer's eyes, so that as you look at the whole painting, each part of it becomes something meaningful. That's to me what is interesting in a painting. What looks just like a random brush stroke at first glance becomes suddenly something very real.

LC: *The forest scene, "Berkshire Forest," is quite different, but very beautiful in its color.*

RS: That was painted up in the mountains of Virginia. It's a pretty straightforward landscape. I was just trying to get the feeling of the way it was that day so most of the emphasis is on the light.

I do try to make each painting as different as possible, so I won't be nailed down trying to be a particular kind of painter.

LC: *There seems to be something of man in most of your other paintings, a person or a house or man-made objects.*

RS: Putting something into the painting like the objects you describe, an individual or an animal or a building, is done very specifically to give dimension to everything else in the picture. I use it most often in a landscape and I find that putting something of known size like a person into a picture tells the viewer how large everything else is. Your eye automatically compares everything else to that object. A tree, for example, can look large or small depending on how big or little the figure is. The painting, "Gretchen Sketching," of my daughter sketching in a field of flowers, has a number of trees that could be any size until I painted her in there.

LC: *Richard, I know that a number of artists will be reading this interview. For their benefit, will you tell us a little about how you work?*

RS: I'm primarily an oil painter, even though I work in other media. When you look at some of my other paintings and drawings, they all look as if I were painting in oil. Even in my watercolors, the brushwork is handled precisely the same way as I would in my oil paintings.

When I'm doing an oil painting, I use a canvas or a panel which I prepared myself, by first sizing with glue, then applying a coat of white lead to get the kind of texture I want.

Really all my paintings are done in what is called *alla prima* style, which is one sitting if it's possible. The reason is that I like to work wet paint into wet paint to achieve a fluidity of brushwork and varied edges. The longest I've spent on a painting is maybe three days altogether. It's just the way I learned to paint. I find that you just cannot go back to something, particularly a landscape, the second day or third day because the light has changed or the subject. Also because the paint dries in between sessions and there's difficulty in getting the soft edges that I can get with wet paint.

I generally start out with a color wash, keeping the paint thinned and building up paint layers as I go along. I don't do sketching beforehand. I never work from a pencil sketch. I usually go right into direct painting. The only sketches I use as aids to the painting itself would be color sketches. I do those when I have to do something very quickly on the spot and when there's not enough time to do a finished painting, so I go only for the color in a sketch. That's the extent of my reliance upon sketching or compositional studies.

LC: *What do you do when you find you cannot finish in that one day?*

RS: If I know I'm going to paint over two or three days, then I scrape down the areas that I have yet to paint so there is a minimum amount of paint on the canvas. I start fresh in that area the next day.

I tend to paint a painting almost like you're pulling a window shade down. It's finished from the point I start; I rarely go back and correct anything. I can see the finished painting in my head; there's almost no room for accidents. I just paint the picture I have in my head or in front of me.

LC: *This exhibition demonstrates the wonderful range of your work. Did you deliberately plan this for the exhibition at Gilcrease?*

RS: I never paint just to have a collection or for a particular exhibition. I do try to get a balanced collection. Last year I knew that I had two exhibitions plus three group shows, but I simply started painting whatever I felt like. Then for the show I would just select from the paintings that were available. When I got about 30 paintings collected, I just lined them all up in a room and said, now I'm going to choose for the exhibition at Gilcrease. I try to balance naturally, but I don't paint particular pictures for an exhibition.



LC: *Is there anything that you would particularly like in the Gilcrease Magazine?*

RS: I would like to thank the folks at Gilcrease and express my gratitude for this opportunity for a retrospective show. I hope that the people who see this exhibition of my work will be touched by the paintings. I hope they'll come away from the show feeling glad to be alive. That's the main reason I chose so many paintings from my own collection to include in this exhibition. These paintings evoke in me some of the happiest moments in my life.

That's why I paint, because the act of painting reaffirms the fundamental goodness of life, no matter what. ◡



"Molly Sleeping" (1985), 10 inches by 16 inches, oil

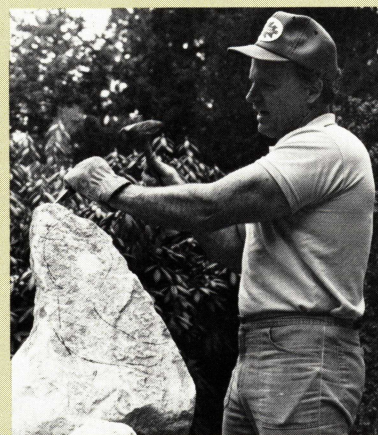


Featured sculptor in the 1986 Rendezvous exhibition at Gilcrease Museum is Tony Angell. Works featured in the exhibition May 3 through July 6 include 12 new sculptures, 16 retrospective sculptures and a dozen wildlife drawings and lithographs done for his books.

