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LIBRARY

THE WORLD OF
ROBERT BATEMAN

THE WORLD OF R

To walk through a gallery of Robert Bateman paintings is to visit the wild and beautiful places of North America and Africa and to meet the creatures of the wilderness. So begins a love affair . . . with Robert Bateman, with his paintings, and with the birds and animals that live in them.

BY LOUISA B. COLLETT

ROBERT BATEMAN HIMSELF IS DIRECT, gregarious, and talks with enthusiasm and an incredible depth of knowledge about the subjects of his paintings.

"I can't conceive of anything being more varied and rich and handsome than the planet Earth. And its crowning beauty is the natural world. Whether it's here in Ontario and in the Antarctic or in Africa, I want to soak it up, to understand it as well as I can, and to absorb it. And then I'd like to put it together and express it in my paintings."

This statement is found in the first book about Bob Bateman, *The Art of Robert Bateman*, published by Madison Press in 1981. A second followed last fall, *The World of Robert Bateman*, a Random House/Madison Press book.

More recently, Bateman talked about his plans for the retrospective exhibition of his work which will open September 21 at Gilcrease Museum.

"For the Gilcrease show I tried to choose a wide variety of my paintings, including some of the wildlife that I thought would be known in your area. One of the things I pride myself in, that is part of my whole philosophy is variety," he

added. "If you come to one of my shows or if you look at one of my books, it is unpredictable what you will see next.

"I'm not saying this is necessarily a virtue, but with very many other artists, when you turn the page, you almost know what you are going to see. I am into a deeper philosophical area where what is good about the Planet Earth, about our universe, is the variety in both our natural heritage and our human heritage. And I concentrate on our natural heritage, so that is the theme of the Gilcrease Museum show."

Exhibitions of Bateman's work draw enormous crowds everywhere. His exhibition this summer at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, Wisconsin, where Bateman presented a workshop on his painting techniques, was tremendously popular. In January, after the Gilcrease exhibition, will come an exhibition of Bateman's work at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

Bateman's paintings and the limited edition prints of his paintings, issued by Mill Pond Press, command ready buyers. There will be several new Bateman paintings for

Louisa Collett is herself in love with the natural world of Robert Bateman. Here she explores it for *Gilcrease Magazine* readers . . . with the help of the artist.

ROBERT BATEMAN



Robert Bateman, "Strutting Ring-Necked Pheasant" (1985), 16 inches by 24 inches, acrylic



sale in the upcoming exhibition of his work at Gilcrease Museum, and the Gilcrease Museum Shop will have available signed, limited edition Bateman prints and copies of his books.

Two quotes say much about the quality of Bateman's work. Andrew Wyeth has this to say, "Bateman's feeling for wild animals and birds is deeply moving." And Roger Tory Peterson, the naturalist artist whose field guides to North American birds revolutionized birding, wrote in his introduction to *The Art of Robert Bateman*:

"Robert Bateman's work has been likened to that of Andrew Wyeth . . . There is an immediacy in the paintings of both Bateman and Wyeth but there is also a profound difference between them. Wyeth nostalgically freezes the moment, holds on to it, whether he portrays the boy in the coonskin hat, the farmhouse of yesteryear, or the nubile young girl brushed by light from an open window. It is a moment suspended forever. In contrast, Bateman's subjects are ready to go somewhere else, to fly away. His creatures are invariably off-centered. They enter from off canvas or are heading out towards the edge. A pheasant hurtles beyond the limits of the painting rather than flying towards the centre. This apparent imbalance gives Bateman's compositions a marvelous sense of action; a split second later the bird would be gone."

A friend of Bob Bateman as well as a fan of his work, Peterson goes on to elucidate:

"It is no accident that his (Bateman's) paintings elicit an instant response from most nature-oriented viewers. Although he remains an abstractionist at heart he overlays well-thought-out forms and patterns with meticulous detail — not the detail of the delineator, rather that of the skilled painter, never losing the vitality of his subject. His paintings have a third dimensional activity, a movement in space, that many wildlife artists fail to master.

"In his pictures," Peterson writes, "the animal is portrayed with its uniqueness in mind, not with the bias of the human observer. As Bateman puts it, 'I try to portray an animal living its own life independent of man.' When painting a grouse, a pheasant, or a duck, he does not present them from a sportsman's point of view, as an entity unto itself . . . There is nothing coy or cute about his animals unless it be in the eye of the observer. He does not stoop to the anthropomorphism which some wildlife artists find so marketable."

What road brought Robert Bateman to his present role as the leading wildlife artist of the twentieth century, the first wildlife artist whose work is featured in a retrospective exhibition at Gilcrease Museum?

On the "Late Nite America" television program last fall,

Left, Robert Bateman, "Late Winter — Black Squirrel" (1986), 14 inches by 9 inches, acrylic

Below, Robert Bateman, "African Amber — Lioness Pair" (1977), 24 inches by 42 inches, acrylic



Bateman told interviewer John Wade:

"All little kids like art and nature, until they reach 12 or 13 and get interested in mature things. But I always knew that I was going to be an artist, though I never thought I would support myself by it. I knew Van Goth never sold anything except to his brother and I didn't figure I'd sell anything. I got serious, both about art and about nature, about the age of 13. Later I taught school so I wouldn't have to paint for the market.

"I taught until I was 46, for two years in Africa, and in Burlington, Ontario. I always knew I would paint and have adventures out-of-doors."

Born in Toronto in 1930, Bob Bateman was indeed paint-

ing and birdwatching from his early years. Through the encouragement of his parents, he developed his budding skills as a naturalist at the Royal Ontario Museum, then majored in geography at the University of Ontario, all the while taking courses in art.

Since boyhood he has put that talent to work drawing the wildlife in which he has always had an intent and serious interest. By the time he reached his twenties, Bateman moved away from purely wildlife studies first to impressionism, through cubism to a phase strongly influenced by the Canadian Group of Seven, and finally to a growing interest in abstract expressionism. As his skills as an artist grew, he continued to search for a personal style, while maintaining





Robert Bateman, "Northern Reflections — Loon Family" (1981), 24 inches by 36 inches, oil. On loan from the collection of Their Royal Highnesses, The Prince and Princess of Wales, a wedding gift from the government of Canada.



his personal interest in the world of nature with field trips, sketching, collecting, and work with other naturalists.

Then, in 1962, when Bob was in his mid-thirties, he encountered the work of Andrew Wyeth at a major exhibition at the Albright-Knox Gallery in Buffalo, New York. That Wyeth show became the inspiration that led Bateman to unite his love of wildlife with his artistic skills. "Up until that time in the art world," Bateman says in *The Art of Robert Bateman*, "the surface of the painting was considered important, and the subject was not. Wyeth was a realist whose pictures had great abstract strength. He was doing exciting painting in which the surface of the real world was important too."

Bob soon left for Africa where he was to begin that two year stint teaching geography in Nigeria. During his stay on the continent he traveled extensively, discovering and sketching the countryside and its wildlife, and beginning to paint in the realist style with which Bateman fans are today familiar.

On his return to Ontario, Bob continued to paint African wildlife pictures and also to paint Ontario landscapes and





Robert Bateman, "Courtship Display — Wild Turkey" (1977), 32½ inches by 35½ inches, acrylic

rural settings in a realistic style. Indeed, he had begun to do what he continues today, to paint other places wherever he might be, to stand in his studio in British Columbia painting an African elephant, for example, or a Nepalese leopard.

