

Celebrity portraits on Karsh sheet identified

CHARLES J.G. VERGE

On May 21, Canada Post issued three stamps and a souvenir sheet to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Yousuf Karsh (1908-2002), one of the world's greatest photographers. The 52¢ domestic-rate stamp shows a self-portrait of Karsh as a young man. The 96¢ stamp, which meets the postal rate for mail to the United States, features Audrey Hepburn. The \$1.60 stamp, intended for international mail, depicts Sir Winston Churchill.

Karsh closed his Ottawa studio in 1992 and moved to Boston, Massachusetts, where he died July 13, 2002.

As a bonus to thematic and topical collectors, the new souvenir sheet features 25 other Karsh photographs in miniature. The same 25 photos are shown in the gutter of the pane of 16 52¢ stamps.

Six Nobel Prize winners are shown: Albert Einstein, physics, 1921; Ernest Hemingway, literature, 1954; Albert Camus, literature, 1957; Lester B. Pearson, peace, 1957; Mother Theresa, peace, 1979; and Elie Wiesel, peace, 1986.

For collectors of Americana, a total of nine or 13 portraits are included in the sheet, depending on whether Albert Einstein, Princess Grace of Monaco,

I.M. Pei and Elie Wiesel are included or excluded.

Six of the people shown on the souvenir sheet are alive: Muhammad Ali, Sophia Loren, Jessye Norman, I.M. Pei, Queen Elizabeth II and Elie Weisel.

The personalities whose portraits are included on the souvenir sheet are as follows, with the year the photograph was taken by Karsh identified in brackets:

The first row shows: Albert Camus (1913-60), French-Algerian writer, philosopher and journalist and second-youngest person to win the Nobel Prize in literature, after Rudyard Kipling [1957]; Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), world-renowned Spanish painter, sculptor and draftsman, founder of Cubism [1954]; John Burke "Dizzy" Gillespie (1917-1993), American jazz trumpeter, singer and band leader [1990]; Angelo Guiseppe Roncalli (1881-1963), Italian church leader known as Pope John XXIII, 261st pontiff of the Roman Catholic church and bishop of Rome from 1958 to 1963 [1963]; Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968), assassinated American Baptist minister and one of the most important persons in the American Civil Rights movement [1962]; Eliezer "Elie" Wiesel (born 1928), Romanian-

born American writer, political activist and Holocaust survivor [1991]; John F. Kennedy (1917-1963), war hero and assassinated 35th president of the United States, 1961-63 [1960]; John George Diefenbaker (1895-1979), Canadian Conservative politician and 13th prime minister of Canada, 1958-63 (1974); Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev (1894-1971), first secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 1953-64, and premier of the Soviet Union, 1958-1964 [1963]; Walter Elias "Walt" Disney (1901-1966), American film producer, director, screenwriter, animator and philanthropist [1956]; Rainer III (1923-2005), prince of Monaco, 1949-2005, and Princess Grace of Monaco (née Grace Patricia Kelly, 1929-1982), American-born Academy Award-winning stage and film actress [1956]; and Yuri Alexis Gagarin (1934-1968), Russian cosmonaut, first person in space and first person to orbit the earth [1963].

The second row includes: Muhammad Ali (born Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr., 1942), American Olympic gold medal-winning boxer and three-time world heavyweight boxing champion [1970]; Princess Elizabeth, now Queen Elizabeth II (born 1926), queen of Canada



Twenty-five portraits of celebrities are shown in the selvage of this souvenir sheet issued by Canada Post May 21 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of world-famous photographer Yousuf Karsh.

and head of the British Commonwealth (1952-) [1943]; I.M. Pei (born 1917), Chinese-born American architect who designed Montreal's cruciform Place Ville-Marie complex (Scott 687) [1979];

Lester Bowles Pearson (1897-1972), diplomat, Canadian Liberal politician and 14th prime minister of Canada, 1963-68 [1965]; Albert Einstein (1879-1955), German-born physicist and formulator of the theory of relativity [1949]; Indira Priyadarshini Gandhi (1917-1984), India's only female prime minister, 1966-77 and 1980 until 1984, when she was assassinated, and daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, also a prime minister of India [1956]; and Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961), American novelist, short-story writer and journalist [1957].

In the third row: Humphrey DeForest Bogart (1899-1957), Academy Award-winning American actor and film star [1946], and Jessye Mae Norman (born 1945), black American opera singer and four-time Grammy award winner [1990]. The three other portraits from top to bottom are Dwight David Eisenhower (born David Dwight, 1890-1969), five-star general of the U.S. Army and 34th president of the United States, 1953-61 [1946]; Blessed Theresa of Calcutta, also known as Mother Theresa (née Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, 1910-97); Albanian Roman Catholic nun, humanitarian and founder of the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, India [1988]; and Sophia Loren (née Sofia Villani Scicolone, 1934), Italian Academy Award-winning film actress [1981].

In the O Canada column in the August 2004 issue of *Scott Stamp Monthly*, I wrote about Karsh and the many photographs he had taken that appear on stamps from Canada and other countries from 1951 on. The National Archives of Canada acquired transparencies of his 1932-87 photographs.

Information about Canada new issues can be obtained from Canada Post National Philatelic Centre, 75 St. Ninian St., Antigonish, NS, Canada B2G 2R8, or online at the web site www.canadapost.ca/collecting. ■

July 2008

The Leaf Issue Plate Proofs Special Offer #S220

There were many items of interest to collectors of Canada at the auction of the American Bank Note Company Archives that was held in New York in 1990. Among them a fabulous offering of plate proofs of the 1897 Leaf Issue (SG#142-149), and bidding was fierce to say the least. Despite the auctioneer's estimate of \$35,000 to \$50,000 US, it was eventually hammered down for \$88,000!

How many sets exist? The key value is the eight cent orange. Only 172 examples were in the lot. Bear in mind that as much as 20% of some values were faulty from careless handling over the best part of a century, so the number of available sets is even more limited.

This set appears to be underpriced when compared to other Canadian proof sets, and I feel that it has plenty of room for future price increases.

Recently I purchased the last remaining holding of this set. I can now offer superb sets at reasonable prices – just \$1,695.00 for the complete set of eight. Pay in five instalments of \$339.00 each if required. Pairs and blocks of four are also available pro-rata. Order today!



Gary J. Lyon (Philatelist) Ltd.

P.O. Box 450 - Bathurst - New Brunswick - E2A 3Z4 - Canada

Toll Free Tel: 1(800) 667-8267 - Fax: 1(888) 867-8267

Email: glstamps@nbnnet.nb.ca

Extensive price list of Canada and Provinces are free for the asking from Canada's leading stamp dealer.