

MARIANNE – THE FACE OF FRANCE

The Marianne definitive issues of France are among the most recognisable philatelic icons. Marianne has been a symbol of Liberty and associated with the Republic since the early days of the French Revolution. It was not however until France's recovery from Nazi Occupation that Marianne began to feature on French definitive stamps, since when she has been a continuous presence for over eighty years. Since the 1970's various philatelic incarnations have served to represent successive Presidential programmes.

This exhibit seeks to set out the development of the Marianne issues of France.

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References: Yvert & Teiller *Timbres de France 2024*
Stanley Gbbons *Part 6 France and Colonies*
France & Colonies Philatelic Society Journal
Cercle des Amis de Marianne



EARLY ESSAYS

In 1942 Charles De Gaulle, Head of the French Government in Exile, commissioned a set of stamps featuring Marianne for the eventual liberation of France. They were based on engravings by Edmund Dulac, who had designed the George VI GB definitives. The head was modelled on that of his friend Emile Rixen's wife, Lea. The first essays were engraved by Leonard Phillips of Harrison & Sons in London and printed using the UPU colours and British inks. Three types were prepared, 25c Green (*printed matter rate*); 1f red (*postcard rate*); and 2.5f blue (*letter rate*).



However, the first design was rejected by de Gaulle, and another set prepared.



In the event neither design was used, allegedly because De Gaulle wanted the Cross of Lorraine included although both were printed and prepared for issue. They were eventually released to the philatelic market after the war



Lea Rixen

ALGIERS MARIANNE

Issued 1944

Printed Charles Hervé, Algiers

designer: Louis Fernez

engraver: Jamignon

Marianne eventually made her first appearance in a rather rudimentary fashion on the definitive stamps of Algeria in 1944, then technically Free France, as the end of the war approached. Commissioned by the French National Liberation Committee, based in Algiers, they were printed by lithography. The model for the stamp is said to be Louis Fernez wife Christiane.



Letter postmarked 25 October 1944 from the French Naval base at Oran, west of Algiers, a key centre for Allied operations in the Western Mediterranean. The destination town of Beauvais had been liberated by the Allies on 30th August 1944.

LIBERATION OF FRANCE

The Algiers Marianne was first released as a French stamp in Corsica in October 1943 following the end of Italian Occupation. After the Normandy Landings it went on sale in Paris from November 1944. The card below is postmarked 24 March 1945, the day the Allies crossed the Rhine and the Nazi forces were finally driven from all French territory.