"But there are whole areas I don't seem to paint," Bateman says. "That doesn't mean I don't like them. It's maybe that I'm more Andrew Wyeth-y or something. I enjoy, for example, swimming in the Coral Reefs and all the color of the tropics, but it's not me. I can't see myself painting a macaw sitting in a hibiscus. Strangely enough, there's a lot of Wyeth quality to East Africa, the grasses, the trees and the rocks."

After successful one-man shows at the Pollock Gallery in Toronto and the Beckett Gallery in Hamilton, Bateman made the decision to concentrate on painting. He stopped teaching for six months to complete paintings for a show at the Tryon Gallery in London, England, one of the foremost galleries for wildlife art in the world.

The success of the Tryon show convinced Bateman to continue painting full time and he has never looked back. Today Bateman's schedule is full for the months and years ahead. He is in demand as a lecturer on wildlife as well as on painting, and he continues to devote a substantial amount of

his time to observing, collecting, and enjoying the birds and animals that inhabit the wilderness of our world.

Asked about how he paints, Bateman has this to say:

"I have a rough idea of what I'd like to do. I do little thumb-nail sketches, a few inches by a few inches, and I obviously know the size of board I'm going to start on, and the shape and proportions. Then I start in on it and the painting constantly has surprises for me. It has traps and pitfalls, wonderful surprises, unpleasant surprises and so on, as I go along. There's really a lot of mystery to it."

Describing how he works, Bob offers a hard data, technical run-down for *Gilcrease Magazine* readers interested in learning how he paints. He will share more of these painting experiences in his lecture at Gilcrease Museum on Sunday, September 21, at 2 p.m.

"I work on quarter-inch Masonite, not tempered, smooth on one side," Bateman said. "I give it three to four coats of gesso, regular acrylic gesso which I cut about one-third to one-half with water so that it goes on quite thin. I put it on with a house paint roller, one of those fuzzy rollers. I usually mix a bit of Payne's gray and raw umber with the gesso.

"I work with the acrylic in liquid form, out of baby food jars, about the consistency of melted ice cream, sort of



Robert Bateman, "Red Wolf — Autumn" (1986), 12 inches by 18 inches, acrylic

Robert Bateman, "Mallard Pair — Early Winter" (1985),
8 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches by 11 $\frac{15}{16}$ inches, acrylic



slooshy, but a bit thick. I primarily use three colors and I do 95 percent of my paintings with these three colors, ultramarine blue, burnt umber and yellow ochre . . . plus white. I also use Payne's gray which is a mixture of burnt umber and ultramarine blue you buy ready mixed. Those would be 95 percent of what I use in my paintings. For the other five percent I buy paint in tubes because I use the colors so seldom, in fact, I can't ever remember finishing a tube. They always last for years, then dry up. Cadmium yellow light, cadmium yellow medium, cadmium red light, thalo blue, and thalo rose — I get all the other colors I might use with those.

"I paint quite a bit with a fairly large hogs hair brush, a round brush. I never use really fine brushes. I like these new imitation sable brushes that are made out of some kind of polyester or whatever. I find they are much better than sable. And they last longer with the acrylic. I also use a foam rubber sponge for misty effects and sky effects and I do layer after layer after layer of very, very thin washes alternating opaque and transparent. I even include white in my washes sometimes, so that I kill the darks; then I reintroduce the darks and do overpainting over the washes. Although I don't consider myself a detail artist, I'll have a relatively large amount of detail and then I'll just take a very big brush and put large light or large dark washes over it to bring out the main rhythms in the painting. Then I'll have to go back in and redefine the stuff I've killed.

"I usually start right in with a brush, just the main shapes. I work quite abstractly when I first start. . . .

"I use the acrylic medium and sometimes give the painting a coat as I go along because I find it seals the painting and I can put my whites on and they don't die on me so much on

varnish. At the end I give a final coat of this acrylic medium, watered-down, for varnish."

One exception to this use of acrylic is the painting, "Northern Reflections: Loon Family," a work in oil which was commissioned by the government of Canada as Canada's wedding gift to His Royal Highness Prince Charles. Bob and Birgit Bateman had the pleasure of seeing it hung with other royal gifts when they visited London in 1981. The painting is on loan to Gilcrease Museum for the Bateman exhibition from the collection of Their Royal Highnesses, The Prince and Princess of Wales.

One of the other paintings of special interest in the Gilcrease Museum show is "Mallard Pair — Early Winter," a 1985 work in acrylic which appears on the first habitat conservation stamp for Wildlife Habitat Canada. Proceeds from the sale of the stamp and from the art print of this image are being used to help preserve wildlife habitats. The painting is on loan from the collection of the artist.

One painting in the Gilcrease exhibition Bateman talks about with special enthusiasm. "Proud Swimmer: Snow Goose" is a study of a snow goose on its nesting territory. It comes from one of the most delightful nesting experiences I've had. I worked with a friend — many of my friends are wildlife biologists, I like to volunteer helping a major 20-year research program studying the snow goose in the Arctic. I was there. I had a territory that I controlled of snow goose colonies, checking each nest each day, watching for the babies to hatch. As soon as the babies would hatch, we would put little web tags, like you use to tag fish, on the webs of their feet. We were able to describe their parents as many, many generations of people have been studying these snow geese, studying the patterns of their



Robert Bateman, "Lion Cubs" (1977), 24 inches by 36 inches, acrylic





Robert Bateman, "Red Squirrel" (1982), 11½ inches by 18 inches, acrylic

parents and grandparents.

"It was so wonderful being in the Arctic at the time when all the birds were breeding, when all around you were countless shore birds and waterfowl, loons and that kind of thing. It really was a thrilling time. I was trying to show in this snow goose painting the kind of brightness, liveliness and excitement of that breeding time in the Arctic, the freshness and clearness."

Asked what his favorite place might be, Bateman replied: "My favorite place to live is the place I'm living or I wouldn't be living there. But my favorite place to visit is unquestionably East Africa, specifically Kenya because it is closest to the Garden of Eden because of the abundance of the wildlife and the tameness of it."

About two years ago Bob and his second wife, Birgit, and their two sons moved to a new home on one of the Gulf Islands of Canada, just north of the San Juan Islands above Seattle. Near Victoria, the house faces south and the Olympic Mountains can be seen from the hill behind it.

"Every time I get home," Bateman affirms, "I'll only be there about two weeks and I have to go off, signing prints or doing promotion or something, but this year I've been home all summer. In September I'm going to be taking part in a

Canadian — I guess you could call it cultural, although that might sound a little snooty — art cruise to Alaska. It leaves Vancouver, then goes up to Glacier Bay in Alaska and returns a week later. There are going to be some of the leading Canadian musicians, plus Irving Layton, Canada's most famous poet, and noted ballerina, Veronica Tennant. I'm the resident artist. Birgit is coming and I'm to give a lecture and I may lead with some bird-watching and that kind of stuff. That should be kind of fun.

"I have a number of paintings that I have to complete, a number of commissions, things that I have to paint in between times. After the Gilcrease opening, in early October, another bit of travel: we're thinking of going to live in a quaint village in southern Germany for the following school year so that our boys can learn German. We're going to go on an exploratory trip, looking at villages and checking out the schools. For the month of November I have a long book promotion tour and then in December, I hope to be at home painting.

