

FALL 2026

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DAYOLDART
MAGAZINE

Mehmet Hale

A Note from the Artist

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *DayOldArt Magazine*.

Every piece you'll see here started the same way: a faded photograph, a forgotten postcard, a poster curling at the corners, collected for my curated archive. What I do is recompose the photo in color — not guessed at, but researched. Before a single brushstroke of digital color goes down, I try to find out who's in the photo, where it was taken, and why it mattered. That's the part people don't always see. The color is on the surface. The history underneath is the point.

This issue is a walk through a handful of pieces from the DayOldArt collections — some of my personal favorites, and a couple that mark real milestones, including one of the very first three pieces I ever colorized, twenty years ago this year.

If you've been following my work on Instagram or Facebook, welcome to something a little slower and a little deeper. If you're new here — welcome. Turn the page and step back in time.



— *Melvin Hale*

The Cover Story: Dorothy Dandridge



She was the first Black woman ever nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress, for her lead role in *Carmen Jones* (1954) — a barrier-breaking moment in Hollywood at a time when the industry rarely offered a Black actress a leading role at all, let alone one that Oscar voters couldn't ignore.

That's part of why she's on this cover. Dandridge isn't just a striking image to colorize — she's a figure whose glamour and her struggle for recognition in an industry that wasn't built for her are inseparable from each other. Bringing color

back into a photograph like this one is a small way of insisting she gets looked at again, fully, the way she deserved to be seen the first time.

This particular image comes from an official MGM postcard — printed not for the American market, but for Italy, with the studio's promotional copy on the back written entirely in Italian. No date was ever printed on it. That absence is its own small piece of history: MGM was distributing Dandridge's image internationally, positioning her as a genuine star to audiences an ocean away, at a moment when Hollywood was still figuring out what to do with her at home. The postcard doesn't tell us exactly when — but it tells us how far her reach already was.

See it in color as art: dayoldart.com/products/the-poise-of-dorothy-dandridge

Feature: Buffalo Soldiers in Montana



Some pieces take a weekend. This one took the better part of a year between other projects.

"Buffalo Soldiers in Montana" is built from an original 1890 photograph, sourced from the Library of Congress, of the 25th Infantry

Regiment posing in the snow at Fort Keogh on December 14th of that year, a Sunday. The photographer was Charles Barthelmess. The age and condition of the photograph necessitated a careful restoration. Around forty soldiers are rendered in

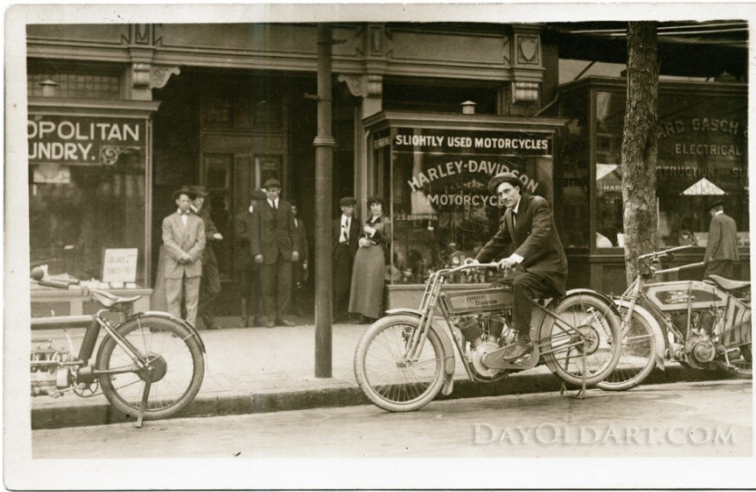


the piece — and every single uniform had to be colorized with real historical accuracy, not approximated. That's nearly a year of research and work behind roughly forty figures, so that each man's uniform reads as it actually would have looked.

The Buffalo Soldiers' story is one that's too often left out of the version of the American West most people grew up with. This piece is my attempt to put them back in the frame — literally.

