



Illustration

SPECIAL ISSUE NUMBER SIX / MARCH 2003

Cover montage of works by

Robert Peak

Artwork © The Estate of Robert Peak

CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT:

My Fair Lady Poster Design

Ad for Puritan Sportswear

Apocalypse Now Poster Design

Time Cover

Ad for Dobbs Hat

Ad for 7-Up

Ad for Winston Cigarettes

Portrait of John Singer Sargent

Center: *Superman* Poster

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Dear Reader...

This special issue of *Illustration* is a celebration of the life and work of one of America's most talented and influential illustrators, Robert Peak.

Peak was perhaps the last of the truly "famous" illustrators. He was an illustrator when the career was still considered to be a glamorous profession—something that is almost hard to imagine now. With his Ferraris (yes, plural), Rolls Royce, long hair and sunglasses, he was every bit the dashing, larger than life figure that we imagine him to be. Yet underneath all the trappings of his success, Peak more than anything else just wanted to be an illustrator. He poured all of his energy into his work, and his ability to create memorable and iconic images never faltered.

As seen by the cover of this issue, no single painting can sum up Bob Peak's career. Much like Al Parker before him, his work over the years was startling, original and ever-changing. His powerful vision and graphic style electrified the commercial art world, and his art in many ways reinvented the look of contemporary illustration. The "Peak Look" became the most admired and imitated style of the day, and almost overnight his work was seen everywhere. His campaigns for some of the largest advertisers in the country gave him unprecedented exposure, and his illustrations for the film industry earned him the title of "Father of the Modern Movie Poster." His many awards and honors have cemented his reputation as one of the giants of the field, and his profound influence can be seen in the work of countless illustrators working today.

I am honored to have the opportunity to present this retrospective of work, and I must thank Thomas Peak for allowing me to share this collection and his accompanying article with you. All of the images in this issue were drawn from Tom's extensive archives, and he went out of his way to dig up many amazing things for us to see. You will not be disappointed!

The concept of this issue, a monograph in magazine format, is an idea I plan to repeat in the future with illustrators such as J.C. Leyendecker and Al Parker. I hope you like this idea, and I look forward to your comments.

Now, on to the story!

Daniel Zimmer, Publisher

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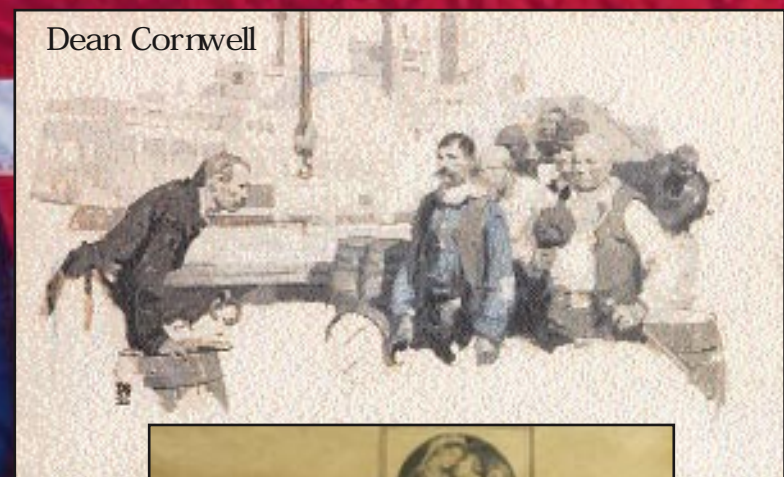
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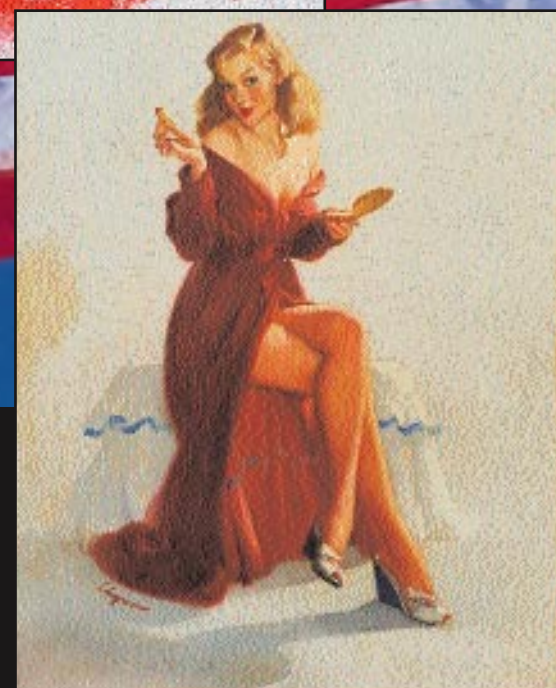
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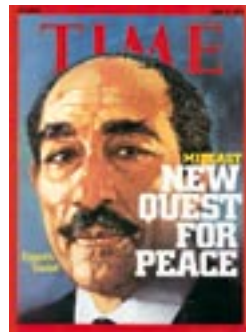
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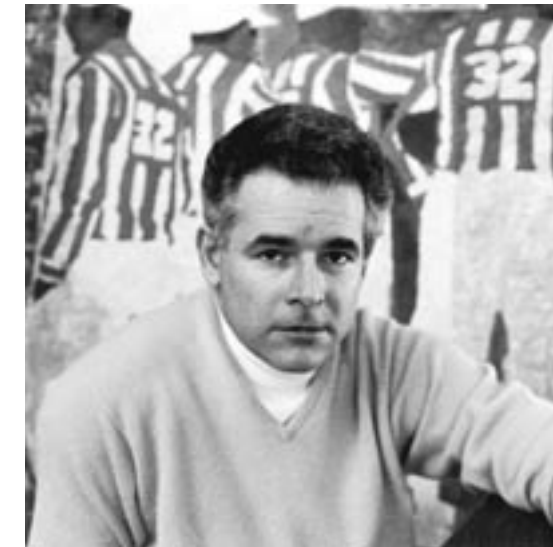
The Life and Art of Robert Peak

by Thomas Peak



If you lived in America during the latter half of the 20th Century, read a magazine or newspaper, or went to a see a movie, then you are already familiar with the work of my father, Bob Peak. From 1953 until his passing in 1992, dad established himself as one of the country's most prolific illustrators, setting his pen and brush to work creating images for major magazines, newspapers, movie posters, and a countless number of consumer print ads. As a child growing up in New York and Connecticut with my sister, Catherine, and two brothers, Robert and Matthew, it seemed like not a week went by that something containing my father's illustration did not come into our home. Whether it was a *Time*, *TV Guide*, or *Sports Illustrated* magazine cover; a Coca-Cola, 7-Up, or TWA Airlines print ad; or some other recognizable image from one of many major national publications, my father's art was seen everywhere by almost everyone.

In the 40 years that my father worked as a professional illustrator, he rose to the top of the field and received numerous awards and accolades. Among those honors were eight Awards of Excellence and four Gold Medals from the Society of Illustrators, with induction into their Hall of Fame in 1977; being named "Artist of the Year" by The Artists Guild of New York in 1961; receiving the "Key Art Lifetime Achievement Award" from *The Hollywood Reporter* for his contributions to the film industry; plus many other awards



Robert Peak, 1964.

and honors that dad accumulated over the course of his career—a career that spanned nearly four decades.

But in the beginning, before all of the acclaim received in later years, Bob Peak was just a seven-year old boy who fell in love with his first set of brushes and paints; a boy who would grow into a man with a tremendous talent.

THE EARLY YEARS

Bob Peak's life began at 7:25 a.m. on May 30, 1927, born to Robert M. Peak Sr. and Helen Marie Peak at their home in Trinidad, Colorado. As a baby, Bob was so beautiful that a couple once

offered to buy him from his parents for \$10,000. Naturally, my grandparents would have no part of it. After the birth of Bob's sister Geraldine one year later, and the subsequent stock market crash in October 1929, the Peaks were suddenly beset with the same financial struggles that affected millions of Americans at that time. When Bob's father found work difficult to come by in Trinidad, he packed up the family and moved them to Denver in hopes of finding better prospects. In the years that followed, Bob's mother gave birth to two more sisters, Virginia and Rosemary, and a brother, Jack.

In Denver, the duplex the family lived in had no furnace, so the only heat was provided by a small wood burning stove. For added warmth the children would all huddle together beneath a blanket. Bob, a Catholic altar boy at the time, would gather by the side of his siblings' bed on cold



Bob Peak's mother, Helen Marie Peak.

winter nights and encourage them all to say an act of contrition. "This way," the boy said, "If we die during the night from the cold, we will all go to heaven."

Like many children that possess special talents, Bob was a serious and intense child who could be quite temperamental. He enjoyed playing with other children but also found ways to occupy his mind when left alone.

A turning point in Bob's life occurred at the age of seven

when his mother bought him a cardboard desk with a beginner's set of paint and brushes. The Christmas gift captivated the boy immediately, and he spent the months that followed taking any opportunity he could to draw and paint. By the time he turned eight, Bob was able to draw recognizable likenesses—an early indication of what he would eventually be capable of.

Just before Bob's ninth birthday, his mother fell ill with pneumonia and passed away at the age of 33. Helen Marie, a devout Catholic, asked that before her death she be baptized and confirmed, requesting the same for all of her children. Robert Sr. saw to her wishes and made sure that all of the children received their sacraments.

The premature death of Bob's mother hit the family hard, and Bob Sr.—left with little more than his wife's sewing machine and the little clothes they had amongst them—moved the family to Wichita, Kansas. The hard times they experienced in Denver came with them to the Midwest, however, and life at their Aunt Ann's was devoid of any luxuries. To make matters worse for the children, Bob Sr.'s sister was a strict disciplinarian that demanded they keep busy with regular chores. After Bob Sr. took a job selling hair care products for Gibson

Products Company, the children seldom saw their father during the day. It was under these circumstances that my dad learned the value of self-reliance.

When Bob was a teenager he worked long hours as a clerk at the local Kroger grocery store, staying until eleven at night on school nights and working hours over the weekend. Understandably, Bob began to fantasize about building a better life for himself in the future, rebuffing any suggestion from his co-workers that he remain in the grocery business. As a form of escape outside of work and school responsibilities, Bob would continue to draw pictures as he did in his childhood.

As a young man, however, he shifted his focus away from pictures of juvenile heroes to those of far away places he wished to visit; images such as a couple walking on a beach, a group of jazz musicians, or a restaurant in New York. In spite of his drab surroundings and a lack of encouragement from his father, Bob persisted in what was becoming a private obsession with art, even building his own makeshift easel in the basement of his aunt's house.

MILITARY SERVICE

Bob's high school career ended with early graduation at the age of 15 in 1942. Though he skipped two grades, he took all of the art courses available at Cathedral High School in Wichita. His interest in drawing and painting peaked during this time, though he participated in school plays and worked every day after school.

Skeptical of his chance at success in an art career, Bob enrolled at the University of Wichita where he majored in geology. The choice of subject was not a good fit for dad, who quickly lost interest in his course work. It wasn't long

before he enlisted in the Navy in May 1945 as a Seaman First Class—anxious to see the world—and was promptly shipped off for eight weeks of basic training in Great Lakes, Illinois. Upon completion of his training, Bob was shipped out to U.S. Naval Frontier Base in San Francisco, California.

Though Bob never saw action in the faraway Korean War, the Navy gave him an opportunity to showcase his artistic talents to his peers. Portraits my dad did of his shipmates were so popular with his subjects that they sent them back home to their families. It was at this point that Bob started to believe that he might someday have a legitimate shot at becoming a professional illustrator. The Navy also gave him time to hone his craft: though placed in charge of the ship's stores, there was always time leftover for dad to sit with a pad of paper and work on his drawings.



Bob Peak in High School, Wichita, Kansas.

RETURNING HOME

Dad's time in the service ended with an honorable separation from the U.S. Navy on August 19, 1946. Filled with renewed optimism at the prospect of making headway in his art career, Bob returned home to find that his siblings were living in an even more desperate situation than they were in when he left. Using his G.I. Bill and money he had managed to save while he was in the service, my father was able to put a down payment on a new home located at 1029 Pershing Street in Wichita. He also treated himself to a brand new Mercury convertible.

In 1947, dad resumed his studies at the University of Wichita—this time, as an art major. Having amassed a sizeable portfolio of work by this time, Bob paid a visit to McCormick-Armstrong, a large printing firm in the Midwest that hired him on part time in the art department. The large staff at McCormick-Armstrong included people in the layout, illustration, and lettering departments. Bob was put to work in all three, receiving valuable encouragement from his superiors and co-workers. The versatility and support dad received from his time at McCormick-Armstrong gave him the self-confidence to pursue a career in commercial illustration, giving him a firm foundation upon which to build.

ART CENTER SCHOOL

Though Bob made strides while attending the University of Wichita, the school was primarily a teachers' college and therefore did not have a regimented curricula for training illustrators. Of the classes that were offered, Bob availed himself of courses in ceramics, lettering, industrial rendering, perspective, and watercolor painting. All the while, dad continued to do his own illustrations. However, he knew that if he was going to go on to the next level, he would eventually have to go to New York to prove his worth—after all, it was one thing to be good by Wichita standards, but it was something else to get noticed in New York.

By the time he graduated from the University of Wichita in 1950, Bob sent his portfolio to the Art Center School in Los Angeles (now Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California). He was accepted on a partial scholarship in October of that year. Fortunately, the time he had spent at the University of Wichita was not a complete waste—he had accumulated enough credits that the Art Center School allowed him to start at the half-year point of their four-year program. The next two years of his life were spent in the rigorous pursuit of his craft. Among his teachers were the famous illustrators John LaGatta and Reynold Brown. LaGatta taught Bob with an old school rigor, emphasizing the importance of giving one hundred percent effort to all projects.



Bob Peak, his sisters and brother. LEFT TO RIGHT: Bob Peak, Geraldine Gegen, Virginia Lipke, Rosemary Malone and William Peak.

In order to support himself while he attended school, Bob had a variety of jobs—waxing floors and cooking in the cafeteria, landscaping the campus grounds, and waiting tables at local restaurants. He lived with a fellow student in a small dorm on campus, and spent what little free time he had continuously drawing and painting. Unlike the University of Wichita, the Art Center School channeled all of Bob's classes toward the study of illustration exclusively, enabling him to learn such topics as sketching for illustration, head drawing, life drawing, and advertising illustration.

Romance would also enter my father's life during this time. He met a young woman—a fellow student at Art Center School—by the name of Lucille Tedesco. After a brief courtship, the couple married in 1952. The girl came from a family that owned a growing ready mix concrete business located in Southern California. Bob's father-in-law, Santo (Sam) Tedesco, was so fond of his new son-in-law that he offered him a position of partial ownership in the family business. Bob, however, was insistent on following his chosen career path. In the short span of time after his graduation from Art Center School, my dad spent three solid months assembling a sizeable portfolio of his work while my mother worked a full-time job to support them. He took the satchel with him when they left for New York City in 1953.

Armed with little more than self-confidence and ambition when he arrived in New York, Bob was able to land a job at the Alexander E. Chaite Studios. Though he made very little



Bob Peak with his wife Lucille, 1952.



Old Hickory Bourbon advertisement, 1956



McGregor Sportswear advertisement, 1957



Dobbs Hat advertisement, 1958



Pepsi Cola advertisement, 1959



Italian Line advertisement, 1958

money, he was working in the company of a number of other fine illustrators. (Some past Chaite Studio alums included Robert McGuinness, Mike Hooks, Bernie Fuchs and Frank McCarthy.) At that time, most of the commercial illustration being produced was done in the “Cooper Studio style”—a photo-realistic style of painting that relied heavily on photo reference and the balopticon projector, an approach made famous by the competing Cooper Studio in New York. Dad wanted to break out of this narrow mold and produce more expressive work. He was often told, “There’s no market for your flamboyant work. You’re going to have to pull in your horns.”

Bob made an effort to conform to this standard, and was able to receive a few early assignments. Dissatisfied with his work, however, he made the decision that he would have to be true to himself, or he may as well give up and move back to California. Bob proceeded to burn all of the illustrations he had made to that point, and vowed from that moment on to only do the kind of work that he wanted to do, spending the next six weeks perfecting his style.

An art director and a salesman at Chaite Studios took notice of Bob’s paintings and appreciated what he was trying to do with his work. The salesman took a stack of Bob’s sketches over to Martin Stevens, a friend and art director at Old Hickory Bourbon. At that time, the company was looking for an illustrator to create images for their new ad campaign.