"We have all kinds of contacts and I love the Old World cultural aspect. We're within a few hours drive of Venice or going up to Britain or Scotland or Scandinavia or other places."



Robert Bateman, "Smallwood" (1983), 24 inches by 36 inches, acrylic

Looking back at his painter's workshop at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Museum Bateman remembers, "workshops are actually fun, a lot more fun than painting. I was a high school teacher for 20 years and I always said that I taught for fun and I painted for real. I found that the teaching part was social and fun and I've always enjoyed it. I was a teacher even before I was a teacher. I went down to the Royal Ontario Museum and gave classes to the little kids and led them on hikes and stuff like that. I enjoy communicating and talking to people and spreading the word. I find it easy, but the painting is much more serious and much more frustrating and challenging."

Asked if he has a favorite painting of all those he had done, Bob says seriously, "No. I don't. The general category would be that both my wife and I generally like the more abstract or esoteric paintings of mine, rather than the more obvious ones. I never know how they are going to come out though."

"I don't see myself changing, but I hope I keep on getting better. And I hope I never get a formula where I'm just repeating myself, which is part of what I was saying earlier about always striving for variety and surprises, the way I think the natural world is. I know I'll always have this realist quality as far as style goes, but I get my kicks and variety — and I'll never get bored — because of the incredible variety in the subject matter I'm dealing with."

Again, Bateman returns to his recurring concern:

"The sanctity of the variety of our planet is almost my religion. I think it is a desecration how we're wiping out the variety on the planet, replacing it with uniformity and a kind of instant-pudding world. That's what I feel most strongly about. In our generation we're busily making more things extinct than has ever happened before. We're incredibly good at it now. The dinosaurs became extinct, but they were around for a hundred million years. One hundred million years! We've been around for one million years. Do you think we're going to make it for another 99 million?"

"There's a species becoming extinct every day right now and the rate is increasing. By the end of the 1980s there'll be a species becoming extinct every hour. We're moving into areas like the tropical rain forests and we're wiping out species we haven't even described yet. No one even knows they exist and they're already becoming extinct."

Robert Bateman paints the wilderness and its creatures with the concern and knowledge of the dedicated naturalist and the hand and eye of the master painter. While he eschews the rich coloristic world of the great nineteenth century painters of the American wilderness for his own beautiful and subtle depiction, in the truest sense he carries on the great tradition of the New World painters like John James Audubon, Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Moran and other masters found in the Gilcrease collection.

Friends of Gilcrease will find themselves immediately at home in the natural world of Robert Bateman. ©



Robert Bateman, "Vantage Point" (1980), 36 inches by 60 inches, acrylic



Robert Bateman, "Artist and His Dog" (1980), 14 inches by 24 inches, acrylic

ROBERT BATEMAN: A CHRONOLOGY

- 1930** Born May 24 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada to Joseph Wilberforce Bateman and Annie Maria Bateman (nee McLellan). He is the first of three children; brothers John (Jack) and Ross are born in 1933 and 1936.
- 1935–43** Attends primary and elementary school.
- 1938** Bateman family rents and eventually purchases a summer cottage in the Haliburton lakes region of Ontario. Time spent here is an important part of Bob's development as an artist and naturalist.
- 1942** Joins the Junior Field Naturalist's Club at the Royal Ontario Museum. During his adolescent and teen years there he develops his birdwatching skills and ornithological knowledge under the influence of James L. Baillie and Terence Shortt. Shortt, an outstanding bird painter, is a major and long-lasting influence.
- 1943–48** Attends high school at Forest Hill Collegiate in Toronto. During high school he is active in the Biology Club of the University of Toronto.
- 1947–49** Spends three summers working at a government wildlife research camp in Algonquin Park in northern Ontario. Here his enthusiasm grows for the landscapes of the painters of the Canadian Group of Seven school.
- 1948** Begins taking painting lessons from Gordon Payne, a well-respected Toronto artist, who teaches him the basic skills of representational painting.
- 1950** Travels to Vancouver Island by bus, painting and sketching with his friend Erik Thorn.
- 1950–54** Attends the University of Toronto in a four-year honors course in geography. Also takes evening courses in the Nikolaides method of drawing from Carl Schaefer. Summer jobs on geological field parties take him to Newfoundland, Ungava Bay, and Hudson Bay.
- 1954** Graduates from university and takes a painting and sketching tour of Europe and Scandinavia.



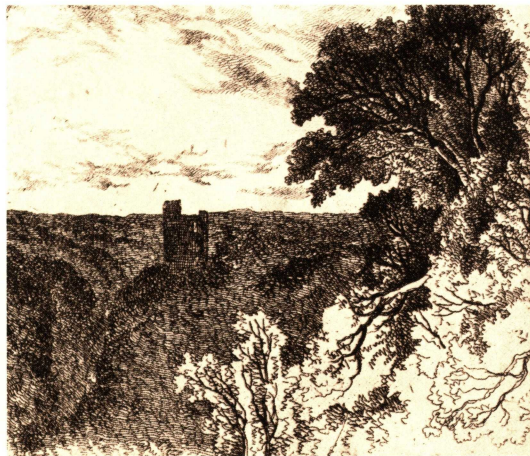
- 1954–63 Experiments with a range of painting styles. From the influence of impressionism and the Canadian Group of Seven, he moved into a cubist phase, and, finally, embraced an abstract-expressionist style.
- 1955 Receives a teaching certificate from the Ontario College of Education and begins a career as a high school teacher of geography and art in Thornhill, Ontario.
- 1957–58 A round-the-world trip in a Land Rover with friends Bristol Foster and Erik Thorn takes him to England, Africa, India, Sikkim, Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, and Australia.
- 1958 Resumes his teaching career in Burlington, Ontario.
- 1960 Marries Suzanne Bowerman, a sculpture student at the Ontario College of Art.
- 1962 Attends a major Andrew Wyeth exhibition at the Albright-Knox Gallery in Buffalo, New York. This encourages him to return to a realist style of painting.
- 1963–65 Spends two years teaching in Nigeria under the sponsorship of Canada's External Aid program. Here he begins painting African wildlife in a naturalist style and begins exhibiting at the Fonville Gallery in Nairobi.
- 1965 A first child, Alan, is born in Nigeria. Later in the year, the family returns to Canada where Bateman resumes teaching in Burlington, Ontario. He continues to paint African wildlife pictures for the Fonville Gallery in Kenya and begins painting Ontario landscapes and rural settings in a realistic style.
- 1966 A second child, Sarah, is born.
- 1967 A series of historical scenes of Halton County, Ontario, are painted as the artist's own Canadian Centennial project and are shown at the Alice Peck Gallery in Burlington, Ontario.
- 1968 John, the third Bateman child, is born.
- 1969 A one-man show is held at the Pollock Gallery in Toronto.
- 1971 A well-received show at the Beckett Gallery in Hamilton, Ontario, encourages him to concentrate on wildlife paintings.
- 1975 A large show at the Tryon Gallery in London, England, one of the world's foremost galleries of wildlife art, is sold out. This convinces him that he should paint full time.
— *Animals in Art*, a group exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum in the same year, brings his work to Canadian attention.
— Marries Birgit Freybe after his first marriage concludes in divorce.
- 1976 A fourth child, Christopher, is born.
- 1978 Shows are held at the Beckett Gallery, Hamilton, and the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Ontario.
— Mill Pond Press begins distributing Bateman images as limited-edition, signed prints. Over 180 Bateman paintings have become prints since this program was launched.
— Travels to the Falkland Island and the Antarctic aboard the Lindblad *Explorer*.
- 1979 Robbie Bateman, a fifth child, is born.
- 1980 Drawing lots for paintings is required at sold-out shows at the Beckett Gallery and The Sportsman's Edge Gallery in New York City.
— Bateman is named "Artist of the Year" by *American Artist* magazine.
— Visits Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands.
- 1981 *Images of the Wild*, a major Bateman show organized by the National Museum of Natural Sciences, opens in Ottawa, Canada, and travels to museums in Quebec City, Winnipeg, Vancouver, and Toronto over the next two years.
— *Northern Reflections* — *Loon Family*, a painting commissioned by the Governor-General of Canada, is the official wedding gift of the people of Canada to Prince Charles.
— *The Art of Robert Bateman* is published, a large-format art book featuring over eighty color reproductions of Bateman paintings, with an introduction by Roger Tory Peterson and a text by Ramsay Derry.
— Visits New Zealand, Australia's Great Barrier Reef, and Melanesia.
- 1982 Explores the Queen Charlotte Islands.
— Bateman and three of his children visit the game parks of East Africa.
- 1983 The *Images of the Wild* exhibit opens at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, and eventually travels to St. Louis, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Greenville, South Carolina.
— He visits Alaska for the first time.
- 1984 Bateman is named an Officer of the Order of Canada.
— *Robert Bateman: Artist and Naturalist*, a one-hour television documentary, is shown on the Canadian Broadcasting network.
- 1985 The Tryon Gallery in London exhibits a major Bateman show.
— *The World of Robert Bateman*, a second book devoted to the work of Robert Bateman, is published. ◻

