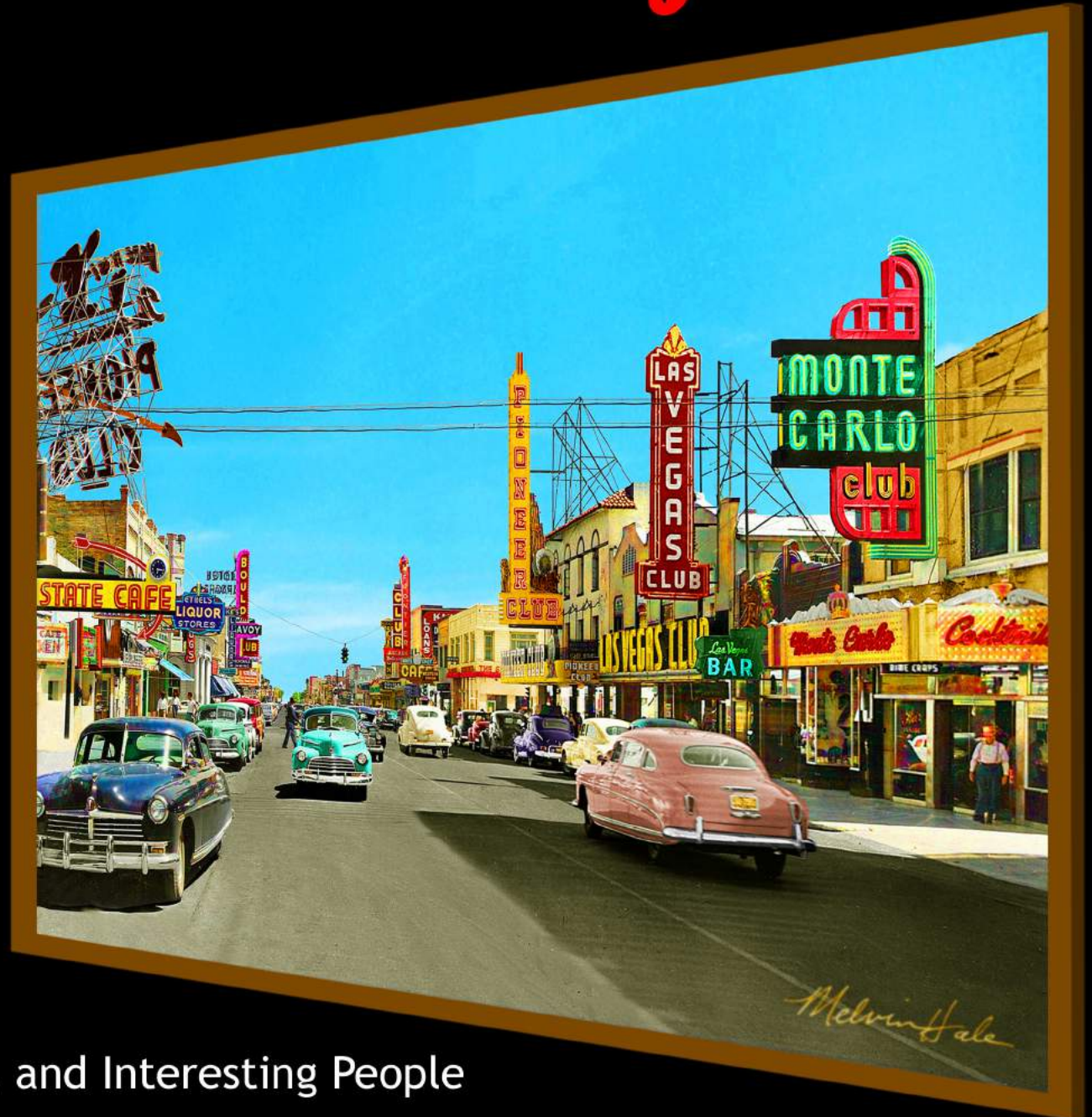


# Beyond Colonizing

Melvin Hale, Ph.D.



