



**LOUIS WAIN:
THE MOVIE**
**HUMOROUS CARDS BY
ARTHUR THIELE**
**COLLECTION AREA
HALLOWEEN**



DEAR READERS,

Welcome to the first issue of “StadeNEWS *International*”, the magazine of Daniel Stade’s Auction House.

Three years ago, we decided to publish our own customer magazine. Since then, seven issues with a circulation of over 9,000 copies each have been published in German-speaking Europe. We were very pleased by the large amount of positive feedback we received. Your comments have inspired us to publish an international English-language version of StadeNEWS. Here is the first issue!

Our auction house has specialized in historic, antique and vintage postcards for over 20 years. We know that background information, postcard community news and interesting facts about postcards are important to our readers. There are only a few magazines worldwide that deal with historic postcards. Occasionally you may find an article on this topic in stamp magazines or other collector’s magazines. StadeNEWS *International* aims to fill this gap. In this issue you will find articles about the artists Louis Wain and Arthur Thiele to Halloween as a collection theme as well as reports from two of my trips to collectors all over the world.

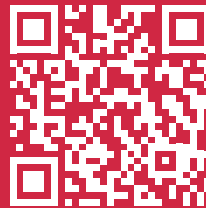
Please let us know what you think of the magazine. Our editorial team would be delighted to receive any comments (redaktion@stade-news.de). If you would like to find out more about our auction house, we recommend the article on page 8 of this issue. If you are thinking about selling your collection or parts of it, please contact us. We will be happy to advise you.



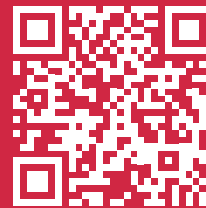
Have fun reading!
Yours
Daniel Stade

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LOUIS WAIN: THE MOVIE

PICTURE POSTCARD ARTIST ON A LARGE CANVAS

BY HERBERT FISCHER, EDITED BY ANNE ROSS

Louis Wain, like his Belgian contemporary Gisbert Combaz, created paintings that eerily prefigure the psychedelic art movement of the 1960s. Many of you will be familiar with his humorous picture postcards of cats. These cards are particularly popular in the USA and Great Britain, but Louis Wain also has a large fan base worldwide. After Louis developed schizophrenia, his paintings began to resemble art created during a LSD trip. Authorities disagree as to whether or not this stylistic development depicts the visual hallucinations he suffered from as a schizophrenic.

In 2021, the artist's unusual life story became a movie called "The Electrical Life of Louis Wain." This makes collecting his postcards even more interesting. The role of Louis Wain is played by Benedict Cumberbatch, who is best known for his role as Sherlock Holmes in the British crime series of the same name. The second leading role is played by Claire Foy, who was awarded a Golden Globe for her portrayal of the young Queen Elizabeth II in the series "The Crown." Composer and musician Nick Cave plays a supporting role as H.G. Welles. He is best known from his time with the band "The Bad Seeds" and the hit song "Where The Wild Roses Grow" which he performed with Kylie Minogue.

Louis Wain was born in London in 1860. Together with five younger sisters, he grew up in the



Source: <https://media-cache.cinematerial.com>



Clerkenwell district. His father was a textile merchant and his mother was French. At the age of 17, Louis began studying at the West London School of Art. After three years of study, he was hired by the school as an art teacher. When his father died, Wain ended his teaching career after just two years. From then on, he worked as a freelance artist so that he could support his mother and sisters.

Wain's life was very different and would remain so until his death in 1939. Born with a split lip, on the advice of doctors, he was only allowed to attend school at the age of ten. Growing up with five younger sisters must not have been easy for him either. At the age of twenty-three, Louis married Emily Richardson, who had been his sisters' governess. She was ten years older than Wain. Marrying a much older woman, and a domestic servant of the family at that, was considered scandalous. After their wedding, the couple moved to the London borough of Hampstead. Louis' wife Emily fell ill with cancer and died three years after their marriage. Emily's illness and death would lead to Louis Wain becoming one of the most popular artists specializing in humorous depictions of cats. ▶



When Emily fell ill, the Wain's took in a stray tomcat, who they named "Peter". Some sources claim that the cat may also have been a wedding present that Louis gave to his wife. Peter comforted Emily while she was seriously ill and brought some variety to their everyday life. Louis Wain often sat by his wife's bedside and began to make sketches of Peter. Until his wife's disease, he had mainly painted other subjects, including dogs and landscapes. Emily thought the cat drawings were so successful that she urged her husband to publish them. However, when he showed the sketches of Peter to an editor, he was initially met with rejection. "Who wants to see pictures of a cat?" was the short answer. So the drawings initially disappeared into a drawer.