Today Angell lives with his wife Noel and twin daughters in Seattle not far from the north end of Lake Washington. Screech owls nest just outside their bedroom, salmon still spawn in their creek, and great blue heron roost in the ancient firs at creek side. The artist also maintains an island studio in northern Puget Sound where the family works throughout the year.

Angell is a member of the National Academy of Western Artists and also fulfills a number of professional and volunteer commitments in the field of environmental studies. He is a leader in the Washington State Chapter of Nature Conservancy and also president of Puget Sound Alliance, a group working to restore the quality of Puget Sound.

Asked who influenced his work, Tony Angell begins with his mother who encouraged his interest in art, then mentions Audubon, whose majestic and flamboyant style opened up the possibilities of interpreting nature. Angell exclaims over the paintings of Vermeer which bring him joy, then adds: "I think, without doubt, the Native American carvers of the northwest coast have been of considerable inspiration to me. Who can deny the presence of spirit when standing before the great Raven Screen in the Denver Art Museum or the Hall of Totems in the Museum of Man in Vancouver, British Columbia?"



TONY ANGELL



SUNNING FALCON

(Gyrfalcon), 26 inches high by 14 inches across by 5 inches deep
alabaster

"I've looked forward to showing this piece as it was first begun in Oklahoma when I was conducting a demonstration at the National Academy of Western Artists. I said then and it's appropriate now, the piece suggested an upright form with head turned. My task was simple -- bring it out. The process was documented in their publication *Persimmon Hill* and I have saved the completed piece in my studio at home so it might come back to Oklahoma for its first public showing.

When I returned home with the piece only the head of the bird had been developed. After working off and on it (I usually have about four or five pieces of sculpture going at once) over a period of two months I finished it at my studio in the San Juan Islands. This falcon had covered considerable territory in its process of emergence."

Tony Angell

Stone Spirits: Tony Angell and the Art of Nature

BY IVAN DOIG

A stone's way of saying is not with words, and so the large-armed man in the midst of these dozen hunks and chunks speaks out their names for them. "Here's white alabaster. This is green serpentine. Black marble, white marble, variegated marble. Over there, that's black steatite. Grey argillite. Grey alabaster." They surround the sculptor like a playful avalanche, these melodious rocks, nestled just to within touch of



him, seeming to await with patient curiosity his next pronouncement. Waiting in conspicuous squat atop the sculpting block is grey alabaster, a piece of dusk-colored stone about the size and shape and blandness of a lopsided waste basket.

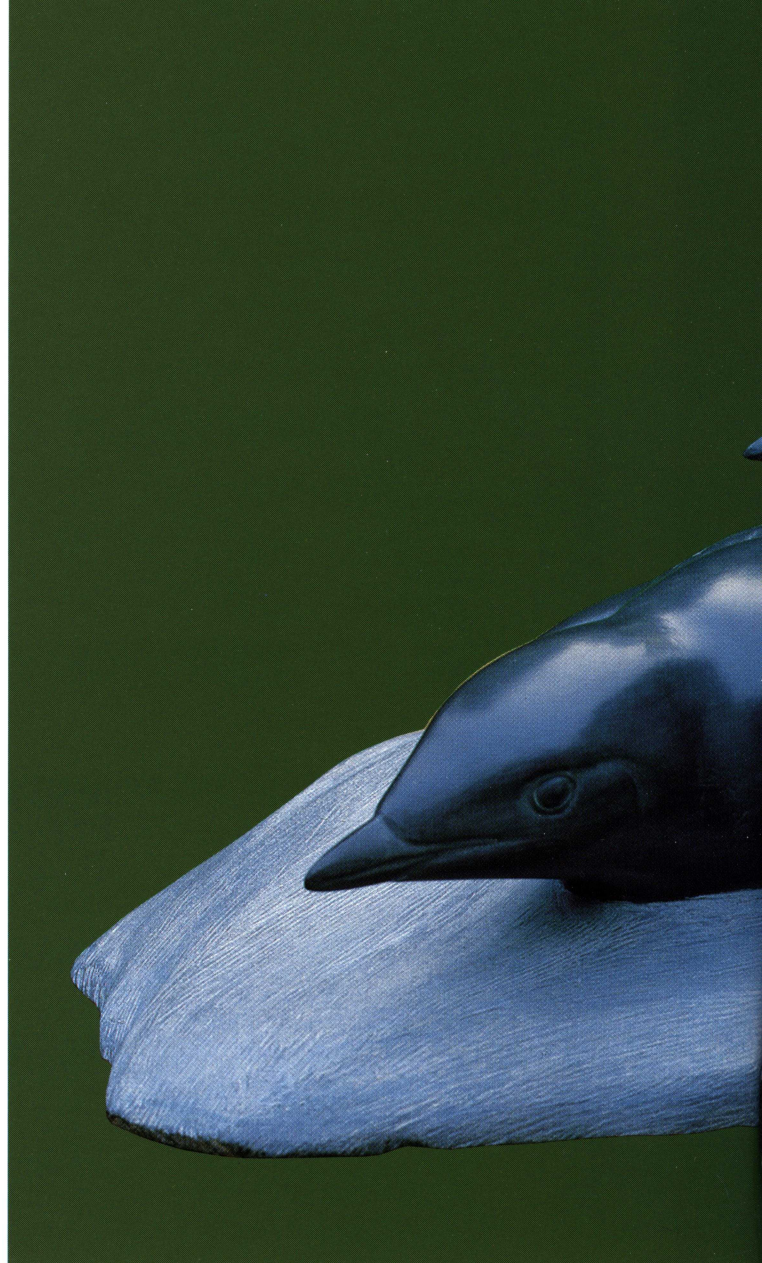
"This looks to me like a great grey owl," says Tony Angell.