Street Scenes, Beaches, and Interesting People

# *Beyond Colorizing*

**From Award-winning Art to a Ph.D.**

Street Scenes, Beaches, and Interesting People

Foreword by John V. Richardson, Jr., Ph.D.

*Professor Emeritus  
Graduate School of Education and Information Studies  
University of California, Los Angeles*

**Melvin Hale, Ph.D.**

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Publisher of Fine Art Since the Year 2000

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Las Vegas, Nevada

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## Reviews

***Very beautiful!!!***

Jason Clodfelter, Co-President, Sony Television

***These were all beautiful images as were so many others. You have a gift that's quite rare.***

Ed Martin, Talent Advisor and Coach, The Larkin Company

***I really enjoyed the walk down memory lane.***

Harry Le Grande, Vice Chancellor Emeritus, Student Affairs, UC Berkeley

***I like your work. It's unique and fun. Keep it up. I wish you the best.***

Michael Wilmering, Assistant Editor, Art Business News, Art Expo

***Such an engaging, informative work whose colorized photos make you feel as if you have stepped back in time and are actually there. I could spend an hour with each one feeling as if a time machine has transported me back to be part of history that is sadly no longer with us.***

Arthur Verge, Ph.D., Professor of History, El Camino College

***I looked through your book and I think it's superb!!!***

Dale Monobe, Ph.D., Friend of the Artist

# Acknowledgements

To my wife Angelica for your love of the art of colorizing, even though it has kept us apart many a night (and day), although we were in the same space. You are a work of art yourself, that I love to behold. Without your dedication and energy and vision, this art would have never become what it is. Words fail me.

To my professors John Richardson, Jr., Ph.D., Anne Gilliland, Ph.D., Beverly P. Lynch, Ph.D.; and Susan Slyomovics, Ph.D. You kept me on point along the way to defending KBI, a theory of visual knowledge for libraries, archives, and information studies. Real science from art.

To my supporters, you are truly special. You have let me know, over and over again, that you see the pleasure, as I do, in strolling down memory lane in living color.

With support from the:





# Foreword

I am thrilled to write a foreword to this book for several reasons. One of Melvin's strengths is his creativity. Should you the reader have any doubt, then you might want to know that his artwork was recognized as early as 2007 at the California State Fair's Fine Art Competition—see “Chi Chi and Cubana,” for example. Or, you could just flip through the following pages and see for yourself.

At UCLA, his hard work and persistence paid off in February 2014 with a successfully defended doctoral dissertation entitled “Toward a Unified Theory of Visual Knowledge in Library, Archives and Information Studies: A Test of the KBI Model Using Documentary Photographs.” This work is the basis for his theoretical understanding behind these fabulous images you are holding in your hands. His novel theory of visual knowledge is quite compact and powerful, helping us think more clearly about what we know, believe, and imagine about the world around us.

Frankly, it's just amazing what Melvin can do with these vintage black & white real photograph post cards. They come to life before your very eyes. In short, I love his work and I hope that you will fall in love with it as well!

John Richardson Jr., PhD

UCLA Professor Emeritus of Information Studies (he/him/his)

Spring 2022

<https://pages.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/richardson/>

# Introduction

Colorizing old photographs as an art form is not new. It has been around almost as long as photographs have existed, which is to say since the mid-1850s. Color photography came into being in the late 1890s, with excellent exemplars produced in the 1910s, but the ability to mass produce color film and color photographs remained a challenge until the mid-1940s.

In the days before digital imaging, and tools like Photoshop, artisans used various pigments and tints to add a more lifelike appearance to black and white photographs. In this approach the color was added on top of the photograph itself. The result might be more accurate in likeness than say a painting. The problem with using paints to colorize is that they cover up numerous details in a photo in favor of an overall effect. However, digital tools can isolate and colorize the smallest of details, in essence, coloring from the inside out.