Louis Wain continued to draw, and in 1886 he enjoyed great success at the age of 26. Under the title "Kittens," the weekly magazine "Illustrated London News" published 150 of his cat motifs in its Christmas edition. Each cat had a different facial expression and was busy doing different things. The drawings quickly became extremely popular. Overnight, the editorial team was inundated with requests. Wain became world-famous within a few hours. From then on, he focused almost exclusively on drawing cats. This included portraits as well as detailed cartoons, which often told a whole story on a single sheet of paper. All of Louis Wain's sketches and paintings have one thing in common: humor. Wain shows cats in human roles and everyday situations – doing shopping or housework, or engaged in sports and other leisure activities. Each of his pictures has a special charm. Lovers of his work eagerly awaited Louis' next publications. To his great regret, Emily did not live to see her husband's success, as she passed away in 1887 before he reached the pinnacle of his career.

Wain was an extremely active artist. He illustrated a large number of books, including more than 100 children's books. His work was published in newspapers and magazines. The "Louis Wain Annual" was published from 1901 to 1915. During the same period, Wain created over 1000 picture postcards. A number of publishers in Europe and the USA printed his popular cards. One of the best known is Raphael Tuck & Sons, who



published the very early cards and the later editions. In Germany, the well-known publisher Theo Stroefer of Nuremberg (T.S.N.) distributed the cards. It is thought that more than twenty publishers were involved in the production of Louis Wain's postcards.

Despite his great success, Wain often had financial difficulties. This was partly due to the financial strain of supporting his mother and five sisters. But the fact that Louis was not a bad businessman was really the root of his problems with money. Negotiating was alien to him. Sometimes Louis sold pictures to publishers without securing the rights to the image. In these cases, the publishers made a lot of money, while Wain received only pocket money.



From 1907 to 1910, Wain lived in the USA, where his work was very popular. However, critical remarks he made about New York resulted in a scolding from the press. Afterwards, he returned to London with a badly bruised ego. There he got into financial difficulties again as he became involved in obscure investments.

A short time later, Wain fell ill and developed severe schizophrenia. Louis spent several years in various nursing homes and clinics. At first, he stopped drawing. For the last 15 years of his life, Louis lived in a hospital near London, which was a pleasant environment for him. This was a pleasant environment for him. The hospital had a large garden, which was home to some of his beloved cats. To keep himself occupied, Wain began to

draw again. However, the drawings changed. During this time, his cat motifs were adorned with flowers and sometimes abstract patterns, and the colors shifted to bright and colorful hues. Some authorities believe these changes were due to hallucinations that are common symptoms of schizophrenia. Others believe the artist was simply experimenting with different techniques. Whatever caused this change, Louis Wain's work came to an end in 1939 when he died in a London psychiatric hospital at the age of 79.





DANIEL STADE ON THE ROAD:

15,000 KILOMETERS FOR A SINGLE CONSIGNMENT

EDITED BY ANNE ROSS

Today, I would like to share with you one of my most memorable experiences purchasing a rare postcard collection from a long-time customer. Our auction house holds up to three auctions every year.

We always try to present our customers with an attractive catalog featuring a variety of unusual postcards. Many smaller consignments are sent to us by post or handed over by consignors in person. I also spend many hours driving to pick up consignments. Postcard collections, like our relationships with customers, grow over decades. Preparing consignments for our auctions always sparks interesting conversations. Customers often share stories about their collectors, which is very important for me. These conversations are very important to me. Our customers know that good and appropriate processing is the basis for satisfactory auction results. I have many pleasant memories of helping our customers, but one in particular stands out.

Last year, I was contacted by a long-standing customer who was thinking about selling his collection due to his age. In a telephone conversation, he told me that he would like to sell his postcards to us. However, a personal

meeting and the handover would have to take place on site, as he no longer wanted to make a long journey due to his advanced age.

Customer visits usually pose no obstacle as they are an expected part of our day-to-day business. In this case, however, the situation was different. We were separated not by a few hundred, but by around 15,000 kilometers. The collector lives in Melbourne, Australia. I had met this nice gentleman about 20 years ago. We met by chance at a large stamp and postcard fair in London. This turned into a long-term business relationship. He regularly took part in our auctions where he always found beautiful items for his collection. German history and special topographical postcards – mainly lithographs – were among his favorite subjects. Now these postcards should return to our auction house to delight other collectors.

We made an appointment and I booked a flight to Melbourne. After a trip lasting more than 20 hours, I arrived in the impressive city. With a population of around 4.3 million, it is two and a half times the size of Munich. Despite his advanced age, our consignor picked me up at the airport and drove me to my hotel. The next day



we looked through his collection together. The sight of so many beautifully prepared albums thrilled me. The collector had amassed more than 40,000 postcards in around 40 years.

