

## MEDICINE HAT

# Inverting the order of ideas, words

**CART: BEFORE THE HORSE**

*Canadian Graphic Design  
for the Arts*

Medicine Hat Museum  
and Art Gallery  
To March 7

There is something stirring in the shadows of the world's largest teepee. This thing, which will have Alberta's fontophiles lining up at the door and trembling with anticipation, is *CART*, an exhibition made up entirely of Canadian graphic design for the arts. This is much more than the mere parading of serifs and monochromatic Pantones. *CART* was as-

sembled through an open call for submissions announced by guest curators Kelly Hartman and Giles Woodward (Fishten Design) and Joanne Marion, curator of art at the gallery.

They were looking for arts-related design that does more than just convey information; they wanted invitations, catalogues, pamphlets and the like, that did something more than ho-hum grid templates with occasional punctuations of colour. They asked for pieces that used new and unusual materials, designs that were multi-functional or pressed content into new and undiscovered moulds.

What they got were hundreds of samples from across the country, mostly from small design firms, made up of lines that pointed in new directions. Two of the gallery's walls are covered with bright posters announcing architecture, music and art shows; another has a shelf that runs its length, stocked with zines, magazine covers and dust jackets (reminiscent of the Dada photomontage shows of 1920s Berlin); a dolly in the middle of the room is piled with FedEx boxes.

*CART*'s subtitle is "Before the Horse," and the goal is indeed to invert the expected order of words or ideas. The declaration here is

that two-dimensional design is usurping art's position — stealing face time and demanding longer and less-utilitarian attention. This is not the first time a curator has brought design in from the cold, commercial world. And, while it is not a necessarily innovative idea, *CART*'s careful assembly of this cross-country design warrants a good, long, art-look. For those people who can speak design in their sleep, this symposium of the industry's avant-garde will inspire. For those who think typeface is something to wear while at the keyboard, it's a pleasant wake-up call to the beautiful function that surrounds us.

Located at 1302 Bomford Cres.  
SW, Medicine Hat, Alta. 403-  
502-8580. [www.city.medicine-hat.ab.ca/cityservices/museum](http://www.city.medicine-hat.ab.ca/cityservices/museum).

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