I discovered that a simple but unchangeable formula was required to achieve the highest levels of realism. In order to do justice to a black and white photo I had to determine what colors were actual; which were plausible at the time; and choices without supporting evidence. I had accidentally stumbled upon a theory which proposes that three primary states of mind make sense of visual experience: know, believe, and imagine, or KBI. Compact but powerful.

## Sources

I collect vintage postcards. The most desirable are real photo postcards, known in the trade as RPPCs. A real photo postcard negative is the same size as the print, making it a high-res image, if well taken and preserved. The most interesting to me are the *street scenes*. Street scenes are usually taken in the most important location in a city or town. I started with a focus on Palm Springs street scenes because I lived there and had an art gallery there, but it evolved into a collection of postcards from cities up and down California, as well as other states. As for the old cars, I like seeing them in the context of the cars around them that were on the street at the time.



Vintage photographs are also great for collecting when you want to diversify your collection of colorized pieces. The studio press release photo of Lucille Ball is an example of a great photograph with strong details, along with extensive caption information on the back. Generally, photographs do not have captions the way postcards do, so it's not always easy to determine very much about their origins, hence old photos are often orphans.



***Betty Jean at Sixteen***  
1941

**Betty Jean** is my mom. This photo was taken in a photographer's studio in Washington, D.C. in 1941 when she was 16, long before she had any thoughts of me. I remember this photo from when I was growing up, but the photo album we kept was lost years ago and I obtained this copy from an uncle around 2002, and it was in the condition you see on the left. For many years I wanted to colorize it, but I lacked the skill to repair it, until I attempted again in 2022. What resulted surprised even me. I only wish that she were still here to see it. Most of the images in this book required some level of restoration before color could be applied. What you see in the three photos above is what the process actually looks like. Preservation is a large part of colorizing, and that alone is a benefit that is often overlooked. It takes *love* not artificial intelligence to do this work.



# Casinos and Clubs on Fremont Street

Las Vegas, 1948

Original: 56x40

Color composition created from two black and white photographs that were merged into one.



## California State Fair Fine Art Awards Sacramento, 2007 & 2008

In 2007 I submitted three of my most popular artworks to the California State Fair Fine Art Competition. All three were accepted for awards, with *Chi Chi and Cubana* awarded a Crystal Award of Excellence. Carol Buchanan, the Fine Art Coordinator for the State Fair, said that this accomplishment of receiving the maximum of three awards was "rare." In 2008 I won another award for *The Victor Hugo Inn - Laguna Beach*.

