

# WILLIAM R. TALBOT

## FINE ART, ANTIQUE MAPS & PRINTS

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### WINTER 2009 SELECTIONS

*Please visit our Web site at [www.WilliamTalbot.com](http://www.WilliamTalbot.com) and click on the "2009 Catalogue" for photographs of each item in detail. Hard copies of the photographs are available upon request.*

1. George Catlin. **"Catlin's North American Indian Portfolio. Hunting Scenes and Amusements of the Rocky Mountains and Prairies of America. From Drawings and Notes of the Author, Made during Eight Years' Travel amongst Forty-Eight of the Wildest and Most Remote Tribes of Savages in North America."** (London: J. E. Adlard, 1844 [1855–65] first edition, second issue). Complete folio with bound title page, introduction and text accompanying 25 plates lithographed by Day & Haghe, Lithographers to the Queen, in black, white and sepia tones ("in printed tints") on heavy-weight paper. Original portfolio in three-quarter red morocco with green pebbled cloth, rope design embossing, gilt embossed decorative leather title panel, and gilt embossed titling on spine. Folio: 24 x 17 1/2." Sheets: 23 1/2 x 17 1/4." Worn at spine and corners. Original cloth ties frayed to attachment points. 3 x 1/4" separation of cloth from leather at front cover. Minor soiling and spotting on lower 1/4 of title page. Plates have minor marginal age toning and wear at sheet corners, as is usual. With generally clean and bright images, overall condition is very fine.

\$70,000.

During the 1830s, Catlin lived for years among the various North American Indian tribes, studying their ways. His published works provide us with the most authentic anthropological record of these already vanishing people.

*A young lawyer turned portraitist, George Catlin traveled west from his home in Pennsylvania in 1830 to fulfill his dream of recording on canvas the North American Indians and their way of life. It was his desire, he said, to paint "faithful portraits of their principal personages, both men and women, from each tribe, views of their villages games, etc., and [to keep] full notes on their character and history. I designed, also, to procure their costumes, and a complete collection of their manufactures and weapons, and to perpetuate them in a Gallery Unique, for the instruction of the ages." (Wagner)*

Catlin's Gallery included more than four hundred painted portraits and scenes of tribal life, from which the illustrations for his books were drawn.

Shortly after taking his "Gallery" to England for an extended period, Catlin self-published the first of the many editions of the *North American Indian Portfolio*. The prints were completed by the British lithographic firm Day & Haghe. Two first editions were issued: the "*regular . . . in printed tints*" for five guineas and the *de luxe* for eight guineas, printed in tints and hand colored.

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to record what he saw. Catlin's study remains one of the most widely circulated works on American Indians written in the nineteenth century, and the illustrations are valued for their highly important visual documentation of indigenous Indian life in the American West.

Refs.: Howes C-243; McCracken, no. 10; Sabin, no. 11532, Wagner-Camp, no. 105a-1.

## 2. A Rare and Unusual Image of Northern New Mexico

Mabel Dwight. **“Penitentes Church,”** 1929. Lithograph. Image: 10 x 13 1/4.” Sheet: 11 1/2 x 16.” Titled by artist in pencil at l.c.: Penitentes Church. Signed and dated by artist in pencil at l.r.: Mabel Dwight—1929. Very light, even age toning. 1/4” marginal tear at l.l. Fine.

\$4,500.

A very important printmaker of the Depression Era, Mabel Dwight is known primarily for her Social Realist images of New York City, often satirical depictions crowded with comic and tragic figures. “Penitentes Church” is a striking departure for the artist—a scene devoid of figures that borders on an Expressionist representation. A snow-covered churchyard dominates the picture, with a simple adobe church behind, and mountains beyond. The rawness of the weathered crosses, their dynamic angles, and the sweeping mountains and clouds in the distance strongly contrast with the notion of a resting place.

The *Penitentes* of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado is a lay confraternity whose foundation dates to Mexican independence in 1821, when missionaries were withdrawn from the area. In the mid-nineteenth century, when the region became an American territory, *Penitentes* were driven underground and became a “secret society,” and then in the mid-twentieth century they were reconciled with the church. Mabel Dwight's depiction and its title give a sense of the anonymity and seclusion of this community during their underground phase.

Mabel Dwight (1876–1955) was born in Cincinnati and raised in New Orleans and San Francisco where she attended the Hopkins School of Fine Art. Born Mabel Jacque Williamson, she was married to the artist Eugene Higgins for some time after moving to Greenwich Village in 1903. Following their separation, she assumed the name Dwight, and became a founding member of the influential Whitney Studio Club.

It was not until 1926, at the age of 52, that Dwight found her medium in lithography when she went to Paris to study with the printmaker Cuchatel. Her work was soon recognized with reproductions in *Vanity Fair*, a national touring exhibition, and prominence among artists represented by the Weyhe Gallery in New York City. Howard Cook, who was also represented by Weyhe Gallery, likely influenced other artists such as Dwight to visit New Mexico at the time (Adams). During the Great Depression, Dwight also participated in the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

Dwight's artworks are part of a number of important collections, including the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston, the Georgia Museum of Art in Athens, Harvard University Art Museums, the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington D.C., the Smithsonian Institution, and the U.S. Library of Congress. Another copy of the present print forms part of the collection of the Tamarind Institute in Albuquerque.

