

# Welcome to Fauxtopia!

*Only in 20th Century America (and now in the 21st century) could a multibillion dollar international industry, based on storytelling and deception, flourish, prosper and develop an almost cult like fanbase –and everyone seems to be happy about it.*

**Dr. Wilma Dean**  
Orwellian University  
Author: *Propaganda Playgrounds,*  
*A History of American Theme Parks*

Theme parks fascinated me as a child. What 9-year-old doesn't love being immersed in make-believe lands come to life? But to a kid who would eventually become a professional graphic designer and a Visual Communication Design Professor, amusement parks, themed restaurants and immersive environments were as equally important to my education as reading, writing and arithmetic.

When I discovered G.E. McAtnoff's **Fauxtopia**, I immediately recognized that this theme park was more than thrill rides, haunted houses and popcorn stands. This was a park that was designed to educate –especially to those people interested in semiotics and visual communications. Classic park themes such as history, mythology, science, foreign cultures and literature are all on display in **Fauxtopia**, but it's more about how these themes are presented rather than the topic itself.

For example, many theme parks have flight simulators that give the visitor that ersatz feeling of flying. But **Fauxtopia**'s ride *The Flight School* –its version of this type of attraction– doesn't just show pastoral country sides from a bird's eye view, but rather displays the technology and ease at which anyone can take control of a 767 and pilot over New York City, Washington D.C., or even a field in Pennsylvania. **Fauxtopia** exposes that the fake world might be the real world...and vice versa.

Over the years, I have studied **Fauxtopia** in depth, researched every aspect, become an expert and author about the park, an archivist and collector of its artifacts, memorabilia and souvenirs, and present it here for all to see. The pieces exhibited are designated as either artifacts from the *Fauxtopia Archives*, which include rarely viewed concept work; memorabilia which were part of the park and on display to guests; or souvenirs, items that have been (and in some cases, are) available for purchase at any number of gift shops throughout the park.

The collection exemplifies flatworks (two-dimensional and illustrative), sculptural works, (three-dimensional) works that focus on sequencing and duration (four-dimensional) and works that require the interaction of guests for them to be appreciated (five-dimensional). This is reflective of the current curriculum of the Visual Communications Design program here at Cal Poly Pomona.

This exhibition has been made possible through grants from the College of Environmental Design Professional Development Fund and the Cal Poly Pomona Provost's Teacher-Scholar Support Program. I would also like to recognize the hard work done by the staff at the Kellogg and Huntley Galleries for their efforts in mounting this exhibit. I especially want to acknowledge the creativity of all the *Fauxbricators* who's talent is on display and enthusiastically participated in the creation of this storied theme park.

I am not alone in my adoration of **Fauxtopia**. Fans of the park have created various video essays and vlogs about where to dine in **Fauxtopia**, the history of various attractions and critical artistic and cultural analysis of this "most believable place on earth!"

I hope you enjoy your visit!

**Professor Raymond Kampf, Guest Curator**  
*The Treasures of Fauxtopia: Artifacts, Memorabilia*  
*and Souvenirs from the Most Believable Place on Earth*  
Huntley Gallery, Cal Poly Pomona, March 2022