We quickly came to an agreement. My customer of many years shook my hand and said: “Mr. Stade, you were always polite and attentive. I always found my most beautiful and favorite cards in your auctions. It is my wish that this collection returns to you.” These personal words still touch me today. An auctioneer could not receive a better compliment.

Together, we prepared the albums for transportation to Germany. The next morning, the collection was picked up by a FedEx employee. I said goodbye and set off on my return journey to Germany. Three days later the consignment had arrived safely in Grenzach-Wyhlen. We were able to sell parts of this unusual consignment in subsequent auctions. Our customer, who intended to donate the proceeds from the sale to an Australian aid organization, was very pleased with the results. I will never forget this experience.

If you are thinking of selling your collection, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to talking to you personally.



STADE AUCTION HOUSE:

A MODERN AUCTION HOUSE FOR HISTORICAL PICTURE POSTCARDS

Stade Auction House is a leading provider of antique and vintage picture postcards. The firm enjoys an excellent reputation in Germany and Europe. We organize three auctions per year, each of which offers over 17,000 individual lots. The auction catalogs comprise more than 1,300 pages.

Collectors from all over the world are among the auction house's customers. There is no comparable auction house that is as specialized and extensive in historical postcards as Stade Auctions. It is probably the world's largest and most important auction house for antique and vintage postcards. In addition to postcards, philatelic lots, militaria, ephemera and specialist books are also auctioned.

Daniel Stade is a young representative of the industry, but already has over 20 years of professional experience. He acquired extensive knowledge of picture postcards at the age of 25. More than 15 years ago, Stade was able to take over the renowned auction house Walter Dienger Auctions. Running his own auction house at such a young age made him proud and gave him additional motivation. Another significant event in the auction house's history occurred in 2016 when Stade took over Hartmut Raith's auction house near Giessen, Hessen, Germany. Raith had been extremely successful in auctioning postcards for over 33 years. He had customers all over the world. The closure of the Raith auction house was regretted by many collectors worldwide. Stade and Raith were business partners and knew each other well. The merger was an extraordinary experience for Stade, as the two men became good friends. They still work together in certain areas today.

Last year, Stade Auction House achieved another milestone in its history when it merged with the Berlin-based company, www.ansichtkartensversand.com. This company is one of the world's largest online stores for historical



Nicole und Daniel Stade

postcards. The online store currently offers around 1.7 million postcards. Daniel Stade had been friends with the founders Ondre Reher and Dusan Bartko for a long time. "The combination of auction house and online store complements each other perfectly and brings with it many synergistic effects," says Daniel Stade.

Stade Auctions is based in the small town of Grenzach-Wyhlen in the German state of Baden-Württemberg near the Swiss border. It currently employs around 20 people. The team was recently expanded to include Anne Ross from Diamond Bar, California. Anne Ross represents Stade Auctions at American postcard fairs. In this way, Stade is driving forward the internationalization of the auction house and offering US collectors a local contact person. Daniel Stade emphasizes that she is the ideal partner for him, as she has extensive knowledge of historical postcards.

Daniel Stade is often asked how he came to collect postcards and whether he has a passion for collecting himself. He says that "My enthusiasm for historical postcards began when my father took me to a collectors' fair. I was fascinated by the cards and stamps on display." Today, Stade collects ashtrays with great enthusiasm and now owns over 4,000 of them. His favorite piece is an ashtray from Hohner, a German company that manufactures musical instruments. The ashtray from the 1920s shows a boy with a harmonica on the rim.

Today you are holding the first issue of *StadeNEWS International* in your hands. Since 2021, seven issues

have been published in German as “StadeNEWS”. With this magazine, the auction house is filling a gap, as there are very few magazines left that deal with picture postcards. Our magazine is published two to three times a year and is produced by three freelancers. You can also find all previous issues on our homepage:

<https://www.stade-auktionen.de/de/magazin-stade-news>. Be sure to keep in contact with us as we expand to serve you better. Daniel Stade and his company are sure to have a few more surprises in store for you in the coming years.

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU:



Marie-José
Rosenwald



Fred
Egen



Carsten Sander



Marion Schröter

SELL POSTCARDS, STAMPS OR COVERS SUCCESSFULLY

If you would like to sell all or part of your collection, Stade Auctions will be happy to assist you. We offer you two options:

1. **sell your goods to us and receive immediate payment.**
2. **bring your goods to our auction for consignment.**

Together we will find the best way to sell your collection. We will also be happy to advise you on the best shipping methods.

Please contact us at:

E-mail: info@stade-auktionen.de

Phone: 0049 76 24 98 95 870

(Monday to Friday, 8.30 am to 5 pm CET)

We look forward to helping you!