LIBERTÉ - ÉGALITÉ - FRATERNITÉ



D'après la médaille

de Daniel Dupuis



DULAC MARIANNE

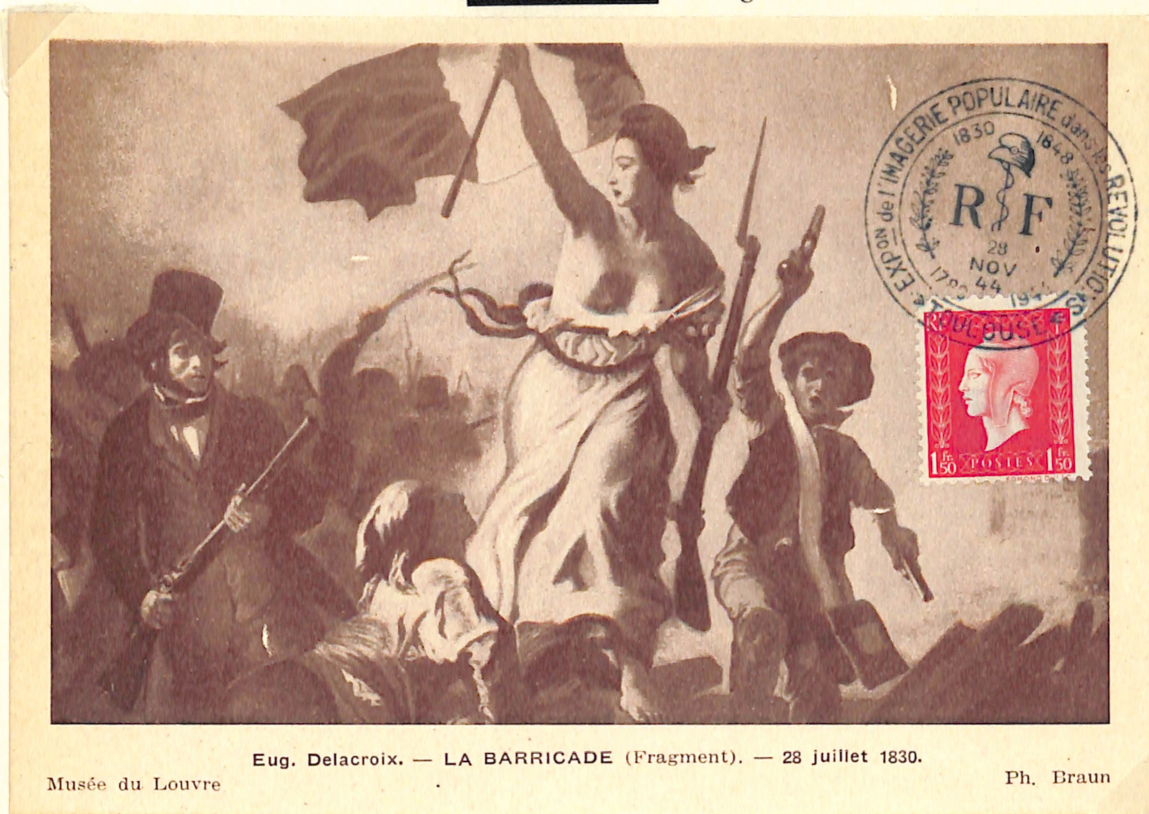
Issued September 1944

designer: Edmund Dulac
engraver: Leonard Phillips

On 25th August 1944, on the day that German occupation of Paris ended, De Gaulle, now President of the Provisional Government of the Fourth Republic, moved quickly to issue the Dulac stamps, with the 1.5f standard letter rate denomination available from 16th September 1944. They were the first definitive stamps to be issued by the Fourth Republic. However, as they were printed in London by De La Rue, they became known as "*Marianne de Londres*". They continued to be issued until the Paris printworks was re-established in 1945.



The 1.5f was issued on 16th September 1944, the first stamp in the series as it was deemed the most-needed denomination required for the standard letter rate. A further 19 values were released throughout 1945



Card dated 28th November 1944, the date when the new stamps became available in Paris



Some of the further nineteen values released throughout 1945

MARIANNE DE GANDON

Issued 1945-1951

designer: Pierre Gandon
engraver: Gandon/Cortot

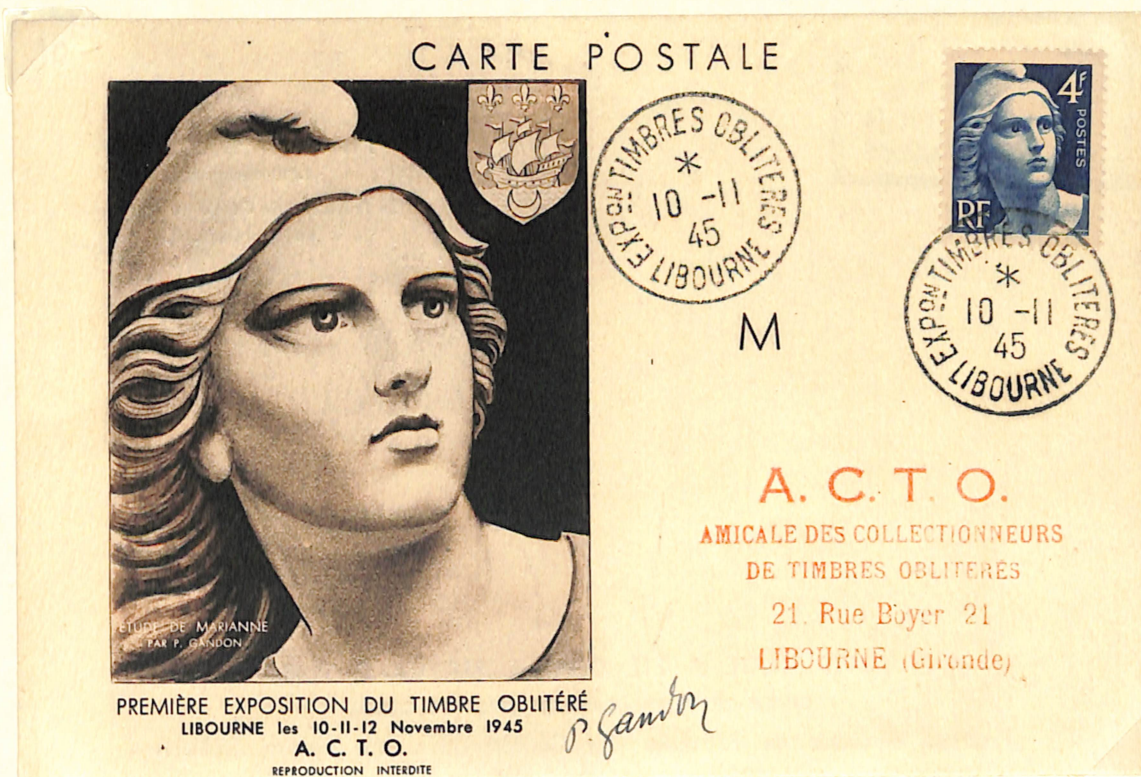
In late 1944, after Paris had been liberated from the Nazis, De Gaulle was anxious to establish a truly French design and printing of the Marianne definitive. He wanted a stamp that would reflect the country's fierce patriotism and pride. He therefore moved quickly in 1944 to approve a design by Pierre Gandon to be printed in Paris. The result was what has become recognised as one of the most iconic stamp designs - also known as *Marianne des Barricades*, a combative depiction modelled on Gandon's wife Jacqueline.



