

Stereotyping Native America

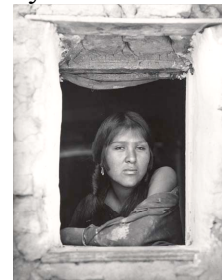
Symposium: Thursday, April 14, 2005
4:00 to 7:00 p.m. – 3rd Floor, Oculorium
UCR/California Museum of Photography



Around the turn of the 20th century, photographic convention dictated Native Americans be portrayed according to mainstream American perceptions. Natives were represented as noble hunters and squaws; as people who lived in teepees; and as people who wore feathers, buckskins and beads. *Stereotyping Native America*, an exhibit which opened March 9 at UC

Riverside's California Museum of Photography (UCR/CMP), features these turn of the 20th Century stereographs of Native Americans from the UCR/CMP's Keystone-Mast collection, specifically showcasing how elements of the pictures contradicted the American "typologies" they were meant to represent.

Christie Time Firtha, curator of the exhibition, has researched and gathered turn of the century 'stereotypes' in which the subjects smirk and tug at uncomfortable clothing while natives in the background and corners of the frames wear calico dresses. In other images, Iroquois are portrayed as living in teepees, and in others, Inuit (pejoratively called Eskimos, which means *raw meat eaters* or *blood drinkers*) are shown posed at the entrance of plaster igloos. Set against Adam Clark Vroman's then contemporary work, which defies American impulses to stereotype natives, this show contextualizes the staged versions of mainstream America's representations of Indian identity in hopes of opening up community dialogue about the historical and contemporary prevalence and power of stereotyped images of ethnicity in American cultural life.



Speakers at the symposium will include Professor of History and California's Native American Heritage Commissioner Cliff Trafzer, as well as Professor of Native American Discourses Michelle Raheja, and American Indian Youth Councilor/Spiritual Leader of the Gabrieleno-Tongva Jimi Castillo.

The symposium is free and open to the public and refreshments will be served.

**The exhibit and symposium are sponsored by
UCR/California Museum of Photography, the *Visual Sovereignty: Indigenous Film and Visual Culture* Mellon Workshop at UCR, and the Center for Ideas and Society.**