Selected for the



Sacramento

2007



# The Art



The Artist

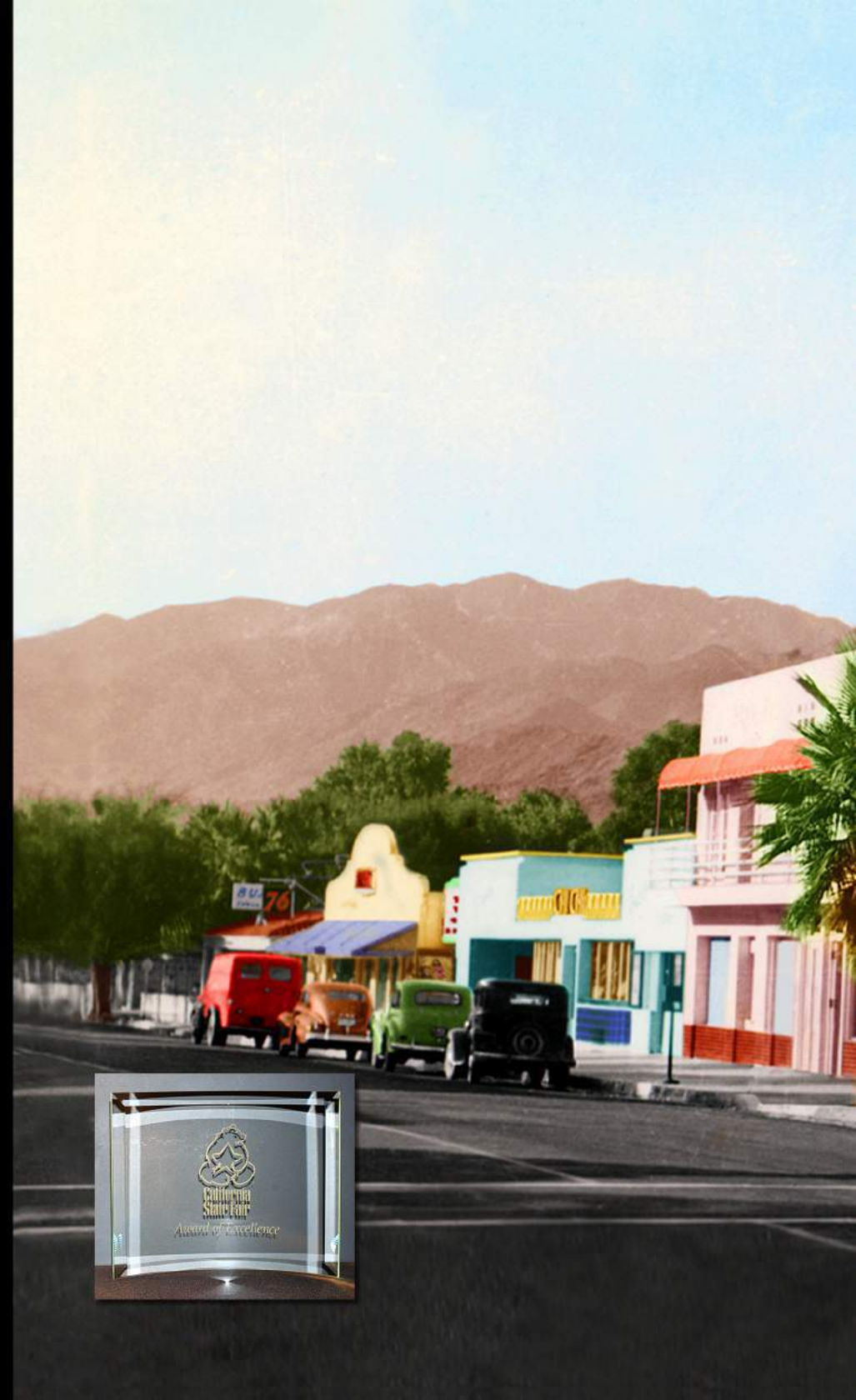
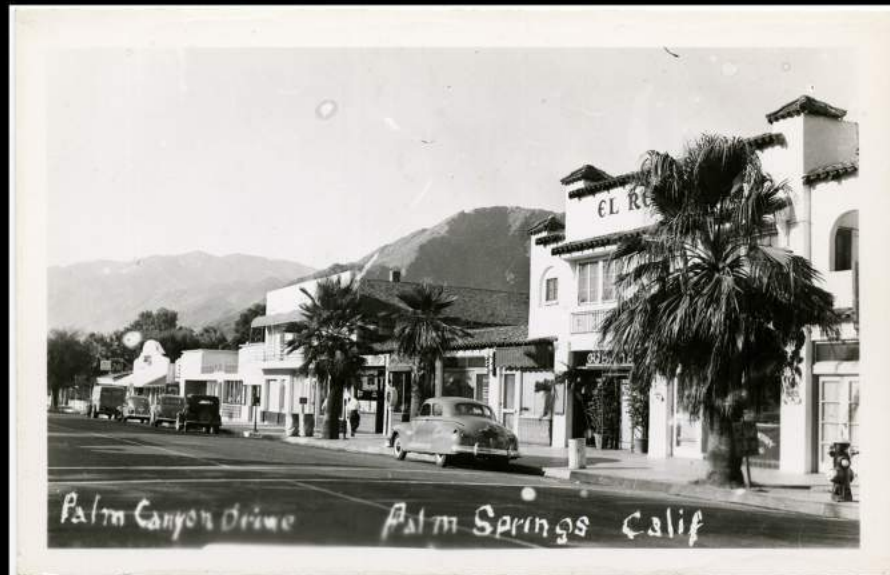