Jacqueline Gandon



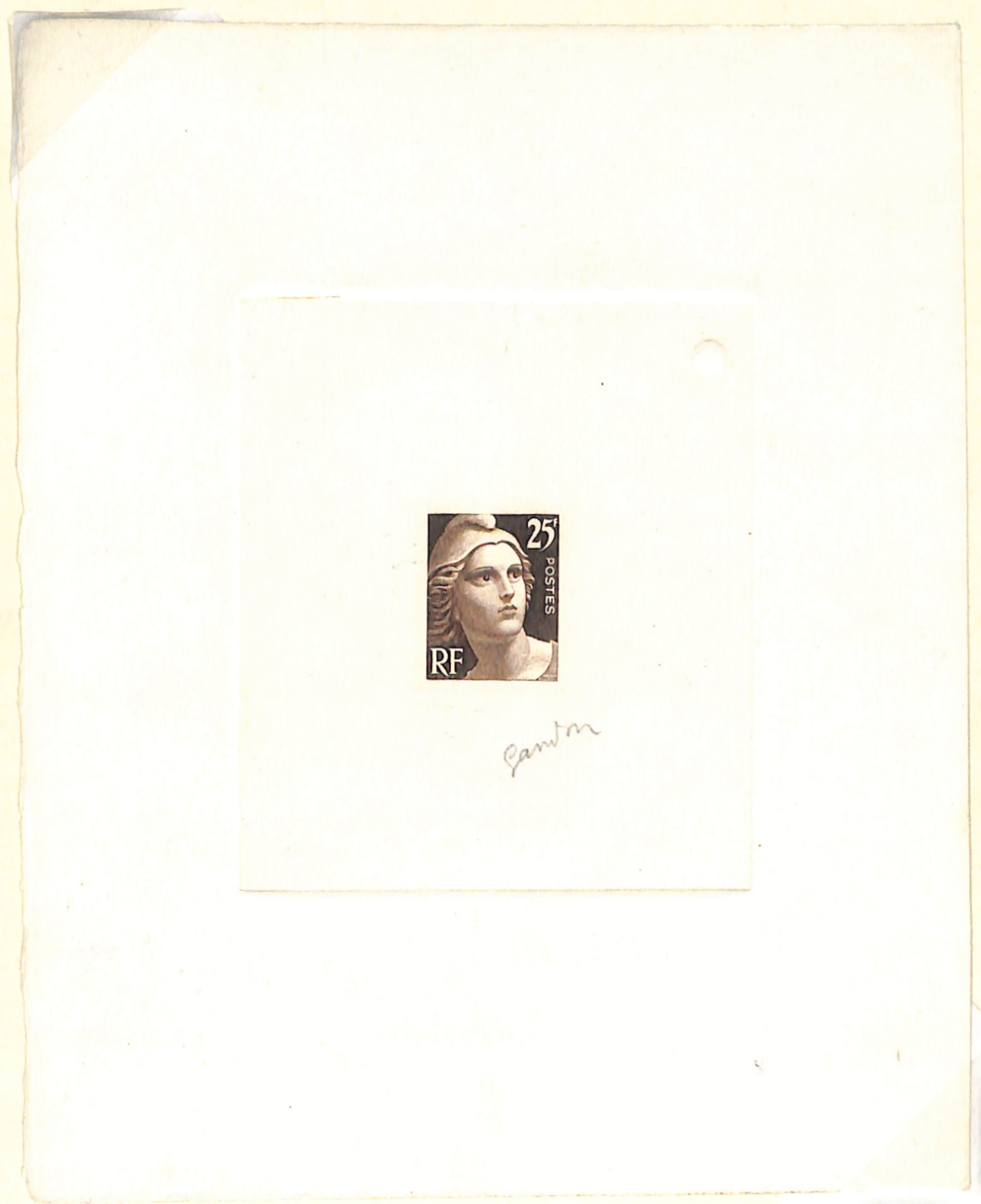
The first two stamps were issued on 15th February 1945, 4f blue engraved by Gandon and 1.50f pink engraved by Henri Cortot produced by the much cheaper typography to meet the high demand for the letter rate.



