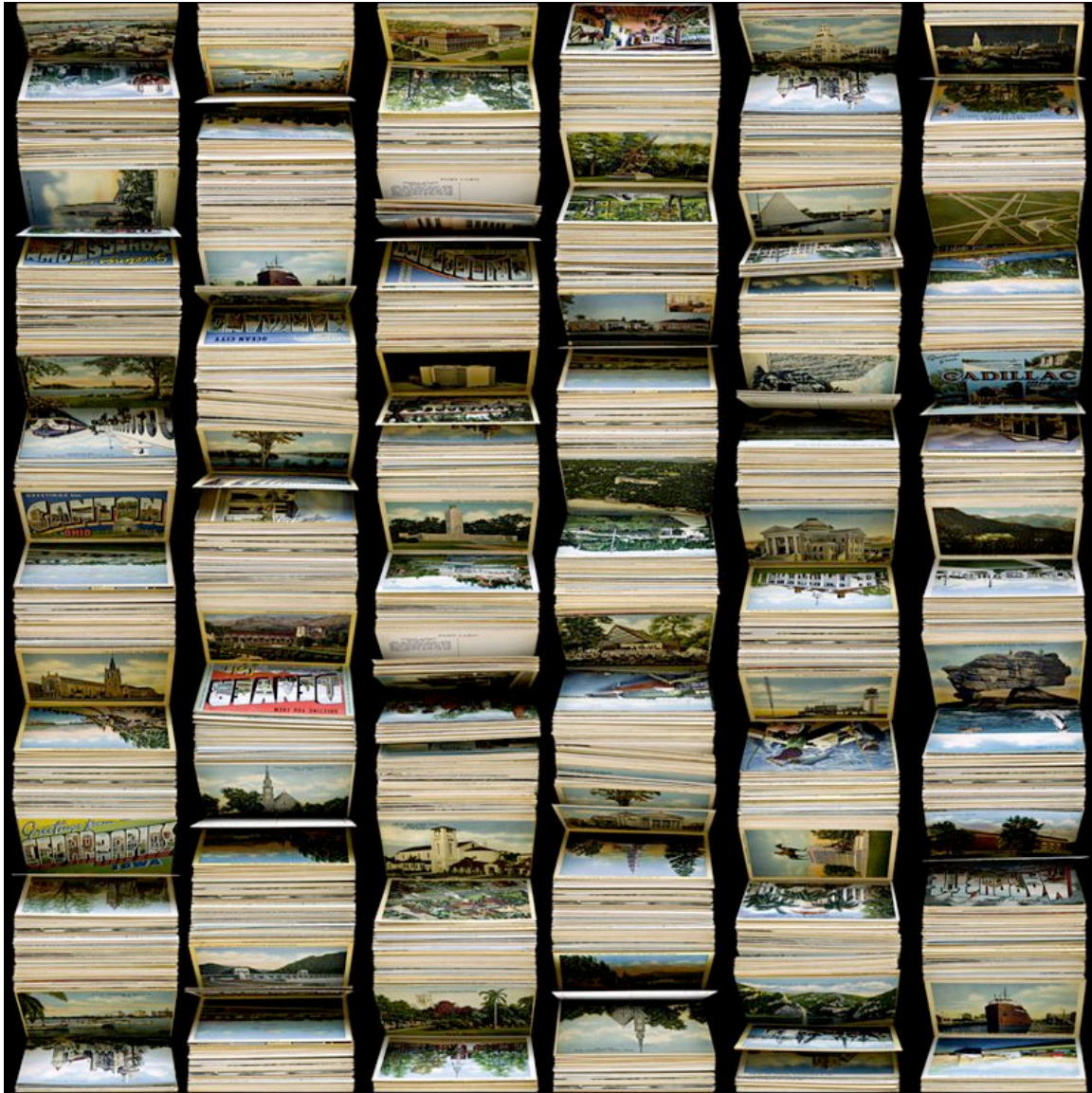


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### **Barbara Astman's Wonderland at Jane Corkin**

Barbara Astman's current show, called Wonderland, at Jane Corkin, has been extended into December, and that's a lucky thing for those of us who decided to travel halfway around the world when it opened, and expected it to be closed by the time we got back (like, say, me). I dropped in to have a look last week, and it was, happily, much what I expected: The subject matter here is Astman's voluminous postcard collection, it's yielded a suite

of precise, serene, compositionally-balanced photographs that subtly reveal themselves to you slowly.

Expected because, for those of us who know Astman's newspaper series, in which she shot precisely ordered stacks culled from her daily reading habits, the postcard series will have a familiar, quiet warmth. Astman, one of the city's senior artists, has arrayed her postcards -- thousands of them -- in stacks, offering glimpses of the kitschy photos and generally unremarkable places they portray at intervals throughout the plane of each piece. The effect, as a viewer, engages you physically in much the same way the postcards themselves do psychologically -- pulling you closer, drawing you deeper into the act of viewing as you hunt for clues to Astman's apparent meanderings.

I don't know if she's really been to Cedar Rapids, but that's beside the point, which is Astman putting a portion of herself on display -- her own aesthetic fascination, and maybe the wanderlust they contain -- and it rings true as intimate, personal, and quietly enthralling. At Jane Corkin in the Distillery until Dec. 5.