IMPRINT

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DANIEL STADE ON THE ROAD

PARIS – THE CITY OF LOVE, POSTCARDS AND BOUQUINISTES

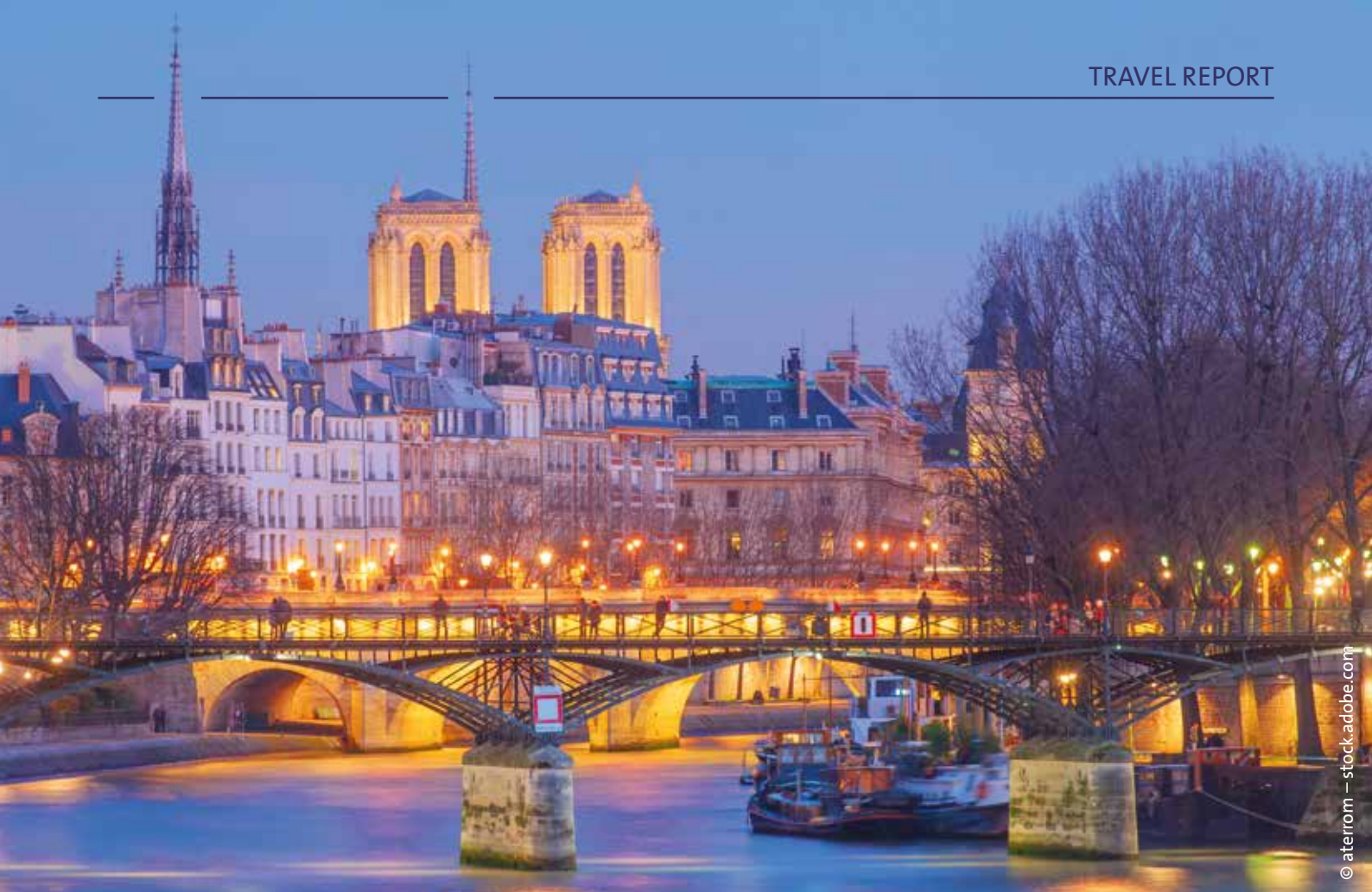
EDITED BY ANNE ROSS

Paris is always worth a visit for collectors of postcards, art, and antiques who enjoy searching for unexpected treasures. On both banks of the Seine, Parisian Bouquinistes (“booksellers”) offer a plethora of paper items for sale - books, old newspapers, magazines, stamps, postcards and more. Paris always reminds me not only of Bouquinistes, but also of a trip to acquire a once-in-a-lifetime postcard collection from a long-time customer.