THE PRINTS OF THOMAS MORAN

BY ANNE MORAND

THE NAME THOMAS MORAN brings to mind grand and beautiful, exciting and colorful visions of the wonders of the American West in the nineteenth century. Rich and gracious oils, delicate and romantic watercolors were his key to immortality. But there is another side to this consummate artist, one which has been somewhat overlooked in the study of his work. Moran was one of the most important members of the painter-etcher movement in America in the late nineteenth century.

The painter-etcher movement in America was a result of the etching revivals which had begun in mid-century in France and England. In those countries etching societies



Thomas Moran, "A Landscape" (1856),
3 inches by 3 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches, etching

were formed to help promote artist-printmakers and their work as original. The New York Etching Club was formed in 1877 and aspired to the same goal.

Moran's beginnings as an artist were also his beginnings as a printmaker. Apprenticed at the age of 16 to the wood engraving firm of

Scattergood and Telfer, he spent only a short time actually carving the blocks of wood from which prints were made. Moran found the task tedious. It involved working with pieces of smooth grained boxwood, the surfaces of which had been highly polished. An image had been drawn on the surface and the pieces bolted together to form the large image. The apprentice's job was to learn to carefully remove





T. Moran

Thomas Moran, "Rural Scene of Trees and Pond" (1860), 3¼ inches by 6⅝ inches, *cliché-verre*

all the remaining white space, leaving the lines and dark areas standing in relief. When printed, the drawing was reproduced in reverse.

Moran's innate talent as a draftsman saved him from seven years of drudgery (the usual length of time for an apprenticeship). When his abilities as an artist were discovered, he was put to work reproducing the designs of another established artist on the block for another craftsman to carve. Even this was not to Moran's liking, as he hated drawing the designs of others. Even though he was eventually allowed to draw the original designs, he soon sought to be released from his apprenticeship to pursue a career as a painter. When he was 18, his paintings were selling at ten to fifteen dollars apiece and he hoped to become a successful landscape painter. Although he left the wood engraving firm, he took with him valuable lessons in line mastery and composition, and because of his early work as an engraver, he developed discipline and a sureness of touch.

From such humble beginnings, Moran went on to become one of America's foremost landscape painters. But

he never left the activity of printmaking completely. After his early exposure, he returned again to printmaking in various other forms: in 1856 he made his first etching, in 1860 he experimented with the novel medium of *cliché-verre*, during the 1860s he created an estimated 40 lithographs, and then in the 1870s returned again to etching when his interest was rekindled by the painter-etcher movement and encouraged by his wife's involvement in the medium. Mary Nimmo Moran (*Gilcrease Magazine*, Vol. 6, October 1984) also became an important member of the American painter-etcher movement. Thomas Moran worked steadily at his etching, along with painting and traveling, until the early 1890s, when his interest as well as that of the public waned in original prints.

Although he would not produce original prints after about 1892, the work which he created during a 30 year span as a printmaker had an impact and a lasting importance. Moran's first attempt to produce an original print was made in 1856 when he etched a small landscape after the English artist Birket Foster. This tiny, simple image undeniably shows an early mastery of line. Apparently, since he was without



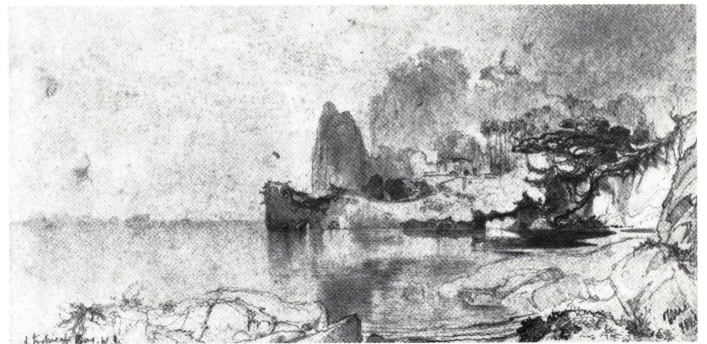
A Composition Bay of Naples. Moran. 1867.

Thomas Moran, "A Composition. Bay of Naples" (1867), 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches by 10 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches, lithograph

training in the medium, this etching was a true experiment. Sometime later, in 1860 or 1861, Moran and his brother-in-law Stephen Ferris were given a demonstration in the art by Philadelphia artist-etcher John Sartain. Moran made a second etching about this time, also reproducing another artist's work, but he left the medium for a while to pursue other interests, one of which was the very unusual and experimental medium of *cliché-verre*. This process, which translates from the French as "glass print," was developed there in the early part of the nineteenth century.

It is not known how Moran was introduced to glass prints. He may have seen John Ehninger's book *Autographic Drawings*, published in 1859, which included several examples. However he learned of the technique, he produced at least five subjects, three of which, dated 1860, are included in the Gilcrease collection.

