

WILLIAM R. TALBOT

FINE ART, ANTIQUE MAPS & PRINTS

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Missions & Moradas of New Mexico: Modernist Views, 1910-1985

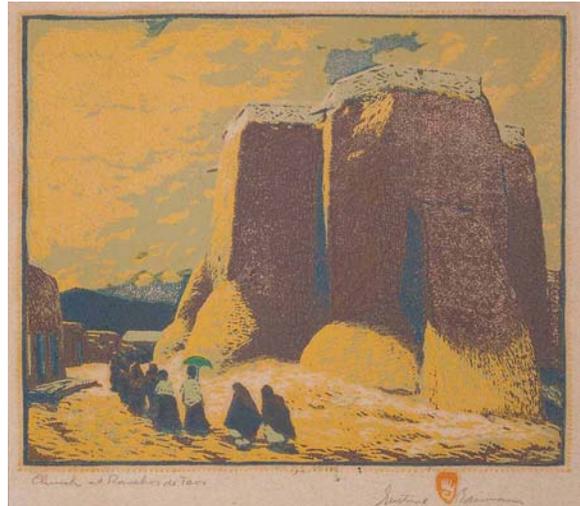
March 23-April 28, 2012

Gustave Baumann's work as a woodcut artist grew out of his experiences in Chicago working as an illustrator associated with the commercial printing industry. Inland Printer, one of the leading printing trade publications, reproduced several of his woodcuts on its magazine covers from 1910. Baumann's woodcuts drew heavily on the color harmonies and the stylish flattering of Japanese woodcuts. When Baumann arrived in Santa Fe after years in the Brown County, Indiana, artist colony, he easily adapted his woodcut style to the colorful New Mexico scene. "Church—Rancho de Taos" captures the grandeur of the building by carefully staging its perspective and relying on a close range of hues and values; the tranquility in Baumann's woodcut imparts a sense of solidity and strength to this Catholic church.

—Joseph Traugott, *The Art of New Mexico: How the West is One*

Ralph M. Pearson, a painter and etcher who had been liberated by the Armory show from "the straitjacket of convention," took up residence on a ranch south of Taos in 1915. Pearson apparently brought his etching press to the ranch either in 1915 or shortly thereafter, for by 1918 he had produced a number of etchings sufficient for an exhibition in Santa Fe. . . . Among dated prints in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts [Museum of New Mexico], the earliest made in the state are an etching by Pearson and a lithograph by Sandzen, both from 1919. Though reflective reflective of Pearson's modernist orientation only in its verve and freshness, his "Church at Rancho de Taos" achieves a monumentality quite beyond its tiny size."

—Clinton Adams, *Printmaking in New Mexico: 1880-1990*



Gustave Baumann (1881–1971). "Church—Rancho de Taos," 1919. Color woodblock print, 36/100. 10 3/8 x 11 3/4." Signed, l.r. Very fine. Period-style frame in cream, blue, green, and gilt highlight, 18 x 19." \$24,000.



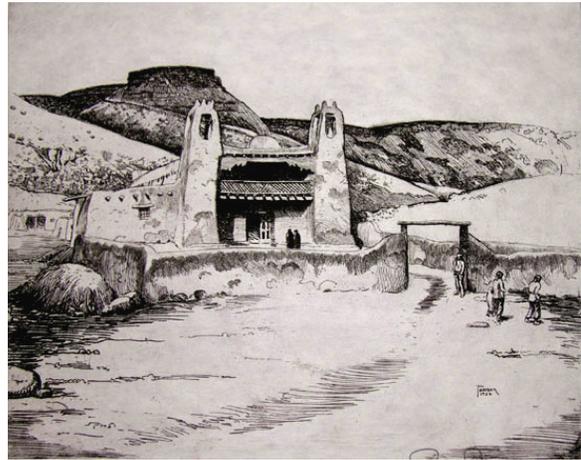
Ralph M. Pearson (1883–1958) "Church at Rancho de Taos," 1919. Etching, 98/100. 4 1/2 x 6 3/4." Signed, l.r. Excellent. SOLD

The evidence of San Felipe Church indicates that Pearson's abilities compare favorably with those of other notable western artists such as Edward Borein, Carl Oscar Borg, and Gene Kloss who worked in the etching medium.

—David Clemmer, *Serenading the Light: Painters of the Desert Southwest* (2003)

By his writings as well as by his work, Pearson has probably done more than anyone to encourage an escape, in etching, from the deadness of traditional presentation.