The history of the Bouquinistes may begin in the mid-16th century when traveling booksellers offered their wares from illegal stalls. In the evenings, they had to hide their crates of goods. Soon it was impossible to imagine Paris without them. After the legalization of trade, they were allowed to offer their goods on the oldest

bridge in Paris, the Pont Neuf. Around 1816, they could buy a license granting permission to keep their boxes permanently on the embankments. Business hours were from sunrise to sunset. Each stall was not allowed to exceed a maximum length of 10 meters. Around 1930, this was reduced to eight meters in order to meet the demand for stalls.

From the beginning of the 1990s, things became more bureaucratic. Under Mayor Jacques Chirac, exact dimensions were set for the stalls. To this day, almost every stall is the same. In 2019, the Bouquinistes stalls were recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Bouquinistes of the early days would never have dreamed of such a thing. The traders normally open their folding stalls on several days of the week. Many Bouquinistes run their business as a sideline, so they may open their



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small shops for only a few hours. In bad weather, the stalls are closed. Unfortunately, the corona crisis did not stop at the Parisian attraction. A petition was launched on an online platform to collect money for antiquarian books for the benefit of booksellers and Bouquinistes affected by the pandemic (see info box).

Picture postcards showing the Bouquinistes would certainly decorate a Paris collection. Have you had any interesting experiences? Do you have postcards about the Bouquinistes? We would be delighted to receive information via redaktion@stadenews.de.

Another highlight for collectors are the many large flea and antique markets in Paris. One of the largest and most famous markets is the Saint-Ouen flea market, the “Marché aux Puces de Saint-Ouen”, which covers an area of several thousand square meters. With over 3,000 stalls, it is one of the largest markets in the world. It is located on the northern outskirts of Paris, in the 18th arrondissement. The market is divided into different segments.



► **Fig. above:** The Parisian Bouquinistes around 1930. **Fig. below:** The Marché aux Puces de Saint-Ouen around 1905 to 1910.



In the “Marché Antica” you will find many small collector’s items, in the “Marché Biron” there are furniture and art objects mainly from the 17th century. The “Marché Cambo” sells furnishings from the 18th and 19th centuries. At three other markets in the Marché Saint-Ouen, you can find old weapons, bronze figurines, second-hand clothing, records and much more. The “Marché Vernaison” takes up the largest space and is the original part of the market. Covering an area of around 9,000 square meters, it sells just about anything that might be of interest. You can find second-hand clothes for just a few cents as well as fine pieces of jewelry costing several thousand euros. In addition to the Bouquinistes and the Saint-Ouen market, there are many other smaller and larger flea and antique markets in Paris, as well as countless shops and stores offering similar collector’s items.

Paris is always worth a trip for me, too. I enjoy finding interesting historical postcards or other paper items for our customers and our auctions. Some time ago, we had a great opportunity, when a customer from Paris called me at my office in Grenzach-Wyhlen. With a heavy heart, he told me that, due to his advanced age, he wanted to sell parts of his collection. These were mainly circus and erotica postcards, as well as other special collecting areas that the elderly gentleman had cultivated over several decades.

The business trip was planned, appointments were made and a suitable hotel was located. I was looking forward to the trip to Paris with one of my colleagues. Once there, we headed by car to a posh Parisian suburb. Our client was waiting for us at the front door. When we entered his house, we could hardly wait to see his collection. We had to be patient. The elderly gentleman had planned our visit carefully. He planned to spoil us with culinary delights first. To welcome us, we were served an aperitif with champagne, salmon and baguette, followed by various small pâtés, exquisitely prepared meat and a variety of cheeses to finish. Some delicious wine accompanied this wonderful reception. After many dishes, drinks and pleasant conversation so soon after our long journey, we began to feel fatigued.

When the customer asked us into his study, we were instantly back on top form. The sight of the collection immediately inspired us. Our customer had been collecting postcards for around forty years. He had amassed an incredible number of beautiful cards and rare curiosities. I have visited many collectors over the years, but this was something extraordinary that I had never seen before. A few hours of viewing went by, garnished with pleasant conversation. We came to a mutually satisfactory agreement and loaded over 100 albums into our vehicle. After a friendly farewell, we drove to our hotel and parked the car in a lockable garage. It would have been unthinkable if this treasure had gone missing overnight.

We went to bed in our hotel rooms tired, full, and satisfied after a thrilling day. The next morning, we visited the “Passage de Panoramas” in the 2nd arrondissement of Paris. The covered passageway, which was built around the year 1800, is well known among stamp and



postcard enthusiasts. There are several stores there that offer smaller and larger treasures. We also found some small collections and beautiful items. This trip to Paris was special for me. I am delighted to be able to share our acquisitions with you not only in this article, but also in our auctions as well.