The process is intriguing. Made without camera or a press, the medium incorporates some of the characteristics of photography and etching. A glass negative plate is covered with an opaque material called a ground. This can be either printer's ink, which is very stiff, or collodian, a gluey



Thomas Moran, "A Tropical Bay" (1865), 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 10 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches, pencil



Thomas Moran, "Port Madoc, Wales" (1882-83), 8 inches by 11 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches, etching

mixture of guncotton, alcohol and ether. Either surface can then be dusted white and the plate laid on a black surface to facilitate drawing. Then with a point, lines are drawn into the ground, exposing the clear glass. The plate is then laid on sensitized photographic paper and exposed to light. The light passes through the lines and transfers the drawing to the paper, which is developed in the same manner as a photograph. There are a number of ways to manipulate surface tone to impart atmospheric effects. The resulting print is rather flat, but very interesting. Some artists of the nineteenth century used other techniques to give a more painterly appearance to the resulting print, but Moran chose to use line only to achieve a beautiful simplicity. With line, Moran could create depth, tone, light, and shadow, even in a simple composition.

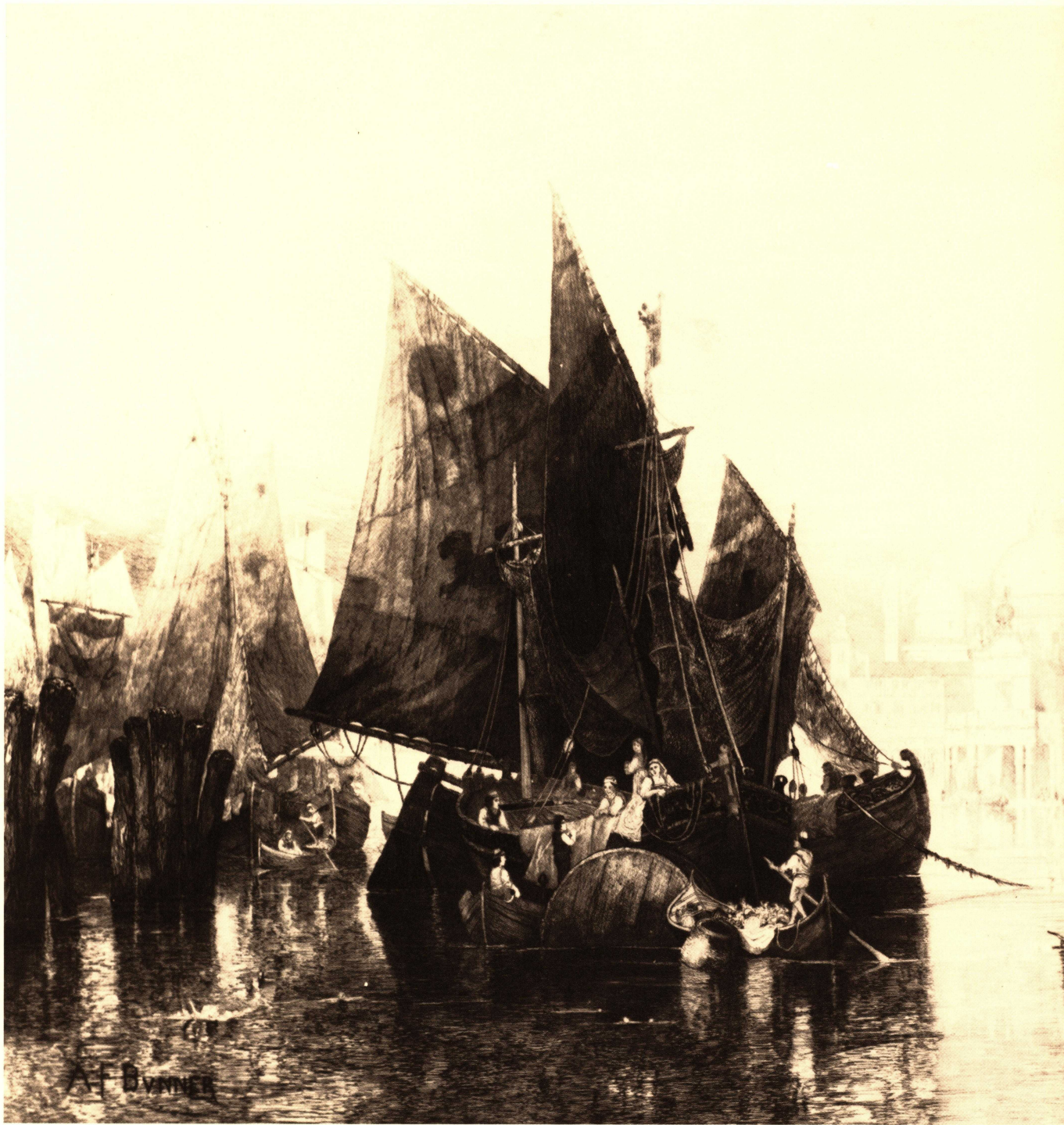
During this time and beyond, from 1859 to 1869, Moran was occupied with the medium of lithography. This method of making original prints (not to be confused with the photomechanical processes which would incorporate the term lithography into their names) was developed in 1798 by a German, Alois Senefelder. Used as a method of making

multiple images for illustration purposes, lithography was also treated as a fine art medium by many artists. The process of lithography is complicated. The printed surface is a very smooth, thick block of fine-grained limestone. On the surface a drawing is made with a greasy crayon. The end result is that the surface of the stone where the drawing appears is very ink receptive and the blank areas around it are very ink repellant. The stone is inked and the excess ink is removed. The paper is placed on the stone, and through the action of a press, the image is transferred from the stone to the paper. Although the stone must be re-inked for each image, many can be made without any wearing down of the stone or image.

The subjects of Moran's 22 lithographs in the Gilcrease collection are hauntingly beautiful scenes of the area around the Great Lakes, such as *Solitude* and *Desolation* and scenes of the Mediterranean such as the *Bay of Baiae* and *A Composition. The Bay of Naples*. Moran created eight lithographs for the series conceived but never completed called *Studies and Pictures by Thomas Moran*, to have been printed by a Philadelphia printer, James McGuigan. The



Thomas Moran, "Sailboat After Chase" (1890), 16 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches by 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches, etching



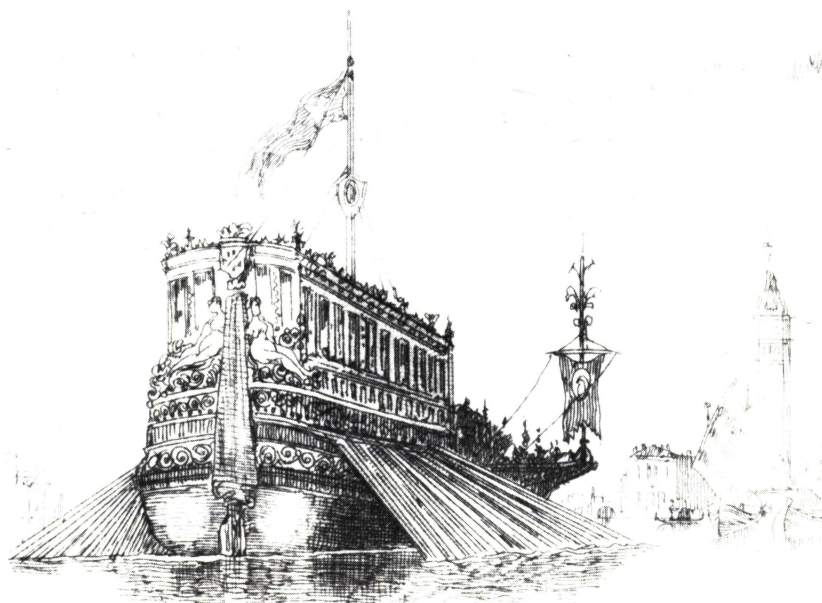
Thomas Moran, "Venice" (1887), 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches by 29 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches, etching



lithographs have a lovely richness to them, imparted by the very dimensional line of the lithographic crayon. Moran applied the crayon drawing, then scraped away areas for lights against darks.