Refs.: Adams, *Printmaking in New Mexico 1880–1990*, p. 36, pl. 30; Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, *An American Collection*, p. 230; Georgia Museum of Art, *The American Scene on Paper*, p. 85–91; National Museum of Women in the Arts, *The Permanent Collection*, nmwa.org; Wolff, *AngloModern*, p. 31.

3. Arnold Rönnebeck. **“Rain in the Jemez Mountains, N.M.”** 1931. Lithograph, no. 12 of 50. Image: 9 3/4 x 14 1/4.” Sheet: 11 1/2 x 16.” Signed in pencil, l. r.: “Arnold Rönnebeck - 31.” Titled in pencil, l. l.: “Rain in the Jemez Mountains, N.M. #12/50.” Very light, even age toning. Very fine.

Please inquire.

Initially trained as a sculptor at the Berlin Royal Art School, the German-born lithographer Arnold Rönnebeck (1885-1947) brought what can only be called a sculptural vigor to his landscape subjects in two dimensions. A robust three-dimensionality certainly underlies the dynamism in the lithograph offered here, in which the artist depicts a cloudburst over the Jemez Mountains of northern New Mexico. Rönnebeck conveys the fury of the storm through a series of interlocking diagonals by which he defines clouds and sheets of rain. He juxtaposes the agitated diagonals of the raging winds and rain against the orderly geometry of the solid landforms below—a statement on the clash of primeval forces in nature.

Rönnebeck first came to New Mexico in 1925, at the encouragement of his friend Marsden Hartley, whom he had met in Paris some twenty years earlier. While in Paris, Rönnebeck studied with Aristide Maillol and became part of the avant-garde circle that included Gertrude and Leo Stein, as well as Hartley. Another member of the circle was Karl von Freyburg, Rönnebeck's cousin and later the subject of Hartley's famous German Officer series.

In 1923, Rönnebeck moved to New York City, and at the behest of Hartley he entered the circle of artists and writers around Alfred Stieglitz. In this milieu, Rönnebeck became acquainted with Mabel Dodge Luhan, the wealthy New York City hostess extraordinaire who had moved her salon to Taos in 1918.

As with so many artists visiting Taos, Rönnebeck stayed with Mabel Dodge, now the doyenne of the Taos modernist colony. The visit changed both his professional and his personal life. He was deeply impressed by the landscape and the native people, and he met his future wife, Louise Emerson, whom he married in New York in 1926. Soon after, the couple moved to Denver where Rönnebeck became director of the Denver Art Museum, a position he held until 1930. The couple remained in Colorado, but periodically visited New Mexico, the landscape and villages of which inspired numerous Rönnebeck lithographs. The present work is a vigorous interpretation of the New Mexican landscape that reflects Rönnebeck's aesthetic grounding in international modernism.

Works by Rönnebeck are part of numerous important art collections including the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, the Tate Gallery and Victoria and Albert Museum in London, The Whitney Museum in New York, the U.S. Library of Congress and the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington D.C., the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Denver Art Museum, and Yale University.

Ref.: Clinton Adams, *Printmaking in New Mexico, 1880–1990* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1991), pp. 40, 144, n. 22.

4. George Catlin. **“Nord-Amerikas Indianer och de, under ett åttårigt vistande bland de vildaste af deras stammar, upplevde Äfventyr och Öden”** (Stockholm, P.G. Berg, 1848). Large octavo. Complete with 23 lithographed plates, hand-colored and highlighted with gum Arabic. Original blind-embossed black cloth, 1/4 brown leather, gilt tooling and titling on spine, green decoration on page edges. Corners restored, some damage to rear board. Manuscript notations in pencil and ink on endpage. Even age toning. Overall excellent.

\$7,500.

This is the first Swedish edition of Catlin's *North American Indians, Written During Eight Years Travel Amongst the Wildest Tribes*. The same title had been published in German in 1846. The work is something of a hybrid of his two earlier works *Letters And Notes On The Manners, Customs, And Condition Of The North American Indians* (1841) and *Catlin's North American Indian Portfolio*, (1844). The Continental editions of Catlin are considered scarce.

The present volume contains an outstanding collection of 23 hand-colored plates adapted from Catlin's 1844 *Portfolio*. Striking scenes of buffalo hunts and rituals make this a very desirable work. The color overall remains bold and fresh, highlighting the wealth of details in costumes and weapons.

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Ref.: Wagner-Camp-Becker 84:14.

## 5. The Seminal Map of the Republic of Texas

John Arrowsmith, "**Map of Texas Compiled from Surveys Recorded in the Land Office of Texas and Other Official Surveys by John Arrowsmith**" (London: John Arrowsmith, 1843 [1841]). Published in Arrowsmith's *London Atlas*. Copper-engraved map, with bright original outline hand color. 24 1/4 x 19 5/8" at neat line. Sheet: 26 3/4 x 21 3/4" with full margins and original index tab cut-outs in u.l. and l.l. margins. Untitled inset map at l.r. showing Mexico, the Republic of Texas, and western United States and its territories. Inset map lower left, "Plan of Galveston Bay from a M.S." Minor crease at u.r. corner, mainly marginal; very minor marginal tear at u.l.; very minor marginal creasing at left edge; very faint, occasional transference. A fine, dark and crisp impression, very bright and clean, and wonderfully preserved—overall an exceptional example in superb condition.