INFORMATION BOX

Bouquinistes

- ▶ You will find the dealers on the banks of the Seine, particularly on the Rive Droite, between the Pont Marie and the Quai du Louvre, on the Rive Gauche and between the Quai de la Tournelle and the Quai Voltaire.
- ▶ <https://bouquinistesdeparis.com>

Flea/antique markets:

- ▶ <https://parisjetaime.com/eng/parisian-life/shopping/flea-markets-and-antique-dealers-paris-i069>

Passage des Panoramas:

- ▶ Between 10, rue Saint-Marc and 11, boulevard Montmartre - 75002 Paris
- ▶ Opening hours: 6 am to midnight (status 01/24)



Fig. above: The “Bal des Débutantes” (Le Bal) and the Cinéma du Moulin Rouge, 1933 **Fig. middle:** The stock exchange (La Bourse), around 1910 **Fig. below:** The Dôme des Invalides, around 1910

ARTHUR THIELE

HUMOROUS POSTCARDS BY A LEIPZIG ARTIST

BY HERBERT FISCHER, EDITED BY ANNE ROSS

In the heyday of picture postcards, there were many talented and successful painters. Many of them remained largely unknown, apart from their name and birthplace. The situation is different with the artist we will take a closer look at in this issue of *StadeNEWS International*.

Arthur Thiele, whose full name was Carl Robert Arthur Thiele, was born in Leipzig, Germany, on November 2, 1860. He died in his hometown at the age of 75 on June 18, 1936. In 1998, the Munich collector Adolf Kugler compiled a great deal of information about the artist in his 372-page book "Carl Robert Arthur Thiele: Leben und Werk, Druckanstalten und Verlage (Life and Work, Printers and Publishers)". Kugler's work may be the most comprehensive book on a picture postcard artist to date. Arthur Thiele is very well known, even to collectors who are only marginally interested in picture postcards.

Thanks to Kugler's research, we know that the majority of Thiele's work was probably created in Schenken-dorfstraße in Leipzig's southern suburbs. He lived and worked there from 1901 to 1929. Thiele's marriage certificate from 1886 states his profession as "painter's assistant." Based on a conversation Adolf Kugler had with a distant relative around twenty-five years ago, we know that Arthur Thiele had no other professional training. His income was derived entirely from painting, which allowed him to run a well-off household. Thiele usually went shopping with his wife in a hansom cab. His studio was in his apartment, so he rarely left home and had little contact with other people.

Arthur Thiele is described as a quiet and reserved person. His wife Lena Louise and he had two sons, both of whom studied at the Academy of Art in Leipzig. His son Walter became an arts and crafts teacher and his son Fritz an academically trained painter. Fritz noted in a family chro-





nicle that his father was content to work as an artist for the rest of his life. This suggests that Arthur's sons did not regard their father's work as serious art. From their point of view, he created only simple picture postcards. From today's perspective, this is a misjudgement. Thiele is better known today than many of the postcard artists of his day.

Arthur Thiele worked with several different postcard publishers. Most of his cards were probably produced in collaboration with the well-known publisher T.S.N. (Kunstanstalt Theo Stroefler, Nuremberg). Other cards by Thiele were published by Friedrich Eyfried, Düsseldorf ("F.E.D."), Gebrüder Dietrich, Leipzig (Dietrich Brothers, "G.D.L."), Lederer & Popper, Leipzig ("L&P") and Ottmar Zieher, Munich ("O.Z.M.").

Thiele became particularly well-known for his postcards depicting humanized animals. First and foremost are the numerous postcards with cats and dogs. Thiele particularly liked to depict dachshunds. This earned him the nickname "Dachshund Thiele" or sometimes "Cat Thiele" among collectors and dealers. Thiele understood like no other how to humanize cats, dogs and other animals while confronting them with the realities of everyday life. For example, cats and dogs visit relatives to celebrate with them. Sometimes their get-togethers end up in fights. Kittens and puppies are shown at school or playing together. Thiele's numerous Easter postcards show rabbits and chickens painting eggs and delivering them to families by cart, car, or even airplane. All the cards have one thing in common: they are generally very humorous. Usually, Arthur Thiele's postcards were designed with great attention to detail.

In addition to the animal world, other subjects also played a role in Thiele's work. For example, many cards deal with the First World War. Although war is associated with much sadness and pain, Thiele was usually successful in his attempts to make these cards humorous. ▶

Soldiers catching a hare in the trenches or kidnapping a cow from the pasture are just as much a part of these cards as a cat being hunted by hungry people in times of “meat shortage”. He was also interested in the trade fair in Leipzig, Thiele’s home town. He drew humorous picture postcards depicting city life at the time of the fair. For example, he focused on the difficulty of finding accommodation during the fair. Thiele dealt with the “modern technology” of the time in a similarly humorous way. He drew cyclists, motorists, zeppelins and balloonists – to name just a few examples – in his own unique way. The misadventures that these innovations brought with them were always highlighted in his paintings. As a result, Arthur Thiele’s postcards became coveted works of art.