Moran sketched a great deal from nature, then used the sketches to create his finished compositions. Compare the lithograph *A Composition. Bay of Naples* to the sketch called, oddly enough, *A Tropical Bay, W.I.* The drawing is not identical, but very similar to and certainly the preparation for the lithograph. The images are the reverse of each other because in the print media the resulting image is a reversal of the original stone or plate drawing. The comparison shows how Moran used sketches for his finished works. A comparison of the technique and style of the drawing and the lithograph also shows how closely related the two media are, at least in Moran's hands.

In 1869 Moran completed his last lithograph and never again returned to the medium, for reasons unknown. It is a shame to have so few examples of an art that was so obviously a major accomplishment with Moran. During the next few years, Moran was extremely busy, with contracts, commissions, and western travels. Although he was painting more and more, he was still quite occupied with creating



imagery to be used in the form of wood engraved illustrations for periodicals such as *The Aldine*, *Scribner's Monthly*, *Harper's Weekly*, and *St. Nicholas*. Western travels, the new popularity of the illustrated story, and Moran's incredible output of original and printed works were a combination which would lead the way for Moran's assurance of success, fame and popularity for the next 50 years of his life and then beyond. During this very active time for Moran, he returned to the medium of etching which he had left almost 20 years earlier.

The medium was experiencing a revival. The revival had

begun in England and France a decade earlier and reached the United States in the form of demonstrations by painter-etchers, treatises, other publications on etchings, lectures, and the establishment of numerous painter-etcher societies. The earliest and most important of these societies was the New York Etching Club, founded in 1877. Etchings became very attractive to collectors. They could have an inexpensive work of art, from the hand of the artist, for little more than it cost to have a reproduction.

Moran's travels to Europe with his wife had meant exposure for the two of them to the etching revival, and they



Moran. after J. M. Turner R.A.



T. Moran,

Thomas Moran, "Bridge in the Pass of Glencoe — Scotland" (1882-88),
9¼ inches by 11¾ inches, etching

were among those who were most active in America. Moran was one of the founding members of the New York Etching Club, and Mary would soon become a member. Mary learned to etch from her husband, an activity which not only helped her pass the long hours while he was away in the West, but also served as an outlet for her own ability as an artist. Due to the New York atmosphere and his wife's proclivity for the medium, Moran's interest was definitely renewed. Though Mary considered Thomas her teacher, he acknowledged her talent as independent of his. Their styles were observably different. Much of their subject matter was similar (both created landscapes of the surrounding Long Island), but while Mary preferred to work on a plate *en plein air*, Thomas preferred to make sketches in the field, then return to the studio to do his etching.

In 1878 Moran purchased an etching press and during the next fourteen years, produced over 80 different etched subjects. Of those Gilcrease has 63, and multiples of many of the individual subjects. The subjects vary from scenes of his Long Island environment, and scenes of England, Scotland and Wales, to those of Mexico and the western United States. He also made a number of reproductive etchings

after the paintings of others, following a pattern established by his earlier work in the medium. While reproductive etchings were not as highly valued as original etchings, they were a lucrative source of income and artists often resorted to their production. Even though of less value, reproductive etchings still ranked above wood engravings and the newer photomechanical reproductions.

The process of etching is very different from that of lithographic or glass prints. Those are planographic or flat surface prints. Etching is an intaglio or relief process. Where the forte of lithograph is the production of beautiful tone, that of etching is the production of exquisite line. By varying the quantity and quality of line, the etching is built. The process, as complicated as lithography but completely different, employs a metal plate into which lines are cut by the action of acids. The plate is covered with a protective ground, the metal is exposed by a sharp instrument which does not cut into the metal, and the plate is bathed in an acid solution. Variations in time and intensity produce lines of varying thickness and depth. The surface is cleaned, the plate inked. The ink is forced into the etched lines, then the surface is cleaned. The plate is then pressed onto the



Moran.

Thomas Moran, "A Study of Willows" (1879), 3 inches by 6¾ inches, etching

surface of a dampened paper and the action of the press forces the paper into the etched lines of the plate, where it receives ink. This very simple explanation is only the beginning. Successive bitings or bathings of the plate in acids, manipulations of the ink with various devices on the surface of the plate, can all be employed to enhance the print beyond pure line and paper.

Moran apparently really enjoyed the art of etching. Where he had hated the tedium and slowness of the process of wood engraving, he delighted in the speed and freedom of etching. His etchings are very romantic in feeling. The manipulation of the tone, and the atmospheric quality of the landscapes, from large expansive scenes to smaller, more intimate views of nature, make his work quite beautiful. His line quality is very expressive, and even though he worked in the studio, there is an immediacy and a freshness to his original work. Many of the prints give no hint to the tremendous amount of work and reworking which went into their production.

Moran's etching production is easy to trace. In 1889 Christian Klackner, a New York dealer, had an exhibition, "The Complete Etched Works of Thomas Moran, N.A. and

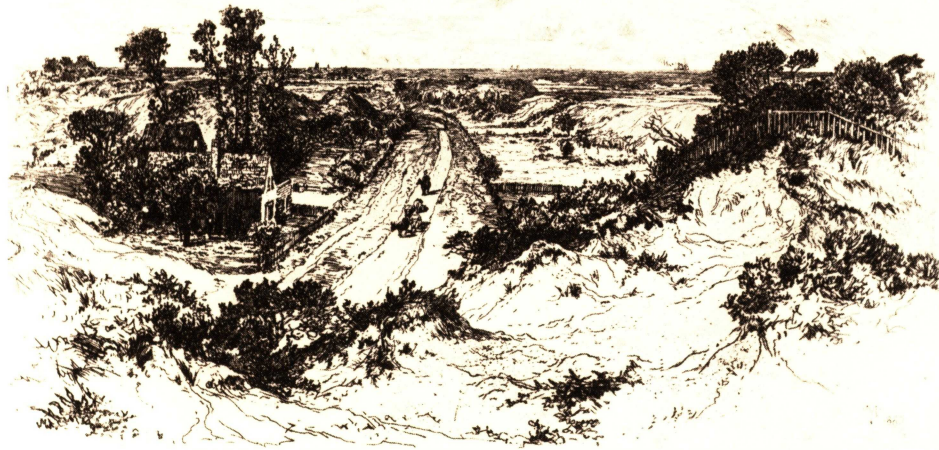
M. Nimmo Moran, S.P.E." Included were almost all of his works to date. The published catalog listed them all with distinguishing information: size, price, and description. It appears that after the exhibition and sale, Moran produced only a few etchings.

The Moran studio collection offers the world a rare look at how Moran created his prints. He apparently was somewhat of an incurable collector and kept everything which might be remotely important. Among the studio materials were the 398 prints in the Gilcrease collection. Most important among those works are not the finished prints. Those exist also in a number of important public collections: Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Metropolitan Museum, and various divisions of the Smithsonian Institution. What the Gilcrease collection has are the unique works in progress. Among the 316 etchings there are 63 different images. The additional works are additional impressions. These include different states and stages, as well as multiple proofs making up the finished edition. The variety in the states and stages attest to Moran's experimental nature and to the nature of etching itself. The etcher has a general idea of the appearance of the print from the plate, but until proofs are



Moran.