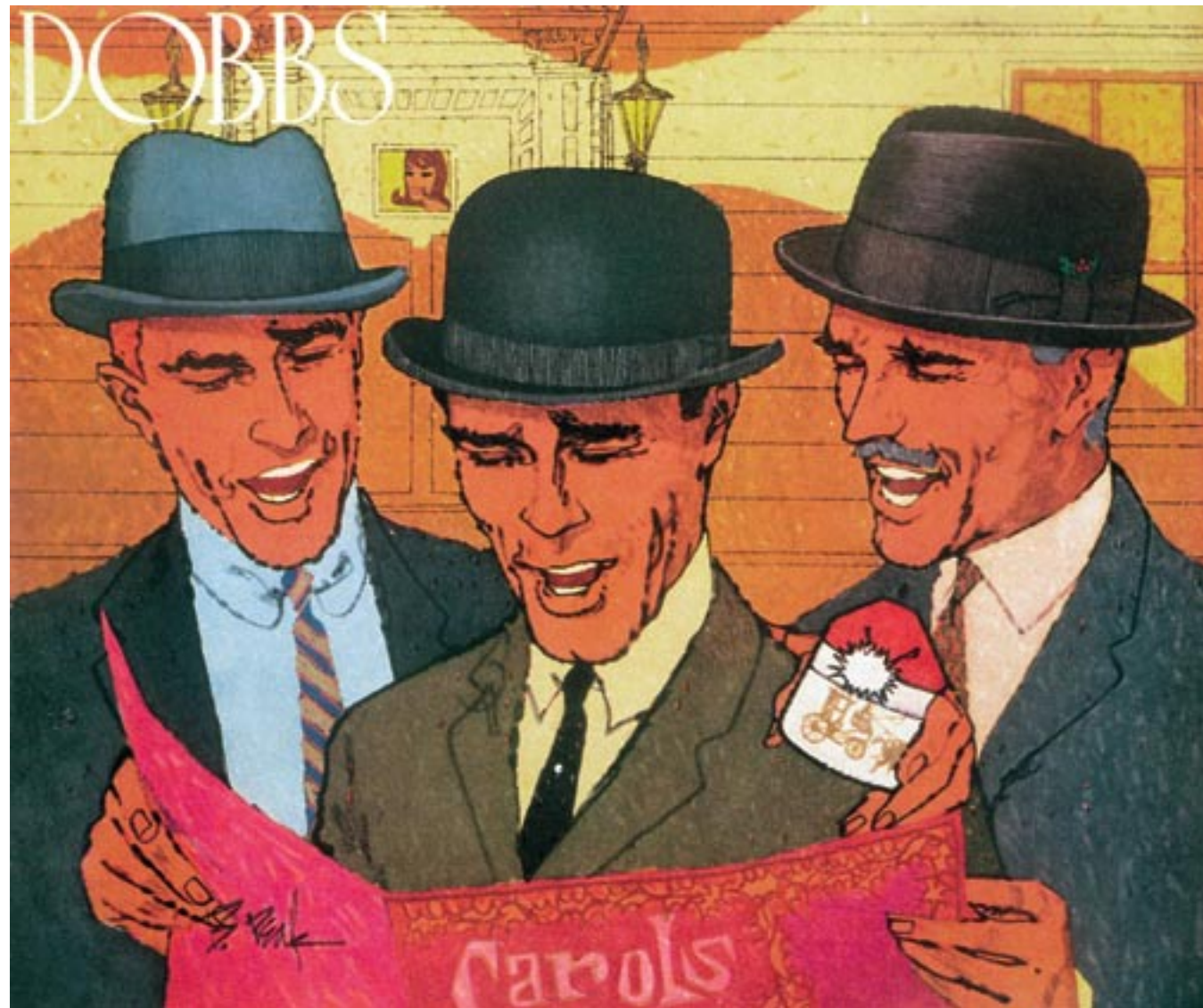
After that initial meeting, Bob received an assignment to create some concept drawings for Old Hickory. The same assignment was also given to René Bouché, the renowned fashion illustrator whose work appeared in *Paris Vogue* magazine in the 1930’s and also counted Saks Fifth Avenue, Jaguar, Helena Rubinstein, and Elizabeth Arden among his clients. Bob respected the range of Bouché’s work, which also included portraits of celebrities including Edward R. Murrow, Sophia Loren, Jack Benny, William and Elaine DeKooning, and Igor Stravinsky.

In approaching the assignment, Bob created an unusual picture depicting men with hook noses and big ears, holding their hands up in front of their faces. It was a departure from the images of beautiful people often seen in commercial illustration at that time. As it turned out, his unconventional style appealed to the people at Old Hickory, and he was chosen over Bouché for the final job. Using the bourbon campaign as a springboard, it was only a matter of months before Bob found his illustrations on the back covers of *Look* and *Life* magazines, and he went from making virtually nothing a week to making over \$40,000 a year. In quick succession, Bob Peak had established himself as a name in the commercial art world.

The impact of his work with the Old Hickory campaign led him to other assignments from Pepsi-Cola, Chrysler, and Dobbs Hats.



Cosmopolitan illustration, 1957. Gouache.



Dobbs Hat advertisement, 1960. Gouache.



Dobbs Hat advertisement, 1959. Gouache.



Dobbs Hat advertisement, 1959. Gouache.

THE 1960s

Bob's career would truly ascend in the 1960's, bringing him assignments and acclaim across a wide spectrum. In that decade, he would work on high profile campaigns for some of America's largest companies, including R.J. Reynolds, Ford Motor Company, 7-Up, Trans World Airlines, and Puritan. He would start painting covers for *Sports Illustrated* and *TV Guide*, eventually creating 39 separate covers for the country's television bible throughout the '60s, '70s and '80s. In 1961, Bob would also for the first time begin to do advertising work for major motion pictures. Over the next two decades, his movie posters for films such as *Apocalypse Now* and *Superman* would further cement his reputation as a legend in the field of commercial illustration.

As the assignments began to pour in, it became increasingly difficult for Bob to manage his own business affairs and still have enough time to do quality work. With his career kicking into high gear, it made sense that he take on official representation. An associate of Bob's suggested that he meet with a friend of his by the name of Harvey Kahn. When they met for the first time in 1960, Kahn had already established himself as a representative of fashion illustrators and photographers, and was quickly on his way to becoming one of the most respected agents in New York for illustrators. His client list eventually included such names as Alan E. Cober, Bernie Fuchs, and Wilson McLean.

When Kahn first went to visit Bob Peak in 1960, the family was living in the top two floors of 36 Central Park South in New York City, just overlooking the park. The master bedroom and Bob's studio were on the very top floor, with the children's rooms, kitchen, den, and other quarters occupying the floor below. When Kahn rang the doorbell, Bob answered and immediately introduced the guest to Lucille, saying, "This is my wife Lucille, she is the most important person in my life." After this pleasant introduction, Kahn would go on to represent Bob Peak for the next 30 years of his career.

By 1962, Bob and Lucille decided that they and their young family would be better suited away from the hectic lifestyle of New York, and moved to the picturesque countryside of Greenwich, Connecticut. With four young children at this point, the couple felt that Greenwich offered the environment and style of living ideal for them to grow up in. Bob drove one of his exotic sports cars into New York whenever he needed to meet with clients, since Harvey Kahn had an established office in the city.

Bob set up his studio at the family house, separate from the living quarters to allow for ample privacy and solitude. Once there, he continued with his busy schedule, constantly working on ways to stay fresh and keep his work in demand. He went to great lengths to stay in touch with the ever-changing tastes of the public, reading whatever new book or magazine he could get his hands on, taking in a variety of material designed for his own young children all the way up to the elderly. His shifting tastes and continual movement was also



Puritan Sportswear advertisement, c. 1962-'68. Gouache and collage.



Bob Peak in New York City at 36 Central Park South, c. 1960-61.



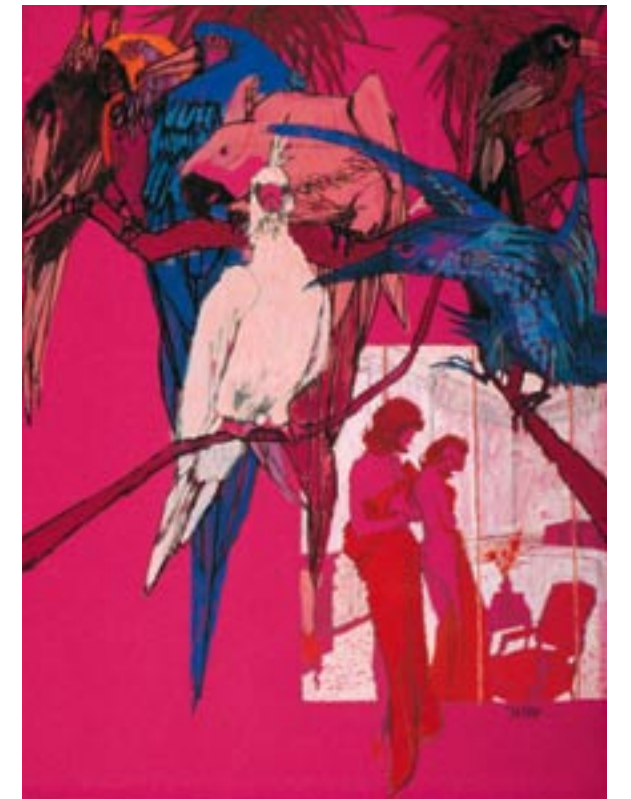
Bob Peak's children in New York, c. 1960-61. LEFT TO RIGHT: Catherine Rogers, Matthew Peak, Robert Peak, Thomas Peak.



Puritan Sportswear advertisement, c. 1962-'68. Gouache and collage.



Cosmopolitan illustration, 1964. Gouache.



Ladies Home Journal illustration, 1964. Gouache.



Puritan Sportswear advertisement, c. 1962-'68.

◀ Puritan Sportswear advertisement, c. 1962-'68. Gouache and collage.



McCall's illustration, 1965. Gouache.



Cosmopolitan illustration, 1965. Fabric collage/mixed media.



Winston Cigarettes advertisement, 1968.



7-UP advertisement, 1964.



7-UP advertisement, 1963.



Winston Cigarettes advertisement, 1969.



Bob Peak's first movie campaign for *West Side Story*, 1961. Gouache.

reflected in the fact that the family moved several times while in Greenwich, switching houses periodically while remaining in the same city.

Despite the separation of his studio from the family living quarters, the frenetic energy of his four children still proved to be too much of a distraction during Bob's working hours. With this in mind, he moved his entire studio up to nearby Westport, Connecticut, setting up a two-story workspace in a commercial building located on the Saugatuck River. The half hour drive between his studio in Westport and his home in Greenwich offered an opportunity to unwind as he sat behind the wheel of his Ferrari and cruised through the beautiful surroundings of the Merritt Parkway. He particularly enjoyed the drive late at night, coming back after putting in many long hours in front of his easel working on any number of assignments. "A half hour's ride in a Ferrari can do more for relaxing me than an evening out at the theater," he said.

Bob Peak would gain his first exposure to the movie industry in 1961, the same year he was awarded the "Artist of the Year Award" by the Artist Guild of New York. David Chassman, an executive at the United Artists film studio, hired Bob to create a new look for a feature film version of the hit Broadway musical *West Side Story*. Up until this time, the major studios such as Universal, Allied Artists, and MGM had used illustrators such as Reynold Brown, Ken Sawyer,

and Joe Smith to create the "key art" during the '50s and '60s for westerns, romances and monster movies. The art created for this film was a radical departure from the established styles of these other artists.

To create the movie poster for *West Side Story*, Bob began the project by doing a series of black and white drawings followed by color paintings of Natalie Wood, Richard Beymer, Rita Moreno, and George Chikiris. He incorporated these subjects into a variety of settings from the film, trying to combine them into a single painting. His flamboyant montage had never been seen before in the film industry, and it was from this point that Bob Peak would transform the established philosophy toward movie advertising. Of the key art for *West Side Story*, Bob said "My job is to encapsulate a movie in one picture, maybe provide a collage of elements that will entice people to come in." His influence over movie art would continue throughout the '60s with work done for *The Birdman of Alcatraz*, *The Manchurian Candidate*, *The Cincinnati Kid*, *In Like Flint*, *Our Man Flint*, *Modesty Blaise*, *Lord Jim*, *Camelot*, and *My Fair Lady*.

For *My Fair Lady*, done in 1964, Bob would create one of his most memorable pieces depicting a young Audrey Hepburn holding an umbrella while standing next to Rex Harrison. Scenes from the movie are intertwined around the two actors, with Hepburn's arms serving as the focal point for the picture. Bob would later remark, "Audrey Hepburn's





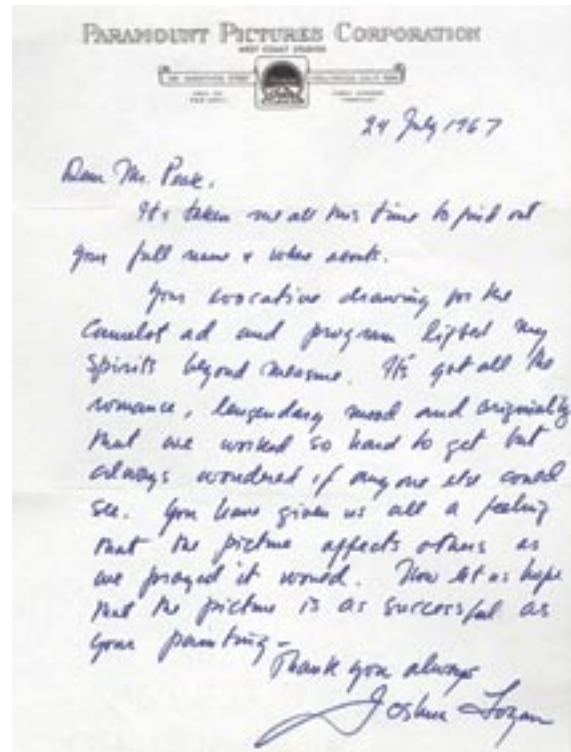
Color sketch for *Camelot*, 1967. Gouache.



Color sketch for *Camelot*, 1967. Gouache.



Color sketch for *Camelot*, 1967. Gouache.



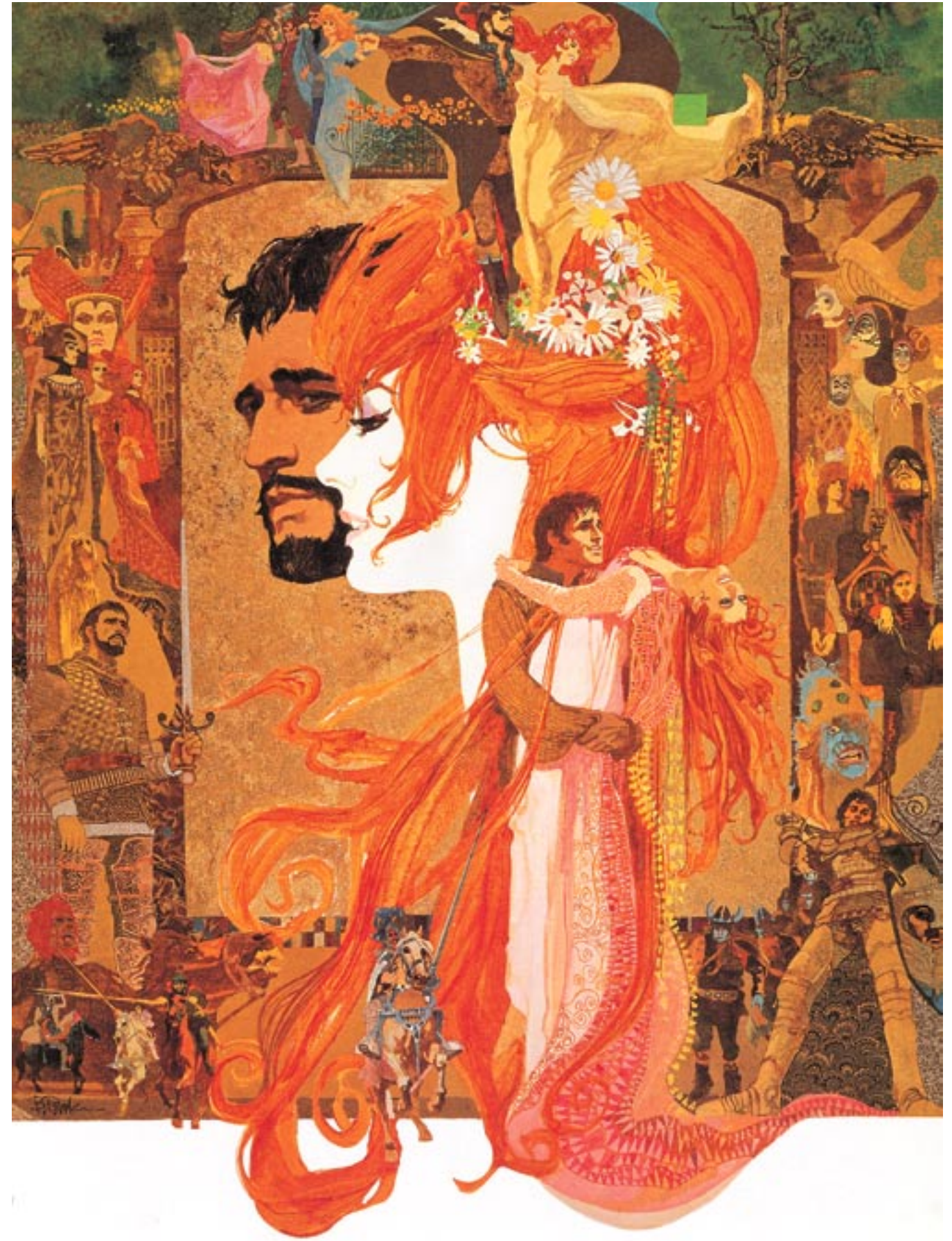
A letter to Bob Peak from Joshua Logan, the director of the film *Camelot*, 1967.

arms were an 'A frame' for the action." A few years later, Bob received a Gold Medal from the Society of Illustrators in 1967 for his widely recognized rendering of Vanessa Redgrave and Richard Harris in *Camelot*.

