

RED WING FRAMING GALLERY

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Contact John Becker, Red Wing Framing Gallery



“Cream of Wheat; 1913-1925”

Red Wing Framing Gallery exhibits original illustration advertising art from The Cream of Wheat Company.

Milling factories dominated the Minneapolis economy in the early 20th century and the Cream of Wheat company was a major influence in shaping this industry. From its founding in 1897, Cream of Wheat hot cereal achieved worldwide recognition for its full color, fine art illustrated advertising.

Emery Mapes, a demanding and eccentric marketing genius, shaped Cream of Wheat’s iconic campaign, and hired the best talent available to execute his vision. Artist including N.C. Wyeth, Jessie Willcox Smith, and St Paul’s own Edward V. Brewer were among those who were employed by Mapes to create the full-page advertisements which were seen in every prominent American magazine of the day, most notably the Saturday Evening Post and Collier’s.

Red Wing Framing Gallery and Grapefruit Moon Gallery are proud to exhibit and offer for sale eleven (11) original Cream of Wheat advertising paintings by artists who include Enoch Bolles, John Rae, Arthur Crisp and Edward V. Brewer. Most of this body of work has never been seen publicly and had been in storage of the archives of the former Cream of Wheat building headquarters in Northeast Minneapolis. The exhibit will be available at Red Wing Framing Gallery from October 10th thru November 2nd, 2008.

“Cream of Wheat; 1913-1925”

Cream of Wheat pioneered product branding, and the company insisted on an unwavering depiction of the product which associated the hot breakfast with images of warmth and comfort. All of the advertisements created under Mapes’ watch reflected the ideal of Cream of Wheat as an embodiment of the American home. The Cream of Wheat advertising campaign is remembered as one of the most successful and controversial branding efforts in American history.

The Cream of Wheat advertising campaign has always centered around the character of an African-American chef. He is presented in a positive, paternal, and comforting fashion, often surrounded by children from nations across the world, but the chef has also been criticized as a subservient and degrading caricature. Over the course of their history, Cream of Wheat has responded to pressure and the historical climate by making small changes to the appearance of the chef, but the iconic image has remained.

Stereotyping in advertising is as old as advertising itself and is a reflection of the values and standards which were contemporary when the ads were created. Looking back on these original artworks provides a rare opportunity to reflect on these now outmoded norms, and also gives us a chance to look at a defining campaign which idealized nostalgic visions of home and family, and created some of the most memorable advertising imagery of the 20th century. The level of artistry and cultural power of these paintings is impressive.

Red Wing Framing Gallery (www.RedWingFraming.com) is located in the historic park corridor of downtown Red Wing, MN and specializes in original fine art, custom framing and fine-art printing.

Grapefruit Moon Gallery (www.GrapefruitMoonGallery.com) is a Minneapolis-based art gallery, specializing in original pin-up, advertising and cover art from the grand age of American illustration. Grapefruit Moon Gallery has developed a world-wide reputation for their expertise in illustration art.

Front:

“*The World’s Fare*”, Edward V. Brewer, 34x44, oil on canvas

“*Vacancy at the Department of Interior*”, Edward V. Brewer, 19x23, oil on canvas

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