\$32,000.

The British cartographer John Arrowsmith first issued his *Map of Texas* in 1841 in his famous *London Atlas*. The map also appeared in William Kennedy's book *The Rise, Progress and Prospects of*

*the Republic of Texas* in the same year. Arrowsmith again published the Texas map in his 1843 atlas, as in the present example. The map immediately became the model for maps of the new republic and was copied extensively by other publishers. And while Texas was annexed to the United States in 1845 and the Compromise of 1850 reset the boundaries of Texas to their current configuration, maps of Texas with its Republic boundaries continued to be published, and even appeared in the *London Atlas* as late as 1858.

When it was issued, Arrowsmith's *Map of Texas* contained the most up-to-date depiction of the latest political divisions. In addition, four years of study by the General Land Office of Texas provided Arrowsmith with the latest information on geographical features, roadways, and the location of Indian tribes. The seals of the Republic of Texas and the General Land Office of Texas appear beneath the title in the upper right corner, attesting to the validity of its sources. Below those, a statement indicates that Texas was "Recognized as an Independent State by Great Britain, 16th Nov.r 1840." At the time, Great Britain actively sought to establish a source for cotton in an independent Texas, and so opposed its annexation to the United States. To this end, British negotiators attempted to draw a treaty with Texas, France, and Mexico while the United States debated the issue of Texas' admission to the union. Arrowsmith's map stands as an endorsement of the most extensive territorial claims made by the Republic of Texas.

*Arrowsmith's map was probably the first to show the full extent of Texas's claim to the region of the upper Rio Grande, an area included within Texas's boundaries until the Compromise of 1850. . . The popularity and general acceptance of the map has been documented by the fact that many map makers copied liberally from Arrowsmith's map, including some of its errors. For example, a number of later maps continued Arrowsmith's statement printed on the western, arid region of Texas that "this tract of Country explored by LeGrande in 1833 is naturally fertile well wooded & with a fair proportion of water." (Martin and Martin)*

Editorial comments throughout the map reveal its intention to encourage development with phrases such as "good land," "rich land well timbered," "beautiful prairie," and "valuable land." A forest shown below the Red River is Lower Cross Timbers, which was considered in 1834 by the U.S. Government to be the "western boundary of habitable land."

The London Arrowsmith firm was founded in 1790 by John's uncle Aaron, an important map maker and official hydrographer to the king. During the early nineteenth century, London emerged as a leader in commerce, as well as cartographic production. The Arrowsmiths set the standard for accuracy and clarity in map making, applying the latest scientific techniques, and issuing some of the finest cartographic publications of the period. The present map represents the height of the Arrowsmith production and is an important document of Republic-era Texas history.

Refs.: Amon Carter Museum, *Crossroads of Empire*, p. 35; Goss, *Mapping*, no. 75; Martin and Martin, pl. 32, pp. 55, 127; Phillips, *America*, p. 843; Phillips, *Atlases*, no. 789; Phillips, *Maps*, p. 843; Rumsey no. 4613.061; Streeter, *Texas*, 1373a; Taliaferro, p. 15; Wheat, p. 173-74, no. 451.

6. Charles Partridge Adams. "**Arapaho Peaks, Vicinity of Boulder, Colorado,**" [1899–1920]. Oil on canvas, 10 x 14." Gold leaf frame in period style: 15 1/2 x 19 1/2." Signed at l.l. Old label on verso from Kennedy Galleries, New York. Excellent.

\$19,500.

Charles Partridge Adams is considered Colorado's premier landscape artist. While known as an Impressionist, Adams' Colorado period paintings reflect his formative association with the styles of George Inness and other great American landscapists of the nineteenth century.

*Arapaho Peaks* is a classic example of Adams' mature Colorado period, for which he is famous. Here, Adams paints the luminous and forceful face of the peaks, with the surrounding landscape acting as a mantle—the whole having the distinctive effect of portraiture. While his work from later periods continued

to reflect a very personal relationship with the landscape, Adams' style became more characteristically Impressionist from 1920 on, when he moved to California.

Charles Partridge Adams (1858–1942) was born in Massachusetts and moved with his family to Denver, Colorado in 1876. There he found work at the Chain and Hardy Bookstore, which served as an exhibition venue for local artists. The wife of one of the bookshop's owners was the artist Helen Chain, who had studied with George Inness. In 1877, she opened her studio to students and among them was Charles Partridge Adams.

Adams traveled east in 1885 to visit the studios of George Inness and Worthington Whittredge. He followed this with a trip to California where he visited the studios of William Keith and Thomas Hill. By 1893, Adams had established a studio in Denver and for a time offered crayon portraits and landscapes in watercolor as well as oil. Eventually, he built a home and studio in Estes Park and called it "The Sketch Box." His work was popular among visitors and was also recognized by important institutions, with exhibitions at the National Academy of Design and the Chicago Art Institute. Adams' works were sold through galleries in Chicago and Kansas City, as well as in various locations in Colorado. In this same period, the artist made extensive painting trips throughout the Rocky Mountains and beyond, continuing to explore his favorite subject of mountain landscapes.