MESSAGES FROM STONE have firmed our lives for at least the last 200 centuries; in the Lascaux Cave of southern France were discovered wall paintings done by our ancestors around 18,000 B.C. -- "long-necked reindeer, majestic bulls, lowing cows, great humped bison," as the writer Guy Davenport described Lascaux's stone-held ancient nature art, "in files and herds, flowing in long strides down some run of time through the silence of the mountain's hollow." Think too of fossils. Of arrowheads. Feudal castles, medieval cathedrals. Petrified wood. The Great Wall of China. The Grand Canyon. The stone world's eloquence of what was, what lasts, what changes, is ever with us down our own run of time.

But when what is within stone has not quite yet made itself known -- when it is still in native stone dialect, so to speak -- we then need the interpreter, the sculptor. "For," explains

Ivan Doig is the author of the memoir *This House of Sky*, which was nominated for a National Book Award, and of the novel *English Creek*, winner of the Western Heritage Wrangler Award as best novel of 1984. He lives, writes, and birdwatches in Seattle.

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Tony Angell, "each rock definitely has a particular spirit, a personality. One stone is stubborn, another is responsive. One is adventuresome, another is comparatively dull. The rock is telling me what it would like to be."

Really? Actually sending out signals of the intrinsic sculpted form it prefers, does he mean?

"Yes. The shape the rock already has, suggests what I ultimately will do with it. A cube or block, now -- that doesn't suggest anything to me, other than a cube or a block. So I like to have the rock already shaped, headed in the right direction. To let the rock lead me, rather than me leading the rock. To let the rock take me away with it."

In more ways than one, Angell's wondrously expressive stone creatures -- the *Rendezvous* exhibition is a proportionate sample of his subjects: some mammals, some fish, and birds by the flock -- come from his artistic feeling, for here,



literally, is an artist who does his work by hand. In the earliest strokes of his hammer and chisel on a fresh rock, "My hands can give me a quick reading as to whether there's a flaw, just by the kind of feeling that comes up out of the stone when I strike it." Then all throughout the day's sculpting, Angell keeps stroking the stone with his fingers, cupping caresses to it with his palm. "Say I want to do a flow of feathers over the sculpture's back; I may *look* at the stone there, but I'll also spend some time *feeling* it, running my hand over it. And sometimes the feel will say, hey, this isn't quite right.

"The heavens are not opening up," Angell is quick to disclaim miraculism in this laying on of hands, "the gods are not touching that rock." Rather, years of daily dedication to stonecraft are making themselves felt; what a poet has called the long devotion of the muscles to the bones.

This durable delicacy of the way he works into the stone is

TWO MURRELETS

6 inches high by 15 inches long by 10 inches wide
argillite

"Along northern Puget Sound pairs of these small seabirds chase one another in synchronous flight. The pairs are so close they appear to be a single form and in turn present all sorts of possibilities for sculptural interpretation.

This piece contrasts somewhat with the more lonely mood of the single murrelet depicted in "Bird at Sea". Here I've sought to emphasize the action and momentum of the two forms hurtling forward along the uneven surface of the water.