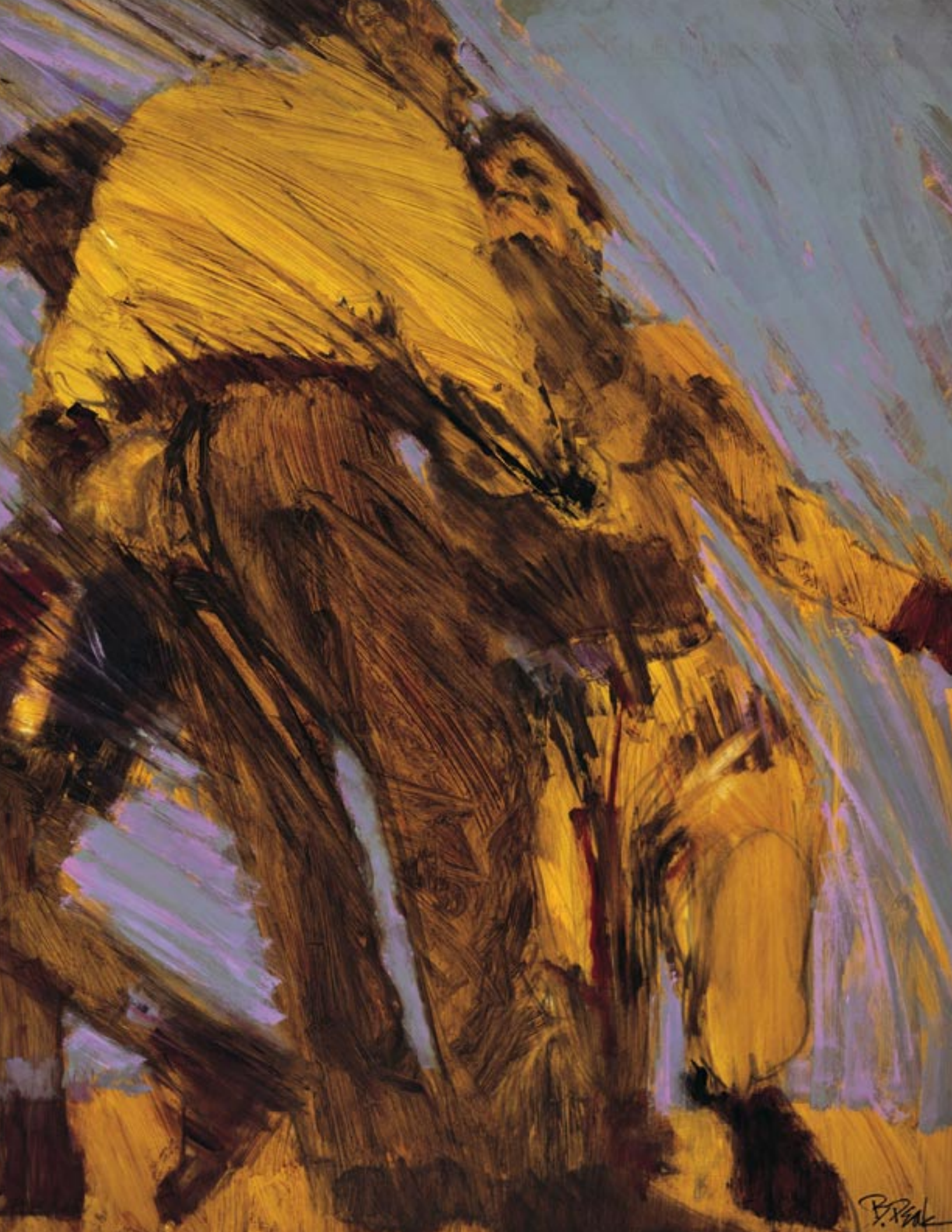
THE PASSING OF BOB SR.

Sadly, the following year—on February 18, 1968—would bring the death of Bob's father. A longtime sufferer from high-blood pressure, Bob Sr. also endured complications from emphysema. Over the years, and in spite of his busy schedule, Bob made many trips back to Wichita to visit with his family back home. At the time of his passing, however, Bob was angry with his father for having not been a better provider for his siblings when he was alive. This sentiment was reinforced by the fact that he and his brother Jack had always helped out with their father's living expenses. He also resented the seeming lack of support Bob Sr. had for his son's profession as an illustrator.

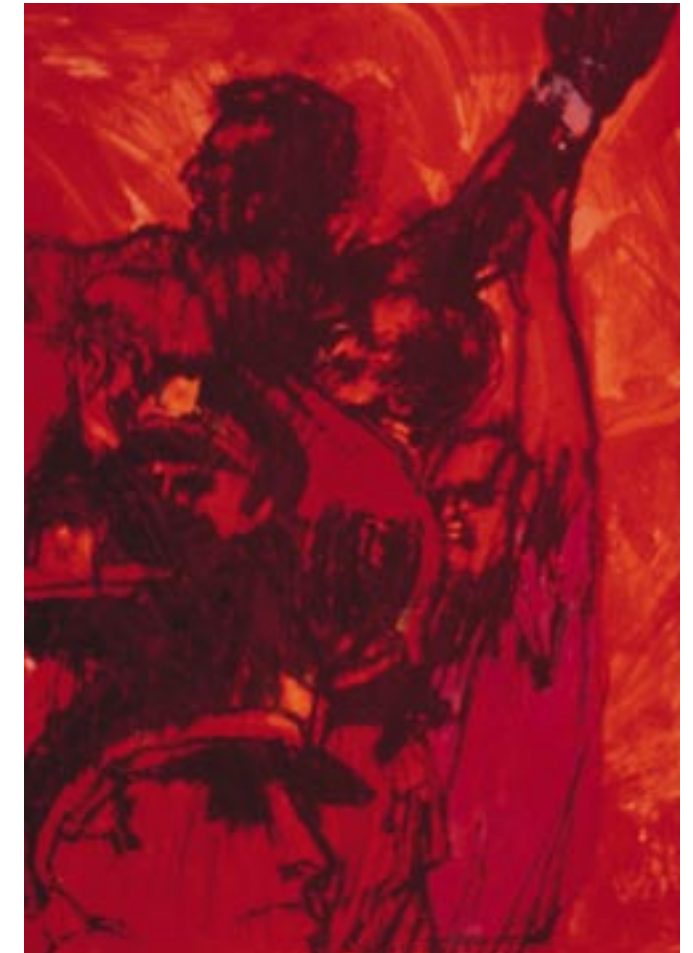
This all changed, though, after Bob came across a large scrapbook his father had kept, which contained innumerable articles and clippings of his son's work. Needless to say, it was bittersweet for dad to finally learn that his own father actually did admire what it was that he was doing for a living, especially after so many years of thinking that he was completely disinterested. Adding to that was when Bob learned that his father would take money from his Social Security check every month and buy any magazines he could find that contained his son's illustrations.



Original key art for *Camelot*, 1967. Gouache.



Esquire illustration, 1961. Charcoal.



Esquire illustration, 1961. Acrylic.

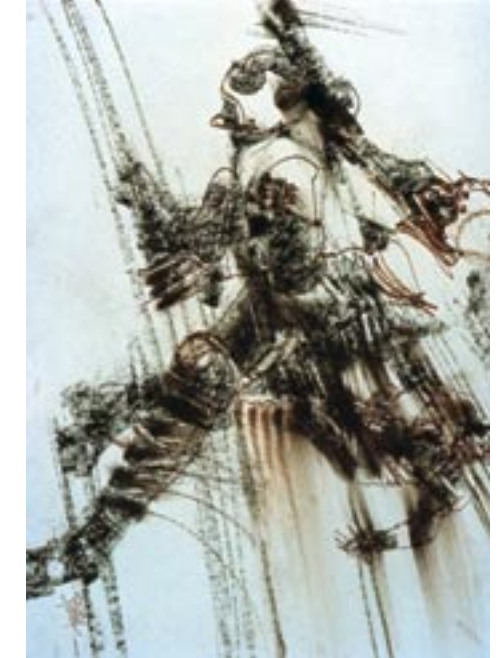
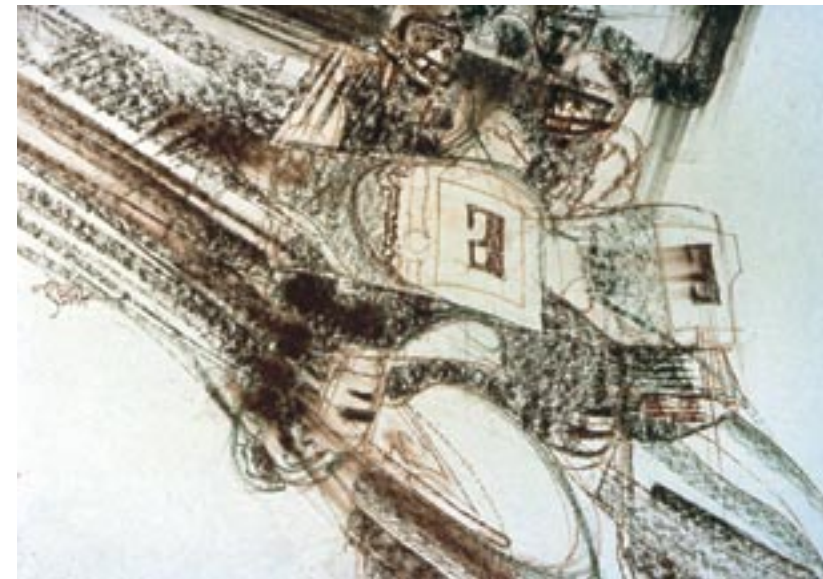
SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

Bob's relationship with *Sports Illustrated* also began in the '60s after making contact with Richard Gangel, the longtime art director for the magazine. The relationship Bob had with the magazine would prove fruitful over the years, providing him the opportunity to travel extensively while covering a variety of high profile—and sometimes exotic—sporting events. One of these memorable experiences came in 1964 when he was commissioned to go on safari with the Shah of Iran as they hunted for ibex (mountain goats). Before leaving for the trip, Bob had to take horseback riding lessons in order to be properly trained for the seventeen day journey.

Upon arriving in Iran, Bob soon learned that the entire trip was intended to be ridden bareback. However, after several discussions with the leaders of the hunting party, he convinced them to allow him the use of a saddle. Even still, Bob found it hard to keep up with the pace of the riders, and found himself falling further and further behind. Worse yet, his companions never looked back to see where he was or whether he was following along. After a successful hunt, Bob was urged to take part in the traditional ritual of draining and drinking the blood of the slain ibex. Not wanting to offend the Shah, he took sips of the blood, and then got sick behind a bush afterwards. When the group

slept at the palace overnight, Bob found it hard to sleep due to the persistent crunching noises he heard all around him. When he asked one of the party members what the cause of the noise was, he was told that it was the sound of termites eating their way through the palace walls. Upon returning to America, Bob came down with dysentery and was hospitalized. Nonetheless, he appreciated the opportunity to go wherever *Sports Illustrated* would send him over the years.

In fact, another *SI* opportunity presented itself to Bob Peak in 1969 for Super Bowl III. That year, the legendary Joe Namath and the New York Jets of the AFL squared off against the heavily favored Baltimore Colts on January 12. In the week leading up to the game, "Broadway" Joe Namath issued his bold prediction that his team would triumph over the team with Johnny Unitas behind center. Dad had the opportunity to roam the Jets' sidelines during the game, taking full advantage of his press pass. With more than enough material to work with, he returned to his studio to work up a series of sketches, spending many exhausting hours trying to head in the right direction. Using gouache on medium board, he then did a series of finished illustrations incorporating vibrant colors of red, yellow, blue, and green. The article on Super Bowl III appeared alongside dad's illustrations in the magazine.



ON THIS PAGE: Comprehensive sketches for *Rollerball*, 1975. Conte crayon.

THE 1970s

The next decade would see Bob continue to do a wide range of poster art for some of the biggest feature films of that time. With each successive project, it became more apparent that Bob was the “go to” guy when it came to creating dynamic movie art that could engage the public and capture their imagination.

Tailoring his craft to suit each assignment, Bob would say, “There are many factors to take into consideration (when creating movie art): the selling factor, the star quality, and contractual relationships, just to name a few.” Bob focused on the qualities of each particular film when creating the art for it and how it related to its marketing. If the film was a period piece, the art would not necessarily reflect the look of that period, since it “would probably kill it.” For a movie that was star driven, he would create a piece that portrayed that actor’s importance. And for a James Bond movie, he focused on the peripheral elements that define the story.

In 1975, Bob received the opportunity to work on the upcoming United Artists’ release *Rollerball*, directed by Norman Jewison and starring James Caan. As part of his research, Bob was sent to Germany for two and a half weeks to work on preliminary sketches before returning to his studio to complete the illustrations. He spent every day on the set working on the sketches, and at night he would frequent the local German restaurants, occasionally meeting up with Jewison and cast members to unwind from the tight shooting schedule.

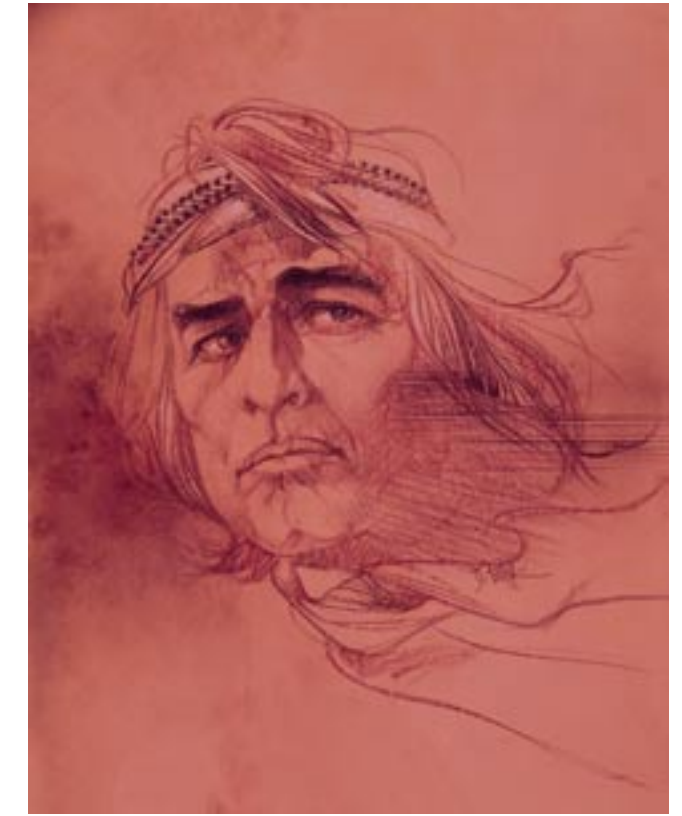
When Bob was once asked how he went about doing promotional work for a film, he said: “I try not to work from stills whenever possible. I get a script and usually see a screening. I may spend a week around the set, talking with the director and actors to get a ‘feel’ for the movie.” Harvey Kahn would then draw up a budget and time frame for Bob to complete the sketches in his studio. During this phase, it always started off as a series of preliminary black and white sketches. “The ideas for these sketches would come in one of two ways—either right away or by working them out. The way to find a solution is to start working. Then one idea leads to another,” he said.

When Bob returned to his studio after leaving the *Rollerball* set in Germany, he completed a series of ten watercolor paintings depicting various action scenes from the film. These paintings were later reproduced in a limited edition portfolio, and awarded an Award of Merit from the Society





Color sketch for *The Missouri Breaks*, 1976. Conte crayon and sepia ink.

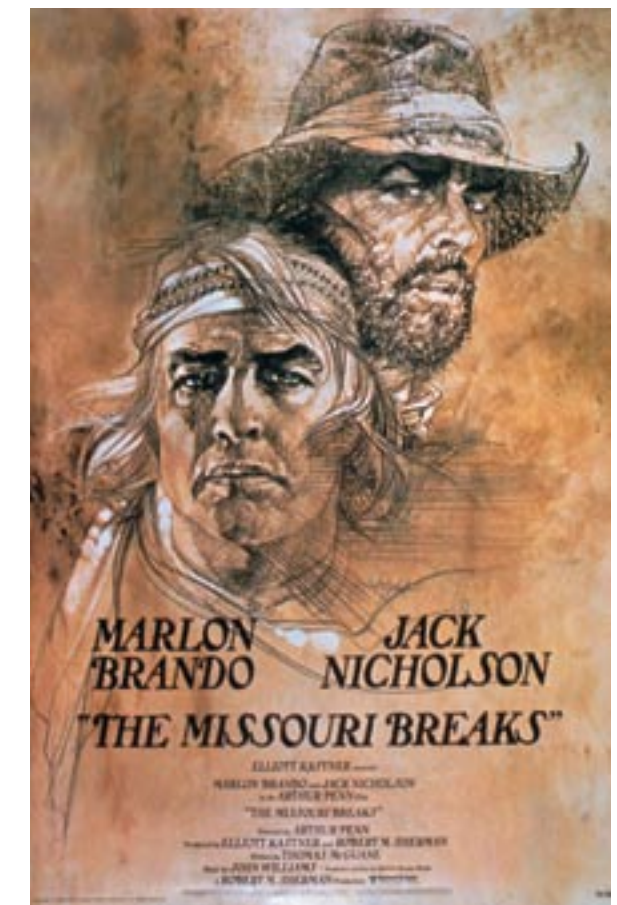


Color sketch for *The Missouri Breaks*, 1976. Conte crayon and sepia ink.

of Illustrators. For the finished key art, which also received an Award of Merit, Bob painted a 50" x 40" piece in gouache entitled "Future Shock."

