

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 7, 2016

## **GHOST PRAIRIE OPENS APRIL 7 AT CSPS**

**Exhibition Dates:** April 7-June 26, 2016

**Opening Reception:** Thursday, April 7, 5-7pm

### **Legion Arts – CSPS HALL**

1103 Third Street SE, Cedar Rapids, IA

[info@legionarts.org](mailto:info@legionarts.org), (319) 364-1580

### **Gallery Hours**

Open 10am-6pm Mon-Sat

Noon-4pm Sunday

*Ghost Prairie* is a new painting project by 2016 Iowa Arts Council grantee, Jen P. Harris. Featuring new works on paper and wood developed during the last six months, the exhibition will be on view in Legion Arts' main gallery at CSPS from April 7 through June 26, 2016. There will be an opening reception on Thursday, April 7 from 5-7pm, during which the artist will be present. A catalogue will accompany the exhibition, featuring a new short story by Hudson Valley-based writer Sarah Falkner, and an essay by Iowa City-based Anya Ventura, former arts research writer at MIT's Center for Art, Science & Technology.

For the last three years, Harris has worked with matrices of modular ink paintings mounted on woodblocks. Not confined to the rectangular canvas, this arrangement of diamond shapes gives the works expansive physical presence and has been described by the artist as "painting installation." The woodblocks function not only as support for the paintings but also create a geometric structure that adds to a *trompe l'oeil* effect in which it is sometimes difficult to distinguish pictorial illusion from actual dimensional space.

Harris recently moved to Iowa City after ten years in New York. The works in *Ghost Prairie* were conceived in response to the Iowa landscape, which is by many measures the most radically altered place in North America. Imagery in the paintings reference the lost expanse of Iowa tallgrass prairie. The artist has written: "I originally conceived of the project as a single monolithic wall installation filling the 35-foot wall at CSPS. Over the course of many months of developing imagery, I realized the installation needed more empty space devoid of images to evoke an experience of the simultaneous presence and absence of an entire dimension of the landscape. This is what I was interested in evoking. I was thinking about ghosts and about how a ghost is a presence that reveals something about our minds and our relationship to history. Through the activity of painting and arranging, I discovered that a more atomized composition stretching around the entire room was more suitable. The way the images in the paintings interact with the blank walls became a central concern."

Support for *Ghost Prairie* provided by the Iowa Arts Council, a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more information, contact Jen P. Harris: 917-804-4987; [jenpharris@gmail.com](mailto:jenpharris@gmail.com).

### **About the Artist**

Jen P. Harris (b. 1977) received a BA in Studio Art from Yale University (1999) and an MFA from Queens College of the City University of New York (2008). Her work has been exhibited nationally at venues including Daniel Cooney Fine Art (NYC); John Davis Gallery (Hudson, NY); Artplace (Los Angeles); Baltimore Museum of Art; and Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts (Wilmington). She is the recipient of a Virginia Center for the Creative Arts Residency Fellowship (2015), New York Foundation for the Arts Painting Fellowship (2012), and Puffin Foundation Grant (2011), among others. She currently lives in Iowa City. Her website is [www.jenpharris.com](http://www.jenpharris.com).

### **About Legion Arts**

Legion Arts is an award-winning, Cedar Rapids nonprofit dedicated to the creation, presentation, understanding and impact of contemporary art. Based at CSPS, a restored landmark building on the edge of downtown Cedar Rapids, Legion Arts presents cutting edge art, music theatre, film and other events at a variety of venues; supports young artists, experimental art forms and new ideas; and works to involve artists and the arts in the processes of community development and neighborhood building.