As in most pieces I've enjoyed watching this sculpture evolve. I find that it's something that changes with the time of day, the light and certainly with the point of view I take when it's approached."

Tony Angell



YOUNG OWL

15 inches long by 17 inches high by 10 inches wide
grey alabaster

"With tail yet to grow out and feathered horns yet to emerge, this is a fledgling bird out for a first foray and a test of wings. The soft grey/brown color of the stone is a perfect match for the plumage of a young owl."

Tony Angell





COILED WEASEL

4 inches high by 11 inches long by 10 inches wide
brown marble

"Along with the rabbit, we have a resident ferret who is an absolutely perfect model for much of the weasel family.

He's an unbridled frolicker, with an insatiable curiosity and once he's finished a house-wide romp he'll curl up with the cat. The long-tailed weasel is white in winter and brown in summer. As its appearance changes with the season, there is a time when it appears to be colored with a bit of both the light and the dark. The marble I found was a perfect match and our live-in ferret (the weasel's first cousin) was more than a willing model.

We also have wild weasels that hunt along our creek for water rats. Mink too are sometimes spotted, but they're hunting for trout.

"This weasel has just come upon something interesting and perhaps caught a tantalizing scent in the breeze.

He'll soon be off in pursuit."

Tony Angell

MAGPIES IN SYCAMORE
20¹/₁₆ inches by 13¹/₄ inches
watercolor

"This painting was done when I was deep in the study of the fascinating family of corvids which includes not only the yellow-billed magpies but ravens, crows and jays as well. We had been in north central California where this particular species is found and were picnicking beneath sycamores and along a dry stream bed. A pair of the inquisitive birds descended looking for a possible handout and for a moment struck a pose that was caught between a frame of sycamore branches. It was a design too good to pass up and I think this study captures part of that memory."

Tony Angell



a remarkable refinement of power and dimension in the same way Angell himself is. He is what might be called a medium helping of big man; solidly muscled, thick wherever you look at him, but except in the arms, not as supremely huge as you might expect of someone who spends a good part of his days moving heavy rock around. He is searchingly thoughtful about life, particularly its manifestations in art and nature, but he also has a room-filling laugh and a hopeless penchant for telephoning his friends in strange accents; and when telling the tale of one sculpture or another, he is perfectly apt to begin:

"To make a long story short -- No, I'll make a short story long . . ."

He also possesses an energy level which, if they could hook him up right, would run the lighting and air conditioning for the entire nine weeks of the Gilcrease Rendezvous exhibi-

tion. Besides sculpting, Angell writes and illustrates (thus far, five books), draws, paints with both watercolor and oil, and has recently taken up stone lithography; besides all that, he holds the job of supervisor for environmental education for the state of Washington, is an activist in the Nature Conservancy, and has been president and spokesman for the environmentalist group called Puget Sound Alliance.

This omnifarious approach he carries over into his stonework, keeping several different sculptures going at once. "Lighted fuses," he calls these works-in-sundry-stages-of-progress. "By having five or six things to do, there's always something I can apply myself to. I'll often start in the morning by doing some fine stuff with the chisel, maybe I'll incise the eye of this pileated woodpecker. Then after I do this for a while I'll go over and get the big chisel and hammer and maybe go out to some fresh place and start taking rock off."

LOON

7 inches high by 16 inches long by 6 inches wide
grey argillite

"Every winter large numbers of Arctic, Common and Red Throated Loons come and winter on Puget Sound. By early spring they have their plumage of courtship and are calling plaintively in the bays. In the morning, when the sea's surface is calm and flat and the sun has yet to rise, the loon sets off to fish and watches the waning light of a star."

Tony Angell





Grey alabaster answers the bap bap of hammer on tooth chisel by flying off in flakes big as sprung padlocks. Chuff chuff chuff of a rasp atop the lopsided that is becoming the rock's peering head, and motes of alabaster float away. The sculptor searches into the stone with a carbide-tipped hacksaw blade one inch, two, three, four. With a pointed chisel, he breaks out a major chunk he has decided must go. After nearly an hour of this loud tactile dialogue, Angell kneels as if looking into the face of the stone and declares:



"It's turning out to be a young owl. A rounded simple form, because young owls have that kind of delicious grey plumage that's largely fluff."

Bap bap, begin hammer and chisel again.