United Artists once again sent work Bob's way in 1976 for the upcoming film release *The Missouri Breaks*, starring Jack Nicholson and the incomparable Marlon Brando. The experience of working on *Missouri Breaks* would make an impression on him in many ways. The first was his trip to Montana: "I went to Montana and loved it. I loved getting away from New York, and, in a sense, it was a way to revisit the horizons of my roots," he was quoted as saying. The second reason was because of his opportunity to work with Brando, an experience he would revisit in 1978 on the set of *Apocalypse Now*.

Brando's trademark reputation of being "difficult" during filming did not escape Bob during work on *Missouri Breaks*. The star was having problems remembering his lines (a classic Brando trait), so the crew would hang up cue cards out of the camera frame for him to read from. This worked fine until one day, in the middle of a scene, Brando stopped everything to tell Bob that his sketching was ruining his concentration and had to stop. Bob discontinued his sketching for the remainder of the shoot and ended up going back home with very little to work with. Nevertheless, Bob drew up an inexhaustible number of crayon and charcoal sketches on textured and rice paper. From these, Bob did a final 52" x 40" watercolor and pastel painting on fiberglass canvas depicting the heads of Brando and Nicholson.



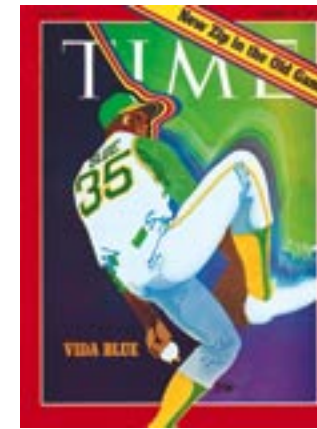
One sheet poster for *The Missouri Breaks*, 1976.



Original art for *Time* magazine cover, 1975. Watercolor and pastel.



Time, January 12, 1970.



Time, August 23, 1971.



Time, January 22, 1973.



Time, June 23, 1975.

TIME MAGAZINE

In addition to his movie work, Bob would also begin a fruitful relationship with *Time* magazine in the 1970's, creating some of the nation's most memorable cover illustrations — 45 in all. Bob's first job for *Time* was a rush assignment done on Christmas Day, 1969, of the country rock group "The Band." For the illustration, he worked up a series of pencil and pastel idea sketches, eventually turning two of them into finished illustrations. David Merrill, art director at *Time*, had the luxury of being able to choose from two different pieces for the cover. The picture was eventually used on the cover of the January 12, 1970 issue of the magazine. From that point on, Bob always made two finished illustrations for every cover he made for *Time*.

When working on *Time* covers, Bob always used photos taken of his subjects, yet never copied the pictures exactly. "I change things... I make my own shadows, for instance," he said. Almost a year after his portrait of "The Band," Bob received the assignment to paint a cover illustration of Mother Teresa for the December 27, 1970 issue. This painting, along with those he made of Anwar Sadat and Marlon Brando, are now part of The Smithsonian Institute's permanent collection.

Bob later said of the Mother Teresa project: "This was the best experience I've ever had with a portrait. I related so strongly to the character of this wonderful woman and it was almost a religious act to paint it. I did two versions and couldn't make a wrong stroke. It was painted in a transparent watercolor, which can so easily go awry, but everything I laid down went into position just right. I'd almost finished it late in the afternoon, (but) when I saw it the next morning, the light was streaming in from the window right across from the painting. I got a chill up my spine, called up my wife and told her about it. It's the only time I've had an experience like that, but I'm convinced that I wasn't the only one who guided the brush on that picture — it had to be the influence of the character of that extraordinary lady." Others must have shared that sentiment, because the watercolor portrait of Mother Teresa later received an Award of Merit from the Society of Illustrators.



Original art for *Time* magazine cover, 1970. Watercolor.

Other illustrations Bob did for *Time* throughout the '70s included such notable names as Richard Nixon, Juan and Isabelita Peron, House Leader Thomas "Tip" O'Neil, Joni Mitchell, and Henry Kissinger.



TWA menu cover, "Las Vegas", 1973.

TWA

In 1973, Charles Butler Associates commissioned my father to do a series of murals for the backs of the TWA movie screens. Charles Butler, a renowned 20th Century designer of British and American commercial aviation interiors, was retained by TWA between 1970 and 1975 to serve as a consultant on the refurbishment of their entire fleet. This project included all of their DC-9s, Conair-88s, Boeing 727s, 770s, 747s, Lockheed L1011s, and a new scheme for their 727s.

The four mural decorations Bob was assigned to paint would depict the continents of Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America. They would be reproduced in silk screen, each measuring 35" x 83". Upon completion, the murals would be placed in front of each section throughout the aircraft. Because of the unique silk screen reproduction, Bob knew he had to treat each mural with flat colors and large decorative shapes. The murals would later be produced into a special "Limited Edition" series of 16" x 38" lithographs, personally autographed by the artist. TWA's *Ambassador In Flight Magazine* also ran an article entitled "Art Gallery in the Sky" on the art of Bob Peak.

The murals met with rave reviews from Charles Butler Associates and TWA, which led dad to do a series of menu covers for the airline. Each menu cover was done to represent one of the major world cities. He continued to

produce artwork for other TWA publications like the *Getaway Adventures* guides with their wrap-around cover designs. This artwork was more sophisticated and subtle than the murals, but kept with the basic design scheme and look that Bob had produced from the original four murals. Over a period of two years, dad illustrated 60 pieces for TWA. These works gave him a tremendous amount of exposure, and enabled him to receive broader media exposure from such publications as *North Light* magazine and *Communication Arts*.



TWA *Getaway Adventures* magazine cover, 1973.



Stevan Dohanos (1907-1994) *Saturday Evening Post* Original Cover Painting - June 21, 1947

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Original oil on canvas entitled "Custer", 1976. This painting won an Award of Merit from the Society of Illustrators in 1977.

THE OLD WEST

Bob Peak's love of the old west was instilled early in his Colorado childhood. His grandmother Kate Belle Coblenz was enamored with Buffalo Bill—because she knew him personally. Bob would later say, "We used to have picnics by Buffalo Bill's grave on Lookout Mountain. I remember my grandmother standing with her in front of his grave. I remember the story of when she met Bill Cody in Hays City, Kansas... and I remember her saying that Buffalo Bill was the greatest man she ever knew."

When she died in Denver, Colorado at the age of 98, her will instructed that her body be cremated and the ashes spread over the grave of William Fredrick Cody.

Over the years, Bob would read all the stories and letters of this legendary figure. He also read numerous books on the subject of the early American West and some of its famed and infamous characters such as Wild Bill Hickok, Jesse James, Billy the Kid, General George Custer, "Doc" Holiday, the Earp Brothers.

This interest in the Old West was rekindled by the assignment to paint a series on the "Marlboro Man" for the Phillip

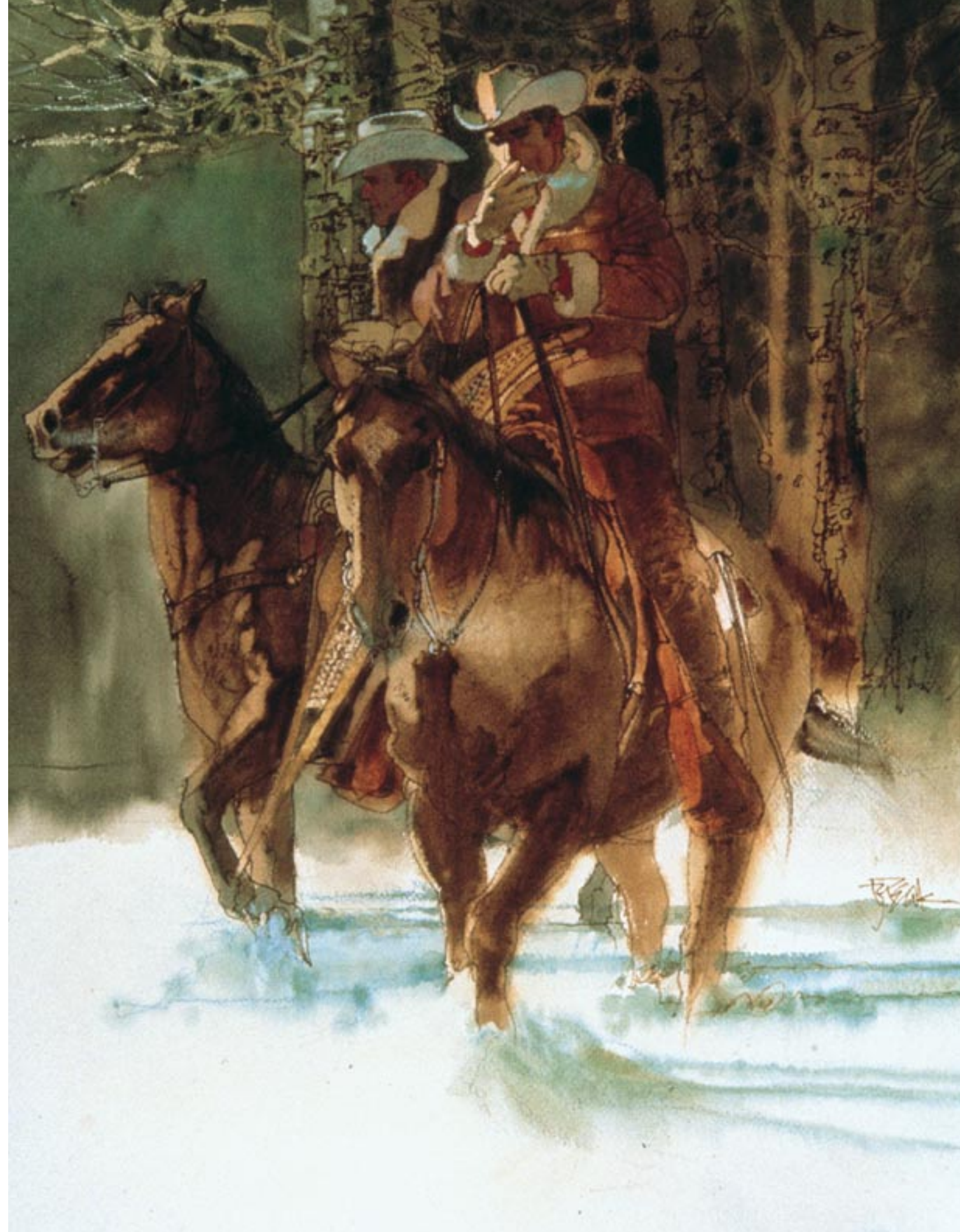
Morris Company in the mid-1970s. Bob would do a series of watercolor paintings and charcoal drawings over a period of six years for both Marlboro and Marlboro Lights Cigarettes. The Marlboro campaign was both artistically and financially rewarding, though at times all consuming.

Bob would also receive an assignment from Mohawk Paper Mills Company to advertise their Navajo Fieldstone Cover Paper by doing two different perspectives of his boyhood idol, "Buffalo Bill" Cody in poster form.

It was during this "Western Phase" that Bob would embark in a direction of creating a series of oil, watercolor, pastel and charcoal gallery paintings depicting scenes and characters from the early American West. These large gallery paintings would have names like "The Hunting Party", "The Last Great Scout", "Indian Dancers", "General Custer", and "Buffalo Bill Cody".

THE ILLUSTRATORS WORKSHOP

In the summer of 1976, Bob would participate in a unique program called the "Illustrators Workshop." The one month long workshop was designed to offer an intensive learning



Original art for a Marlboro Cigarettes advertisement, 1974. Watercolor on paper. ➤



Original art for a Marlboro Cigarettes advertisement, 1974. Watercolor on paper.

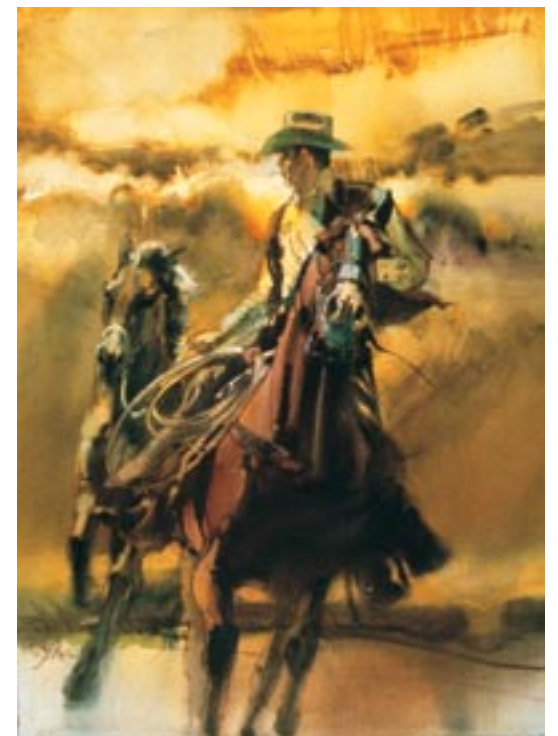


Original oil on canvas entitled "The Hunting Party", 1985.

experience as an introduction into the field of professional illustration. Six of America's greatest contemporary illustrators designed the course—Bernie Fuchs, Mark English, Bob Heindel, Fred Otnes, and Bob Peak himself—and were collectively able to persuade Michael J. Smollin, a fellow colleague with extensive advertising and management experience, to serve as managing director. Alan E. Cober acted as the group's functionary president.

By the 1970s, the dynamics of the commercial art world of the '40s, '50s, and '60s had changed drastically. In earlier years, the apprenticeship stage had served as an important role in the development of many of the country's most outstanding artists. Up-and-coming illustrators during the '50s were able to hone their skills by working in the bullpens of any number of large art studios, with direct contact with many of their heroes. By contrast, the '70s saw many young newcomers lost on their own, lacking the direction or connections to truly support themselves in their profession. Places like the Cooper Studio, Chaite Studio and others ceased to exist, and the entire commercial art field underwent significant changes. The Illustrators Workshop sought to provide an effective way for the budding commercial artist to make the transition from student painter to practicing professional in the modern era.

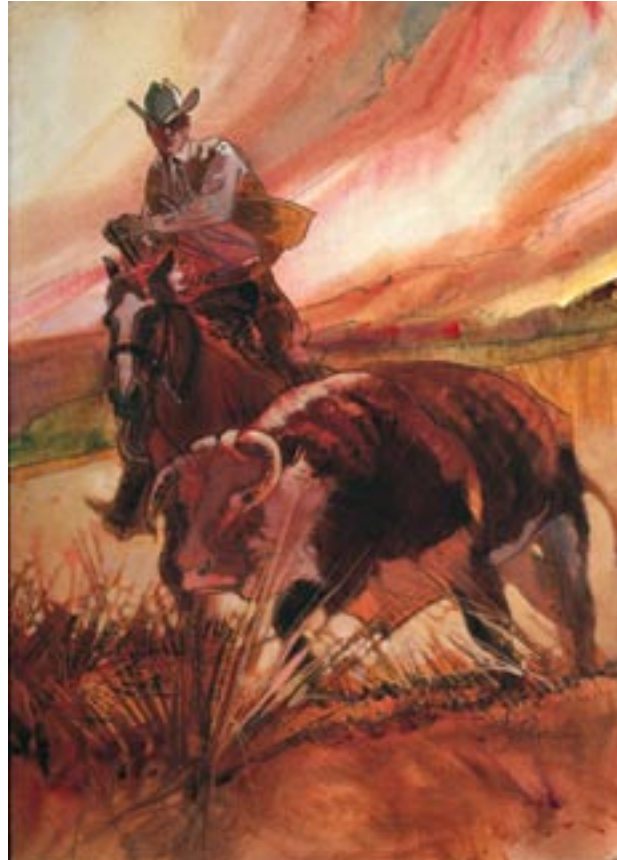
"It's a frustrating, bewildering period to make the transition from school or working in a studio into this rough, tough marketplace,"



Original art for a Marlboro Cigarettes advertisement, 1974. Watercolor on paper.



Original art for a Marlboro Cigarettes advertisement, 1974. Watercolor on paper.



Original art for a Marlboro Cigarettes advertisement, 1974. Watercolor on paper.

Bob commented. "Here you've got six seasoned veterans ready to help you, to explain this thing to you, and to (help) get you going.

"If only I could have had that when I came to New York," Bob said. "Imagine having Robert Fawcett, Austin Briggs, Al Parker, and Harold Von Schmidt to talk to and critique my drawings. Wouldn't that have been something?"