After suffering a near-fatal illness, Adams moved to California in 1920, establishing homes in both Pasadena and Laguna Beach. While his new market required that he focus on California landscape, he would occasionally create a painting from memory of his beloved Rocky Mountains.

Charles Partridge Adams' paintings are held in a number of important permanent collections including the Colorado Historical Society, the Colorado Springs Museum, the Denver Art Museum, the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, the Phoenix Art Museum, the Portland Museum, the San Diego Museum of Art, and the Utah Museum of Fine Arts.

Ref.: Dines, Leonard, and Cuba, *The Art of Charles Partridge Adams* (1993).

**7. George Catlin. "North American Indians: Being Letters & Notes on their Manners, Customs and Conditions, Written During Eight Years' Travel Amongst the Wildest Tribes of Indians in North America, 1832-39"** (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1926). Two octavo volumes, complete with 320 color lithograph illustrations, including 3 maps, one folding. Original red cloth pictorial covers, stamped in black and gilt. Top edges gilt. Interior fine with light age toning. Covers have light wear at edges and toning on spines. Presented with mylar dust jackets and slipcase. Near-fine condition.

\$2,500.

This is a beautiful edition of George Catlin's classic study of Native American life, which was originally published in 1841 as *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*.

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Refs. (1841 ed.): Wagner-Camp 84:20; Sabin 11536; Howes C241.

8. Arnold Rönnebeck. “**El Monte Sol, Santa Fe, N.M.**,” 1927. Lithograph (unnumbered). Image: 8 x 11 1/2.” Sheet: 11 1/2 x 16.” Signed in pencil, l. r.: “Arnold Rönnebeck.” Titled in pencil, l. l.: “El Monte Sol, Santa Fe, N.M.” Paper watermark: FRANCE. Very slight age toning. Very ne.

Please inquire.

Rönnebeck brought a sculptural boldness to landscape subjects through his masterful lithographs. The present image is a powerful interpretation of a New Mexico landscape that reflects the artist’s love of the area and his aesthetic grounding in international modernism. This pastoral scene is dominated by twin peaks, rendered as large, impressive masses contrasted with the serenity of simple abodes and cultivated fields below. Where Rönnebeck’s later New Mexico landscapes often move with dramatic energy, *El Monte Sol* breathes with a sense of the enduring energies of the earth.

As a young man, Arnold Rönnebeck (1885–1947) studied sculpture at the Royal Art Schools of Berlin and Munich. Moving to Paris in 1908, he continued his study with the sculptor Aristide Maillol. Maillol was a master of abstraction whose simplified human forms always retained an earthy vigor—a sensitivity that would echo in Rönnebeck’s landscape images. While in Paris, Rönnebeck became part of the avant-garde enclave that included Gertrude and Leo Stein, as well as Marsden Hartley. In 1923, Rönnebeck moved to New York City, and at the behest of Hartley he entered the circle of modernist artists and writers around Alfred Stieglitz. In this milieu, Rönnebeck became acquainted with Mabel Dodge Luhan, the wealthy New York City hostess extraordinaire who had moved her salon in 1918 to Taos, New Mexico.

Rönnebeck first visited New Mexico in 1925, and stayed with Dodge, now the doyenne of the Taos modernist colony. The visit changed both his professional and his personal life. He was deeply impressed by the landscape and the native people, and he met his future wife, Louise Emerson, whom he married in New York in 1926. Soon after, the couple moved to Denver where Rönnebeck became director of the Denver Art Museum, a position he held until 1930. The couple remained in Colorado, but periodically visited New Mexico, where the landscapes and villages continued to inspire Rönnebeck’s art.

Works by Rönnebeck are held in numerous important art collections including the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, the Tate Gallery and Victoria and Albert Museum in London, The Whitney Museum in New York, the U.S. Library of Congress and the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington D.C., the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Denver Art Museum, and Yale University. Another copy of the present print forms part of the collection of the Tamarind Institute in Albuquerque.

Ref.: Clinton Adams, *Printmaking in New Mexico, 1880–1990* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1991), pp. 40, 43, 144, n. 22.

9. Arnold Rönnebeck. **“Rio Grande Canyon, N.M.,”** 1931. Lithograph, no. 8 of 50. Image size: 9 1/2 x 14.” Sheet: 11 1/2 x 16.” Signed and dated in pencil, l.r. Titled and numbered in pencil, l.l. Fine.

Please inquire.

Initially trained as a sculptor at the Berlin Royal Art School, the German-born lithographer Arnold Rönnebeck (1885–1947) brought a sculptural vigor to his landscape subjects in two dimensions. A robust three-dimensionality underlies the lithograph offered here, in which the artist imposes an orderly geometry upon the canyon walls and surrounding mountains of the Rio Grande Gorge just south of Taos. Against these forms, he deftly juxtaposes stylized cloud patterns that read as flat abstractions in the upper third of the print. Even as Rönnebeck applies the tenets of modernist abstraction to his interpretation of the Rio Grande Gorge, he also conveys the sweeping grandeur of this particular vantage point in which the river appears to be flowing through a giant crack in the earth (and, geologically, the formation actually is a crack known as the Rio Grande Rift). He underscores the drama of the landscape through bold alternations of light and dark patterns.