—James Laver, *A History of British and American Etching* (1929)



Ralph M. Pearson (1883–1958) “San Felipe,” 1922. Etching, no. 19. 7 3/4 x 9 7/8." Sheet: 10 3/8 x 12 5/8. Signed, l.r. Excellent. **SOLD**

Although Howard Norton Cook developed a national reputation as a painter and muralist during his lifetime, he is known today as one of the premier American printmakers.

This unusual depiction of the Rancho de Taos church gives us a rare glimpse of both the artist's raw draughtsmanship and his underlying approach to paint. Here is the free and fresh quality of a drawing combined with a tonal wash, producing an incredibly accomplished solidity of form. The mood of this work is dramatic, yet glowing, contributing a mystical light befitting its subject.

Cook completed twenty-nine woodcuts and etchings during his first sojourn in Taos from 1927 to 1929. The present woodcut belongs to this inspired period. Cook wrote of his experience, “. . . here, long before tourism, was a living, colorful, strange, appealing Indian and Spanish culture right in an exciting, primitively beautiful part of our country.” The early Taos prints and some of his drawings were exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe in 1928.



Howard Cook (1901-1980). “Rancho de Taos,” c. 1927. Casein and oil wash on gessoed artist's board, mounted to wood. 14 x 15 1/2." Signed, l.r. Very fine. **Please Inquire**

In his early work, Will Shuster responded to the New Mexico environment and the subject of the *Penitentes* with a modernist approach and an empathetic eye. "Three Black Shaws" shows figures in a winter landscape approaching their church as if driven through the chill by their faith. The abstract simplicity of this rendering gives force to its scale.

William Shuster moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1920 and the following year formed the artist's group *Los Cinco Pintores* along with Jozef Bakos, Willard Nash, Fremont Ellis and Walter Mruk. This important group became the foundation of the modernist art colony in Santa Fe. Their first exhibition was at the Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe during December of 1921.

Shuster exhibited frequently at the Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe, but it wasn't until 1947 that the museum exhibited fine art prints by the several New Mexico artists who had long established themselves in the medium.

This striking drawing of the historic mission church at Rancho de Taos creates a marvelous mood as the cloud and tree forms echo the rhythm of the adobe structure. Indeed, the vitality of the church as Willis draws it makes it seem a force of nature in itself.

The San Francisco de Asis Mission Church was built between 1772 and 1816. With over two centuries of community hands having affected the form of the building, it is, in a poetic sense, a living entity. For over a century, this church has attracted visitors and inspired countless artists. As Georgia 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.*" According to D'Emilio and Campbell, "*The Rancho de Taos Church has been portrayed more often, by more artists than any other church in the United States, perhaps in the world. It has been interpreted so widely that it has become an artistic icon. . . In harmony with its surroundings, the Ranchos Church exerts a quiet force which has universal appeal.*"



William Shuster (1893–1969). "Three Black Shaws," c. 1930. Etching with watercolor. 3 x 3 7/8." Signed, l.l. Fine. Beveled mat, silver-leaf frame, 9 x 10." **SOLD**



Brooks Willis (1903–1981). "Rancho de Taos Church," 1930s. Graphite on paper. 14 1/4 x 10." Signed, l.r. Fine. Beveled mat, dark oak frame, 18 x 22." **\$1,400.**

EN
 MEMORIA
 DE
 SEFERT . . . A VEGIL DE MARTINES
 NASIO EN [FEBRERO] 2 DE 1869
 MU[ERTO] EN MAI [22] DE . . . ALA
 EDA DE 65 AN MESE
 UN
 PADRE NUESTR[O]
 . . . AVE MARILLA . . .
 SUDARIO
 ALA [ULT]IMA
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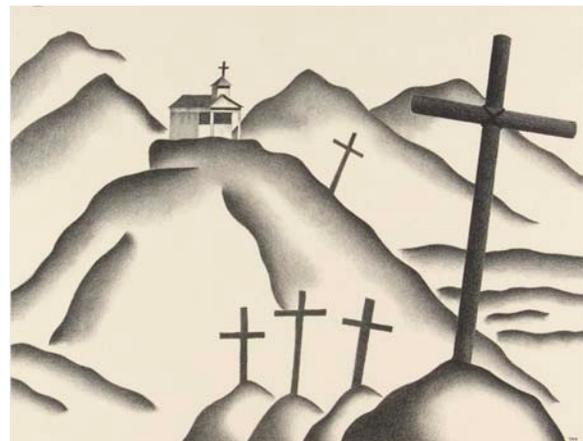
IN
 MEMORY
 OF
 SEFERT . . . A VEGIL DE MARTINES
 BORN FEBRUARY 2, 1869
 DIED MAY [22] . . .
 AT THE AGE OF 65 YEARS
 OUR FATHER
 HOLY MARY . . .
 SHROUD
 OF THE HIGHEST



New Mexico Cemetery Cross, 1934. Wood with incised text, brass screws. 44 1/2 x 32 3/4." Weathered. \$9,500.