The Lascaux Cave and its rockscape of eloquently elemental animals was discovered in 1940, Tony Angell's birth year. Maybe time too sends messages reverberating through its interstices. Angell's green gentle crevice of childhood was California's San Fernando Valley, and as the willow-and-eucalyptus-groves-that-were became the Los-Angeles-suburbs-that-are, his concern for nature was sharpened. (An athletic scholarship to the University of Washington took Angell north to Seattle in 1958; there he and his wife Noel and vibrant twelve-year-old daughters Byrony and Gilia still live, along with various wildlife mending from mishaps. (Two are to be met in the Rendezvous exhibition: a pygmy hare whose stage name here is "Snowshoe," while "Coiled Weasel" was modeled by the household ferret, a.k.a. Humperdink for the way he "humps" along when running.) Angell believes his art constantly tries to bespeak the balance, the integrity, that nature maintains if humankind will let it:

"The motives of the subjects I treat are directed toward the single end of survival, and survival on reasonable levels, the fitting within the niche of a particular habitat, rather than the kind of overindulgent, indifferent kind of behavior that marks so much of our 'advanced' society. Like a lot of students in American lit, I'm touched by Thoreau: 'Simplify, simplify.' "

Is it, then, displeasure with humankind's nature-marauding habits that keeps him from sculpting people?

*"No, I like people. I've even been called a humanist. But I better understand myself by studying subjects other than people. I think I found a lot of myself in the process of doing my raven series -- the book (*Ravens, Crows, Magpies and Jays*), a lot of drawings, a bunch of sculptures. I know myself a lot better just through that process of trying to define human*

SMALL FLOUNDERS

3 inches high by 10 inches long by 12 inches wide
serpentine

"I see these fish when I dive in the rich waters of Puget Sound. Their skin often matches their preferred background which may not be at all unlike the color of this stone.

I've enjoyed interpreting these forms for (like the loon) there's a directness about them — a strong and simple image. Then too there's the border of fin with the abundance of line that embraces the smooth body.

For a fresh model I need go no further than our public market on the waterfront. I have eaten more than one of my models."

Tony Angell

HUNTING FALCON

8 inches high by 10 inches long by 5 inches wide
grey argillite

"There's a special moment in all living and vital life forms where their posture suggests that action is but a breath away. It's a coiled spring or a lighted fuse.

I've often watched hunting merlins and peregrine falcons twist rapidly around on their perches to follow the action of some animal. They sometimes crouch and lean far forward before they're off in a burst of wings."

Tony Angell





THE WOOD HEWER

10 inches high by 6 inches deep by 6 inches wide
argillite

"The Pileated Woodpecker has always amazed me. As big as a crow they can fly at hawk speed when threading their way through a thick forest. They hammer fist-sized pieces of bark and wood from the sides of trees as they dig out termites and the larvae of carpenter ants.

As a sculptor I'm fascinated with the depiction of this subject's specialized form and the interpretation of that elemental matching of its being with the surface of the tree upon which its life depends."

Tony Angell

KINGFISHER WITH CATCH

10 inches high by 6 inches long by 6 inches wide
grey marble

"There are few forms in nature that are quite as demonstrative as the Kingfisher. They just stand there on a twig before you and you can make a pretty good guess as to what they do for a living. There's not much subtlety to them and because of this they are very clear as to what one sculpts "about" them.

This one has just snapped up a small fish and has flown to a rock holding his catch. Including fish, or any animal caught by the subject, opens up fresh opportunities for design and contrast.

Because of the degree of hardness and relative lightness of color I have chosen to detail the sculpture in a way that I hope reinforces the overall form. The lines of wing feathers repeat the lines of the wing itself and the unruly head of feathers give additional attention to that oversized head and beak."

Tony Angell



place and experience and being, through the understanding of a very confident, successful, beautiful, expressive life form like a raven."

Now to see, with Angell's guidance when needed, how his outlook and nature and stone find their way together in his works. Let us now appraise murrelets.

"They're a favorite bird, very wonderfully structured," he says of these chubby buoyant seabirds of Pacific coastal waters, no longer than the span of your hand. "They've got those paddle-like wings -- I've always enjoyed sculpting those against the stout bodies." How he has sculpted the two examples of them in the Gilcrease Rendezvous exhibition helps to explain his divinations of the personality of stone. "Bird at Sea" is of black steatite; the stone itself, in its polished birdform and unpolished surge of wave, is the black and gray of the drama presented by this solitary swimmer of the great and restless sea. "This stout fellow," Angell calls him in due admiration. Now turn your eyes toward birds of a

different color, the grey argillite "Two Murrelets." Of warmer tone of gray, of softer stone, this pair hurtles on and down in thrilling surf-ride rather than struggling up the face of the water. "These two little guys are together, they're partners in their situation," Angell confirms.

