Elspeth H. Brown, Professor of History, University of Toronto

*Work! and The Corporate Eye*

Elspeth Brown’s research concerns queer and trans history; the history and theory of photography; the history of US capitalism; and oral history. She is the author of *Work! A Queer History of Modeling* (Duke, 2019) and *The Corporate Eye: Photography and the Rationalization of American Commercial Culture, 1884-1929* (2005). She is co-editor of *Feeling Photography* (Duke University Press, 2014, with Thy Phu), “Queering Photography,” a special issue of Photography and Culture (2014), and *Cultures of Commerce: Representation and American Business Culture, 1877-1960* (Palgrave, 2006). She is the Director of the LGBTQ Oral History Digital Collaboratory, a five-year digital history and oral history public, digital humanities collaboration. She is an active volunteer and Vice President of the Board for The ArQuives: Canada’s LGBTQ2+ Archives.

April 1, 2-3:30pm, SOS 250

Alex J. Taylor, Assistant Professor and Academic Curator, History of Art and Architecture, University of Pittsburgh

*Container Corporation’s Art Direction*

Under the leadership of Walter Paepcke, Chicago-based packaging manufacturer Container Corporation of America was a pioneer among company's using art in advertising as a prestige marketing strategy in the 1940s and 1950s. This paper turns to the company’s art patronage after Paepcke’s death in 1960, exploring how pop artists helped Container Corporation pursue a new, more sales-focused direction, and help combat mounting criticisms over the material waste and deceptive practices of supermarket packaging.

April 8, 2-3:30pm, SOS 250

Karen Fang, Professor, Department of English, University of Houston

*Background Artist: Art and Immigration in the Life and Work of Tyrus Wong*

Chinese immigrant Tyrus Wong was still a non-citizen when he became a lead stylist on Disney’s beloved 1942 film, Bambi. For nearly three decades following he was a Warner Bros. sketch artist, and he also designed popular Christmas cards that often sold in the millions. What does it mean that a nonwhite immigrant who for many years was the subject of the US government’s racially discriminatory anti-immigration policy helped create so much of America’s visual culture? How did Chinese Exclusion both inform and challenge Tyrus Wong’s art, and what does looking at his career do to revise conventional accounts of fine and commercial art?

April 15, 2-3:30pm, SOS 250

Barbara Phillips, Rawlco Editor and Professor of Marketing, University of Saskatchewan

*How do advertising pictures persuade?*

Twenty-five years ago, images in advertising were dismissed by scholars as mere affective or heuristic cues. The real persuasive work was thought to be driven by the ad’s verbal copy, which was attended to and elaborated on by discerning consumers. A puzzling encounter with Snuggle, the fabric softener bear, led Dr. Barbara Phillips to a career in exploring how advertising pictures are understood by and ultimately persuade inattentive and resistant consumers. This talk will tour four different types of advertising images and their influences on consumer response: spokescharacters such as the Pillsbury Doughboy, visual rhetoric, fashion images, and visual brand identity.

RSVP to vsri@usc.edu to participate and for readings.