4f stamp on commemorative card signed by Gandon for First Exposition of the Used Stamps Collectors Association, Limoun, November 1945

GANDON DIE PROOF

A further four values were issued in March and May 1946. A recess die proof signed by the artist for the 25 franc value issued on 15th March 1946 is shown below.



Two of these stamps featured on the commemorative strip celebrating the centenary of the French postage stamp in June 1949, albeit in different colours

Recess die Proof signed by the artist Pierre Gandon

GANDON HIGH VALUES

Issued 1945

*designer: Pierre Gandon
engraver: Pierre Gandon*

A series of High Value stamps was issued in March and May 1945 using the Gandon engraving. There was a particular need for a 50 franc value to meet the needs of US Servicemen for airmails to the United States.



Airmail to USA postmarked Neuilly sur Seine 16th October 1945

SURCHARGES AND OVERPRINTS

The Gandon Mariannes extended to about fifty issues between 1945 and 1951, marking numerous changes in postal rates, and also being variously surcharged or overprinted for some Francophone territories overseas.



*Dated corner block of first printing
Note oval flaw to right of chin*

An interesting twist in this story was an increase in the basic postal rate from 3f to 5f decreed on 26 December 1946 intended to take effect from 1 January 1947. Public outrage at this swingeing increase resulted in a last minute review and a 4.50f stamp was quickly produced to take effect from 23rd January. The full 5f rate applied briefly on 1st and 2nd January, thereafter the 5f stamps were sold at 10% discount until the new value was available.



*Examples of the range of
of 12 pre-cancelled values that were
available for bulk mailing services
between 1949 and 1951.*

*Uniquely, the 2.50f chocolate brown
value was only issued pre-cancelled*



*In January 1954 it was announced that
the 18f value that had been withdrawn
on 25 July 1953 would be re-issued
as overprinted 15f (international
surface mail rate) in order to use up
excess stock rather than incinerate it*



*Examples of the range of Marianne definitives overprinted for the African Financial Community, fourteen
former French and Portuguese colonies in West Central Africa and the Indian Ocean, and Algeria*

MULLER MARIANNE

Issued 1955- 1959

designer: Louis Muller
engraver: Jules Piel

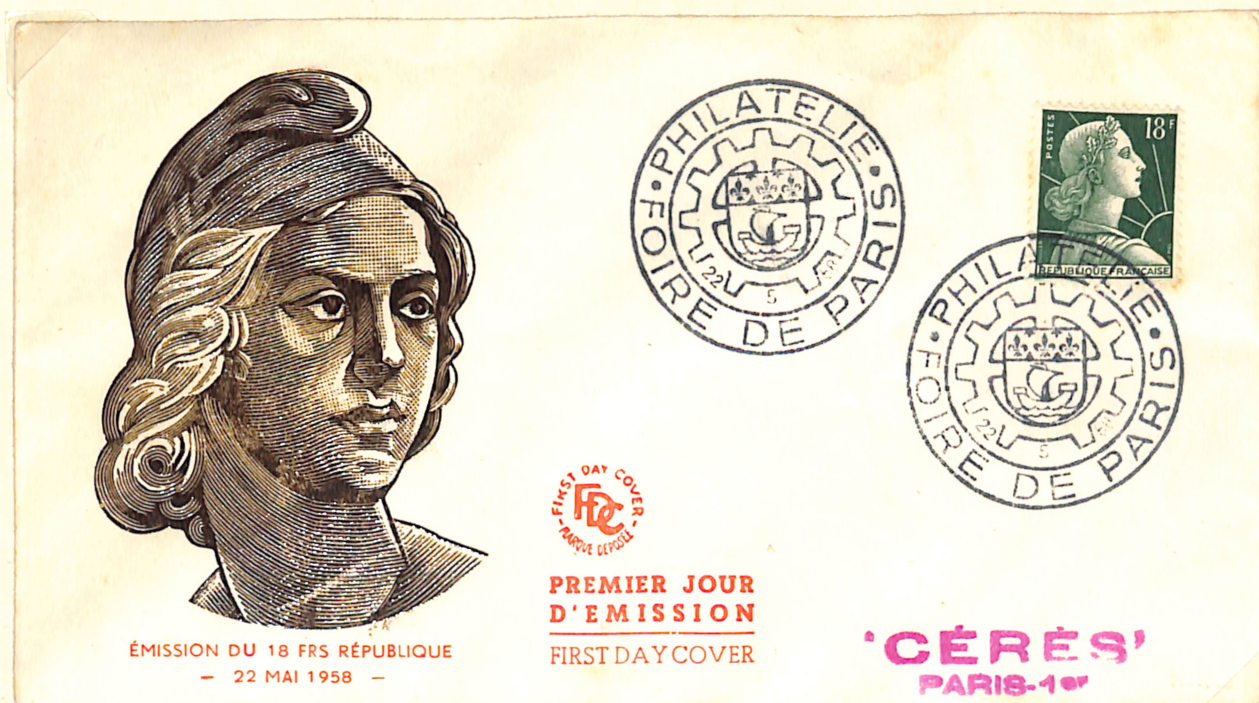
In the 1950's it was felt that a less assertive and more aspirational image was required for the nation. The "Republic of Hope" design by Louis Muller showed Marianne looking to a new dawn, with the rising sun perhaps a nod to the *Ancien Regime* and an echo of the old Royalist image of the Sun King. As a further reflection of the prevailing conservative political mood the Phrygian cap, symbol of revolution, was discarded in favour of the wreath, token of fertility.