## *Chi Chi and Cubana*

Palm Springs, c.1943

Original: 60x40

Named after two famous dinner clubs on Palm Canyon Drive, this award-winning artwork started as a real photo postcard taken during WW2 when soldiers were stationed at the El Mirador Hotel. These clubs are also featured in the movie *The Saint in Palm Springs*. This was just the third color composition I created, in June 2006. The major chore here was using the lasso tool in Photoshop to “cut out” the palm fronds. That alone took well over a day to complete. The choice of a blue car was made to symbolize the importance and coolness of water in the desert. Imposing its presence above the town, the 8,000’ San Jacinto Mountain brings an almost mystical quality to this early morning street scene.





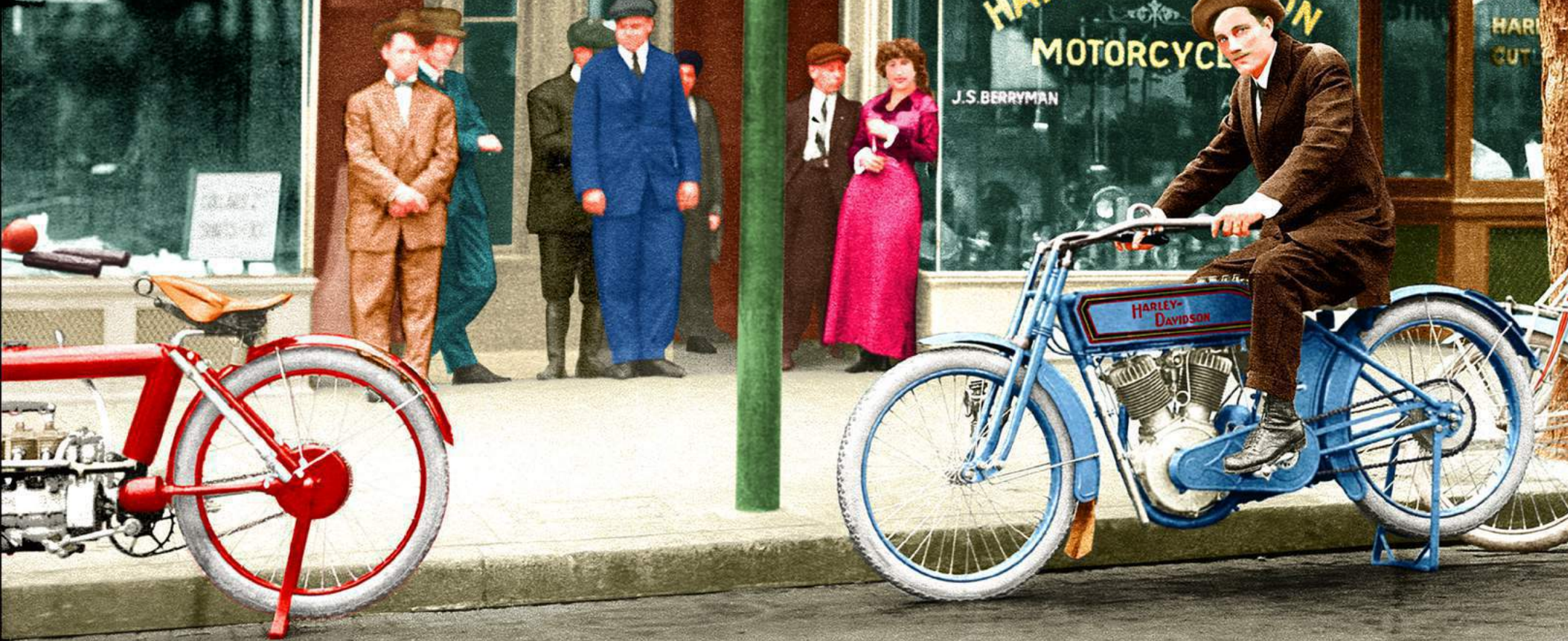
OPOLITAN  
UNDY.