Morada at Chimayo depicts a chapel of the *Penitente* sect, located within the dynamic setting of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The *Penitentes* of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado is a lay confraternity whose foundation dates to Mexican independence in 1821, when Spanish missionaries left the area. In the mid-nineteenth century, the region became an American territory and *Penitentes* were driven ‘underground,’ practicing in secrecy until the mid-twentieth century when they were reconciled with the church. The village of Chimayo’s history of fervent devotion extends back centuries, and continues to this day.

In White’s image of the *morada*, the small structure appears firmly rooted in an ethereal environment of cloud-like representations of mountains and hills, while a number of crosses at various angles give a sense of the living spiritual presence. The print offered here is a fine example from White’s Southwestern series, all of which are quite scarce because of the small sizes of the editions.



Theo Ballou White (1902–1978). “Morada at Chimayo,” c. 1934. Lithograph, no. 10 of 21. Image: 10 1/2 x 13 7/8." Sheet: 12 1/2 x 18 1/4." Signed in pencil, l.r. Titled and numbered in pencil, l.l. Original mat. Superb condition. Please inquire.

Gene Kloss certainly holds an equivalent position as master of the etching and aquatint. A native of California, Kloss enjoyed an exceptionally long and productive career, spanning eight decades from the mid-1920s until the early 1990s. She produced over 600 etched plated and hand pulled every print herself. Her earlier prints, particularly those of the 1930s and '40s, are highly prized for their beautiful, soft gradations of tone and sophisticated compositional sense. Kloss was the only etcher employed by the W.P.A. in New Mexico, and she produced nine prints for the program in 1933–34, all of which are now eagerly sought after by collectors. . . Ceremonial scenes of northern New Mexico's Pueblo and Hispanic communities remained Kloss's primary subject matter throughout her career.

—David Clemmer, *Serenading the Light: Painters of the Southwest*

. . . For Kloss, the drawing, the biting, and the printing of a plate were interdependent parts of a single process: "I want the finished print to enable the viewer to see the design, the subject matter from across the room, at arm's length or under a magnifying glass—also upside-down for satisfactory abstract design. . . . Art is life to me and is plastic thought. . . ."

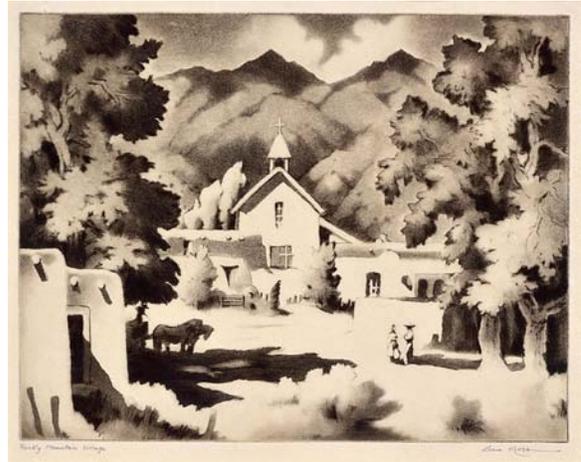
In some regions of the United States—particularly in and around New York—the WPA/FAP proved an important stimulus to American printmaking. In New Mexico, however, its effect was limited by the fact that none of the sixteen graphic workshops established by the WPA/FAP was located in a state between Illinois and California. Lacking access to a federally supported workshop, Kloss was fortunate in that her work for the project coincided with her purchase of a large Sturges etching press. This, she recalls, "enabled me to do much larger plates than the smaller presses I had owned previously. . . ."

—Clinton Adams, *Printmaking in New Mexico: 1880–1990*



Gene Kloss. (1903–96). "Processional—New Mexican Church," 1937. Drypoint, soft ground and roulette, edition of 50. 11 1/2 x 14 1/2." Signed, l.r. Excellent. Beveled mat, silver-leaf frame, 20 x 23."

\$16,000.



Gene Kloss (1903–96). "Rocky Mountain Village," (Pilar NM) 1945. Etching, drypoint, and aquatint, edition of 50. 9 x 12." Signed, l.r. Excellent. Beveled mat, silver leaf frame, 16 x 20."