Stamps were issued throughout 1955, except the 18f and 25f values issued in 1958 and 1959 respectively



This series of colour trials for the 20f value preceded its issue in June 1955



SHIP OF STATE

Issued 27th July 1959

designer: Andre Regnanon
engraver: Jules Piel

With the impending dawn of a new decade, and political unrest at home and among overseas colonies, a new image of Marianne confidently guiding the ship of state, *Marianne a la nef* was released on 27 July 1959. It was the first Definitive issue of the Fifth Republic which had been declared in October 1958 in response to the political crisis which had spawned the independence of most of the former French colonies. A multicoloured red, white and blue edition reflecting the colours of the national flag was released on 1 January 1960 on the introduction of the new French franc, equivalent to 100 old francs. It was however superseded within six months.



New currency issue



An overprinted issue was released on 11th December 1959 for disaster relief, following the collapse of the Malpassat dam on the French Riviera when 423 people died in the town of Frejus. It was withdrawn on 24th December.

DECARIS MARIANNE

Issued 1960-1961

designer: Albert Decaris
engraver: Jules Piel

Produced by the million in typography, and restricted to just one value, this rather unprepossessing representation of the French philatelic icon nevertheless has a significant philatelic following due to at least two defined types, and a range of shade variations. Despite its ubiquity, it is one of the shortest lived editions, being withdrawn after only nine months.



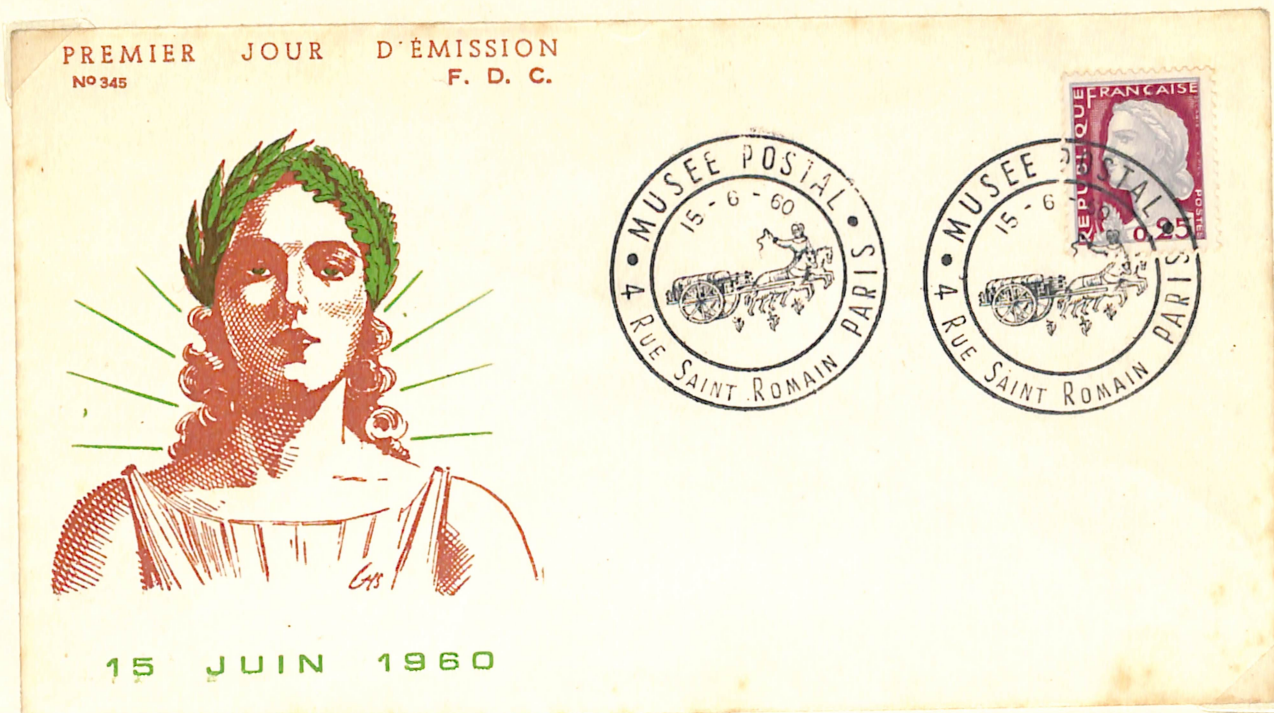
Type 1
Heavy line down nose
and under lip