SLIGHTLY USED MOTORCYCLES

HARLEY-DAVIDSON  
MOTORCYCLES

J.S. BERRYMAN

HARLEY-DAVIDSON





## *Berryman's Harley-Davidson Motorcycles*

Washington, D.C., c.1915

Original: 50x30

John S. Berryman was a Harley-Davidson motorcycle dealer and later an auto dealer who raced Harleys. He was also part of the original National Capitol Motorcycle Club of Washington DC. He once held a race called the Berryman Run. He is the person on the motorcycle. His dealership was a few blocks from the White House.



(L-R) 1910 Pierce, 1915 Harley-Davidson, & 1914 Excelsior.



Composed from a rare and highly sought-after Stephen Willard photo postcard. The Utah Parks Company, a subsidiary of Union Pacific Railroad, operated various forms of transportation in Bryce and Zion Canyons from the 1920s until 1972. Although it is not clear if this vehicle was painted this color, later Utah Parks buses displayed this general color scheme. In the photo below the original is being installed in an executive's office in Sony Pictures Television Studio in Culver City.



*Seeing the Sand Dunes*  
Death Valley, c. 1925

Original: 50x30





Nothing is known about the family and friends in this real photo postcard except the words "San Diego" written on the back. It may have been taken in a photographer's studio, or at a beach.



*Family Reunion at the Beach*  
San Diego, c.1925

Original: 50x32





# Beyond Colonizing

Melvin Hale, Ph.D.

Volume 2



Street Scenes, Beaches, and Interesting People

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Volume 2

**Melvin Hale, Ph.D.**



Publisher of Fine Art Since the Year 2000

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Las Vegas, Nevada

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# Introduction

Bringing the past alive by colorizing old black and white photos is a way of resurrecting a small sliver of time, making the past feel more human and relatable. Colorizing allows vintage images to better participate with photos taken today. But colorizing is still an exercise in imagination or some level of fantasy. If you have read the Introduction to Volume 1, you are aware of the theory of visual knowledge that I defended called KBI, which emerged from the method I used to create realistic color compositions from black and white photos. KBI stands for the three states of mind that make sense of visual experience: know, believe and imagine.

I initially used KBI to deconstruct and reconstruct these black and white photographs with the goal of producing a realistic color depiction, often heavy on the details. In this volume I introduce a new application of KBI in which the emphasis is not on what I know but on what I Like. What I am liking now is where the scene itself shifts to one of abstraction and simplicity. I call it the DreamView. The abstracts I create in DreamView range from nearly realistic to simply pieces and parts of the original photo, but always maintained in their original placement. This is easily possible because a digital color composition is a digital mosaic which can be comprised of hundreds of digital pieces.

I begin by removing the sky and replacing it with a black background. In this view the “I” of KBI is put to work to open up the possibilities of visual imagination. I call it KBI Without Boundaries. Most of the DreamView compositions are first shown as realistic interpretations, some from Volume 1. I like both versions, but I like the simplicity of DreamView and the possibility of endless color variations. As an art patron you can request custom designs and colors for art that match your personal taste and decor. It’s a benefit of being born digital.

As an example of abstraction I will use *Hotel San Clemente*. My focus is on the vintage cars in both expressions, but in DreamView I reduced the hotel to flat white walls and windows, and reduced the appearance of shrubbery, and I increased the details on the cars.