Striving and brave solitude, "Bird at Sea" seems to say. Achievement and companionship, "Two Murrelets" seems to say.

The warmth of the argillite versus the drama of the steatite, Angell believes, come into our perception this way by courtesy of "the stone and how it handles light. At least to my eye, there's a softness to the argillite. It's like the stone just says, 'Okay, relax, go with the flow.' "

Whatever the 'flow' of any specific Tony Angell sculpture, under it is a remarkable deepness of form, an essence as if the sculpted creature is declaring *this is what it is to be falcon, hawk, eagle, murrelet, weasel, hare . . .*

Perhaps put it this way: the English novelist Arnold Ben-

RAVEN INTO FLIGHT

30 inches high by 28 inches long by 45 inches wide
bronze on black granite

"This particular piece was my first bronze endeavor after having been stone carving for nearly ten years. I had been very much immersed in the research, drawing and writing for my book *Ravens, Crows, Magpies and Jays*. In some ways, I'm convinced the completion of the piece was a culmination of some incredibly intense personal moments connected with my work on the Raven. It also stands in dramatic contrast with the comparatively gentle mood of "Courting Ravens" which was done about the same time.

I can personally identify with the Raven as he launches into flight — pulling away from earthly concerns to ride the whims of the wind."

Tony Angell





SNOWSHOE

5 inches high by 10 inches long by 5 inches wide
white marble

"For the past four years we've had a rabbit living in the house. He has his special "territory" of course, but he sometimes has the run of the house and will join us in the family room and settle in much like a family dog.

Their smooth and gentle contours are seductive to the eye and when I have a piece of stone that is already "rabbit" like in its form, the process is underway."

Tony Angell

nett was once told by a discerning admirer that while Bennett's famous book *The Old Wives' Tale* was "it," his newer and riskier work was "itter." Similarly, Tony Angell's sculptures are more quintessential, "itter," than the actuality of the forms of the creatures they portray. This is quickest seen in the robust size of his stone birds and animals. "A lot of my work is a little larger than what actual life is," he remarks, "but no larger than what I perceive them to be." At work here too is the expressive density of stone itself. A murrelet in life, for instance, weighs not much more than half a loaf of bread, but the steatite "Bird at Sea" registers a resounding 22½ pounds and the argillite "Two Murrelets" 20½ pounds -- adding a quiet but hefty substantiality, a multiplication of the little bird's beingness, into how we see Angell's concept of a murrelet.

Impressive as they are in size and weight, Tony Angell's sculptures most of all have the enhancement of risk. To look at one of his creatures is to see motion about to erupt -- the pileated woodpecker tensely ready to begin his jackhammering, the kingfisher set to make lunch of its catch -- and this extraordinary sense of rock-about-to-spring-to-life is perhaps Angell's most intriguing, edge-walking achievement in his work. "Putting in a sense of flexed preparedness," he simply calls it, but it is anything but simple. Once again, that

long devotion of the muscles to the bones; in high school and college Angell was a shotputter, and the contained power of shotputting, the release waiting to happen, seems still to be speaking in his musculature's memory as he sculpts.

And the sculptures that are yet to happen? What does he hope the stone will suggest next?

"I'll always do ravens. I've given myself this promise to do one raven at least a year. And more murrelets. As to ones I haven't done yet but want to . . ." He begins to think them aloud: "grey jet . . . magpie . . . tundra swan . . ." The spirit flock waiting in the stone.

"This is a good place to stop," Angell says as he lifts away the power grinder that has just granted disc eyes to the rock. "I'm excited, I'm stimulated, and now I can take that stimulation over here," turning to where a green serpentine flatfish waits to have its fins created, "and do some of this."

Behind him on the sculpting block, grey alabaster by now is not just itself, but uncannily, indubitably, intrinsically owl. ◡



RICHARD SCHMID

Gilcrease Rendezvous Exhibition

EXHIBITION/SALE PAINTINGS

"Berkshire Forest" (1985), 16 inches by 20 inches, oil
"Carnations and Begonias" (1985), 20 inches by 28 inches, oil
"Des Moines House" (1985), 14 inches by 24 inches, oil
"Gretchen Sketching" (1985), 20 inches by 30 inches, oil
"Iowa Spring" (1985), 8 inches by 12 inches, oil
"Jamie and Gretchen" (1985), 18 inches by 24 inches, oil

