

WITTE MUSEUM

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WITTE MUSEUM presents *ART OF THE CIRCUS*

from the world famous Hertzberg Collection
& Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus
December 17, 2005—July 16, 2006

SAN ANTONIO—Come discover the magical world of the circus from behind the scenes in a new exhibit: *Art of the Circus*, at the Witte Museum December 17, 2005 through July 16, 2006.

Some of the finest circus art has been extracted from the Hertzberg Circus Collection, one of the largest circus collections in the world. Original artwork by Emil Rothengatter, historic posters and one-of-a-kind costumes – many of which are on loan from Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus - allow *Art of the Circus* to paint a picture of “The Greatest Show on Earth.”

Emil Rothengatter, or “E. Roe” as he signed his work, was born in Germany and brought to the United States as an infant. While working in Cincinnati in the 1880s, which was the center of poster printing at the time, Rothengatter was drawing circus posters when he was commissioned by James A. Bailey to record the birth of the first elephant to be born in captivity. Rothengatter’s works on view in *Art of the Circus* are illustrations that were later transformed into circus posters.

In addition, the artist's hand-written notes can be seen on many of the works. Due to their fragile nature, the selections of artwork will rotate during the course of the exhibit so that none are exposed to light for long.

Posters that told of the coming attractions were beautiful, alluring and the most visible art of the circus. Posters on view, from the turn-of-the-century, include Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows, Nepal; Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show on Earth featuring The Paldrens; and Forepaugh & Sells Brothers Shows United, and Royal Riding Shows of the World.

While costumes are perhaps the most visually stimulating element of the circus, they are also integral in conveying excitement and holding the variety of acts together. *Art of the Circus* features an array of costumes including a ringmaster, juggler, gymnast, clown, male and female trapeze artists and a showgirl. The selection of costumes enables visitors to investigate the differences between traditional and modern fabrics and how they changed throughout the years.

Harry Hertzberg, a prominent San Antonio businessman, politician and philanthropist, was a tremendous circus fan, who over his lifetime, built an amazing collection of circus memorabilia and artifacts. Upon his death, the San Antonio Public Library \ received this rare collection and in 2003 the Hertzberg Circus Collection was added to the permanent collection of the Witte Museum.

For more information call 210.357.1900 or visit www.wittemuseum.org. *Art of the Circus* is included in museum admission.

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