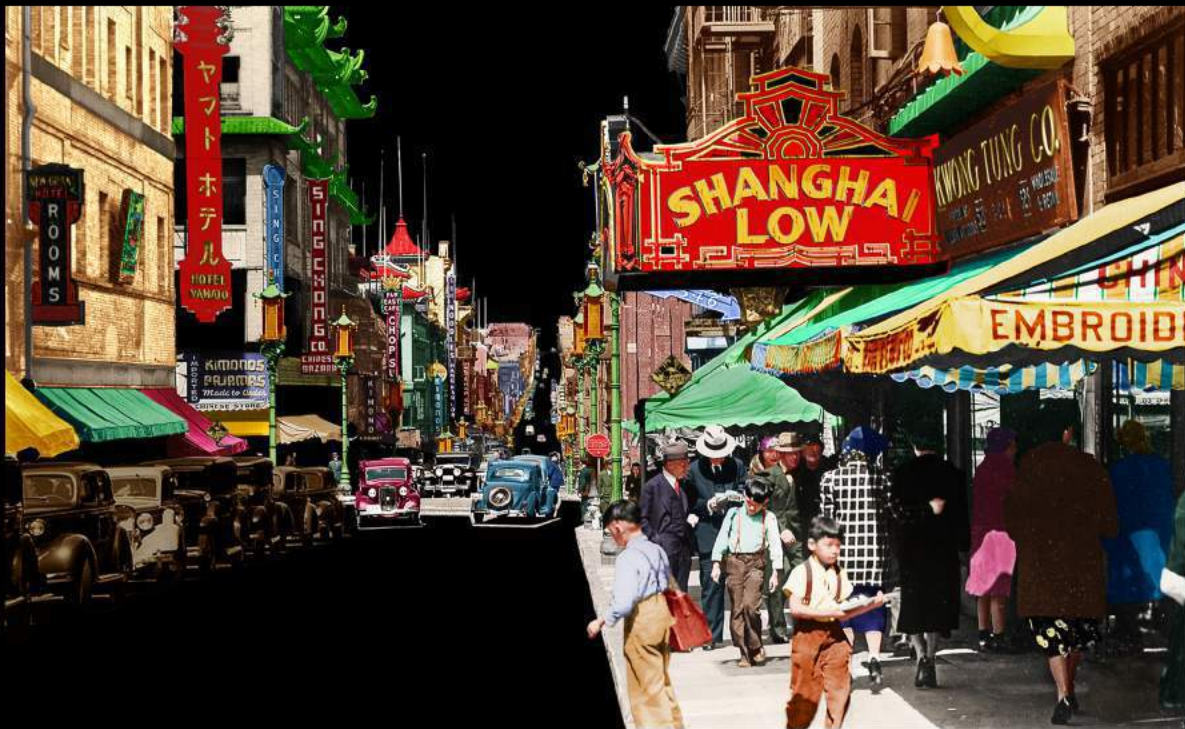


DreamView employs new techniques and strategies, so I view it as a major milestone in my development as an artist. I am free of the commitment to realism. Free to explore new visual expressions. What I am not free of is my commitment to quality, and the delivery of wall art that will last for generations. I use only archival media for that. While you can order art in any shape or size that the image will accommodate, standard sizes for horizontal artwork is 60x40, 50x30, 40x26 and 32x18.

There are several new pieces presented in this volume that I think are quite exciting. The *Malibu Trading Post and Trancas Beach* was created from two very old photo postcards, but together they merge into a nice panoramic scene along the famed Pacific Coast Highway (PCH). The Loma Linda Shopping Center







I have discovered numerous photo postcards taken from this end of Grant Street facing D.W. Low's "Shanghai Low Restaurant" at 453 Grant Street in San Francisco's Chinatown. As mentioned in Volume 1, this was one of the locations for the filming of the 1947 movie "The Lady from Shanghai" starring Rita Hayworth and Orson Welles.