There is a large selection of Thiele’s postcards on the market, both for beginners and advanced collectors. Due to the large number of cards, it is probably impossible to collect Arthur Thiele’s entire output, so it is advisable to limit yourself to a specific area. Cards dealing with the First World War are inexpensive to acquire. These postcards are available from a price range of around five euros (\$5.40). The situation is different for animal motifs. Cards with large editions can be found in the price range of around ten euros (\$10.80). Very rare pieces, only offered once in decades, have repeatedly achieved sales prices of well over 1000 euros (\$1,080) in recent years. Care must be taken with unsigned cards. There are cards which, partly due to Adolf Kugler’s extensive research, can be attributed to Thiele without a doubt. These certainly should be included in a collection. In many cases, however, cards are incorrectly attributed to Arthur Thiele in order to achieve a higher sale price. Beginners in particular should be careful. Ask experienced collectors or dealers for advice if necessary.

Arthur Thiele’s cards can be recommended without reservation. These postcards are a lot of fun to collect. They can also serve as a suitable investment. In our auctions, you will regularly find a wide range of Arthur Thiele postcards to expand your collection or to open up a new collecting area.



HALLOWEEN

A CUSTOM WITH A LONG TRADITION, A SPECTACLE FOR CHILDREN AND A SPECIAL COLLECTING AREA

BY HERBERT FISCHER, EDITED BY ANNE ROSS

In the United States, trick or treating is a dying custom. Yet Halloween postcards remain to provide a record of the traditional games and superstitions associated with October 31st. Every year in October, pumpkins and candy pile up in supermarket displays. Special pop-up stores sell a wide variety of gruesome masks and costumes.

Halloween is celebrated by both adults and children in a number of different ways. Adults have costume parties with much drinking, spooky music and dancing. Parents take their children on “haunted hayrides” or to “haunted houses” where actors dressed like zombies and vampires enact scary scenes. Some elementary schools and communities have Halloween parties at which costumed children receive candy and play games. However, public celebrations of Halloween such as trick or treating have declined in recent years. As a result, adults view their childhood Halloween revels with a great deal of nostalgia. These emotional recollections of bygone days fuel the popularity and prices of Halloween postcards among American collectors.

Traditionally, on the evening of October 31, beginning at about 7:00 p.m., children walk from house to house in groups, dressed up in scary costumes. The youngest children are accompanied by older siblings. As soon as the front door opens, the children yell “Trick or treat!” Those who generously hand out sweets rather than healthy treats usually escape being made the victims of pranks. Once children are 13, they lose interest in trick or treating. Some of them take to the streets at night on Halloween to “decorate” trees with toilet paper or bash in mailboxes. In the early 1990s, trick or treating began to decline out of concern for childrens’ safety. As a result, in many areas, Halloween celebrations began to shift from public celebrations in the streets to private parties celebrated indoors. But in some suburban towns where there are more children, Halloween is still celebrated the old-fashioned way.



A girl dressed as a witch, the witch’s hat, the broom and the black cat are of course a must, a card with particularly beautiful and strong embossing, around 1915.

The tradition of celebrating Halloween originally comes from Ireland. There are different theories about the origin of the custom. Theories of a Celtic origin persist, carried forward into Christian times. It is assumed that the name derives from “All Hallows Eve” – the evening ►

before All Saints' Day, from which the word "Halloween" developed. In any case, Halloween is always associated with life and death.

Irish emigrants brought this custom to the United States in the 19th century and preserved the tradition there. The festival soon became one of the most important folk festivals in the USA and Canada. In America, the illuminated pumpkin is the most common symbol of Halloween. According to Irish legend, the villain Jack Oldfield set a trap for the devil and caught him. Jack only let the devil go when he promised not to interfere with his illicit activities. When Jack died, he was not allowed into heaven and the devil wanted nothing to do with him in hell. So Jack was condemned to walk the earth forever in ghostly form. However, the devil took pity on Jack and gave him a turnip and glowing coals so that he could walk through the darkness. In Ireland, carved turnips with glowing coals for eyes became the first "Jack o'lanterns." They were thought to scare away evil spirits. Pumpkins were more plentiful than turnips in the USA, so they were carved instead. Eventually candles replaced the coals, but the name "Jack o'lantern" remained. Halloween became so popular that it was only a matter of time before the custom was depicted on postcards. Cards featuring witches, ghosts, the devil, black cats, owls and other spooky creatures were sent to friends and acquaintances, just like on other holidays and festivals.