Type 2
Weak chin



Shade variations



COCTEAU MARIANNE

Issued 1961-1967

designer: Jean Cocteau
engraver: Albert Decaris

Jean Cocteau was an artistic French polymath who was a leading figure of the Parisian *avant garde* in the early 20th century. Though primarily a writer and film-maker, Cocteau was also a prolific artist with a distinctive style. His commission for this Marianne stamp marked a new departure in stamp design and proof printing. It also broke new ground with the first full scale integrated colour printing process from proof to finished product by the Imprimerie des Timbres-Poste (Stamp Printing Works) in Paris. The red, white and blue scheme echoes the colours of the French flag.



Type 1 "Normal"



Type 2. "Peak"



"Red omitted" proof

The new printing process created scope
for numerous varieties around
misalignment of the red and blue impressions.
There are two principal recognised types as indicated



CHEFFER MARIANNE

Issued 1967-1971

*designer: Henri Cheffer
engraver: Claude Durrens*

In 1967 a design by Henri Cheffer previously rejected in favour of the Muller Marianne in 1955 was reviewed and considered acceptable. Cheffer had however died by then, so Claude Durrens was asked to re-engrave the image. This representation of Marianne follows the more classical lines of early French stamps. For this Durrens received the *Grand Prix de l'Art Philatelique* in 1967, the first time that a small format definitive stamp had done so.

The 30c and 40c Cheffer issues were selected as part of the automated mail sorting by phosphor banding trials which began at Clermont Ferrand in March 1970, and were subsequently extended across the country.



*Printed by typography
this phosphor trial issue
lacks the Cheffer/Durrens
inscription down the right side*



*The Cheffer Marianne was the
first product of the new
Government printing works
which opened at Perigueux in
the Dordogne in 1970*

BEQUET MARIANNE

Issued 1971-1976

*Designed by Pierre Bequet
Engraved by Pierre Bequet (B)
or Jean Miermont (M)*

In a marked contrast to the previous issue, Pierre Bequet produced a stylised sketch verging on the abstract of Marianne wearing the traditional Phrygian cap. The substantial reduction of the image with respect to the value was widely criticised. This issue also marked the first full scale production of phosphor band mail segregation technology which had been launched experimentally in 1970. The recess printed issues are inscribed with Bequet's name at bottom left, the typographic issues, unasccribed, were engraved by Jean Miermont.

Issued 1971



M



B(phosphor)

Issued 1974



M



B (phosphor)



B (phosphor)

Issued 1976



M



B



B(phosphor)



*Coil stamps issued July 1976
They had tropical gum to
counteract humidity of
externally located dispensers*

PREMIER JOUR D'EMISSION
N° 892 HISTORIQUE F.D.C.



0,60 MARIANNE



SABINE MARIANNE

Issued 1978 - 1981

designed and engraved: Pierre Gandon
after Jacques-Louis David

This extended series of more than thirty issues over four years is based on a detail from the painting *Intervention of the Sabine Women* by Jacques-Louis David in the Louvre. It was approved by President Giscard D'Estaing and depicts the head of the Sabine Queen Hersalie, who is shown in the painting interceding in a battle between the womens Roman husbands and their Sabine relatives. David's original model was the French aristocrat Aurore de Bellegarde who evaded the guillotine and embraced the Revolution.



