

**APRIL VISIT TO LOREN MOORE'S MATCHCOVER COLLECTION EXHIBITION
AT THE BLUE LINE ARTS GALLERY IN ROSEVILLE, CALIFORNIA**

By Phil Gordon

After a year of being marooned in southwestern Washington State due to COVID restrictions and risks for travel, and with two dosages of Pfizer vaccine in my shoulder, I decided to hit the road in the middle of April for the first time in over a year. With a high pressure weather system over the Pacific Northwest I could travel south along scenic Oregon US Highway 101 to Northern California without the chance of encountering coastal rain and visit the Avenue of the Giants, Lake Tahoe and some other sights and see Loren Moore's collection of matchcovers and matchbooks on display at the Blue Line Arts gallery in Roseville, California.

I have enjoyed attending the AMCAL conventions of recent years where fellow collectors have assembled and presented matchcover displays. It is interesting to me how and why other collectors put together intriguing displays around a certain theme or interest. But our convention displays will not translate whatsoever into a curated gallery or museum exhibition. That's where Loren's ambitious work comes in: to take interesting, attractive and arguably historic matchcovers and display them in an engaging way that is compatible with accepted standards of public exhibition.

I and others saw some of Loren's earlier work along these lines, most recently at the 2016 AMCAL convention in Roseville, where he presented a limited number of framed displays of matchcovers and "trays" of matchbooks. In the last couple of years Loren has taken these prototypes and commissioned even more frames and trays for eventual public display.

What the public and I saw at the Blue Line Arts gallery in late April were over two hundred beautiful floating frames for displaying groups of flat matchcovers and dozens of "trays" for displaying full matchbooks. The floating frames were hung on walls to be viewed straight-on and the trays were placed on pedestals to be viewed from above while leaning over. Each pewter finished floating metal frame included two pieces of clear glass that sandwiched an inner piece of clear thin plastic that had "windows" cut into it to retain the matchcovers themselves so as to prevent the matchcovers from slipping down between the two pieces of glass by gravity or movement. All of the matchcovers within a frame stayed aligned in a proper array. I can tell you that all these beautiful floating frames made for a stunning gallery display as the matchcovers appear to be floating in thin air in front of the art gallery walls.

I was there on opening day but most of the other visitors, who were overwhelmingly drawn to the conventional artwork also on display in other rooms of the gallery, seemed to be quite intrigued with the concept of old matchcovers and matchbooks as a type of art medium, and the other guests that evening spent plenty of time browsing Loren's displays. Although I can not confirm this belief with absolutely authority, some people in the know feel that Loren's collection may have been the first serious major curated collection of matchcovers at an American art gallery or museum type venue. I think that this

was a unique opportunity for the public to view matchcovers and matchbooks as art and history and indirectly I think of the exhibition as a source of pride for matchcover collectors like ourselves to see our collecting interest and hobby presented in an elevated and sophisticated manner to the public.

If we collectors, with our thousands upon thousands of interesting, beautiful and historically fascinating matchcovers, quietly keep our collections squirreled away in albums on our home bookshelves, we do nothing to promote the hobby or invite new people to join us. Loren's move to a public exposition is valuable in this regard.

Of course, it should also be mentioned that the ubiquitous internet is also a fine opportunity to offer images of matchcovers to be made viewable by anyone in the world. See thousands of matchcover images on Loren's Matchcovercollector website and particularly view the images of the Blue Line Arts gallery displays here:

<https://www.matchcovercollector.com/matchcover-category/blue-line/>

My largest collection of matchcovers is from businesses along US Highway 66 and I have nearly 200 matchcover images displayed on my website here:

<http://rt66.x10host.com/matchcovers/matchcovers.html>

MATCHCOVER SHOW AT THE BLUE LINE ART GALLERY

A Note from Jim Rauzy

Loren,

I just wanted to say thanks for giving me a personal tour of your show. Knowing you, I knew it was going to be good but it was much better than good, it was outstanding. I was in awe!

There were several things I was impressed with and I would like to give you credit for a few of them. Your idea of placing that undetectable clear plastic sheet with cut outs in every picture frame solved the biggest problem in displaying match books, that of slippage. Because of the labor involved I am sure this was not cheap to do however, this insures that they will always be presented in a highly professional manner with nothing out of place.

The next thing I was impressed with was the quality of the books that you chose to display. With the vastness of your entire collection I am sure you spent many hours going thru each category and picking only the best of the best in both quality and art work. Even the books from the 1800's looked like they were brand new.

The last thing I would like to give you accolades for is the sheer size of your show. You covered every area of the hobby and did it in spades.

Loren, you can take pride in saving a small piece of American History and doing it in museum quality.

Thanks Again
Jim Rauzy