*Shanghai Low #3*  
San Francisco, c.1938

Original: 50x30



SHANGHAI  
LOW

KWONG TUNG CO.  
WHOLESALE  
& RETAIL

SING CHONG CO.  
CHINESE BAZAAR

FAR EAST CAFE  
CHOP SU

KIMONO  
KIMONO

EMBROID



# THE TEPEES

Dancing

Dining Room

Fountain Service

Cocktails

CLOSURE MONDAYS



*The Tepees*  
US Highway 40, Colorado, c. 1948

Original: 50x30





*Importantes Casas Comerciales Tijuana, B.C.M*



## *Tijuana Perfume*

Mexico, c. 1948

Original: 50x30



*Love From the Beatles*

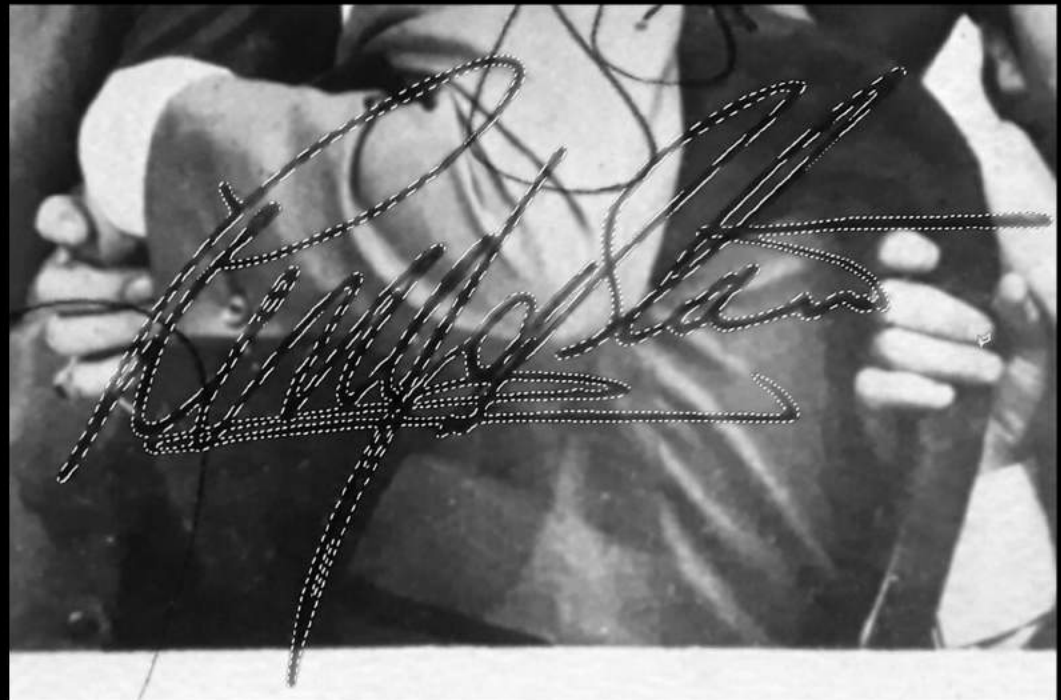
c. 1962

Original: 24x30



*love from the Beatles*

*John Lennon*  
*George Harrison*  
*Paul McCartney*  
*Ringo Starr*





This artwork came from a signed postcard of The Beatles addressed to an early fan which simply says "To Alison, Love from The Beatles." The Polygonal Lasso tool in Photoshop was used to fully trace each signature, then it is cut and pasted onto its own layer, ready to be colored. In the black box above on the left you can see all four signatures isolated in different colors. Each and every element in a digitally colored composition has to be treated this way. In the final artwork I created a left shoulder for John Lennon which was cut off in the original postcard. The signature highlighted with the lasso is Ringo Starr.







*Buffalo Soldiers in Montana*

Ft. Keogh, Dec. 14, 1890

Original: 58x32

The Buffalo Soldiers were Black soldiers who served in the U.S. Army after Emancipation. This group were the Buffalo Soldiers of the 25th Infantry, stationed at Ft. Keogh, Montana. There are upwards of 40 soldiers in this photo, which was obtained courtesy of the Library of Congress.



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**Photographs are like time machines.** One way that we can turn back the hands of time is to colorize black and white photos, and see them again like it just happened. That is what I do. I add color and artistic interpretation to old photos using science derived from art.



*Lena Horne in a Red Swimsuit*  
c.1941

[www.BeyondColorizing.com](http://www.BeyondColorizing.com)