Rönnebeck first came to New Mexico in 1925 at the encouragement of his friend Marsden Hartley, whom he had met in Paris some twenty years earlier. While in Paris, Rönnebeck studied with Aristide Maillol and became part of the avant-garde circle that included Gertrude and Leo Stein, as well as Hartley. Another member of the circle was Karl von Freyburg, Rönnebeck’s cousin and later the subject of Hartley’s famous German Officer series.

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As with so many artists and writers visiting Taos in the 1920s, Rönnebeck stayed with Mabel Dodge, now the doyenne of the Taos modernist colony. The visit changed both his professional and his personal life. He was deeply impressed by the landscape and the native people, and he met his future wife, Louise Emerson, whom he married in New York in 1926. Soon after, the couple moved to Denver where Rönnebeck became director of the Denver Art Museum, a position he held until 1930. The couple remained in Colorado, but periodically visited New Mexico, the landscape and villages of which inspired numerous Rönnebeck lithographs, such as the one offered here and dated 1931.

In that year, Rönnebeck sent Carl Zigrosser, his dealer at the well-known Weyhe Gallery in New York City, a batch of lithographs featuring New Mexico subjects. They are of subjects “round little old Santa Fe,” he wrote to Zigrosser, “and, therefore, may not find much of an echo among N.Y. addicts.” At this time, Rönnebeck was at the end of his tenure as director of the Denver Art Museum, and he continued, “I had to get something out of my system about these much loved regions.”

The present image was likely one of this group of prints that Rönnebeck sent to New York. It is a vigorous interpretation of the New Mexican landscape that reflects the artist’s love of the area and also his aesthetic grounding in international modernism.

Ref.: Clinton Adams, *Printmaking in New Mexico, 1880–1990* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1991), pp. 40, 144, n. 22.

10. Arnold Rönnebeck. **“The Sacred Mountain of Taos, N.M.”** (early 1930s). Lithograph. Image size: 8 3/4 x 11 1/2”. Sheet size: 11 1/2 x 15 3/4”. Signed in pencil, l. r.: “Arnold Rönnebeck.” Titled and in pencil, l. l.: “The Sacred Mountain of Taos, N.M.” Fine.

\$5,000.



Arnold Rönnebeck (1885–1947) brought a sculptural vigor to his landscape subjects in two dimensions. A strong three-dimensionality characterizes the boldness of the lithograph offered here, in which the artist depicts the famous Taos Mountain of northern New Mexico. The mountain forms fairly writhe on the paper, communicating a sense of the living presence for which the mountain is legendary. At 12,000 feet above sea level, Taos Peak looms over the surrounding Rio Grande Valley, beckoning travelers who pass beneath its shadow. Legend holds that the mountain emits a mystical energy that can summon newcomers or send them packing.

More than a thousand years ago, the “Red Willow” people of the Tiwa tribe embraced Taos Mountain as their spiritual home and built the many-storied Taos Pueblo at its base. They claimed as their birthplace the sacred waters of Blue Lake, a small lake cradled in a mountain valley high above the pueblo. Blue Lake is the source of the clear stream that tumbles down the mountainside and provides water to the pueblo below. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, East Coast artists began to flock to the nearby village of Taos, attracted by the clarity of the air, the charismatic light, and the vibrant colors of the landscape. Kindred spirits—artists like Rönnebeck, writers, and free thinkers—followed in their wake and contributed to the formation of a world-famous art colony. Today, Taos Mountain continues to hold spiritual significance for the Pueblo Indians, as well as remaining essential to the culture, religion, and daily life of the town of Taos.

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The present image is a vigorous interpretation of the New Mexico landscape that reflects the artist’s love of the area and also his aesthetic grounding in international modernism.

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## 11. A Superb and Rare Example by the Master of American Modernist Printmaking

Howard Cook. **“Taxco Market”** (1932–1933). Etching and aquatint on japan paper from an edition of 30. 8 7/8 x 11 7/8” at plate mark. Signed in pencil l. r.: Howard Cook. Fine condition.

\$15,000.

The skillful execution and empathetic mood of this rare and charming print make for a fine summation of Howard Cook’s printmaking achievements during a sojourn in Mexico, a time when his best work was accomplished. Cook created the print in 1932–33 during his first trip to Mexico, which was financed by a Guggenheim Fellowship. He had been recommended for the fellowship by print dealer

Carl Zigrosser and architect William Spratling. After a brief stay in Mexico City, he and his wife, the artist Barbara Latham, settled in the quaint village of Taxco in a small house overlooking the cathedral. Very few Americans had yet discovered the charms of Taxco, although Cook's neighbor Spratling by this time had established a salon of sorts in his nearby hacienda. Members consisted mostly of North American intellectuals, but they occasionally also included the artists Diego Rivera and José Clément Orozco, who were, with David Alfaro Siqueiros, the leaders of the Mexican mural movement.