This first portion of the series was issued in March 1978



The final three issues in the series were issued in September 1981 and inscribed *Republique Francaise*, rather than *France*. This followed an edict from newly elected President Mitterand who believed it to be more in line with UPU rulings on country names



LIBERTY MARIANNE

Issued 1982-1990

*designed and engraved: Pierre Gandon
after Eugene Delacroix*

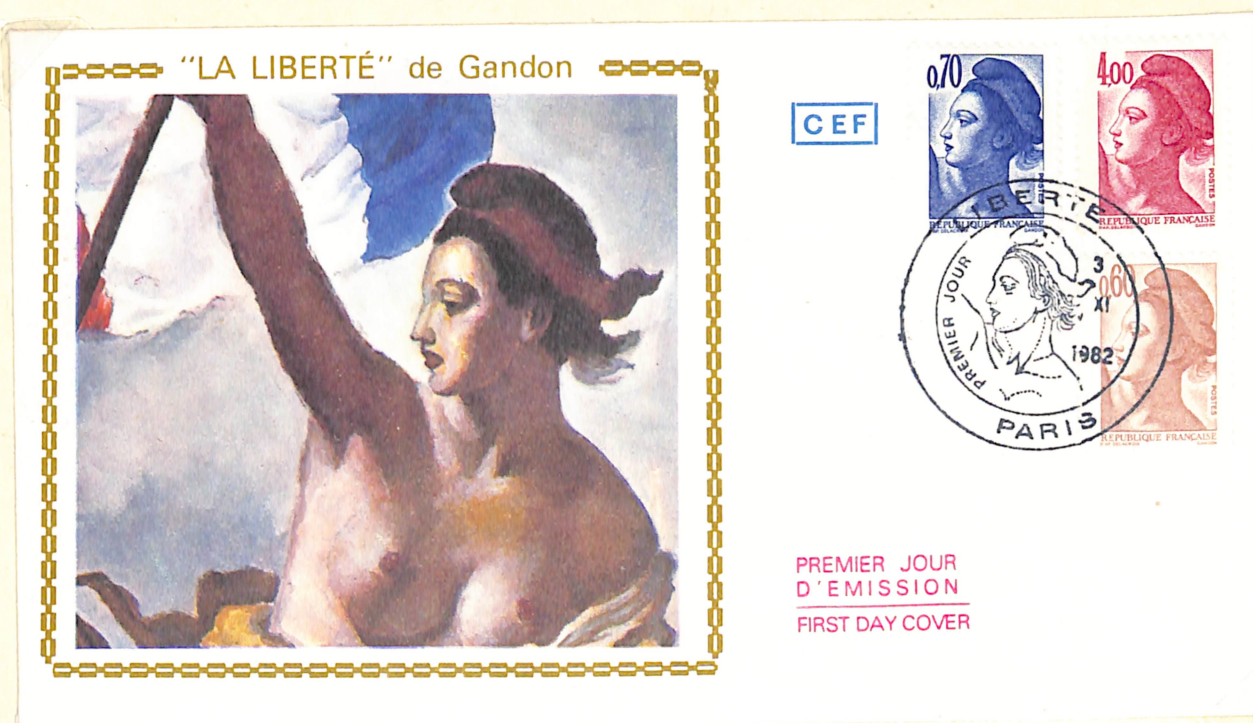
There was the third, and last, Marianne series from Pierre Gandon and the second inspired by a famous French painting. It ran for eight years and some forty issues. The image was based on the depiction of *Liberty leading the People* by Eugene Delacroix in the Louvre and has strong echoes of Gandon's first Marianne. It was selected by President Mitterrand shortly after coming to office in May 1981.



First series issued 4 January 1982



This series saw the introduction of the green Prioritaire Non Urgent (PNU) service (equivalent to UK Second Class) for domestic letters up to 20g weight. They were denoted by letter with three issues between 1986 and 1990 reflecting changing rates. A red priority mail option was added in 1990.



BRIAT MARIANNE

Issued 1990-1996

*designer: Louis Briat
engraver: Claude Jumelet*

Commissioned and selected by President Mitterrand to celebrate the Bicentenary of the French Revolution, this was the first full face representation of Marianne. Although officially termed *Marianne du Bicentaire*, it was nicknamed The Blind Marianne, possibly a deliberate allusion by the artist to the traditional concept of justice.



First series issued 26 March 1990



In 1991 LaPoste issued "D" Domestic rated stamps. Red for Priority mail, and Green for Ecopli less urgent items

PERMANENT VALUE ISSUE

Issued 1993

designer: Louis Briat
engraver: Claude Jumelet

1993 saw the first French issue of a non-denominated permanent value stamp, denoted TVP, (*Timbre à Validité Permanente*). These were sold at the current postal rate for a standard domestic letter, 2.50f at that time. Although all TVP stamps were withdrawn from sale on 1st January 2023 these "Forever" stamps are still valid for postage at the 20g domestic letter rate today.



