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Contact: Ben Dupuy
(202) 253-2063
publicrelations@rexorganization.com

Rex, The King of Carnival, Proclaims Mardi Gras 2024 and Unveils 2024 Proclamation

*The Rex Organization, Incorporated in 1872 as the School of Design,
Continues its Legacy of Public Artwork Celebrating Carnival*

(New Orleans, Louisiana) Today, during the traditional Kings' Day celebration at Mardi Gras World, Rex, the King of Carnival, by royal edict, proclaimed Mardi Gras 2024. Rex Official James J. Reiss III announced the King of Carnival's proclamation and plans to visit "... his beloved Capital City of New Orleans" as follows:

Rex, King of the Carnival, sends greetings and announces with pleasure his intention to visit his Capital City of New Orleans.

His Majesty invites all of his subjects to gather, from far and near, to join in the many Celebrations and Processions which will shortly unfold under the Joyful Carnival Banner. He promises that the Festivities and Pageants arranged for this Celebration will surpass in Joyousness and exceed in Beauty the most Brilliant Attainments of the Glorious Past, culminating in His Grand Procession on Tuesday, February 13th, 2024 to celebrate the great festival of Mardi Gras.

It is further commanded and ordained: that the Joyous Music of Carnival shall fill the Streets of His Capital City, Multiplying all Merriment; that Fair Weather and Blue Skies shall prevail; that Multitudes might gather and celebrate without Impediment; that the Royal Constabulary shall marshal the Grand Celebration with their Customary Skill and Tolerance; and that the Keepers of Inns, Taverns, and Eating Establishments in His beloved Capital City shall throw open their Doors to receive all Carnival Celebrants.

By the King Himself, Rex

Attest Bathurst Lord High Chamberlin



Rex's Royal Edict Proclaiming Mardi Gras 2024

“Since its founding 152 years ago, the Rex Organization’s incorporated name has been ‘The School of Design,’ which reflects its interest in advancing education and the arts,” said Rex Official James J. Reiss III. Reiss continued, “Annually, the Rex Parade artistically and traditionally illustrates an educational theme rich in references to culture, history, mythology, literature, nature, geography, and the arts. The Rex 2024 Parade theme, “*The Two Worlds of Lafcadio Hearn – New Orleans and Japan*,” carries that long and important tradition forward.”

Few writers have better understood and described the unique culture of New Orleans than Lafcadio Hearn. When he left New Orleans to live and write in Japan, he opened a window into another rich and colorful culture. His writing about both of his worlds is filled with unforgettable images, many of which are captured in the 2024 Rex procession dedicated to this remarkable writer.

In 1989, Rex honored Hearn with the procession entitled “*Lafcadio Hearn’s Fantastics*,” which featured mainly New Orleans-themed floats. This year’s procession, titled “*The Two Worlds of*

Lafcadio Hearn – New Orleans and Japan,” is weighted toward Hearn’s Japanese writings, many of which were based on local ghost stories and folklore.



Poster depicting Rex’s 2024 Parade theme, The Two Wolds of Lafcadio Hearn, by Matt Hales

In 1872, the Rex Organization set out to create a special daytime Carnival celebration for the city of New Orleans. It did so by creating magnificent floats, rolling works of art for the public to enjoy. At a time before internet, television, and radio, Rex’s floats created a spectacle that quickly gained notice across the entire country. Visitors flocked to New Orleans to see the beautiful Carnival procession.

While Rex’s rolling works of art are well-known in the New Orleans area and far beyond, other forms of art have also flourished. Historically, Rex has issued proclamations declaring the date of the Carnival celebration and inviting his subjects to gather and join in the festivities. Proclamations were posted in train depots around the country, and Mardi Gras in New Orleans became a major tourist destination (see Rex’s Royal Edict on Page 2). These proclamations were not issued after WWII.

In 1980, the tradition was revived, and each year a local artist selected by the Rex Organization creates an original Rex proclamation art print highlighting the year's theme or one of the iconic images of Rex and Carnival. These sought-after collectors' items always carry the notation "Rex Proclaims Mardi Gras."

Rex's 2024 Proclamation is by Patti Adams, a painter, calligrapher, and professional musician, who lives and works in New Orleans. She specializes in a wide array of unique commissions, including proclamations and invitations for Mardi Gras, custom lettering for books, gilding projects, paintings, calligraphy, and book illustration. Ms. Adams is on the faculty of the New Orleans Academy of Fine Arts and Loyola University and in her "spare time," continues her 35-year career as a professional flutist with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra. A long-time admirer of the work of Lafcadio Hearn, she was thrilled to be invited to create the 2024 Rex Proclamation. Ms. Adams has stated, "I have always loved reading Lafcadio's wonderfully poetic and irreverent prose about our city, especially the work written during his time living here from 1878 through 1887. For me, New Orleans has been the perfect city for the melding of my two artistic worlds – the visual arts and the musical arts – because the city is a daily celebration of the senses and thus, the ideal canvas for any creative artist. And, like Lafcadio Hearn, my work expresses my love of New Orleans, a place that I find enchanting, haunting, and inspiring."

Rex's 2024 Proclamation, completely hand-drawn by New Orleans artist Patti Adams, celebrates this year's Rex Parade theme, "*The Two Worlds of Lafcadio Hearn – New Orleans and Japan.*" Befitting a theme honoring a noted literary figure, the proclamation features a quote from Hearn that is essentially a love letter to New Orleans. The artwork features early Rex ducals, or medals, from 1878 through 1887, which Hearn is likely to have seen when he resided in and wrote extensively of New Orleans. The main medal featured at the top-center is Rex's 2024 ducal. Hearn, who hid his injured left eye in portraits, is featured at the bottom-left corner. Hearn's name, in both English and Japanese, as well as in Japanese characters, are below, and, to his left, is a Raven, which was his occasional *nom de plume*. The iconic Japanese bonsai tree and setting sun on the bottom-left is balanced against the New Orleans skyline on the bottom-right, representing Hearn's "Two Worlds." Mixed flowers representing those of Japan and New Orleans are incorporated throughout, including bees and a butterfly, a literary reference to Perry Young's description of Carnival as "a butterfly of winter whose last real flight of Mardi Gras forever ends his glory."



Rex's 2024 Proclamation by artist Patti Adams

About the Rex Organization: Since the founding of the Rex Organization in 1872, its traditions have helped define Mardi Gras. Rex's proclamation invites his subjects to the grand celebration of Carnival. His royal colors of purple, gold, and green are to this day the colors of Mardi Gras, and the song played in the first Rex parade, "If Ever I Cease to Love," has become Carnival's anthem. Rex, the King of Carnival, and his consort, the Queen of Carnival, preside over the Rex Ball, Carnival's glittering conclusion. www.rexorganization.com

About the Pro Bono Publico Foundation: The Pro Bono Publico Foundation ("PBPF") is the Rex Organization's public education philanthropy association. Since its founding in 2006, the PBPF has donated more than \$13 million, including more than \$1 million annually for the past eight years, and committed nearly \$1.6 million in 2023 to support New Orleans public school education, primarily charter schools, charter management organizations, and school support entities such as New Schools for New Orleans and Teach for America. Most of the PBPF's philanthropic funds are raised from annual donations from members of the Rex Organization. www.probonopublicofoundation.org