

Cachet Media: OIL PAINT

By Pat Morgan

As collectors know, a first day cover (FDC) is very often made more valuable by adding a “cachet.” Cachet is a French word that means “seal” or “stamp.” Thus, a cachet is any kind of inscription, artwork, or design, handmade or machine-made, used to decorate a cover. Anyone can make add a cachet an envelope. A cachet usually is added to enhance the subject of the stamp but in the case of an “event” cover it is to enhance the date or location of the postmark.

Individual collectors began making cachets by hand in the early 1900s. Some cachet-makers made quite a name for themselves (Knapp, Weigand, Collins, etc.) and their designs became very collectable. Now, of course, many illustrators design them with computers and sophisticated graphic software and copy onto the envelope using color copiers.

Over the years cachets have been added using pencil, colored pencil, ink, rubber stamps, watercolors, acrylic paint, oil paint and or any combinations of these media.

Let’s highlight the rarest of these media, OIL PAINT.

The reason that oil paint is rarely used is that paper envelopes soak up the oil from the paint and make a total mess out of the envelope. Secondly, oil painting is a more difficult media primarily due to the time it takes to dry completely (potentially up to 6 months).

The list of Cachet Artists that have even attempted to use oil paint is quite small; Art Kober (Fig. 1), Lois Hamilton (Fig. 2), Clara Walker (Fig. 3), DD Jagyi (Fig. 4), Julian Pugh (Fig. 5), Mae Luhta (Fig. 6), and Tom Mueller (Fig. 7 & 8). Julian Pugh and Lois Hamilton painted on canvas and then mounted the canvas to the envelope in order to get past the issues with the oil permeating the paper envelope.

Tom Mueller, of Elsberry MO, is the only Cachet Artist that produced the majority of his work in oils on paper envelopes. Tom developed a process and technique to prepare the paper to accept the oil paint without ruining the envelope. Tom’s work, in my opinion, is similar in quality to what D. Knapp produced using other media.

If you are lucky enough to find an oil painted cachet, stop and appreciate the detail and effort taken by the artist because they took the extra effort to use one of the most difficult combinations to create it, oil paint on a bond paper envelope!



Figure 1. Art Kober



Figure 3. Clara Walker

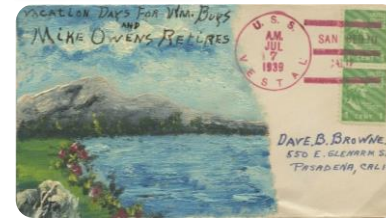


Figure 6. MaeLuhta



Figure 2. Lois Hamilton



Figure 4. DD Jagyi



Figure 5.
Julian Pugh

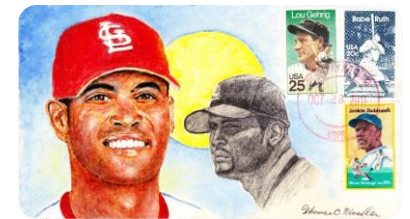


Figure 7. Tom Mueller

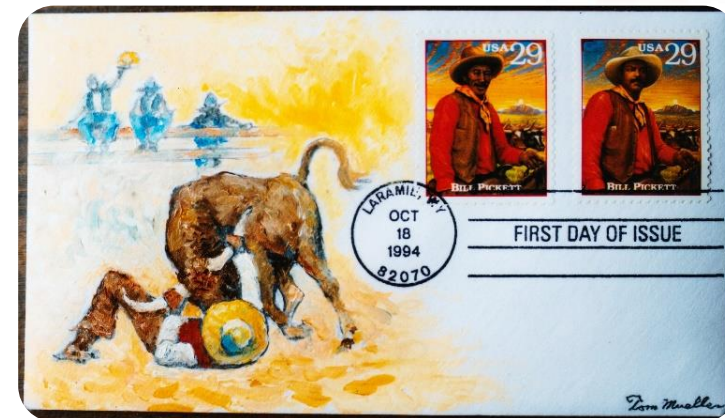


Figure 8.
Tom Mueller