The program consisted of two segments: a seminar portion and a workshop portion. The seminar was designed as a week-long series of lectures by various instructors from leading magazines: graphic designers, art directors, sellers, and illustrators. They included such guest speakers as Art Paul, art director at *Playboy* magazine; Eugene Light, art director at Warner Books; and Harvey Kahn. The workshop portion was devoted to working on actual assignments, providing students with a chance to work under bona fide professional conditions. The students would be given daily individual attention from the members of the faculty, whether it be in the classroom or lecture hall.

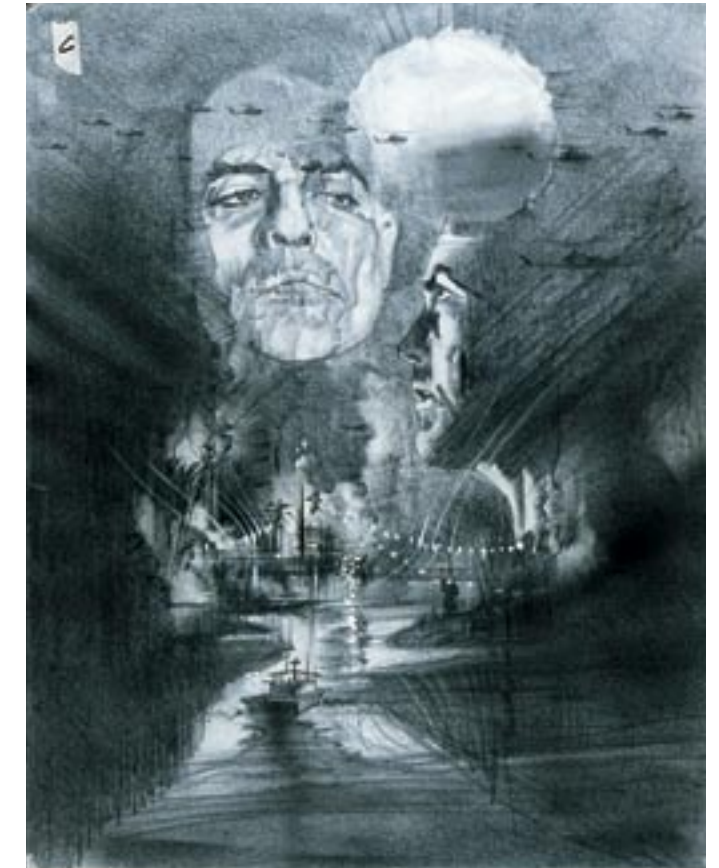
Students, in groups of twenty, were given the unique opportunity to actually visit the studios and homes of the instructors. Six of the seven members had set their studio in or adjacent to their living quarters (Bob was the only one whose studio wasn't set-up in his residence). Instead, he occupied a two-floor space in Wesport, Connecticut. Without question, this immersion experience gave students an invaluable glimpse into the artists' personal environment, with hopes of gaining an added appreciation of how reflective it was of the work they were producing.



Original watercolor on paper entitled "Buffalo Bill", 1985.



Comprehensive sketch for *Apocalypse Now*, 1979. Graphite and watercolor.



Comprehensive sketch for *Apocalypse Now*, 1979. Graphite.

APOCALYPSE NOW

In 1978, Bob would once again team with United Artists, this time receiving the assignment to help create the key art for the big screen adaptation of Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, starring Marlon Brando, Martin Sheen, and Robert Duvall. The film was inspired by Joseph Conrad's novel, *Heart of Darkness*, adapted to fit the contemporary setting of the Vietnam War. As expected, there was a tremendous amount of hype surrounding the film, with a great deal of money, time, and effort dedicated to its production. Brando alone was being paid one million dollars a week for the effort.

Before beginning work, Bob had the chance to meet with Coppola to get a feel for the picture and to better define what it was that the director was looking for. The sentiment was that Coppola wanted to make an event of the film, and to that effect Bob created five final promotional paintings. To get to this point, the artist spent countless hours working up a series of 18" x 24" black and white sketches. These studies evaluated the overall layout and helped Bob firm up his design ideas for the finished paintings.

"This is an exceptional visual film, and required an image with a specific felling," Bob Peak said of *Apocalypse Now*. A theme that he returned to throughout his art for the film was based on his opinion that "Brando has a marvelous head." That's why, on completion of the



Art for *Apocalypse Now*, 1979. 30" x 40", watercolor and gouache.



Color comprehensive art for *Apocalypse Now*, 1979. Pastel.



Comprehensive sketch for *Apocalypse Now*, 1979. Charcoal and gouache.

preliminary sketches, Bob decided that Brando's head would be the centerpiece of his composition. The smaller heads of Duvall and Sheen would surround Brando's, with the burning red sun separating them. On one of the other finished pieces, Bob would do Brando's head with an image of the boat headed down the river. Coppola, however, insisted that the bridge be included as well, so another painting was done with the bridge below Brando's head and the boat headed down the river.

Finally, after everything was complete and Bob had produced the final five paintings, Coppola and Duvall's differences on the set finally reached a boiling point. At Coppola's instruction, Bob was forced to remove Robert Duvall's image from all of the paintings.

All of the final images were painted in watercolor and gouache on stretched watercolor paper, and measured 34" x 44". Bob tried to keep the watercolor paintings transparent as long as he could so that he could use pastels or airbrush to create flares and feather things out. "It seemed to work like magic," he said. Bob then finished off the paintings with a coat of acrylic matte medium to separate layers of paint in order to develop glazes. In spite of the difficulties of working on *Apocalypse Now*, Bob would later tell his agent that it "was the most exciting thing (he) ever worked on."

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Original art for *Superman, The Movie*, 1978. Pastel and gouache.



Original key art for *Superman, The Movie*, 1978. 34.5" x 44.5", pastel and gouache. ▶

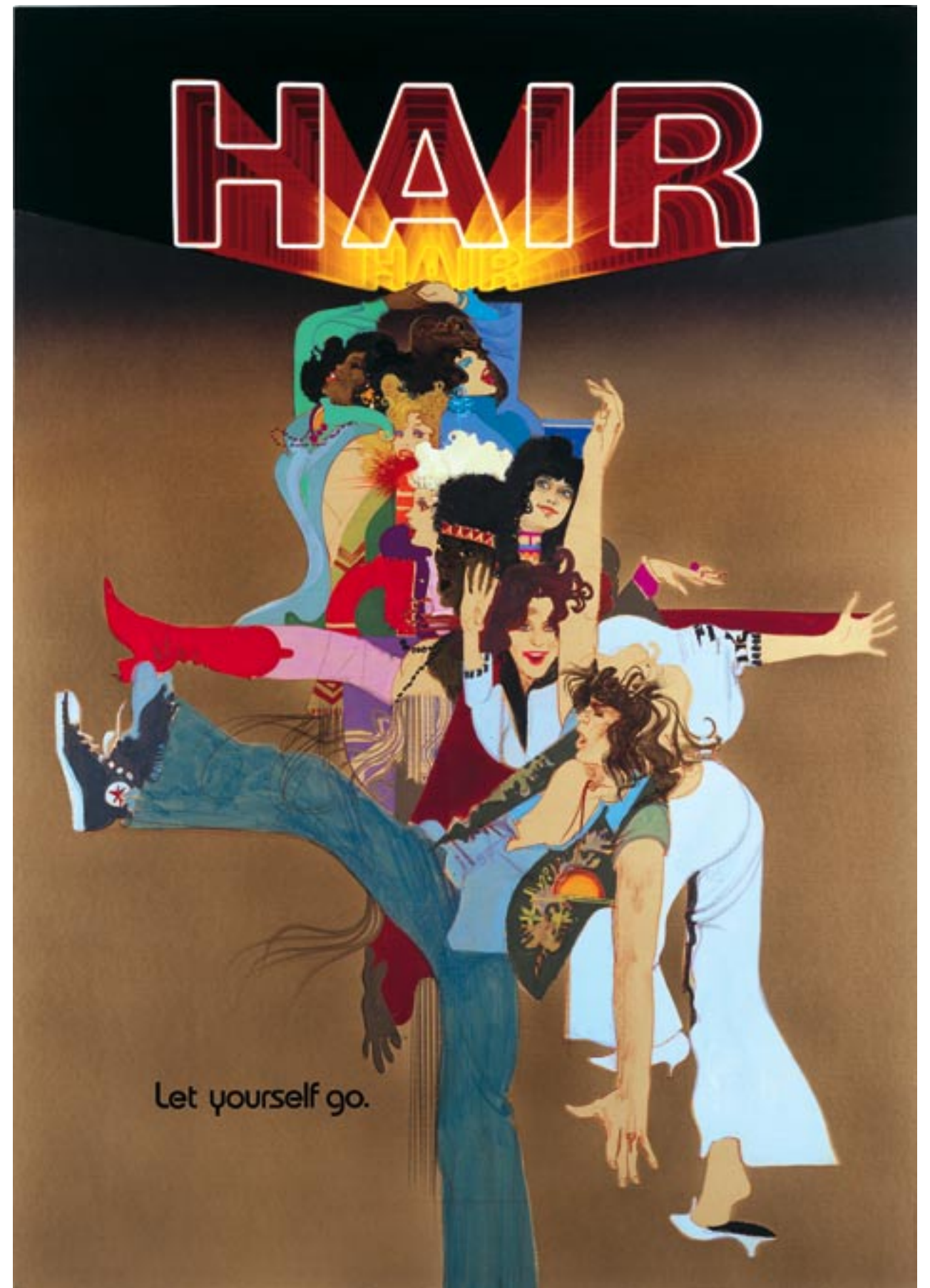


Original key art for *The Wizard of Oz*, 1978. 34" x 42", gouache.

◀ Original art for *The Wizard of Oz*, 1978. 34" x 42", gouache.



Original key art for *HAIR*, 1979. 32" x 45", gouache.



Original art for *HAIR*, 1979. 30" x 40", gouache.



GALLERY PAINTINGS

In 1978, Bob was approached by Jack O'Grady to do a one man show of his work at Jack O'Grady Galleries at 333 North Michigan Avenue in Chicago, Illinois. Jack O'Grady—himself a professional photographer and gallery owner—had followed Bob Peak's art and career for some time. They had established a working relationship in 1975 when Bob collaborated with renowned Illustrators Workshop members Bernie Fuchs and Mark English as part of the "Custer to Cochise Show" at the O'Grady Galleries in April of that year. The show proved to be a huge success, with all of Bob's paintings selling out quickly.

As a commercial illustrator, Bob had always said, "You are hired to solve someone else's problem and to please your client. I love it. That's what I always wanted to be, even as a little kid, and I am well suited for it. When I get a problem, I analyze it for what it is, and what I should do to solve the problem." With his fine arts paintings, Bob would work to solve his own problem and please himself. He would say, "Once you get a taste of painting what you want and selling it, that's great."

Over the years, despite his heavy work schedule, Bob had always found the time each year to do a certain number of fine arts paintings for himself. The opportunity to do a one man show was something he had been working towards for some time. He would later say, "I did it because I had to do it." The show, entitled "People, Places & Things: The Art of Robert Peak," had its opening on April 18, 1978. The

show consisted of some 20 paintings, sketches, and Peak's first lithograph. Bob Peak's paintings would include "Cathy with Cat", a watercolor portrait measuring 36" x 24" of a young girl sitting innocently on the ground with her cat. Surrounding her are beautifully muted green budding summer flowers and trees with delicate splashes of yellow and purple colors to enhance the enchanted setting. He named the painting after my sister, who sat for him.

Like all painters and illustrators, Bob studied the works of many renowned artists. The list of artists that dad admired included such painters as Robert Henri, John Singer Sargent, Egon Schiele and Nicolai Fechin. For the O'Grady Gallery Show, Bob would do a number of portraits of these famous artists.

One of the works was a pencil sketch measuring 30" x 40" of Robert Henri standing, full figure, body positioned almost sideways to the viewer, with one hand in his pocket and the other hand hanging from his vest pocket. The sketch shows Bob's strong use of line, and detailed in the focal areas of Henri's vest and head with portions of the arms, shoulders, and legs outlined only with pencil—revealing little or no detail. Bob would do a second painting on Henri using the same pose, only this time the piece was done with oil on paper. He added a potted plant and partial wall behind him to give a sense of depth and added color. He left the right side of the painting blank with only the brown color of the paper showing.

Bob was an ardent admirer of the work of Egon Schiele,

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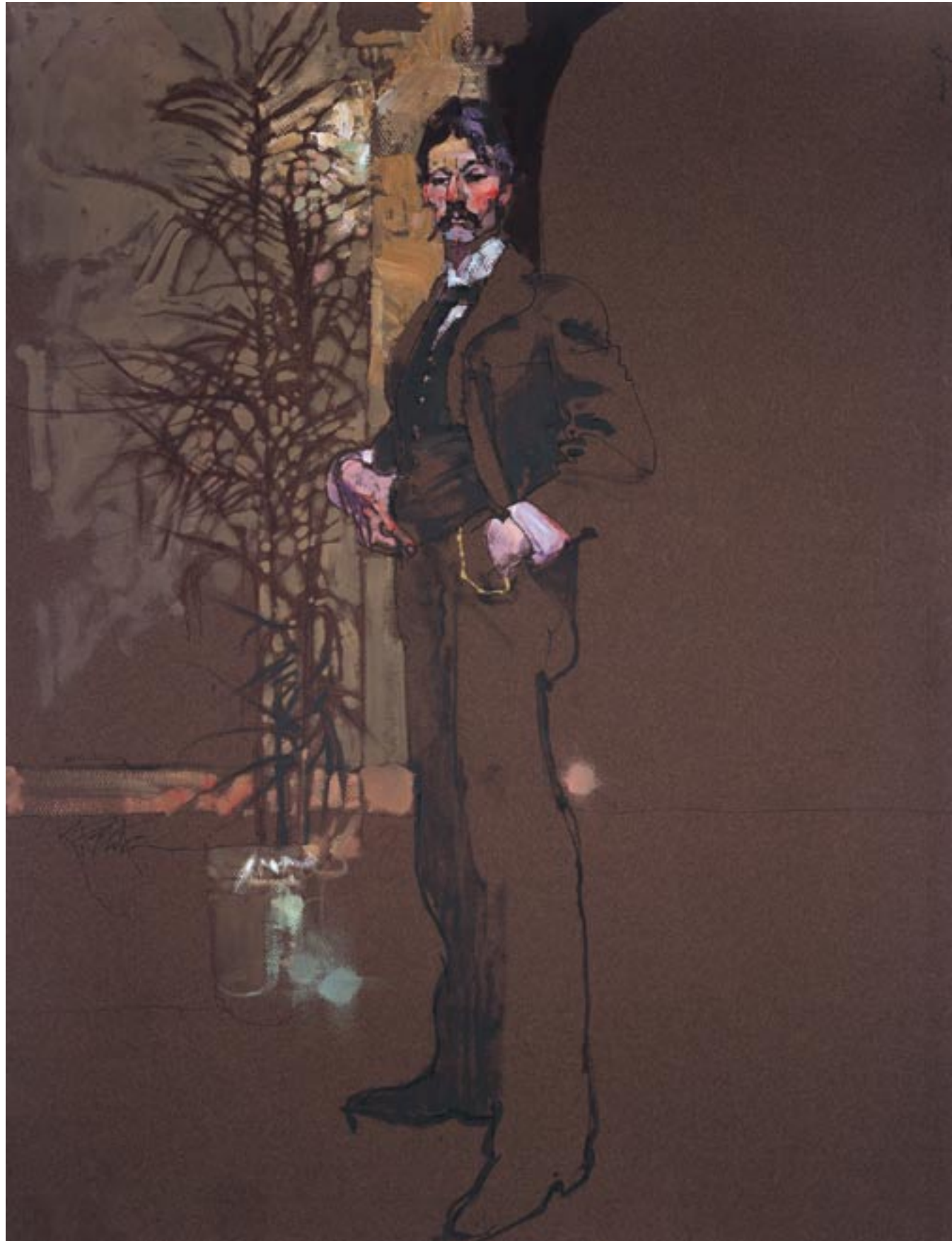
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Original oil on museum board entitled "Portrait of Robert Henri", 1978. 20" x 25".



Original oil on canvas painting entitled "Portrait of John Singer Sargent", 1988. 40" x 30".

the Austrian born artist who would die tragically in 1918 at the age of 28. Throughout his life, Schiele was portrayed as a troubled artist who made eroticism one of his major themes (and was briefly imprisoned for obscenity in 1912.) Schiele was obsessed with his own appearance and made a large number of self-portraits. Bob would paint a revealing watercolor entitled "Portrait of Egon Schiele," measuring 24" x 36" showing the artist, hands in his pockets, admiring himself in a full length mirror. We see only a glimpse of his face in the foreground image, and it is in the mirror that Bob reveals the true character of his subject. To the artist's left, stacked against the wall, are a few of his finished and unfinished paintings.

Bob would also complete two portraits of John Singer Sargent for the O'Grady Galleries Show. He was the most influential artist in Bob's fine arts work and was the one artist he most admired and talked about. I can remember as a college student, my father giving me a large John Singer Sargent book as a Christmas gift. He was so enamored with this artist and his beautiful work he was hoping to pass along some of this enthusiasm to me. I eventually read the book

and studied the images, and have come to appreciate this great artist.