Cook quickly fell under the powerful spell of the Mexican muralists. This was especially true of the work of Rivera, whose aesthetic and stylistic innovations inspired a turning point in Cook's career. Cook had up to this time created mostly cityscapes and occasional landscape prints. In Mexico, he focused, as the muralists had, on the human figure, and like them he attempted, as he wrote in 1942, "*to realize a portrayal of the serenity and beauty of the lives of the common Mexican people.*" Indeed, while in Taxco, Cook concentrated on figural studies, drawing individuals and groups in pencil, ink, and chalk, as well as painting them in watercolor. He produced dozens of portrait studies from locally hired models and became a keen observer of the colorful village life and its exotic customs.

In *Taxco Market*, Cook endows his subjects with a dignity and monumentality that result not only from his sensitive depiction of peasants engaged in their daily routine but also from his masterful manipulation of formal elements. As Janet Flynt observes, Cook's figures are "*delineated with strong draughtsmanship and intense, sculptural contrasts of dark and light. The dark tones, composed of many fine, sensitively etched and inked lines, are not opaque, but richly luminous. Indeed, light seems to pervade the image . . . invoking a presence that is both humble and hieratic.*" The mural-like composition is a brilliant application of spatial principles favored by Rivera and Orozco. Flynt notes that against "*a framework of intersecting diagonals, Cook has simplified and grouped his figures in rhythmic arrangements of interlocking planes and angles. As in his murals, realistic space has been virtually eliminated in favor of maximal use of planar space.*"

Complementing the formal aspects of the print, Cook introduces a new human warmth and almost iconic intensity in his subjects, despite his Modernist tendency to abstract the figure into idealized shapes and powerful tonal contrasts. Consequently, the formal innovations of Cook's Mexican phase and his deep reverence for the Mexican culture combine in a happy balance of form and content. This is a delightful work by the great master of American Modernist printmaking.

Ref.: Duffy, *The Graphic Work of Howard Cook: Catalogue Raisonné* (Bethesda Art Gallery, 1984), pp. 36–37; cat. no. 181.

12. Emil Bisttram. "**Taos Indian Woman and Child,**" 1934. Lithograph. Image: 15 3/4 x 12." Sheet: 19 1/2 x 15 1/7." Signed and dated at l. r.: "BISTRAM 34." Titled at l.l.: "(No 1) TAOS INDIAN WOMAN + CHILD." Small spot in l.l. margin that appears to be original printing ink. Minor loss at l.l. corner of sheet, professionally repaired. A very rare work in very fine condition.

\$3,500.

*It is my conviction that art . . . is a means to unfold the consciousness and thereby bring it to envision and experience wider horizons. . . . an experience on a higher plane of emotion and intellectual perception without which there can be no real progress in man's development.*

— Emil Bisttram

Emil Bisttram (1895-1976) came to New Mexico having absorbed the ideas of modernist abstraction and the international style of representation. His philosophies were well developed and he embraced the design principles of Dynamic Symmetry. By his own account, when Bisttram finally came into contact with the spirituality and art of Native Americans in New Mexico, his many artistic influences and goals found resolution. His portraits of the period are considered to be some of his strongest works.

*Taos Indian Woman and Child* is a penetrating psychological portrait. The mother is engaged in her own thoughts as she looks to the distance while her child seems to examine the viewer. Although there is no physical embrace between the two, one perceives a profound connection. The image is rendered with a

cubist interplay of planes between the faces, blunt-cut hair and blanket folds, interconnecting the figures in a way that no posture could emulate.

Bisttram grew up in New York City and entered the art world at a very exciting period in modernism. His main influences were the Russian abstractionists Wassily Kandinsky and Nicholas Roerich. Under a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1932, Bisttram worked in Mexico with Diego Rivera, after which he relocated to Taos, New Mexico. *“Bisttram made a formal statement of his artistic intentions with the co-founding of the Transcendental Painting Group. This Group gained recognition for being among the first Southwestern artists to challenge the supremacy of the conservative regionalist painters.”* (Wiggins)

While the Transcendental Painting Group is strongly identified with non-objective forms of expression, Bisttram never rejected the use of representation altogether. Bisttram altered his style to fit his subject, even as his nonobjective persuasions and mystical convictions became the driving forces in much of his work from the 1930s on. Although the Transcendental Painting Group lasted only a few years, Bisttram’s School of Art endured.

With the outbreak of World War II, Bisttram decided to take his school to Los Angeles where many young artists were either stationed in the armed services or were working in defense plants. In the winter, he moved the school to Phoenix and offered classes to the handful of artists who were able to enroll during wartime. Throughout the war, Bisttram continued to operate his school on a seasonal basis, moving between Los Angeles and Phoenix. After the war, the school returned to Taos and flourished with students enrolled under the G.I. Bill.

As a creative and intellectual force, Bisttram is recognized as one of the most important modernists of the Southwest.

Ref.: Walt Wiggins, *The Transcendental Art of Emil Bisttram* (1988).

13. Dale William Nichols (1904-1995). **“Midwest Morning,”** 1945. Lithograph. 9 7/8 x 12 3/8” at plate mark with full margins. Signed beneath the image in pencil, l.r.: Dale Nichols. From an edition of 250. A crisp and spotless example in very fine condition.

