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**Advertising as Art: New Exhibition of Illustrator Art Opening at the
National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum**

Is illustration art or not? Head to The Cowboy and tell us what you think!

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK – The Cowboy invites visitors to come and explore the colorful 20th century illustrations that make-up the *Storytellers and Sellers: Artist Illustrators* exhibition, March 21 – November 15, 2020. This will be a chance for visitors to see rarely-exhibited items from the Dickinson Research Center, which showcase the illustrative backgrounds of many of our western artists.

Illustrators used their skills to capture the imaginations of consumers by creating original art for things like book and magazine covers, advertisements, billboards, movie posters, labels and much more. These early illustrations were not only a source of entertainment, but instrumental in shaping popular culture of the early 20th century.

“This exhibition un-frames art and how we define it,” said Kimberly Roblin, Director of the Museum’s Dickinson Research Center and Curator of Archives. “Art doesn’t have to be an oil painting by a European master. It doesn’t have to be serious or offer social commentary. It can be fun. It can be entertaining and informal—a greeting card, an advertisement, a book cover. For the first half of the 20th century, art was a part of daily life if you knew where and how to look.”

Artists featured in *Storytellers and Sellers* often had little more than a tagline or two to direct their assignments. Armed with limited information, they delivered dramatic results in the form of bold and bright designs created with a standard artistic approach.

Illustrator art typically has not received the same critical acclaim as fine art, even though many fine artists began their careers in illustration and created works ranging from western imagery to war scenes and beyond. This exhibit encourages visitors to come and take a long and thoughtful look at the early illustration works of such fine artists as Lowell Ellsworth Smith, Bettina Steinke and others.

Visitors are encouraged to use the hashtag, #storytellersatthecowboy and tag us at @nationalcowboymuseum when they come and visit *Storytellers and Sellers: Artist Illustrators*.

For more information about the *Storytellers and Sellers: Artist Illustrators* exhibition, visit nationalcowboymuseum.org/storytellers.

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About the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City is America’s premier institution of Western history, art and culture. Founded in 1955, the Museum collects, preserves and exhibits an internationally renowned collection of Western art and artifacts while sponsoring dynamic educational

programs to stimulate interest in the enduring legacy of the American West. For more information, visit nationalcowboymuseum.org.