The two pieces Bob completed on Sargent portray the artist seated on a couch dressed in what appears to be a three piece suit, holding a distinguished pose with his right hand on his hip. His other hand is holding a lit cigarette, hand pointed upwards. One piece was done with charcoal on paper measuring 30" x 40", my personal favorite. Here, he portrays Sargent's flamboyant character, working with the charcoal in a feathery way. "It's a virtuoso kind of thing," my dad would say. The second painting, an oil on paper, measured 25" x 20". Only now, Bob had included a vase of flowers in the foreground underneath Sargent's left hand holding the cigarette. With most of Sargent's body in shadow, we only see into portions of his face with his left hand holding up the cigarette. A candelabrum positioned behind the couch throws off flares of golden light. All of these elements lend to the mood of the painting.

A show of Bob Peak's fine arts paintings would not be complete without images of the Old West. For the O'Grady Show, Bob would paint portraits of three colorful figures



Original oil on canvas entitled "Robert Henri with Unidentified Woman", 1987. 40" x 63".

from this era, "Mountain Man," "Last of the Great Scouts," and "Buffalo Bill." "Mountain Man" was a pastel painting measuring 30" x 40". This is one of my favorite Western paintings ever done by my father. "Last of the Great Scouts," a watercolor measuring 24" x 36", was inspired by the daring cavalry scouts who would precede a regiment to scout out an area for possible danger. Bob Peak's portrait of "Buffalo Bill" was another watercolor painting measuring 22" x 30". This legendary figure would be sketched and painted by Bob several times over the years. This painting would show us the influence in his work of yet another painter, Nicolai Fechin, the Russian artist who came into prominence in the early 1900s. Fechin would land in New York in 1923, later moving to the dryer climate of Taos, New Mexico in 1927 to help with the tuberculosis that he had developed while living in New York. In Taos, he became part of the great Southwestern art movement. It is these images of the Pueblo Indians and his charcoal drawings that heavily influenced much of Peak's own charcoal paintings.

The O'Grady Galleries Show proved to be quite a success and spurred Bob on to create more fine art pieces. In the '80s, he began turning his attention to painting pictures of elegant women and couples in romantic settings. Constantly searching for new means of self-expression, Bob turned inward to his own heart and soul, producing paintings unlike any we had seen from him in the past. He gave these paintings names like "A Fine Romance," "Stardust Dance," "Silver

Mist," "Circles and Triangles," "Spring into Summer," "Robert Henri with Unidentified Woman," and "Rapture." He would not rest his palette with these works, though. Paintings like "Medusa," "Black Thunder," "Blue Vase," and "The Other Bridge" would also be done, giving us variations to his subject matter. Bob would also give us a rare landscape painting titled "After Monet," an exquisite oil painting different in style than any he had done before. Though scarce in number, these paintings represented a lifetime of learning and experiences; his feelings expressing the joys, sorrows, and wonders of life.

Though Bob would continue with his illustration work into the 1980s and '90s, fine arts painting would become more important and prevalent with each passing year.

A MOVE TO ARIZONA

In the summer of 1977, after many years residing on the east coast in New York and then Connecticut, Bob Peak once again yearned for the wide open spaces, blue skies and milder winters. He decided to move out west to Scottsdale, Arizona with his wife Lucille and set up a new residence. At the time, our mother was not too thrilled with the prospect of moving from Greenwich, Connecticut where they had established roots and where she had formed friendships that had lasted throughout the years. She gave in, however, and began packing up all their belongs and arranging everything for the movers. As an added chore, they both had to close

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Original watercolor on paper entitled "Cathi with Cat", 1978. 36" x 24".



Original oil on canvas entitled "Early Summer", 1978. 40" x 30".



"Circles and Triangles", 1986. 46" x 78". Oil on canvas.

down Bob's studio right off the Saugatuck River in Westport, Connecticut which was a task in itself, considering all the years he had worked there. They also had to concern themselves with all his reference materials and files of illustrations that needed to be transported out to Arizona.

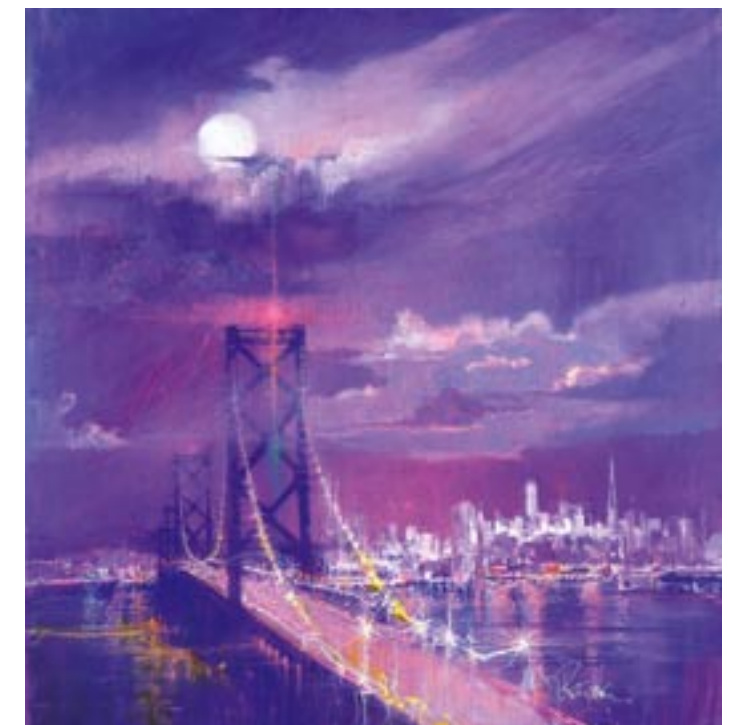
Our parents had taken several trips out to Scottsdale ahead of time to look for a place to set up their residence and his studio. They chose a home still under construction in what was, at that time, considered North Scottsdale, located in a gated community with swimming pool, tennis courts and clubhouse for its residents. After selling their house in Greenwich, Bob and his wife moved temporarily to The Greenwich Country Club while their new home in Scottsdale was being completed. Earlier that year, our mother had not been feeling well. She was diagnosed with cancer and had surgery. We had all believed she was on her way to a full recovery, but would later find out differently. Once in Arizona, Bob set up a temporary studio attached to the main house. The working space was smaller than he was accustomed to, but made do for now. He would later move his studio to a commercial space near the Scottsdale Airport.

Bob Peak's reputation established over the many years afforded him the luxury of living where he wanted. He did tell me though, he thought their move to Arizona made his agent Harvey Kahn somewhat nervous, as I'm sure it would any artist representative. The work kept coming in, though, and Bob's reputation for producing great and innovative work continued.

It was in late 1979 that our mother's battle with cancer would take a turn for the worst. She would pass away on December 12th, 1979 in Los Angeles at the UCLA medical clinic. Our father, myself, my sister Catherine and brothers Robert and Matthew and all the family would be present.

Our father was devastated by the loss of our mother. Over the next few years, he would experience a difficult time adjusting to life without his soul mate. We all did our best to console him during this tragic period, at the same time grieving with our own loss. His agent and friend Harvey Kahn showed great understanding in backing off the job assignments. Slowly, as his zest for life returned, Harvey began approaching him with work. Our father would eventually return to a busy work schedule, but the absence of our mother would leave a void in his heart, never to be replaced again.

Eventually, Bob would sell his home in Scottsdale, Arizona and move further north out Scottsdale Road to the community of Carefree. In Carefree, overlooking the valley, he would set up a much larger residence that included a swimming pool and guest house. He would close down his studio by the Scottsdale Airport and move everything back to his home, where he set up his studio in the guest house with most of his files and reference materials finding a home in one of the spacious three door garage areas.



"The Other Bridge", 1990. Oil on canvas. This was Bob Peak's last fine arts painting.



THE 1980s

In the last full decade of his life, Bob Peak stood at the top of his profession as one of the most imaginative and highly sought-after illustrators in the country. The industry, though, was now caught in the midst of change. A good portion of illustrative assignments were starting to give way to photography and specialty houses. These firms were—and still are—able to put together several elements into a single piece, giving art directors finished work at a fraction of the cost and time it would take an illustrator to complete the same assignment. Despite this apparent move within the advertising industry, Bob Peak's reputation for producing new and innovative work continued to put him in a position of high demand by major advertising agencies and clients.

In the movie industry, where Bob Peak had established his reputation for his unique and innovative work, he was continually sought after to produce key art for many of the major films being produced throughout the 1980s and '90s. Bob would also be commissioned to work on such major projects as the U.S. Postal Service Olympic Stamp assignment, the 1984 Summer and Winter Olympic Games, the fifteen year anniversary of the Special Olympics, the 1988 Indianapolis 500, and a commission for Miller Brewing Company.

In 1980, my sister Catherine and I had the opportunity to experience some of the environment surrounding the Illustrators Workshop with which my dad had been a part of for several years. Just a few months before this, our mother had passed away, and it was at our father's suggestion that we accompany him to France where he would be taking part in the latest session of the Workshop. Naturally, my sister and I jumped at the chance, quickly gathering together our passports to catch a flight to Paris to meet up with our dad.

Neither of us had—before then—visited Europe, and, needless to say, we both had a great time. Initially, the intention was to have me help out at the Workshop with setting up slide presentations and assist with whatever else was needed for our father or the other illustrators involved. Unfortunately, on my first day at the lectures, some of the students objected to my being there, saying that I had not paid to be a part of the classes and that it wasn't fair that I participate. My interests were, in fact, not to become an illustrator, but only to be of assistance during the day. Nevertheless, I excused myself from any further classroom involvement after that.

My sister and I spent our time in Paris visiting the various museums and sights during the day. In the evening, our father would take us to hook up for dinner and drinks with Mike Smollin and the other illustrators and their wives. We would sit and talk for hours at any number of the different restaurants and bistros in the city. It was such an enjoyable experience, and everyone present was extremely nice to my sister and myself. They were a great group of people to be around, and I had been enamored by all of their work over the years. I was especially fond of Bernie Fuchs' work.

In fact, I still have one of his paintings of a bullfighter hanging in my dining room at home.

When time permitted, my father would take us over to the Musee de Louvre, Musee d Orsay, Cathedral of Notre Dame, and many other remarkable sites around Paris. Dad was in awe of the work done by the great European Masters like Philippe de Champaigne, Antonella da Messina, Leonardo da Vinci, and other great artists. We learned a great deal about them from our father. Dad was not just an artist himself, but a student of these and other great painters like Toulouse Lautrec, Renoir, Matisse, and Van Gogh, just to name a few. He knew so much about so many of these great painters, he would later tell us that "visiting the Louvre can sure bring things into perspective when assessing one's own work." Though the Paris experience came at a difficult time for all of us, it was an educational experience that I will cherish forever.



Bob Peak with Eunice Kennedy Shriver, 1983.

THE SPIRIT OF SPORT

Throughout an artist's career, occasionally an assignment comes along that holds much more significance than being just another project. In 1983, Bob Peak would receive such an assignment when he was commissioned to produce six paintings for reproduction into a limited edition series of original lithographs to commemorate the 15th Anniversary of the Special Olympics.

The Special Olympics was founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, honorary chairperson. Her husband, Sargent Shriver, is chairman of the board, and Timothy P. Shriver, Ph.D. now serves as president and CEO. The Special Olympics were designed to provide people with mental retardation an opportunity to develop fitness, demonstrate their courage, and experience the joy of competition as they participate and share in friendship with fellow athletes. "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt." These words are the oath honoring those athletes who participate in these Special Olympics.

Bob Peak's first task was to choose six athletes exemplifying the characteristics of courage, spirit, and self-determination which are the hallmarks of the Special Olympics.



Bob Peak with Howard Cosell, Wilt Chamberlain and Frank Gifford.

These individuals would be more than just outstanding athletes; each would transcend their chosen sport by exemplifying qualities of compassion, selflessness, and a willingness to improve the lives of others. Bob chose Frank Gifford, Chris Everet Lloyd, Joe DiMaggio, Jack Nicklaus, Pelé, and Wilt Chamberlain as his subjects. Each of these fine athletes would then work with Bob Peak to select their qualities to be represented, as expressed in their own words.

Instead of creating his images from the actual world of sports, Bob chose to symbolize each athlete's special qualities as embodied in the world of nature. For Frank Gifford, Bob painted a scene of trees whose leaves have changed with the

autumn season. Reflected through the image are small scenes of children at play. The autumn symbolizes the football season, and the children the joy of sport and competition. *"The greatest thing about sport is the memory of having been there."*—Frank Gifford.

For his painting reflecting the spirit, compassion, and commitment to excellence as shown by Chris Everet Lloyd, Bob painted a wintery scene of white birch trees surrounded by an icy snow-filled ground. In the foreground are beautiful yellow flowers refusing to yield to the winter chill. This painting symbolizes the athlete herself full of self determination, persisting even in the face of adversity. *"Sometimes I think I grew up faster from losing than from winning."*—Chris Everet Lloyd.

A solitary runner illuminated by the radiance of a sunset, alone, concentrating. This is the image Bob visualized to represent Joe DiMaggio, a man who through his individual efforts and team leadership would bring out the best qualities in not just himself but in those who touched and were touched by him. These are qualities that truly express the meaning and spirit of the Special Olympics. *"All of us need victories in life... even if they are only victories over ourselves."*—Joe DiMaggio.

For his painting of Jack Nicklaus and his continual compassion toward helping others, Bob chose a late afternoon setting of children at play with a ball on a green field of grass with rays of late afternoon sunlight filtering



Limited edition lithograph for the Special Olympics. *"The greatest thing about sport is the memory of having been there."*— Frank Gifford.

through the distant trees. Long shadows of the children stream across the field as day begins its slow decent into night. One senses, if not for their loss of light, these children would continue to play on forever. *"To love a game, to play it, is the greatest joy of childhood. Only later do we learn it is one of the greatest joys of life."*—Jack Nicklaus.

Bob's next subject would be the legendary soccer player Pelé. Against a magnificent sky of blue, a herd of horses led by their leader takes refuge against the approaching storm. The qualities of strength and leadership within the unity of teamwork as shown in this painting represent the same qualities Pelé has shown throughout his own life. *"Sport is health and life itself. For we come together, share fellowship, and discover how alike we are."*—Pelé.

To portray Wilt Chamberlain—a giant even among athletes—Bob would paint an image of enormous cliffs towering over the surging waves far below as they crash relentlessly into massive towers. Undaunted by their onslaught, these towering images stand steadfast, much like the unshakable strength, determination, and persistence of Chamberlain himself. *"The true spirit of sport is not how tall you stand nor how high you reach. It's how much you give of what you have to give."*—Wilt Chamberlain.

Upon completion of the six paintings, the next step was to take these images and reproduce them into a Limited Edition Series of original lithographs titled "Spirit of Sport". This work marked Bob Peak's first effort in the medium of

fine art lithography. He would personally pay meticulous attention to every detail throughout the process from the original paintings to the finished production of the lithographs themselves.

Working with the skilled lithographic craftsmen of the renowned Atelier Ettinger, Bob would give endless hours of his time to ensure that every nuance, line, and tone of his original paintings would be reproduced to perfection. He personally selected the finest hand-woven lithographic paper and hand-mixed inks. He then prepared each color plate for the series by hand and had final approval of each print that came off of the hand-fed presses. The edition was limited to 350 sets of lithographs. Once the run was completed and approved by Bob Peak, the original plates were then destroyed.

In New York, Bob would attend a special ceremonial presentation of his original Special Olympics paintings, attended by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the selected athletes, and other sports and business dignitaries. The six Special Olympics paintings were unveiled to a renowned and enthusiastic audience. Afterwards, behind a backdrop of the paintings themselves, Bob had his picture taken with Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the athletes, and several of the attendees. Even the late Howard Cosell got in on some of the picture taking with Bob and the other sports personalities. This would be an assignment and an evening my dad would remember and cherish.

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United States Postal Service, commemorative stamps for the 1984 Summer Olympics.

OLYMPIC STAMPS

“First: It won’t be all running and jumping. Second: Winter and summer will be represented. Third: The activities represented will be as accurately depicted as possible. Fourth: They will be well designed. Fifth: They will be colorful.”

These were the words spoken by the 17 member Citizens’ Advisory Committee charged with the task of bringing forth a diverse, precise, vibrant, and attractive set of 24 stamps—plus four pieces of postal stationery—to honor the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Games and the Sarajevo Winter Games. The Advisory Committee, however, did not make the final decision on which stamps are printed; they only served as counsel in the process. The final decision on which stamps were printed was in the hands of the Postmaster General. Serving as one of the Advisory Committees’ members was James A. Michener, famed American novelist, essayist and travel book writer.

The Advisory Committee began by conducting an exhaustive process of reviewing stamps produced for prior Olympic Games from 1896 through 1960. What they found was that 564 stamps had been issued showing specific events like running and discus throwing, with another 131 honoring the games themselves without showing any specific events. Since 1960 the number of stamps issued had approached a thousand. After examining all the prior Olympic Stamps, the committee came to the conclusion that over the years, some exceptionally good stamps had been produced—and some poor ones as well. This Olympic Stamp review provided the committee with invaluable information on what to look for and what to avoid.