\$3,200.

Dale Nichols was an important “American Scene” artist. While stylistically his work bears an affinity to that of artists like Thomas Hart Benton and Grant Wood, his method was uniquely focused. In his artistic process, Nichols drew almost exclusively on his childhood experiences growing up in rural Nebraska. He stated,

*“I feel that an artist paints best what he has been exposed to during his youth. I think my memory paintings of my home state may be my only creations that I sign with full confidence.”*

While this would certainly give rise to his classification as a ‘Regionalist,’ his frame of reference lends a dreamlike or surreal quality to his art. The present lithograph depicts a farm scene on a winter’s night. A man driving a horse-drawn wagon sled surmounts the road that leads to his barn. The sky is black and heavy. Likewise, the rolling hills and snowdrifts are quite weighty. Through the indications of the landscape, there is a perception of the daily toil endured by the farmer.

Nichols went to Chicago at the age of twenty to study at the Academy of Fine Art. Most notably, he studied with the important graphic designer, Carl Werntz. He continued to live in Chicago through the 1930s, one year teaching at the University of Illinois. In the 1940s, he worked as Art Editor for *Encyclopedia Britannica*. He then traveled extensively, and retired to Arizona. Nichols authored two books on art theories and methods: *A Philosophy of Esthetics*, published in 1935, and *Figure Drawing*, published in 1957.

Nichols artworks are part of a number of important collections, including the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the Spencer Museum of Art, the Museum of Nebraska Art, the Block Museum, and the Maier Museum of Art. In 1996, a painting by Nichols was reproduced on postcards issued by the U.S. Postal Service.

Refs.: Museum of Nebraska Art, *monet.unk.edu*; David Zellman, *300 Years of American Art*.

14. Lucille W. Leggett. **“Sacred Mountain,”** n.d. (1940s). Oil on canvas board, 17 3/4 x 22.” Frame size: 26 3/8 x 30 1/4.” Signed in l. r. corner. “Sacred Mountain” inscribed on frame verso. Surface cleaned. Presented in a period gold-toned frame. Fine.

\$7,500.

Working with the high-keyed palette and individualized brushwork of impressionism, Leggett conveyed the sun-drenched colors and pellucid light of the desert sky in paintings of adobe churches, houses, ranches, ghost towns, and natural features. In this view of Taos Peak, the mountain is rendered in deep blue with a pulsating rhythm above gently rolling and warmly toned foothills. A winding road leads through an aged ranch fence, lending a sense of human history and welcoming. With its bold and fresh brushwork, this painting represents a truly masterful work by this artist.

At 12,000 feet above sea level, Taos Peak looms over the surrounding Rio Grande Valley, beckoning travelers who pass beneath its shadow. Legend holds that the mountain emits a mystical energy that can summon newcomers or send them packing. More than a thousand years ago, the “Red Willow” people of the Tiwa tribe embraced Taos Mountain as their spiritual home and built the many-storied Taos Pueblo at its base. They claimed as their birthplace the sacred waters of Blue Lake, a small lake cradled in a mountain valley high above the pueblo. Blue Lake is the source of the clear stream that tumbles down the mountainside and provides water to the pueblo below. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, East Coast artists began to flock to the nearby village of Taos, attracted by the clarity of the air, the charismatic light, and the vibrant colors of the landscape. Kindred spirits—artists like Leggett, writers, and free thinkers—followed in their wake and contributed to the formation of a world-famous art colony. Today, Taos Mountain continues to hold spiritual significance for the Pueblo Indians, as well as remaining essential to the culture, religion, and daily life of the town of Taos.

Lucille Leggett (1896–1966) was born in Tennessee, and as a teenager moved to New Mexico in 1914. She married a railroad engineer and relocated to El Paso, Texas, where she studied art at a local college. She later became captivated by the desert landscape of New Mexico, especially the south-central mountains around Capitan, Carrizozo, and Ruidoso, which lay within a couple of hours’ driving distance of El Paso. In time, she gravitated north to Santa Fe, moving there in 1952 to a studio home on Canyon Road. The villages and landscape between Santa Fe and Taos soon became the primary focuses of her art.

Refs.: Phil Kovinick and Marian Yoshiki Kovinick. *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Women Artists of the American West* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998); *Samuels’ Encyclopedia of Artists of the American West*, p. 284.

15. Lucille W. Leggett. **“Taos Church,”** n.d. [1950s]. Oil on canvas board, 16 x 12.” Period gold-toned frame: 22 1/2 x 18 1/2.” Signed in l. r. corner. “Taos Church” inscribed on verso. Very fine.

\$4,500.

Lucille Leggett (1896–1966) was born in Tennessee and as a teenager moved to New Mexico in 1914. She married a railroad engineer and relocated to El Paso, Texas, where she studied art at a local college. She later became captivated by the desert landscape of New Mexico,

especially the south-central mountains around Capitan, Carrizozo, and Ruidoso, which lay within a couple of hours' driving distance of El Paso. In time, she gravitated north to Santa Fe, moving there in 1952 to a studio home on Canyon Road. The villages and landscape between Santa Fe and Taos soon became the primary focuses of her art.