\$6,500.

Ansel Adams first photographed the St. Francis church at Rancho de Taos in the 1920s when he was working on his book *Taos Pueblo* (1930). Adams revisited the church around 1950, giving us the present study, which is perhaps even more profound in capturing the immensity that had initially impressed him. The Housatonic Museum of Art describes his attraction to this subject as follows:

When he first saw the church, Adams was impressed by its “magnificent form” and its “rigorous and simple design and structure.” The photograph of this church was shot from the rear, which was the angle that Adams thought made it “one of the great architectural monuments of America.” He wrote . . . “it is not really large, but it appears immense. The forms are fully functional; the massive rear buttress and the secondary buttress to the left are organically related to the basic masses of adobe, and all together seem an outcropping of the earth rather than merely an object constructed upon it.”

Lucille Leggett was 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 her home in El Paso. In time, she gravitated north to Santa Fe, moving there in 1952 to a studio home on Canyon Road. 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*. *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.



Ansel Adams (1902-1984). “St. Francis Church, Rancho De Taos, NM,” image c. 1950, printed 1976. Silver gelatin print. 13-1/4 x 10-1/2. Signed, l.r. Excellent condition. Beveled mat with dark oak frame, 19 x 23.” \$20,000.



Lucille W. Leggett (1896–1966). “Taos Church,” c. 1950s. Oil on canvas board, 16 x 12.” Period gold-toned frame, 22 1/2 x 18 1/2.” Signed, l.r. Inscribed on verso: *Taos Church*. Very fine. \$4,500.

Noted for his ingenious use of printmaking materials and techniques, Blackburn was one of the first artists in the early 1940s to use screen printing for fine art prints. In his image of this famous church located in Ranchos de 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 buttresses. 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. As with so many modernist artists of the twentieth century, Blackburn chose to depict the much painted, drawn, and photographed rear view of the building. Georgia 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.*"



Morris Blackburn (1902-1979). "Adobe Mission" [Ranchos de Taos Church], 1962. Screen print, 30/30, 10 x 14." Signed, l.r. Fine. Carved, gold leaf frame with a red rub and box mat, 20 x 23." \$4,500.

Waldrum was a prolific photographer, producing thousands of images as he systematically worked his way around the historic adobe churches and penitente moradas of northern New Mexico. He sought out oblique angles and truncated views that transformed these relatively small, yet imposing monuments of mud, straw and plaster into sculptural forms that he would set against skies of vibrant blue, red, gold, yellow and green. On occasion Waldrum would stand back far enough from his architectural subjects to allow a slice of the surrounding landscape to find its way into the composition, but the relative scarcity of the landscape in his oeuvre indicates that he did not consider such context to be essential. . . In some Waldrum paintings detail is almost completely absent and architecture dissolves into pure abstraction.

—David Clemmer, *Serenading the Light: Painters of the Desert Southwest*



Harold Joe Waldrum (1934–2003). "El Contrefuerte Atras de la Iglesia de San Francisco de Asis" [the rear buttress of the Church of San Francisco de Asis, Rancho de Taos], 1980s. Acrylic on canvas. 12 x 12." Signed in acrylic, verso. \$14,000.

"Painting was the one avenue through which I could find psychical tolerance and be released. My life has always been motivated not by intellectual or rational considerations but more by a subjective compulsion, by what I love."

— Lawrence Calcagno

Known as a California Expressionist, Calcagno also maintained a home in Taos, New Mexico. Here, in this unusual and exquisite drawing of the Rancho de Taos church, Calcagno also reveals his mastery of a more traditional approach—or perhaps more accurately a solid grounding in the formal training that informed his more abstract expressions. His teachers were Mark Rothko, Clyfford Still, Edward Corbett, and Richard Diebenkorn. In 1950 he went to Paris to study at L'Academie de la Grande Chaumiere, and in 1951 to Florence to study the works of the Renaissance, where he enrolled at the Instituto d'Arte Statale.

Calcagno's abstract "landscapes of the mind"—with their recognizable and consistent horizons—derived in part from the artist's sense of the universal, yet mysterious harmony of nature.

—Joyce Henri Robinson



Lawrence Calcagno (1913-93). "St. Francis Church, Taos," 1984. Wax crayon and turpentine wash on rag paper. 22 X 30." Signed, l.r. Excellent condition. Beveled mat, gilt frame with red rub, 31 1/2 x 39."
\$8,500.