See it in color as art: dayoldart.com/products/buffalo-soldiers-in-montana

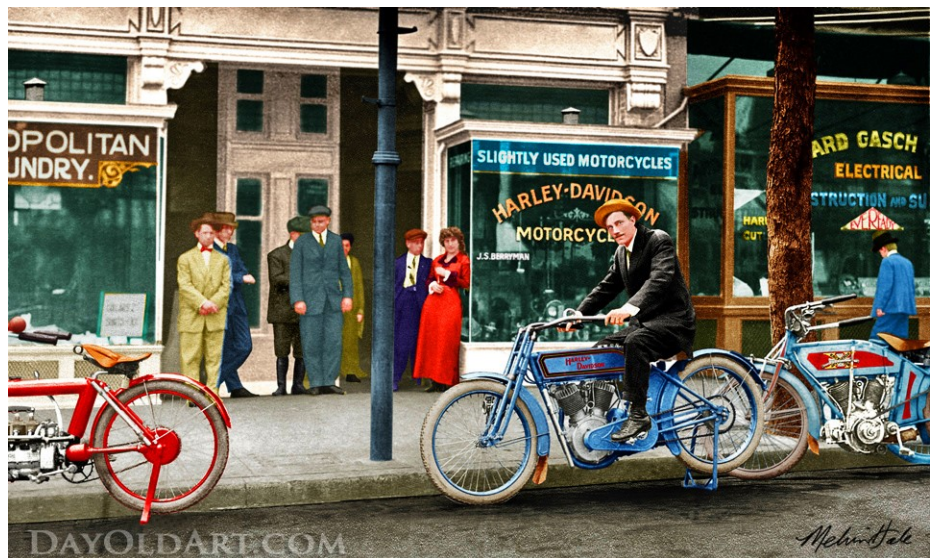
Feature: Berryman's Harley-Davidson



This one started with a fading postcard street-scene photograph from the early 20th century, most likely showing John S. Berryman himself seated on a 1915 Harley-Davidson outside his dealership at 912 9th Street NW in Washington, D.C. Berryman was a noted Harley-

Davidson dealer and racer, right at the moment motorcycle culture in America was being invented in real time. Beside him, two more machines — a 1910 Pierce, the first American four-cylinder, with shaft drive, and a British 1914 Excelsior — along with a crowd of onlookers or employees in period dress gathered outside the shop.

What I find most interesting about this piece is what it says about a city block. That same address has cycled through decades of use since Berryman's day, evolving from a hub of motorcycle culture into something else entirely —



a reminder that history doesn't just live in people, it lives in places, even after they've been repurposed. The location now appears to be a parking lot.

See it in color as art: dayoldart.com/products/berrymans-harley-davidson

Feature: Mel's Drive-In, San Francisco

If you've seen the movie classic *American Graffiti*, you've seen this drive-in — even if you didn't know its name. This piece is colorized from a black-and-white press photo pulled from the archives of the *San Francisco Examiner*, showing the diner exactly as it looked when George Lucas shot it for his 1973 film, with Ron Howard and Harrison Ford among the young cast cruising past its neon sign. The movie was made for a famously tight budget — around \$777,000 — and went on to earn



roughly \$150 million at the box office, one of the great return-on-investment stories in Hollywood history.



There's a black-and-white Highway Patrol car parked out front in the scene, as if it's still keeping an eye on the diners inside. Every classic car in the lot, every inch of that yellow façade, had to be color-matched to feel

period-correct rather than invented — the goal is always that a viewer who actually remembers 1950s San Francisco would recognize it as true, not just pretty.

See it in color as art: dayoldart.com/products/mels-drive-in-san-francisco-1

Feature: The Chi-Chi Club, Palm Springs

Two pieces, one legendary nightspot.