The 1984 Summer and Winter Olympic issues would be the largest single commission ever given to one individual in designing postal stamps. The Stamp Advisory Committee conducted an extensive search to find the right artist who could display athletic authenticity, diversity, movement, drama, excellent drawing, and vivid color. Bob Peak was chosen for the assignment for his proven reputation of producing brilliant, colorful, and exciting images.

At the outset of the postal assignment, Bob Peak turned to fellow Hall of Fame Illustrator Stevan Dohanos, who had served as design coordinator of the Citizen’s Stamp Advisory Committee from 1961 to 1981. Over the years, Steve had created 40 stamps himself and commissioned over 300 by fellow artists. Steve told my father, “You’ll have to think small when you’re doing a stamp.” Bob hadn’t yet realized just how small that would be.

The Postal Service had already made their decision on what Olympic events would be portrayed on the 28 stamps. A firm rule of the Postal Service states that no living person shall appear on an American stamp, and that no dead person may appear, except former Presidents, until ten years have passed since that person’s death. Because of this, only a few American Olympic heroes—like Jesse Owens and Jim Thorpe—have qualified.

Bob began his assignment by doing an enormous amount of research. He began to dig through books, articles, files



Downhill Skiing, 1984 Winter Olympics stamp design.



United States Postal Service 1984 Summer Olympics poster.

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“Golden Moments in Archery—Luann Ryon, USA.”, 1984. Watercolor.

on athletes, and files on the Olympics. Bob would say, “You don’t just put things in. You have to know what you can and should leave in.”

Once Bob felt he had compiled enough material to work from, he was ready to start on his preliminary sketches. At this point Bob met with Bradbury Thompson, a prominent graphic designer who would serve as the art director on the project. Thompson was also in charge of arranging the lettering on all the stamps. Bob felt he had to leave white space for the type. He felt it would be no good trying to run letters over a color. Bob would also have to keep within the Postal Service guidelines by producing his paintings small—7.2” x 4.2”. This was because large illustrations usually have too much fine detail to reduce to stamp size effectively.

Peak was used to working in a large format, sometimes 30” x 40” or even larger. He began sketching small to establish some type of rhythmic flow with his hand. After much time and practice, he felt he had a workable style and began with his initial sketches on each sport represented. The Postal Service has selected an almost even balance of male to female athletes. Dad would later say, “I was careful to keep the uniforms entirely generic... no numbers, and no indications of national teams.”

Bob chose bands of color to help unify the stamp designs but still work on their own from sport to sport. At first, he had trouble with being consistent without totally repeating

the band design from one stamp to the next. Fortunately, some of the objects depicted in several of the stamps such as barbells, skis, a bicycle, and a basketball helped with that stamp’s design. He also found some difficulty when it came to stamps portraying team sports like soccer and volleyball. It was difficult to fit everything in.

With dozens of sketches completed, Bob left his studio in Scottsdale, Arizona and headed to Washington, D.C. to Postal Service Headquarters. Once in Washington, experts from the Stamp Division looked over all the preliminary sketches and made their selections of those pieces that would be turned into actual stamps. Then there was a meeting with the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to arrange for printing proofs and make any suggestions to improve printing quality on any of the pieces. Next, the U.S. Olympic Committee was asked to provide a group of specialists from college teams, coaches, and Olympic competitors who could check the accuracy of Bob Peak’s illustrations. Once changes were made to a few of the sketches and they were approved, Bob would return to his studio in Scottsdale and complete the finished illustrations.

Peak would transfer his approved sketches to D’Arches watercolor paper and start on the finals. Some problems developed, though. In particular, the printing cylinder proofs turned up some difficulties with the colors. Bob had a tendency to gray-off the flesh tones. In the press, too much

red tone re-appeared. To produce warmer flesh tones, Bob adjusted the scale of the colors. Finally, the finished illustrations were ready to go to print. He would later say, “When I was about halfway finished with my final illustrations, I realized this job was the smallest thing I have ever done, but it would have more readership than anything else I’d ever done. That gave me a sense of satisfaction.”

Bob Peak’s twenty-four Olympic stamps and four postal stationery Olympic images would be printed in the millions and circulated worldwide. They would be treasured by thousands of stamp collectors and seen by countless future generations.

GOLDEN MOMENTS

The triumphant achievement of the U.S. Postal Stamp commission would lead to an even larger project for Bob Peak. Once again, the U.S. Postal Service commissioned him to produce a series of thirty-two watercolor paintings. These impressionistic paintings were to expand on the Olympic theme shown in the stamps. The U.S. Postal Service would then produce these thirty-two watercolor paintings into a book in 1984 titled *Golden Moments*. Each Olympic watercolor painting was shown on a two-page spread with that event’s corresponding stamp displayed actual size on the upper left hand side of the page. The book was dedicated to the late Jim Thorpe, a magnificent American athlete who won both the decathlon and pentathlon events in the 1912

Olympic Games. In 1950, an Associated Press poll named Thorpe as the “Greatest Male Athlete of the First Half of the Twentieth Century.”

The *Golden Moments* book included a foreword by James Michener. The sports narrative was written by Bob Hoobing, New England sports editor for the Associated Press and sports editor of *The Boston Herald*. The stamp design narrative was done by David Lewis Eynon, Philadelphia advertising executive and former general manager of the Philatelic Education Division of the U.S. Postal Service.

The Olympic watercolor paintings proved to be an assignment of mammoth proportions, with a good portion of 1983 dedicated solely to completing this unprecedented commission. The project called for depicting several celebrated athletes and teams who had participated in the Olympics throughout the years. The decision on which athletes would be painted was in the hands of the U.S. Postal Service. Once Bob knew which athletes and teams he would showcase in *Golden Moments*, he began an exhaustive amount of research to learn as much as he could about each of these extraordinary individuals. Bob made it a point to learn just how each athlete came into prominence, studying photographs of each athlete in competition to gain knowledge of their form and facial expressions. He also paid particular attention to what the athletes wore. It was vital that he get this information correct on all of his watercolor paintings.

Being a sports enthusiast myself, my father asked me to

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“Golden Moments: Equestrian—Gunter Winkler, Federal Republic of Germany”, 1984. Watercolor.

assist him with some of his research into a few of the athletes and their events. I was somewhat familiar with boxing, weight lifting, swimming, and track and field. I did research for him on U.S. boxer Sugar Ray Leonard, the great Soviet weight lifter Vasily Alexeyev, U.S. freestyle swimmer Debbie Meyer, and track and field stars Edwin Moses, Al Oerter, and Jesse Owens. I compiled information for dad to work from showing these athletes performing during competition. I made notes as to their stances and leg and hand positions. Some of these notes included information on Sugar Ray Leonard and how he positioned his hands, legs, and torso right before delivering a punch. Also included was a description of Al Oerter and how he distributed his body weight and positioned his limbs just prior to releasing the discus. On the Olympic sports I was not familiar with—such as fencing, archery, hockey, and speed skating—dad would research and gather his own information to work from.

Once he felt that there was enough reference material to work from, Bob would produce a series of sketches until he felt satisfied that he had captured the right movement, strength, and energy he was looking for. He then took the sketches and worked them into a series of watercolor comps. Once completed, he was ready for the next step of producing finished watercolor paintings.

For his finished paintings, Bob would intensify his watercolors and add strong lines and more detail to each piece.

He also added more movement to each athlete, giving each painting increased strength and vitality. He would later say: “Vibrant colors (with) lines of strength and energy.... I tried to capture the feeling of the competition along with the image.” He also said, “Olympic sports—perhaps unlike any other athletic endeavor—bring out images of grace, beauty, and energy.”

In all, Bob would complete thirty-two watercolor paintings. Several of these paintings hold significance beyond the images themselves. The painting that is probably the most recognizable of all the Olympic works is the one depicting the U.S. Men’s Hockey Team’s miraculous defeat of the mighty Soviet Team en route to a Gold Medal at the Lake Placid Winter Games in 1980. Bob captured this unforgettable moment using powerful, vibrant colors and a dynamic image of the young Americans raising their arms in victory.

Another noteworthy Olympic watercolor was done of the ice dancing couple Jayne Torville and Christopher Dean. For more than nine years they had been amazing audiences worldwide with their exquisite performances. In 1984 at the Sarajevo Winter Olympics, while dancing to the music of Ravel’s *Bolero*, they would amaze even their most ardent fans with a performance of a lifetime. They received a perfect 6.0 score from all nine Olympic judges for artistic style, and another three 6.0’s and six 5.9’s for technical merit. This would earn the British national idols the Gold Medal.

Bob’s painting revealed the beauty of the pair skating, arms stretched out from their sides as they appeared to glide effortlessly down the ice. The illustration would evoke such a lasting image that Torville and Dean would later send Bob a video tape thanking him for painting such a beautiful, moving image representing their performance. Dad was moved by the sign of appreciation.

The painting that recognized the less-heralded Olympic event of fencing showed an image of Ilona Elek Hepp of Hungary, the most acclaimed female fencer in history. So great was her reputation in her sport that in 1982 she was elected an honorary member of the International Fencing Foundation. She would be the only woman ever selected for such an honor. Bob’s powerful image of the “thrust and parry” between fencing combatants gave a sense of power and grace working as one. It appears almost to be a ballet, only this ballet would inevitably produce but one ultimate victor. The Society of Illustrators would later award Bob with a Gold Medal for this Olympic image.

Several additional watercolors would include such notable Olympians as Russian gymnast Nikolai Andrianov, U.S. swimmer Debbie Meyer, Romanian gymnast Nadia Comenici, U.S. speed skater Eric Heiden, and Jesse Owens. These would be just some of the many athletes recognized for their supreme efforts and determination by the U.S. Postal Service and the Olympic Committee.

All thirty-two original Olympic watercolor paintings

would eventually find a permanent home at The Southland Corporation in Dallas, Texas, where they are on display throughout the entire building. Upon completion of the works, Southland, in the spirit of their commitment to help support the dreams of future Olympians, produced a limited edition series of prints from the paintings. Each 28” x 23” print was placed in a protective art folder which included a biography on the artist and information on the subject of the painting. With only a limited number available, the prints were offered by invitation only to a select number of individuals and companies.

As part of their efforts, Southland funded the construction of the 7-Eleven Velodrome—used as the site of all U.S. Olympic Cycling track events. They would continue their benevolent support of amateur athletes by funding a second velodrome at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

THE INDIANAPOLIS 500

In 1988, Bob Peak would revisit the sport of automobile racing with a commission by the Miller Brewing Company to create a commemorative painting for the 1988 Indianapolis 500 Race.

Bob first became fascinated with automobile racing back in 1966 while on location for the MGM Film *Grand Prix*, directed by John Frankenheimer, starring James Gardner, Eva Marie Saint, Yves Montand, and Antonio Sabato. *Grand Prix*

Phillipians 4:5



The 1988 Indianapolis 500.

became famous for its split screen imagery that added to the tension and excitement of the film. While on location, Bob visited some of the great street and road racing circuits of Europe from Monte Carlo, to Spa in Belgium, then England and Brands Hatch, then France and, finally, to Italy. He got to meet and talk with such legendary drivers as Phil Hill and Graham Hill. His experience working on *Grand Prix* started a love for automobile racing and exotic sports cars that would continue on throughout his life.

For his oil painting, Bob would incorporate several elements giving an image full of the pageantry and grand spectacle of this great American sporting event. His painting would blend the imagery of today's race while at the same time reflecting back to one of its competitors from the 1916 Indianapolis 500. Using a beautiful sky of cumulus clouds as a backdrop, we see the competitors as they charge through turn one of the opening lap, with the Borg Warner Trophy handsomely displayed in the foreground.

A limited edition series of 250 lithographs signed and numbered by Bob Peak were offered by the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Bob Peak's original Indianapolis 500 oil painting was donated to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway's Hall of Fame Museum, where it is on permanent display.

MOVIE WORK OF THE 1980s

Bob also continued to work on a number of movie campaigns throughout the '80s, including such films as *Pennies from Heaven*, *Excalibur*, *Star Trek II*, *The Year of Living Dangerously*, *Star Trek III*, *Silverado*, *Star Trek IV*, *Star Trek V*, and *The Comfort of Strangers*. Other films to come his way included *Reds*, *The Dark Crystal*, *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, *James Bond: License To Kill*, and *Impromptu*.

In 1981, Bob was commissioned to produce the *Academy Players Directory* for the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences. For this special project, Bob would paint a dazzling scene hearkening back to the glamour days of old Hollywood when such stars as Marlena Dietrich, Clark Gable, Humphrey Bogart, John Wayne, Mae West, Errol Flynn, Jean Harlow, Spencer Tracy, and Fred Astaire could be spotted roaming the back lots and soundstages of Hollywood's biggest studios, or eating lunch in one of the nearby restaurants. Bob's painting would be turned into a poster for the movie-going public as a reminder of the early days of Hollywood Babylon.

The imagery produced by Bob Peak for *Star Trek I: The Motion Picture* back in 1978 would set the tone for the next four *Star Trek* movies. For *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* (1982), Bob would paint images of Captain Kirk and Spock with a much larger, imposing image of Ricardo Montalban looming over them. The unusual rock formations and the black cloaked figures in the distance gives the illusion that the crew is on a distant planet as they encounter their nemesis in a clash of good versus evil. Bob would produce several variations of this theme in both

black and white and color. The illustration chosen as the final key artwork would be a tighter version of one of the color comp illustrations.

The *Star Trek* film series continued in 1984 with the third installment titled *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*. This release centered around the Vulcan character played by Leonard Nimoy, who also directed the film. Just as he had with the previous two films, Bob Peak would spend many hours working up black and white idea sketches. Several of these idea sketches were then chosen to be worked into color comps. His finished art produced a striking and mysterious image of Spock's head almost transparent against a backdrop of endless stars. Rays of light radiate out from him as they disappear into deep space. Below Spock are smaller images of Kirk and the other Enterprise crew members. Above, the Enterprise is locked in battle with a Klingon warship.

In 1967, Bob had painted the extraordinary image for the film *Camelot* that won him a Gold Medal from the Society of Illustrators, the first movie painting ever to be awarded such a distinction. In 1981, Bob would revisit the magical time of knights, princesses, and sorcerers with his work on director John Boorman's film *Excalibur*. Unlike its predecessors,



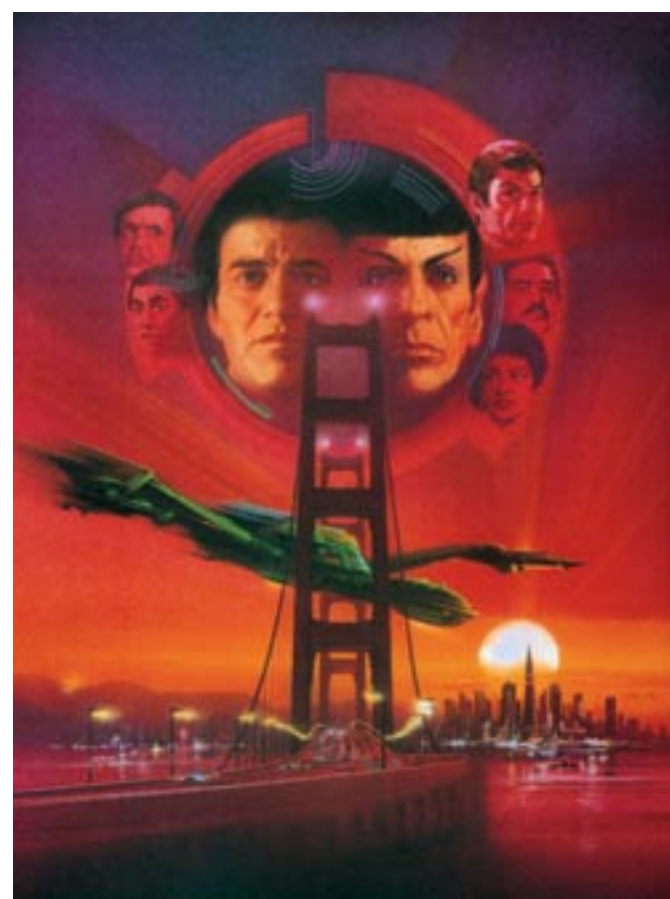
Original art for "Academy Players Directory", 1981. Watercolor. ▶



Original key art for *Star Trek II—The Wrath of Kahn*, 1982. Gouache.



Original key art for *Star Trek III—The Search for Spock*, 1984. Gouache.



Original key art for *Star Trek IV—The Voyage Home*, 1986. Gouache.



Original key art for *Star Trek V—The Final Frontier*, 1989. Gouache.

◀ Original key art for *Star Trek—The Motion Picture*, 1979. Gouache.



Original key art for *Excalibur*, 1981. 32" x 38", gouache and pastel.

◀ Original key art for *Excalibur*, 1981. 34" x 42", gouache and pastel. This piece was awarded a Gold Medal from the Society of Illustrators.



Excalibur—based upon the novel *Le Morte d'Arthur* by Sir Thomas Mallory—would present a much more realistic version of the story of King Arthur. Its fight sequences in particular were much more realistic than any of the earlier films about King Arthur and his kingdom.