Thomas Moran, "A Tower of Cortez — Mexico" (1883), 11½ inches by 9½ inches, etching



Moran.

Thomas Moran, "A Road Near the Sea — Easthampton" (1880), 8 inches by 11 inches, etching

pulled from the plate, there is a lot of guesswork. Changes often occur between the first proofs and the final form of the print. Line can be added, or taken away; tones can be enhanced; compositions can be altered drastically. Experimentation also occurs with the type of paper used. Different papers accept ink differently. Moran used at least four types of paper regularly.

From the examination of the studio print collection we know that Moran was intense and methodical about his print work. He was very particular about the final appearance and his notes on some of the printer's proofs (Moran could print his own plates, but often gave them to professional printers after his final changes were made) are very specific about how he wanted the plate handled. We know that he could go to great lengths to produce a final image, evidenced by the pencil and watercolor sketches, the sometimes as many as three major state changes in the plate, and the variety of effects in the proofs before he decided upon a final image. We also know of the variety of his work, the wide range of subject matter, compositional forms and techniques.

And, finally, we have great insight about how prolific and busy he was. During the time of his etching production, he made not less than eight major excursions to the West and

to Europe, as well as numerous lesser trips around his immediate environment. The major trips included a commission from the B & O Railroad which sent him down the seaboard route, and then out the western route of the railroad in 1881. He had been to the Tetons and visited the Donner Pass in the summer of 1879. In 1882 he spent over four months in Great Britain, visiting England, Scotland, and Wales. He spent the early months of 1883 in Mexico, having sailed from New York to Mexico. In 1886 he made his long anticipated visit to Venice and remained over three months. It is astonishing to imagine how busy he was during those years, as he was also painting and providing illustrations for wood engravings for various books and periodicals.

Thomas Moran, through his far-reaching and wide-ranging body of work, was responsible in part for the increasing appreciation of the American public for American art. His paintings and prints were collected extensively during his lifetime and continue to be today. He often had more work than he could handle and continued to receive commissions late in his long career. Gilcrease Museum is fortunate to have as part of the art collection, not just examples of one phase of this extraordinary talent, but of many. ☺

About the Catalog:

"The Prints of Thomas Moran"

THE CULMINATION OF nearly three years of intensive study of the Moran print collection at Gilcrease is the publication of a catalog which represents several firsts. It is the first major catalog of any single part of the Gilcrease collection. It is the first major publication from Gilcrease to be funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. It is also the first major publication to result from cooperation between Gilcrease Museum and the University of Tulsa.

The catalog, though prepared in conjunction with an exhibition, is more than an exhibition catalog. It is the initial effort in a long-desired project to catalog the Gilcrease collection in book form. The enormity of the collection has intimidated us for a long time, because no one volume could possibly do justice to all the works in the art collection. So through a combination of funding and interest on the part of staff and researchers, we are beginning to produce a multi-volume catalog.

The decision to start with the prints of Thomas Moran might seem odd. Why not Remington or Russell, or even the Moran

paintings? The answer is complex. The Moran collection is the largest part of the Gilcrease collection. It makes up roughly one-fourth of the total art collection, and we receive more inquiries in various forms about it than any other part. The aspect of a studio collection makes it extremely important for research, inside and outside the staff, but due to limitations, it is the most difficult part of the collection to work with.

Activity began in 1983 with the exploration of the work of Mary Nimmo Moran, a substantial part of the studio collection. Continuing from there, the natural course was to go on to Thomas' work. The studio collection is too large to be handled in a single volume. The prints represent nearly 400 works, the sketches nearly 1000, and add to those figures another 50 or so oils and watercolors. Then there are nearly 1000 additional works Moran himself collected and kept, works of his family, who were artists, and his friends, and it is evident that a single volume dedicated to that much work would be unwieldy. So we began with the smaller part of the collection, the prints. Also, we wanted to take advantage of local expertise.

Nancy Friese, assistant professor of art at the University of Tulsa, is the co-author of the catalog and the co-curator of the exhibition. A painter and printmaker, she has spent a great deal of time in the study of the technical aspects of

printmaking in the development of the media. This fall she has been granted a leave of absence from the University of Tulsa to accept a position of visiting professor at Princeton University. Before she left, she completed the mammoth task of cataloging and classifying the prints.

At the beginning of the project two years ago, we very optimistically applied for support from the National Endowment for the Arts. The grant request was accepted and with that acceptance came support from the University of Tulsa and the State Arts Council of Oklahoma. We began the task of putting our research into a format and to plan the catalog and exhibition which accompanies it. The product is a 300 page, fully illustrated catalog and the exhibition of over 100 works, which will be on view October 18, 1986 to January 18, 1987. This project has also helped us prepare for the next volume on the paintings and drawings of Thomas Moran, anticipated to be finished in 1988. ◡

. . . *Anne Morand*

GILCREASE BOOK REVIEWS

BY MILDRED LADNER THOMPSON

THE WEST OF THE IMAGINATION by the father-son team of William H. Goetzmann and William N. Goetzmann (Norton, \$34.95) sounds like a book that has been waiting to be written.

Due to be published in October, the book combines the efforts of a Pulitzer Prize winning historian at the University of Texas and his art historian son, former director of the Museum of Western Art in Denver. Together they explore the myth-making of the artists from Catlin to O'Keeffe who have amplified the drama of the American frontier through their evocative work.

With 200 illustrations (160 in full color), the book sets forth the West "first as an Eden, peopled with noble warriors." Frontier life, "the fur trapper, cavalryman, cowboy and farmer . . . on the Overland Trail, the Gold Rush and (in) San Francisco" are dealt with. The rise and fall of the western film, the images of Dorothea Lange and other photographers and new works by Native American artists, also are promised in this colorful compendium which bears on its dust jacket Thomas Moran's "The Mirage." The book ties in with a six-part PBS series of the same name, for which Gilcrease Museum Director Fred Myers served on the advisory committee.

* * *

The Life and Times of James Willard Schultz (Apikuni) by Warren L. Hanna (University of Oklahoma Press, \$24.95) is a biography with enough colorful material to make parts of it read like a novel.

Those who know Schultz's work, *My Life As an Indian, Blackfeet and Buffalo, Why Gone Those Times?* (*Blackfoot Tales*), will find the chronicle of the writer's own experiences as much of a western saga as the Indian life he depicted.

Schultz left his home in Boonville, New York, in 1877, bound for Fort Benton, Montana Territory. There the 18-year-old fell under the spell of Indian life and of the Blackfoot girl he nicknamed Natahki (Blackfoot for "cute" or "pretty"). He returned East at age 21, but the call of his life in Montana with Natahki brought him back. His association with the famed trader Joe Kipp, experiences in the rugged country now encompassed by Glacier Park, his miserable second marriage of twenty years duration to a mail order

worker beloved as he was by the Blackfoot tribes, are set forth here in detail.

Schultz's only child, the son of his Natahki, was Lone Wolf (Hart Merriam Schultz) whose work can be found in the Gilcrease art collection.

