

Race and Regionalism: Representation in the Heartland (Iowa, 25–26 Apr 25)

Grant Wood Art Colony, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa

Deadline: Nov 1, 2024

Jacqueline Banigan

8th Biennial Symposium of the Grant Wood Art Colony at the University of Iowa presents:
Race and Regionalism: Representation in the Heartland.

The Grant Wood Art Colony at the University of Iowa seeks paper proposals that consider intersections of racial identity and American Regionalist art.

As one of the leaders of American Regionalism, Grant Wood characterized what he knew about the Midwest by exploring themes like the rural, the quotidian, and the domestic, and encouraged his students to do the same. His graduate student, Elizabeth Catlett, recalled the artist's instruction at the University of Iowa: "First he said, 'What are you going to do? It should be something you know most about.' I decided to do a little Black girl ironing; I knew a lot about ironing." Wood's artistic output and teaching elevated a sensibility for everyday intimate moments encapsulating life in the heartland.

But what is the heartland? The term typically conjures up the image of a bygone place through an exclusive nostalgia which so often fails to encompass how Black artists like Elizabeth Catlett and others came to advance the legacy of the American Scene and obscures the various pathways artists took through American Regionalism. Despite being a socially constructed and often indeterminate category, racialized identities of artists, models, and patrons affected the production and imaging of American life. By redressing the multivalent intersections between race and Regionalism, this symposium endeavors to uncover new and perhaps unexpected answers about who is represented and representing in the heartland.

We invite 20-minute papers as well as prearranged panels that consider any aspect of artistic practice—broadly defined to encompass visual art, decorative arts, kitsch, material culture, literature, music, and theatre—connected to American Regionalism and affected by racialized identities. We encourage proposals from art historians, artists, curators, historians, and graduate students.

Interested presenters should submit an abstract (250-300 words), a shortened CV (1-2 pages) including their current institutional affiliation, and a short biographical note (150 words or less). Please complete the form and upload necessary documents by November 1, 2024. For those who wish to submit a prearranged panel, please provide a short panel abstract (300-350 words) and the names of confirmed participants with paper titles. Submit through this portal: https://uiowa.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cOWM7n1kT9AibJ4

We expect to be able to provide some support for travel and lodging expenses to participate in this two-day event. Funding will be confirmed along with notification of proposal status in January 2025.

This event will be concurrent with the Stanley Museum of Art's exhibition, it's a fine thing, a show centered on the Black Midwest and supported by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Conference Committee: Maura Pilcher, Derek (DK) Nnuro, Ashley Howard, R. Tripp Evans, and Jackie Banigan

Reference:

CFP: Race and Regionalism: Representation in the Heartland (Iowa, 25-26 Apr 25). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 14, 2024 (accessed Apr 8, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/42594>>.