For this film, Orion Pictures envisioned a campaign consisting of not one, but five finished illustrations used to capture the audience's interest. Bob went straight to work exploring the different facets of the picture. He worked exhaustively to come up with idea sketches built around the themes in the movie. He then took these sketches and developed color comps which, ultimately, would become the five illustrations representing the film. Using gouache and pastels on museum board, Bob painted a series of five finished illustrations, painting variations on several of the pieces. One illustration shows the passion and romance of Sir Lancelot and Lady Gueniver in a lover's embrace. A second painting gives the unforgettable image of the sword Excalibur, rising with all its magnificence from the sea. Two knights clashing in battle conjures an image of two factions fighting for control of one kingdom. The looming, all-powerful image of the grand wizard Merlin would win Bob a Gold Medal from the Society of Illustrators, and the final finished key art presents an image of all the preceding illustrations in a single montage painting.



Original key art for *Excalibur*, 1981. 32" x 40", gouache and pastel.

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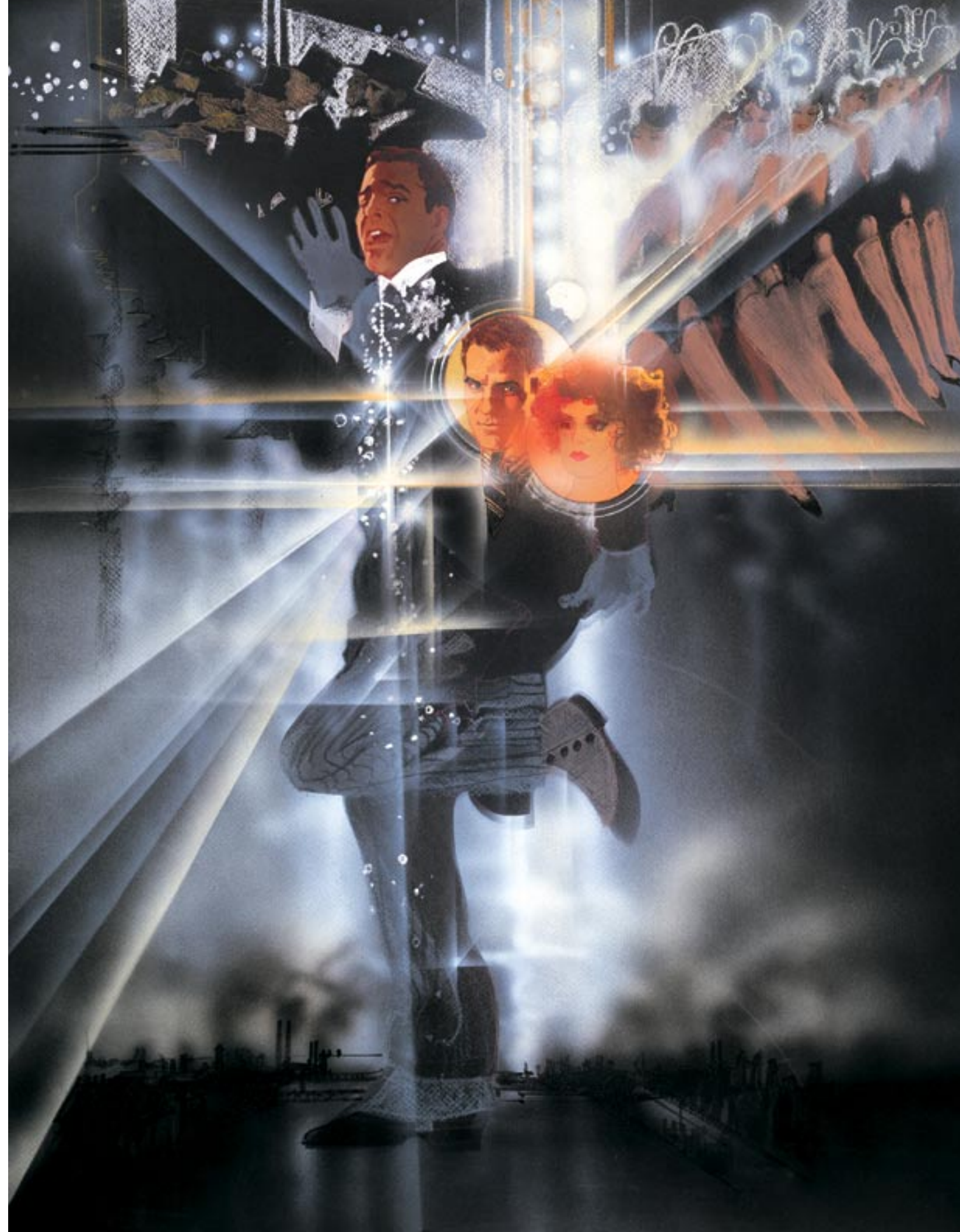
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◀ Original key art for *Excalibur*, 1981. 32" x 40", gouache and pastel.



Original art for *Pennies from Heaven*, 1981. Gouache and pastel.



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One sheet poster for *The Comfort of Strangers*, 1990.

A LIFETIME OF ACHIEVEMENT

On June 26, 1992, some thirty years after Bob had first arrived on the Hollywood scene with his innovative and electrifying work on *West Side Story*, he was honored as the recipient of the “Key Art Lifetime Achievement Award,” presented by *The Hollywood Reporter* for his enormous contributions to the film industry.

Tony Curtis—legendary star of such movies as *Spartacus*, *Some Like It Hot*, and *The Defiant Ones*—hosted the standing-room-only crowd of over 600 invited guests. Curtis listed some of the great movie posters throughout the decades, and expounded on the influence “key art” had played on the film industry over the years. Afterward, he introduced one of the evening’s many presenters, including some of the movie industry’s most prominent executives.

Beau Bridges, film and television star and member of the talented Bridges family, was given the honor of presenting the award to my father. Bob was only the second individual in the 21-year history of the awards ceremony to be chosen by the advisory panel for such an honor. Only the late Saul Bass, who had worked with such great directors as Alfred Hitchcock, Martin Scorsese, and Otto Preminger was recognized with such an award for his work in key art.

After his introduction, the audience was treated to a presentation of Bob Peak’s film work starting in 1961



Preliminary study for *The Comfort of Strangers*, 1990.

and ending with *The Comfort of Strangers*. It was in the following year, 1991, that Bob would work on his final movie, *Impromptu*. Appropriately enough, both *The Comfort of Strangers* and *Impromptu*—the last two films Bob worked on—were both done for Don Smolen, with whom Bob had worked on so many memorable campaigns over the years. The artwork for the film *Impromptu*, starring Hugh Grant, Judy Davis, and Mandy Patinkin, was left unfinished, having gone no further than a series of black and white study sketches.

As Bob stood at the podium that night to accept the Lifetime Achievement award, he was overwhelmed with emotion. He could not help but look back on all the years of countless projects, long hours, and innumerable sacrifices he made to help him to realize his dream of becoming a respected professional illustrator. The evening proved to be a moving tribute to a man who over the years earned the title of “Father of the American Movie Poster.” The evening held special significance for myself and my siblings as all four of us were in the crowd that night, along with Bob’s longtime friend and agent Harvey Kahn and wife Isabelle. Later, we would all have dinner together, with much of the weekend being in each other’s company. Sadly, it would also be the last time our father and all four of his children would be assembled together.



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Features Haddon H. Sundblom, James Avati, Jack Faragasso.

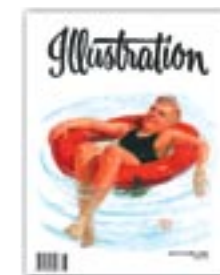
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EPILOGUE

Just a little over a month after my father received his Lifetime Achievement award, he passed away on August 1, 1992 at Scottsdale Memorial North Hospital in Arizona as the result of a brain hemorrhage suffered in a fall. His family, friends and those who knew him were shocked and devastated by the news. His agent, Harvey Kahn, ran a piece in the obituary section of *The New York Times*, talking about the man, the artist, his work and his life. A photograph of Bob Peak and a reproduction of his movie poster *Camelot* accompanied the article. This was a thoughtful gesture by Harvey Kahn and greatly appreciated by myself and my brothers and sister. *The Hollywood Reporter* as well as *Premiere* magazine would also run stories about my father and his career.

The story of Bob Peak, his work, his life, and his legacy will live on in the remarkable body of work he leaves behind. His art has left an indelible impression on popular culture and the field of illustration. Many fond memories are also left behind with his children, family, friends, and colleagues. We were all fortunate to have grown up in this world with a loving father who taught us, by example, the meaning of integrity, professionalism and how, with a strong work ethic, you can succeed in this competitive world. We were able to see the beauty of life and all of its wonders through his eyes as an artist. To stop and behold the glory of a sunset or the way a freshly spun spider web glistens from the moon's light right after an early spring shower. These are the invaluable lessons my father leaves to us all. ●



IMPROMPTU

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Preliminary study for *Impromptu*, 1991.

SPECIAL NOTE: I would like to extend a warm thank you to Harvey Kahn and Don Smolen for their time and invaluable assistance with information used in this article. A thank you must also go out to Par amount Pictures and 20th Century Fox for their assistance. A special thank you to Matt Zimmer, editor of *Illustration*, for his endless hours of work in bringing my story to you. My gratitude goes out to Dan Zimmer, publisher and designer of *Illustration*, for giving me the opportunity to write about my father's life and work. It has been a pleasure working with Dan, a truly professional and dedicated individual. I wish him continued success with *Illustration* magazine. To learn more about Bob Peak, please visit bobpeak.com

The text of this entire article is © 2003 by Thomas Peak.

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Remembering Bob Peak

by Harvey Kahn

A Speech Given to The Society of Illustrators in January, 1993

First of all, I want to thank Illene Hedy Schultz, the Board of Directors of the Society and Terry Brown for the opportunity to talk about my friend Bob Peak.

When Hodges asked if I would speak to you about Bob, my first reaction was a negative one. How do you say something about someone whose work is bigger than life? Having represented Bob Peak for more than 35 years, I have come to the following conclusions:

When an artists' work is so widely recognized, admired and imitated, we sometimes lose sight of the originality and vigor of his statement. Looking at Bob Peak's movie posters for the Star Trek series, we can understand how shocking and innovative Bob's work was when he first came on the scene in the late 50s and early 60s.

Although Bob was involved in many areas, he was of course best known for his movie work. Our first project together back in 1961 was "West Side Story". A lifetime of strong images followed—many were landmarks in Bob's career, such as "My Fair Lady", "Camelot", "The Missouri Breaks" and "Rollerball". A highlight was "Apocalypse Now" which Bob said was the most exciting thing he had ever worked on.

Bob's artistic vision represented a bridge between the era of Norman Rockwell and Coby Whitmore, with its emphasis on technique, to more direct ways of making pictures, greater use of line and a more startling, bolder palette. Bob was always more interested in the idea of the work. His thinking transcending technique; despite the technical ability, for Bob it was all in the mind. In fact, when people called, curious to know how he had achieved a certain luminosity in a piece, his response was a curt one. Bob Peak was not always a tactful guy, but he was larger than life.

In these hard times, it may be difficult to believe that the profession of illustrator was once a glamorous pursuit. Bob was one of the "Glamour Boys"—with his flowing white hair, sun glasses and Rolls Royce, a story book marriage to his lovely wife Lucille, exotic on-location assignments, and every award in the book, including the "Key Art Lifetime Achievement Award" in 1992 from the Hollywood Reporter. Nonetheless, Bob always said, "All I wanted to do was to be an illustrator." Despite his very healthy ego, I feel Bob most wanted to please, which made him the consummate commercial artist. Having a reputation like Bob Peak's put a lot of pressure on him—but it was the pressure that got his adrenaline going. He had many ideas on a given project and

usually put them down in sketch and comp form. At times, it seemed that he did too many. That adrenaline would get going and he would go on and on, and I'd have to ask him to cease and desist. There are other jobs waiting!

I'll leave you with a story that ironically occurred during Bob's last job. The Star Trek people, after fooling around with some other graphic possibilities, came back to Bob at the last minute for a special project. He'd been working around the clock when they called me to say they'd be sending someone down to check up on Bob's progress. I told them they shouldn't do that, but they didn't listen. Now, when Bob was deeply into a job, on a tight deadline, he and I had a signal when I'd phone. He'd know it was me, but for anyone else, he wasn't at home. The poor guy from Paramount spent three days in the Arizona desert without once speaking to Bob—who was, as I had warned, unavailable. Right down to the end, Bob insisted on his own creative expression by not quite acquiescing to the client's intervention.

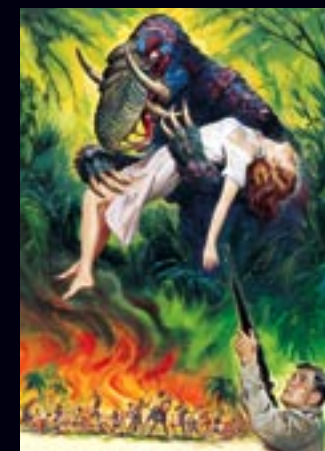
It was never dull representing Bob! ●



Bob Peak, 1988.

The Art of Reynolds Brown

by Dan Zimmer



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EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS

The Art of the Elegant Line: Pen and Ink Drawings from the Kelly Collection of American Illustration

Now through April 4, 2003

Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, Virginia

Famous American images such as Uncle Sam and the Gibson girl are now on display in Randolph-Macon College's Flippo Gallery. *The Art of the Elegant Line: Pen and Ink Drawings from the Kelly Collection of American Illustration* will be on display until April 4.

The Flippo Gallery is located in Pace-Armistead Hall on 211 North Center Street on the R-MC campus. Gallery hours are 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and weekends by appointment which can be made by calling (804) 752-3018.

The exhibition features 34 of the Kelly Collection's best pen and ink images. Most were published as illustrations in books, magazines and advertisements between 1880 and 1935. Charles Dana Gibson and nineteen other artists are represented in this collection including Joseph Pennell who is best known for his liberty loan posters, James Montgomery Flagg, creator of Uncle Sam, Howard Pyle, the father of American illustration, John Held who was famous for his drawings of flappers and jazz babies and N.C. Wyeth, the first of the great Wyeth family of painters.

The Kelly Collection of American Illustration is a northern Virginia based collection owned by Richard and Mary Kelly, philanthropists and private collectors.

Monsters, Mickey and Mozart: The Drawings of Maurice Sendak

March 15th - May 18th, 2003

The Brandywine River Museum

In collaborative exhibitions, the Brandywine River Museum and The Rosenbach Museum and Library will jointly celebrate the 40th anniversary of Maurice Sendak's landmark book *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963). The Rosenbach will exhibit nearly all of the original drawings and watercolors featuring the book's internationally famous Max and his tamable Wild Things. The Brandywine River Museum's exhibition will present over 50 drawings created for two other highly acclaimed Sendak books, *In the Night Kitchen* (1970) and *Outside Over There* (1981), in addition to other works. Together, these books form a trilogy devoted to themes that have long been central to the artist's career. At the Brandywine River Museum, U.S. Route 1 and PA Route 100, Chadds Ford, PA 19317.

For more information, call: 1-610-388-2700

The Berenstain Bears Celebrate: The Art of Stan and Jan Berenstain

Now through May 26, 2003

The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge

More than four generations of children have eagerly followed the adventures of the Berenstain Bears, and have learned about life in the process. Now, for the first time, a major museum

exhibition showcases the work of the series' prolific creators Stan and Jan Berenstain.

The exhibition explores the couple's evolution as artists and focus on the development of their popular Berenstain Bears family. The exhibit will include examples of some of the Berenstains' earliest children's books and magazine illustrations, as well as several interactive displays for children.

For more information, call: 1-413-298-4100

Herblock's Gift: Selections from the Herb Block Foundation Collection

Now through June 28, 2003

Library of Congress, Swann Gallery, Thomas Jefferson Building

A special exhibition featuring fifteen original drawings included in a major donation by the late *Washington Post* cartoonist Herblock (1909-2001) and the Herb Block Foundation. Monday - Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

For more information, call: 1-202-707-9115

Edward Gorey: 1925-2000

Now through June 15, 2003

Edward Gorey House Museum

This exhibition leads visitors through illustrator/author Edward Gorey's life, from his first pair of baby shoes, to his diaries as an adolescent and finally to his worn out sneakers and favorite yellow sweater. Original artwork, photographs, and first editions help illustrate the vast array of works that Gorey produced during his lifetime and provide a glimpse into this extraordinary individual.

For more information, call: 1-508-362-3909

Folks, if there are any events happening in your area, do me a favor and send me an email to let me know about it. If I don't receive a press release, I can't promote your show or event. To make a long story short, I NEED YOUR HELP. If you know of any Exhibitions or Events that we should include here, please contact me. —DZ ●

In The Next Issue...



REYNOLD BROWN



REVELL MODEL BOX ART



FRANK E. SCHOONOVER

Reynold Brown by Dan Zimmer (a preview of the upcoming book!)

The Box Artists of Revell by Thomas Graham

The Art of Frank E. Schoonover by Louise Schoonover Smith

Sheet Music Cover Art by Kevin Lynch

... and much more!