Working with the high-keyed palette and individualized brushwork of impressionism, Leggett conveyed the sun-drenched colors and pellucid light of the desert sky in paintings of adobe churches, houses, ranches, ghost towns, and natural features. She was particularly interested in the local way of life and its heritage, an inclination apparent in the present work, *Taos Church*. Leggett's lively, bright colors suggest influences from the folk traditions indigenous to the borderlands of the United States and Mexico.

*Taos Church* depicts one of the lesser-known churches in Taos with Taos Mountain looming in the background. Leggett portrays the church from its distinctively shaped façade. Three worshippers approach the entrance through the outside wall. The forms and brushwork in the church building, distant mountain, trees and clouds participate in an uplifting motion, harmonizing with the spirit of the subject. The sacred mountain of Taos itself has an ancient spiritual legacy native to Taos. More than a thousand years ago, the "Red Willow" people of the Tiwa tribe embraced Taos Mountain as their spiritual home and built the many-storied Taos Pueblo at its base.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, East Coast artists began to flock to the nearby village of Taos, attracted by the clarity of the air, the charismatic light, and the vibrant colors of the landscape. Kindred spirits—artists like Leggett, writers, and free thinkers—followed in their wake and contributed to the formation of a world-famous art colony. Today, Taos Mountain continues to hold spiritual significance for the Pueblo Indians, as well as remaining essential to the culture, religion, and daily life of the town of Taos.

*Taos Church* captures the earthy spiritualism that characterizes many of the indigenous communities of the Southwest.

Refs.: Phil Kovinick and Marian Yoshiki Kovinick. *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Women Artists of the American West* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998); *Samuels' Encyclopedia of Artists of the American West*, p. 284.

16. Morris Blackburn. "**Adobe Mission**" [Ranchos de Taos Church], 1962. Screenprint, no. 30 of 30. Image: 10 x 14." Sheet: 18 1/2 x 25." Signed in pencil by artist, l. r.: Morris Blackburn. Titled and numbered in pencil, l. l.: Adobe Mission / Imp. 30/30. Fine.

\$2,750.

*Adobe Mission* is a wonderful modernist interpretation of the Ranchos de Taos Church by the Philadelphia artist Morris Blackburn (1902–1979). Noted for his ingenious use of printmaking materials and techniques, he was one of the first artists in the early 1940s to use screen printing for fine art prints.

In his image of the famous church located in the small New Mexican village of Ranchos de Taos just south of Taos, Blackburn took advantage of the inherent flatness of the screen printing process to define the bold geometry of the structure. By juxtaposing unmodulated planes of color to represent zones of light and shadow, he defined the impressive sculptural quality of the church's apse and its massive adobe buttresses. As with so many modernist artists of the twentieth century—among them Georgia O'Keeffe, John Marin, and Raymond Jonson—Blackburn chose to depict the much painted, drawn, and photographed rear view of the building. Depicting this view was a given, as O'Keeffe once noted. "*Most artists who spend any time in Taos have to paint it, I suppose, just as they have to paint a self-portrait.*" Blackburn, who owned a house in Taos, indeed spent a great deal of time there—virtually every summer until 1969. His fascination is evidenced by his repetition of the view in several media: watercolor, mezzotint, and the screenprint offered here.

The focus is not surprising. Blackburn frequently worked in the cubist idiom and often reduced his subjects to an abstract play of simplified forms. The planar qualities and angularity of the unadorned adobe walls offered the perfect subject matter for an artist interested in the geometry of form expressed in two dimensions. Blackburn's image of Ranchos Church remains representational; nonetheless, the print is cubist in mood if not in style.

The Ranchos Church was completed in 1815 and is perhaps the finest example in New Mexico of Southwestern mission architecture. Designed by Spanish Franciscans and built of indigenous materials by Pueblo Indians, "*it has been portrayed more often, by more artists,*" according to Sandra D'Emilio, "*than any other church in the United States, perhaps in the world. . . . Artists have been drawn to the church as subject matter for nearly one hundred years. Most [artists] have approached it from the south—on the road through the Sangre de Cristo Mountains north of Santa Fe. . . . The road slowly descends into the Ranchos de Taos valley and through the small village of Ranchos de Taos, the site of [the church]. The road passes not in front of, but behind, the Ranchos Church. From this vantage point one might fail to recognize the mysterious sculptural form as a church at all. Yet its commanding presence dominates the rural landscape. . . . In harmony with its surroundings, the Ranchos Church exerts a quiet force which has universal appeal.*"

Blackburn's work represents a compendium of transatlantic stylistic developments spanning the first half of the twentieth century. Although he never achieved a major national reputation, he nonetheless had an enormous impact on his immediate environment. A masterful painter, printmaker, and graphic artist, he was a legendary teacher at the Philadelphia Museum School of Industrial Art and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, inspiring a host of students in the arts of painting and printmaking. This is a superb impression of this scarce, early American modernist print by one of the medium's finest mid-twentieth-century innovators.

Ref.: Sandra D'Emilio and Suzan Campbell, *Spirit & Vision: Images of Ranchos de Taos Church* (Santa Fe: The Museum of New Mexico Press, 1987), pp. 1–2, 15.