Chi Chi Starlite Room Performers

This piece reimagines an original promotional poster for the Chi-Chi nightclub in Palm Springs — once one of the desert's premier destinations for A-list entertainment. The illustrated lineup alone reads like a mid-century who's-who: Jerry Lewis, the Mills Brothers, Louis Armstrong, Lena Horne, the Crosby Brothers, Liberace, Eartha Kitt, and Milton Berle, and others, all reimagined in color against a starlit blue-and-white backdrop. Below them, a color

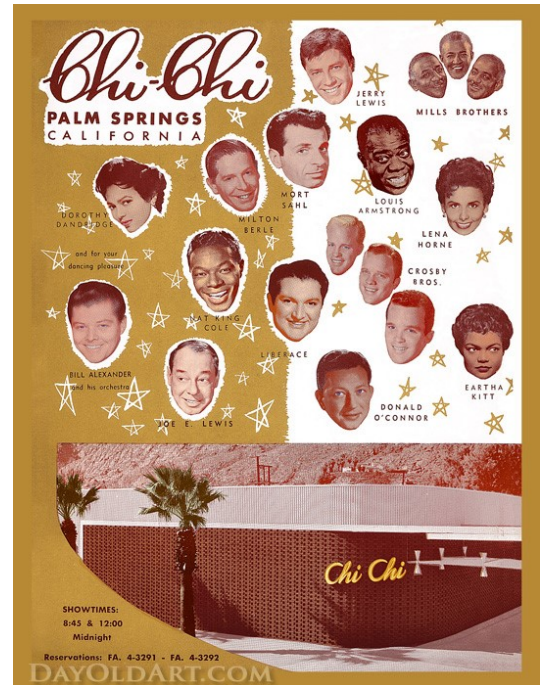


photo pulls
back the

curtain on the club's interior — a showgirl mid-performance and tables set for an audience that came dressed to be seen. In the original she is not wearing a bikini top, and the art can be ordered that way.

See it in color as art: dayoldart.com/products/chi-chi-starlite-room-performers-2



Chi Chi and Cubana

This piece has a personal milestone behind it: it was only the third piece I ever colorized, completed in May of 2006, just days after I colorized my first piece: *Car in the Cacti*. I had no idea at the time that it would go on to win a Crystal Award of Excellence at the California State Fair Fine Art Competition the following year — one of the three awards I took home that year, a feat the Fair's Fine Art Exhibit Supervisor called rare for a single artist to pull off at all, let alone right out of the gate. Not unimportantly, it has also been my best seller.



The color scene captures Palm Springs' Palm Canyon Drive in the 1940s, with the teal-hued Chi-Chi club on the left and the Cubana club — tucked inside the El Rey Hotel — on the right. A teal 1940s coupe sits parked out front, a nod to the desert



oasis's famous pools. Both clubs even made a cameo in the 1941 film *The Saint in Palm Springs*. Two decades later, I still think about how far a postcard photograph can travel.

See it in color as art: dayoldart.com/products/chi-chi-and-cubana

The Collections and the Book, at a Glance



African Americana — Colorized historical photographs documenting the history and life of African Americans in the diaspora. The collection includes unseen and rare images, including Lena Horne in a Red & Gold Swimsuit, The Buffalo Soldiers in Montana, Aretha, Maya Angelou, The Tuskegee Airmen, Dorothy Dandridge and MLK, Jr. Meets Malcolm X.



Glazed Art on Board — We're talking about 12x19 travel-size art on cradleboard. These are primarily original works. All come finished with a luxury epoxy resin glaze. Get the original or a low number artist proof. They're exquisite & hard to look away from!



Stretched Canvas Art — Gallery-wrapped and ready to hang, Stretched Canvas Art brings the archive to gallery scale. At 50x40 or 60x40 they own the wall over a sofa or above a mantle; beautiful at any size. Available glazed.



The Colorizing Pro — This book pairs the artwork with a theory of visual cognition called KBI that earned me a doctorate at UCLA in 2014. It's part art book, part memoir, part how-to-colorize and remaster photos manual.

Available now at DayOldArt.com.

Recognition



This work has been formally recognized since nearly the beginning. In 2007, three pieces — including *Chi Chi and Cubana*, featured in this issue — won the maximum of three awards given to any single artist at the California State Fair Fine Art Competition. In 2008, I was one of four artists selected worldwide as a "Trendsetter and Emerging Artist" by *Art Business News* magazine for its 30th Anniversary issue.

"Such engaging, informative work whose colorized photos make you feel as if you have stepped back in time... I could spend an hour with each one." — Arthur Verge, Ph.D., Professor of History, El Camino College.

Read more at dayoldart.com/blogs/news/awards-and-reviews

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