EXHIBITION/RETROSPECTIVE PAINTINGS

"Bengal Tiger" (1971), 16 inches by 20 inches, gouache
Lent from a private collection
"Boy With a Flower" (1963), 12 inches by 18 inches, oil
Lent from a private collection
"Bowery" (1972), 16 inches by 24 inches, oil
Lent from a private collection
"Cheryl" (1971), 19 inches by 24 inches, charcoal
Lent from a private collection
"Christmas Still Life" (1972), 24 inches by 32 inches, oil
Lent from a private collection
"Gift to Gretchen" (1967), 30 inches by 40 inches, oil
Lent from a private collection
"Gretchen at 7" (1974), 16 inches by 20 inches, oil
Lent from a private collection
"Guadeloupe Grove" (1977), 18 inches by 24 inches, oil
Lent from a private collection
"Hans" (1962), 18 inches by 22 inches, conte crayon
Lent from a private collection
"Jan" (1976), 10 inches by 12 inches, oil
Lent from a private collection
"Jan" (1962), 36 inches by 60 inches, oil
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. William Kirberger, Bartlesville, Oklahoma
"Jan and Bettina" (1964), 30 inches by 40 inches, oil
Lent from a private collection
"Lillies and Lemons" (1977), 20 inches by 26 inches, oil
Lent by Wayne and Barbara Rumley
"Lorie" (1972), 16 inches by 21 inches, charcoal
Lent from a private collection
"Michelle" (1978), 7 inches by 11 inches, oil
Lent from a private collection
"Molly Sewing" (1981), 16 inches by 20 inches, oil
Lent from a private collection

"Jody's Dolls" (1985), 24 inches by 36 inches, oil
"Molly Sleeping" (1985), 10 inches by 16 inches, oil
"Nude" (1985), 18½ inches by 14½ inches, conte crayon
"Nude" (1985), 17¾ inches by 14¾ inches, conte crayon
"Standing Nude" (1985), 18 inches by 14 inches, oil
"Tea Roses" (1985), 10 inches by 18 inches, oil

"Molly's Dolls" (1981), 24 inches by 36 inches, oil
Lent from a private collection
"November Maples" (1981), 20 inches by 30 inches, oil
Lent by Wayne and Barbara Rumley
"Peaches and Silver" (1980), 33½ inches by 39½ inches, oil
Lent by Wayne and Barbara Rumley
"Spring Floodwater" (1973), 12 inches by 18 inches, oil
Lent from a private collection
"Standing Nude" (1964), 24 inches by 36 inches, conte crayon
Lent from a private collection
"Susan" (1971), 20 inches by 24 inches, oil
Lent from a private collection
"Susan" (1971), 16 inches by 19 inches, conte crayon
Lent from a private collection
"Sycamore" (1971), 24 inches by 36 inches, oil
Lent from a private collection
"Taos Alley" (1976), 24 inches by 34 inches, oil
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. William Kirberger, Bartlesville, Oklahoma
"The Iron Fence" (1971), 16 inches by 30 inches, oil
Lent from a private collection
"The Red Shawl" (1976), 24 inches by 30 inches, oil
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. William Kirberger, Bartlesville, Oklahoma
"Tug Boat" (1967), 8 inches by 16 inches, oil
Lent from a private collection
"Virginia Winter" (1984), 20 inches by 28 inches, oil
Lent by Wayne and Barbara Rumley

TONY ANGELL

Gilcrease Rendezvous Exhibition

EXHIBITION/SALE SCULPTURE

- "Coiled Weasel," 4 inches high by 11 inches long by 10 inches wide, brown marble
- "Hunting Falcon," 8 inches high by 10 inches long by 5 inches wide, grey argillite
- "Kingfisher with Catch," 10 inches high by 6 inches long by 6 inches wide, grey marble
- "Loon," 7 inches high by 16 inches long by 6 inches wide, grey argillite
- "Raven into Flight," 30 inches high by 28 inches long by 45 inches wide, bronze on black granite
- "Shorebird in Spring," 10 inches long by 4 inches high by 5 inches wide, alabaster
- "Small Flounders," 3 inches high by 10 inches long by 12 inches wide, serpentine
- "Snowshoe," 5 inches high by 10 inches long by 5 inches wide, white marble
- "Sunning Falcon," (Gyr Falcon) 26 inches high by 14 inches across by 5 inches deep, alabaster
- "The Wood Hewer," 10 inches high by 6 inches deep by 6 inches wide, argillite
- "Two Murrelets," 6 inches high by 15 inches long by 10 inches wide, argillite
- "Young Owl," 15 inches long by 17 inches high by 10 inches wide, alabaster