Unfortunately the biographer, a retired lawyer, chose to structure his book in episodes and personality profiles rather than integrating the story of Schultz, his family and associates, into a smoothly flowing narrative.

* * *

THOMAS GILCREASE MUSEUM ASSOCIATION members who took part in a past trip to the Yucatan and may anticipate another Mexican sojourn will welcome the revised and enlarged second edition of *A Guide to Ancient Maya Ruins* by C. Bruce Hunter (University of Oklahoma Press, \$19.95 hardback, \$12.95 softback).

Hunter conducts readers through 24 sites, all in Mexico, illustrating his updated text with close to 200 illustrations including color and black-and-white photos, maps and site plans. The author has led study field trips to these sites for the American Museum of Natural History for over 30 years.

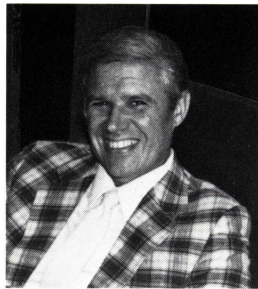
* * *

THE APACHES called him "Paper Medicine Man;" the Sioux knew him as "Ink Man." His story is told in *Paper Medicine Man: John Gregory Bourke and His American West* by Joseph C. Porter (University of Oklahoma Press, \$29.95).

A soldier/scientist with an international reputation as an ethnologist and military historian, Bourke also was a prolific writer. During 30 years of Army service, most of it in the post-Civil War West, Bourke became involved with Indian life and culture and was invited to work with the U.S. Bureau of Ethnology. He was deeply concerned with the government's treatment of the Indians and became a staunch defender of their rights. For whatever reason, he never rose in rank beyond captain.

Porter is curator of Western American history and ethnology at the Joslyn Art Museum's Center for Western Studies in Omaha. ☐

Message from the Director



THESE ARE GREAT DAYS at Gilcrease Museum — times of change, times of growth.

The building construction contractors have been on the job now for a little over a year. Their schedule projections show the whole job as being completed by next summer. The bulk of the new construction is actually complete right now. Remarkably the erection of the three story addition to the west has proceeded with very little disruption of museum operations. In fact, visitors need to keep out a sharp eye to notice that there is a new 54,000-square-foot structure now attached to the old building.

Remodeling of the front entrance and the library, however, will not be easy to overlook since they will block accustomed paths of circulation. For the museum it will be a bit like wearing braces on your

teeth — more than a little embarrassing, especially so to adolescent persons and just maturing museums (which is where Gilcrease falls in its institutional life cycle), but well worth the awkward period in view of anticipated improvement. With Gilcrease Museum, improvements will be dramatic not only in appearance but also in function, moving the museum into state-of-the-art mechanical systems to better protect and preserve our treasures.

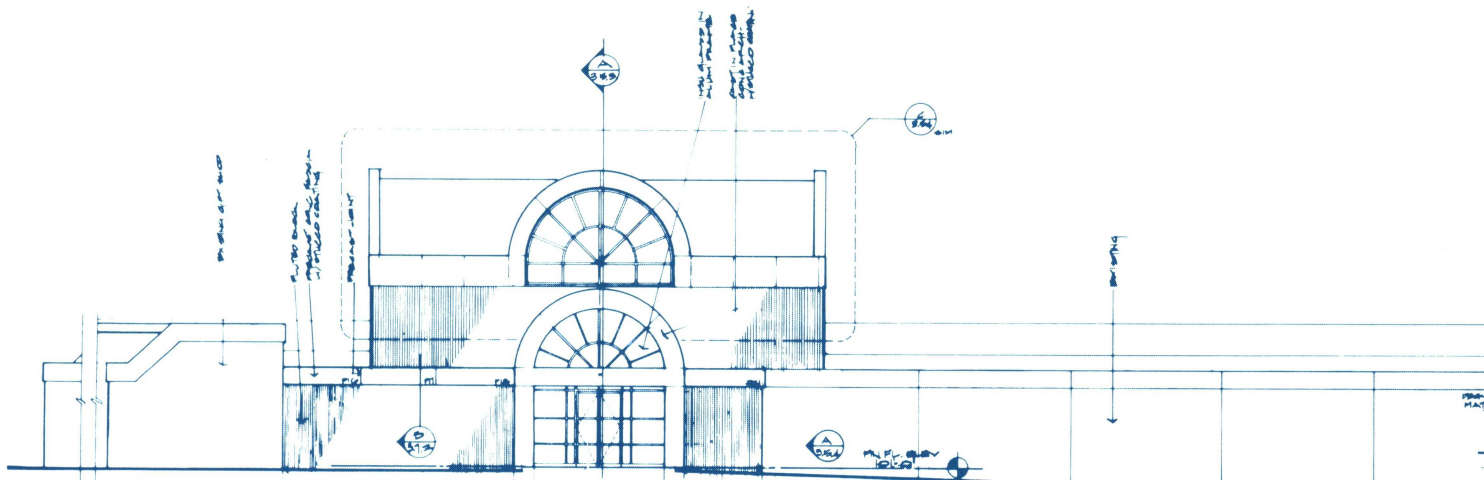
Planning for expanded programs to grace our new facility proceeds on many fronts. New initiatives in education will soon bear fruit. Important acquisitions keyed to a collection's "wish list" are in process. Exciting loan exhibitions and publications to mark the beginning of a new Gilcrease era are being negotiated with sister institutions. All in all, the shape of the mid-term future is coming into focus and it looks great.

What with all the planning and anticipa-

tion, however, this year has not been neglected. The exhibition schedule, for instance, is splendid. First, the Robert Bateman wildlife painting exhibition; then the rug and jewelry sale in the Museum shop; Anne Morand's Thomas Moran print exhibition with its accompanying book; "American Art in Miniature;" "Holidays at Gilcrease," a modern master painting show (Teague, Lovell, Clymer); and finally in the Spring our Rendezvous celebration with this year's artists Bettina Steinke and Fritz White.

If anyone believes that growth (and the often necessary teeth braces) can be intimidating, evidence is not to be found at Gilcrease Museum as it moves confidently from youth into young adulthood.

Fred A. Tegen



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FRONT COVER:

Robert Bateman's "A Resting Place — Cape Buffalo" (1986), 28 inches by 48 inches, acrylic.

BACK COVER:

Morris Rippel's watercolor, "The Mower" (1986), 7½ inches by 12 inches, watercolor.

ILLUSTRATIONS:

All the illustrations for the article, "The Prints of Thomas Moran," are from the collection of the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art.

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American Art in Miniature



Morris Rippel, "The Mower," (1986),
7½ inches by 12 inches, watercolor

"American Art in Miniature: 1986" is an exhibition of small scale paintings by 50 of the best living American realistic painters that will offer a glimpse into the varied world of current American art. This is the third miniature painting exhibition at Gilcrease and it will open November 22. The artists include Tony Angell, Joe Beeler, Glenna Goodacre, Gary Niblett, Tom Ryan, Paul Strisik, Hollis Williford, Wayne Wolfe, Wilson Hurley, and Morris Rippel, whose new work, "The Mower," is shown here. The "American Art in Miniature" preview and wall sale for Gilcrease members will be on the evening of November 21. The exhibition will be on display through December 15.