

# Booth Museum Mounts Major Retrospective Provides Rare Opportunity

By John Faubion

Collectors of limited edition prints of originals by Howard Terpning (b. 1927) have reason to be excited: According to Tom Shinall, Director of Marketing for the Booth Western Art Museum in Cartersville Georgia:

*"By nearly any measure - awards, sales records, critical acclaim or collector demand - Howard Terpning is the most accomplished living Western artist of today. While there have been several major exhibitions of his work over the years, there has never been a true retrospective exhibition. Opening December 15, 2016, the Booth Western Art Museum will correct this oversight with **Howard Terpning: 70 Years of Art**. Focusing on four major segments of his artistic output, the art gathered together for the first time will introduce audiences to the steppingstones of his early career that led to his masterful paintings that today sell for upwards of \$2 million at auction."*

On display are dozens of original paintings, some of which were reproduced as limited edition fine art prints, and/or giclée canvases, collected by legions of Terpning enthusiasts. This exhibition provides a rare opportunity for these collectors to see some of the original paintings that inspired their coveted reproductions.

A notable example is the 2011 oil painting "White Man Fire Sticks." The 30"w x 40"h original has been reproduced as a limited edition fine art giclée print (17½"w x 23½"h) by Terpning's longtime publisher Greenwich Workshop. It is also available as a more limited edition canvas that is only an inch smaller in width and height than the original.

The ability to create these fine art reproductions in larger sizes on canvas is likely contributing to an increase in collector demand for all of Terpning's work, including his earliest Greenwich Workshop prints on paper (long ago sold-out and now available only through the active secondary market). Greenwich Workshop has been publishing Terpning prints since 1980. Even then, in the relative infancy of the limited edition fine art offset lithograph market, Terpning's work found a strong collector base. This base has grown as giclée printing technology has evolved to the point where it is capable of producing thousands of color values that allow reproductions, whether on paper or canvas, to achieve remarkable fidelity to the original art. During a recent phone interview, Greenwich Workshop President, Vincent Grabowski, told me that some collectors who are lucky enough to own Terpning originals also purchase the canvas pieces and report that the average person "couldn't identify the original versus the reproduction." I saw one of these canvas reproductions recently at an Altermann Galleries auction in Arizona. It was so spectacular that I've become a fan of all things Terpning. Apparently, I'm not alone. According to Grabowski: "...once we got Terpning into canvas it really started to open up a lot more people's eyes and he well-overtook every artist we publish as far as the volume of pieces, and the value of his pieces, in the marketplace."

One of the qualities that Terpning collectors most admire in his work is his sensitivity to the Native American people. He attributes this sensitivity to the treatment of "the disadvantaged peoples of Southeast Asia" that he witnessed as a civilian combat artist for the United States Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. Grabowski told me: "When it comes to telling the story of the Native American, I can think of no other artist who has painted with the same thoughtfulness and emotion."

This thoughtfulness is present in Terpning's "White Man Fire Sticks" even though the scene is an unusual departure from the more peaceful depictions of the Great Plains tribes that comprise the bulk of his Western themed work. Terpning has said of it: "These two Blackfoot warriors are engaged in a small skirmish with their enemy, possibly the Flatheads." Here, Terpning has drawn us in close to the subjects where we can see faces that do not belong to stereotypical bloodthirsty savages. Instead, we see one face that expresses concerned deliberation and another with a sense of anxious urgency in getting his flintlock loaded in time to make another shot. We find ourselves rooting for these men though we do not know whom they are confronting, or why.

Given all of his strengths, it is no wonder that Lisa Wheeler, Director of Curatorial Services for the Booth Western Art Museum told me: "It is easy to understand why Terpning's prints and giclée canvases are so popular with collectors. This exhibition offers the rare opportunity for print



*White Man Fire Sticks* by Howard Terpning™, giclée on paper or canvas, 2012 courtesy of The Greenwich Workshop®, Inc. [www.greenwichworkshop.com](http://www.greenwichworkshop.com)

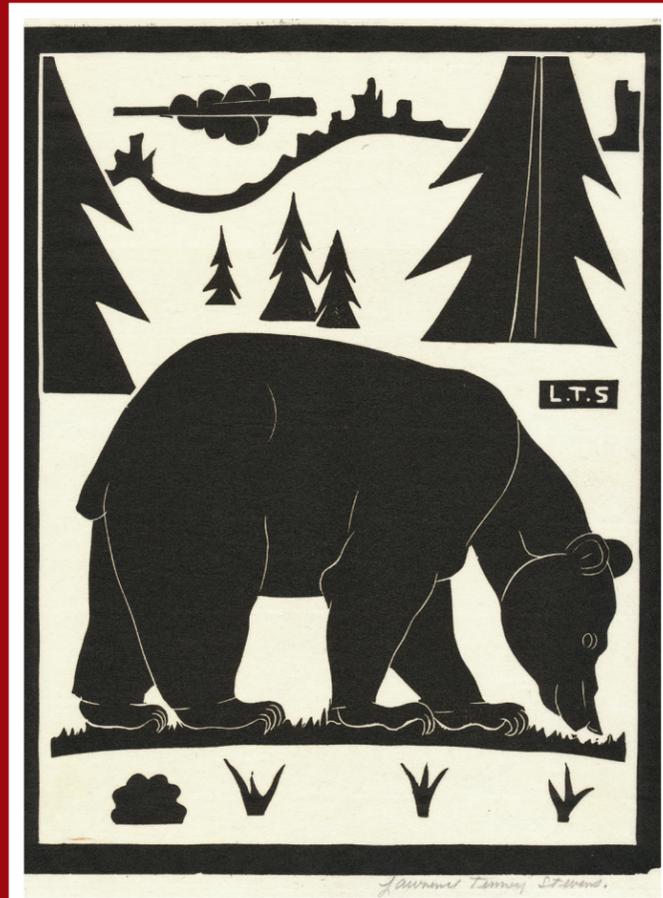
collectors to see the original works of art in a stellar setting. Placed in the context of his full career, including illustrations, movie posters, and combat art – the 40 large paintings of his mature career truly confirm his status as the most accomplished living Western artist."

The Terpning retrospective runs through March 26, 2017.

*John Faubion has researched, written and lectured about Lawrence Tenney Stevens since 1995. He was award-winning co-curator of a major 1996 Stevens retrospective exhibition at the Tempe Historical Museum in Arizona. His discoveries in the Stevens archives contributed to the preservation efforts of the 1936 Dallas Centennial Fair site, and led to the recreation of three of Stevens's monumental sculptures there. He is writing a book about Stevens and is planning related exhibitions for 2016 and beyond. He established the Western column in the Journal of the Print World and welcomes your feedback and suggestions for future articles.*

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## LAWRENCE TENNEY STEVENS (1896-1972)



*Lawrence Tenney Stevens, "Bear in the Wyoming Rockies," Linocut, c. 1935 Copyright LTS Trust 2014*

From a series of rare Western and wildlife linocut prints pulled from his own press by American sculptor, Lawrence Tenney Stevens, beginning in the Spring of 1935. These are among discoveries in the Stevens archives that have compelled scholars to conclude that Stevens was "an undeniable progenitor of "Cowboy High Style."



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