Halloween postcards are so popular that a catalog was published in 2009 by American authors Gary and Louise Carpentier. This spiral-bound book is now in its 3rd edition. It contains over 3,500 color illustrations of Halloween postcards in 300 pages. They are sorted by publisher and rated.

This catalog is hard to find in the USA. The price is likely to be around \$100 plus the shipping cost. However, the purchase is worthwhile if you want to systematically build up your Halloween collection. You can find out which cards belong to a particular series, which publisher printed the cards and how they are valued in the trade. As

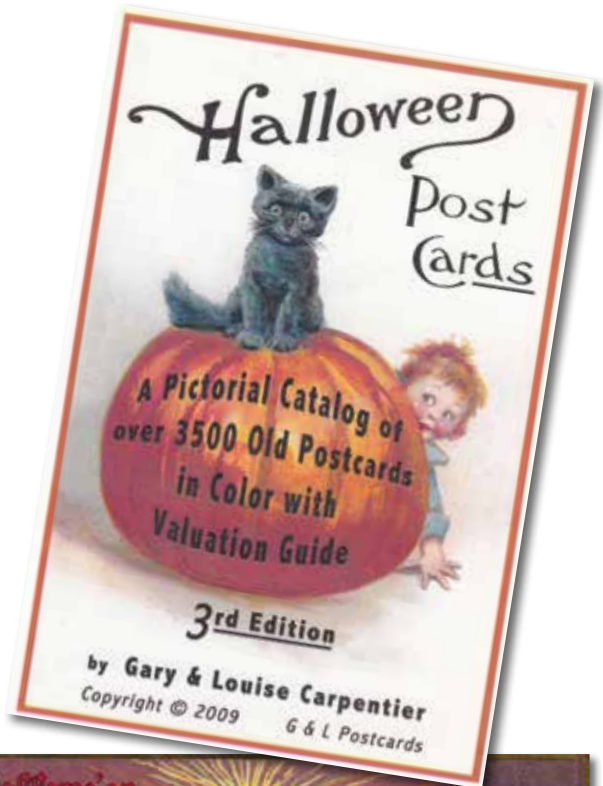


Fig. above: Catalog **Fig. below:** Pumpkin men cutting a cake with a knife and fork, an embossed card from the well-known publisher Raphael Tuck & Sons, Halloween series no. 150, around 1910

there is only comprehensive literature for a few areas of postcard collecting, Halloween enthusiasts have a clear advantage with this catalog. Incidentally, many Halloween series are "printed in Germany". A certain amount of know-how was required to produce these mostly colorful and sophisticated postcards. German printers were able to produce them in the highest quality and so they were produced in Germany.



Five witches stand by the fire, a pumpkin man plays music, a broomstick is used of course, the black cat must not be missing, this card was made in Germany and produced for the American market, around 1905/10.

Building up a collection or an exhibit of Halloween postcards provides a special challenge. For example, very few cards from the period around 1900 found their way to Europe in the mail. Accordingly, dealer offers in Europe are rare. Every now and then, however, a card can be found. Yet there is still the option of ordering online. Numerous retailers now offer a selection of Halloween postcards in their online stores and on the well-known sales platforms. However, the “Halloween” theme is so popular that almost exclusively individual cards are traded. To complete a full set of Halloween cards can take 10 or 20 years on a limited budget. For smaller lots or collections, a trip to postcard shows in the United States can be worthwhile. But be forewarned that some dealers sell reproductions of Schmuckers’ original cards, many of which were originally embossed. The reproductions lack the original embossed surface.

Halloween cards are among the most expensive on the collectors’ market. Simpler cards or those with large print runs can be obtained for around \$20 or a little cheaper if you are lucky. Rare cards, especially those published by John Winsch, often cost several hundred US dollars each. These include cards by the artist Samuel Schmucker, who is very well known in the USA. He was partially paralyzed due to polio, but established him-

self successfully as a picture postcard artist. Schmucker worked for the Detroit Publishing Company and John Winsch. He signed his cards with the abbreviation “SLS”. He died of a heart attack at the age of 42.

Outside of the United States, Halloween is not a common area of postcard collecting. So if you want to get into it and have the necessary patience, you will certainly enjoy it. In any case, a collection of the finest Halloween postcards will attract the attention of other viewers. In the United States, Halloween cards may be a good investment for collectors.



Fig. above: Girl in a ghostly cloak with a skull, marveled at by pumpkin faces, a card from the publisher John Winsch, a sought-after card, retail price approx. 200 - 250 US dollars.

Fig. below: A black cat sits on a glowing pumpkin, behind her a witch with a hat and broom, a bat flies in the sky. One of the typical colorful embossed cards, around 1910.

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