EXHIBITION/SALE DRAWINGS AND LITHOGRAPHS

- "At the Estuary," 2/20, 29½ inches by 21¾ inches, plate lithograph
- "Clark's Nutcracker," 6½ inches by 9⅝ inches, pen and ink
- "Falcon Pursuing Seabird," 23½ inches by 19⅜ inches, pen and ink
- "Gulls on the Shore," 19¼ inches by 23¼ inches, pen and ink
- "Gyr Falcon," 27½ inches by 21¾ inches, pencil
- "Magpies in Sycamore," 20⅛ inches by 13¼ inches, watercolor
- "Marsh Owl," 2/20, 29½ inches by 21¾ inches, plate lithograph
- "Migrant," 2/20, 29½ inches by 21¾ inches, plate lithograph
- "Over Cattails," 2/20, 29½ inches by 21¾ inches, plate lithograph
- "The Diving Loon," 23¼ inches by 19¼ inches, pen and ink
- "Watching the Edge," 2/20, 29½ inches by 21¾ inches, plate lithograph
- "Yellow Headed Blackbird in Display," 12⅝ inches by 10⅞ inches, pen and ink

EXHIBITION/RETROSPECTIVE SCULPTURE

- "Arctic Loon," 10 inches high by 15 inches long by 8 inches high, black steatite, Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Catterall, Issaquah, Washington
- "Bird at Sea," 6 inches high by 10 inches long by 12 inches wide, black steatite, Lent anonymously
- "Courting Ravens," 36 inches high by 16 inches wide by 10 inches deep, black steatite, Lent by Pacific Northwest Bell, Seattle, Washington
- "Falcon," 15 inches high by 28 inches long by 6 inches wide, serpentine, Lent by Wayne and Barbara Rumley
- "Falcon at Hard Strait," 18 inches high by 16 inches long by 12 inches wide, black steatite, Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Richard H. Clements
- "Falcon Turning into the Wind," 34 inches high by 20 inches long by 10 inches wide, white Italian marble, Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Matthew Hoff, Jr.
- "Generation," 10 inches high by 18 inches long by 12 inches wide, cascade grey marble, Lent anonymously
- "Gyr Falcon," 18 inches high by 24 inches long by 8 inches wide, brown steatite, Lent by Wayne and Barbara Rumley
- "Gyr Falcons," 20 inches high by 20 inches long by 12 inches wide, white marble, Lent by SAFECO Insurance Company, Seattle, Washington
- "Marsh Owl," 7 inches high by 16 inches long by 6 inches wide, serpentine, Lent by Wayne and Barbara Rumley
- "Night Spirit," 6 inches high by 7 inches long by 6 inches long, argillite, Lent by Karen W. Robison, Littleton, Colorado
- "Otter with Flounder," 17 inches high by 32 inches long by 20 inches wide, black steatite, Lent by Virginia Mason Medical Center, Seattle, Washington
- "Racing Seabirds," 12 inches high by 36 inches long by 10 inches wide, marble, Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Cornforth, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- "River Spirit," 6 inches high by 15 inches long by 14 inches wide, black steatite, Lent by Nelson C. and Nancy L. Krum, Denver, Colorado
- "Stellar's Jay," 7½ inches high by 10 inches long by 5 inches wide, serpentine, Lent anonymously
- "Swimming Merganser," 5 inches high by 15 inches long by 10 inches wide, black steatite, Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Morrow, Seattle, Washington

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FRONT COVER:

"Jody's Dolls" (1985), 24 inches by 36 inches, oil painting by Richard Schmid.

Additional copies of this issue of the *Gilcrease Magazine* may be purchased in the Gilcrease Museum Shop at \$5.00 each. To order by mail, send a check for \$6.00 (includes \$1.00 postage and handling) to the Gilcrease Museum Shop, 1400 Gilcrease Museum Road, Tulsa, OK 74127-9990.



Gilcrease Rendezvous Fair

The first May weekend brings to Gilcrease Museum not only the opening of the annual Gilcrease Rendezvous exhibition but the festivities of the Rendezvous Fair. This recreation of the 19th century trappers and traders fair brings to the museum artists and craftsmen demonstrating traditional crafts and on the grounds Indian dancers, music groups, jugglers, a puppet theatre, square dancers, cloggers, and more. This year it's the Eighth Annual Gilcrease Rendezvous . . . open free to everyone . . . on Saturday and Sunday, May 3 and 4, from 1 to 5 p.m.



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Angell



SHOREBIRD IN SPRING

10 inches long by 4 inches high
by 5 inches wide
alabaster

"Plovers love to sun themselves and
occasionally stretch a wing out, thereby
accentuating the beauty of their form."

Tony Angell