



Contact: Abby Haigh, Marketing Assistant 319.268.5508 abby.haigh@cedarfalls.com

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HEARST CENTER TO FEATURE 19TH CENTURY AMERICAN TRADE CARDS

November 12, 2019 - The Hearst Center for the Arts is featuring over two hundred original 19th century American advertising cards in an upcoming exhibition, titled *From Advertising to Art: 19th Century Trade Cards and the Unfettered American Imagination*. The show opens on November 19 and will run through January 5, 2020. The Hearst will host a public reception on November 22 from 5:00-6:30 p.m. including a gallery talk with Dr. Lenore Metrick-Chen, an art and cultural historian, at 6:00 p.m.

The 2-by-6 inch trade cards reflect a time of cultural change and cultural anxiety as America shifted from an agrarian to an industrial economy and into an emerging world power. By 1876, trade cards circulated widely and were becoming the dominant method of advertising. In the course of advertising all sorts of new commodities, card artists created wildly inventive new visual languages of montage and proto-surrealism in which human forms merged with animals, vegetables, machines and fruit.

Trade card advertising coincided with the years surrounding the first Chinese Exclusion Laws banning Chinese immigration. During this time, every ethnic group was considered fair game for satire and stereotyping in advertising. Despite the small population of Chinese people in America, hundreds of trade card images depicted Chinese figures. An underlying theme of the exhibition explores the variety of responses to cultural change during this era, from demonizing and dehumanizing to a carnivalesque sense of magic, alongside a shifting visual culture from the Victorian moralizing realistic style towards Modernism.

From Advertising to Art was originally curated by Dr. Lenore Metrick-Chen. Metrick-Chen's ongoing study of the impact of Chinese in Western art recently culminated in her publication, *Collecting Objects/Excluding People: Chinese Subjects and American Visual Culture, 1830–1900*.

Also on view: *James Hearst in Prose* is on view at the Hearst Center through December 29. This exhibition features a series of displays that offer analyses of Hearst's three prose collections, uncollected farm journalism, essays, and fiction. Also highlighted, *Radio and the Farm Boy*, a recently discovered 1923 article in Wallace's Farmer that is believed to be James Hearst's earliest work published outside of Cedar Falls.

About the Hearst Center for the Arts

The James & Meryl Hearst Center for the Arts is located at 304 West Seerley Boulevard in Cedar Falls. More information on the Hearst Center and its programs is available at www.TheHearst.org, by calling the Hearst Center at (319) 273-8641, or follow us on Facebook. The Hearst Center is free and open to the public.

Where Art Happens

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