MARIANNE DU BICENTENAIRE
ÉPREUVE DU "NOUVEAU TIMBRE"
Timbre à validité permanente



IMPRIMERIE DES TIMBRES-POSTE ET DES VALEURS FIDUCIAIRES
FRANCE

TVP Die Proof
Briat Marianne

LUQUET MARIANNE

Issued 1997-2005

designer: Eve Luquet
engraver: Claude Jumelet

Also known as *Marianne du 14 Juillet*, this was the first Marianne definitive to be designed by a woman. It was also one of the more long-lived issues, running for almost eight years before being superseded. July 14th is of course, Bastille Day, when the storming of the notorious prison launched the French Revolution in 1789. It has been a public holiday in France since 1880.



The LP TVP issues were the first released in coils and booklet



Part of the initial series

EURO CURRENCY

Issued 2002

designer: Eve Luquet
engraver: Claude Jumelet

In January 2002 the entire series was re-issued in the new Euro currency and inscribed RF, rather than Republique Francaise



LAMOUCHE MARIANNE

Issued 2005 - 2008

designer: Thierry Lamouche
engraver: Claude Jumelet

La Poste opened the design competition for this stamp to all French citizens, to reflect the twin themes of the environment and the fundamental values of the Republic. Some 50,000 designs were submitted, and the winner, illustrator Thierry Lamouche, was selected from ten finalists chosen by public vote with the final selection by President Jacques Chirac. Hence this issue is designated Marianne des Français *Of The French People*.



ITVF printing

The image is intended to represent Marianne emerging as a flower, and sniffing the air, to signify the importance of the environment. The Government printers legend ITVF in the lower frame signifies Imprimerie des Timbres-Poste et Valeurs Fiduciaires, which became Phil@poste in 2006.



Phil@poste printing



PREMIER JOUR
D'EMISSION
FIRST DAY COVER



Marianne des Français



COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLETS

The 60th Anniversaries of the Dulac and Gandon Marianne issues were commemorated in booklets produced during the incumbency of the Lamouche Marianne



Dulac Marianne 60 year Anniversary 2005



Gandon Marianne 60 year Anniversary 2006



In 2008 a "Faces of the Republic" booklet commemorated a range of Marianne issues

BEAUJARD MARIANNE

Issued 2008-2013

designed and engraved by: Yves Beaujard

This issue, designated *Marianne et l'Europe*, was chosen by President Nicolas Sarkozy to mark the French Presidency of the Council of Europe. A star replaces the traditional cockade. It was the first issue to be designed and engraved by the same artist since Gandon's Liberty issue twenty five years earlier.



The first 13 values were released at a stamp show, Salon du Timbre, in June 2008, plus a special commemorative and postally valid 5 euro silver stamp.



The three principal TVP rates were issued as self adhesive, and in November 2008 all denominations were made available as self-adhesive, the first issue to be so.

SPECIAL MAIL OPTIONS

The Beaujard Marianne saw continuing streamlining of the mail options in addition to the established red and green TVP rates equivalent to first and second class mail. Further to the *Ecopli* mass mailing option aimed at businesses, replacing the old "pre-cancelled" stamps, there were Priority Letter (LP) rates for 20g, 50g 100g and 250g as well as European and International (*Monde*) letter rates.



The range of special mailing option stamps available in 2011



Minisheet issued in 2012 to mark the first anniversary of the new priority mailing range.

*The **letter verte** option was introduced in 2011 for non-urgent internal mail, to be delivered by terrestrial transport rather than air, to reduce environmental impact. The **letter-en-ligne** involves sending a digitised document via LaPoste which is then printed and delivered to the recipient.*

MARIANNE FOR YOUTH

Issued 2013-2018

designers: David Kawanna/Oliver Ciappa
engraver: Elsa Catelin

This issue, *Marianne La Jeunesse*, commissioned by President Francois Hollande, and chosen from a shortlist selected by French High school pupils, focussed on Youth. It was inspired by comic strip design, and this led to some criticism that the image was too "Disneyfied". The head was allegedly modelled on Ukrainian Inna Shevchenko of the Lesbian activist group Femen, although this was denied by the artist through his lawyer. However that did not prevent calls from some quarters for the stamp to be boycotted due to perceived links with radical political activism.



Part of first series



Marianne
et la jeunesse
2013



Marianne et la jeunesse 2013



Commemorative booklet and minisheet

CATELIN DIE PROOFS

Stamps and proofs for *Marianne et la Jeunesse*. Two dies were engraved, one with children playing at the bottom right for the majority of issues, and another with a tree instead, and leaves entwined in Marianne's hair for the *lettre-verte* "green" delivery options.



Phil@poste - FRANCE



Etat 2

Catelin

Marianne et la Jeunesse
Recess Die Proof
Signed by engraver Elsa Catelin

DATAMATRIX

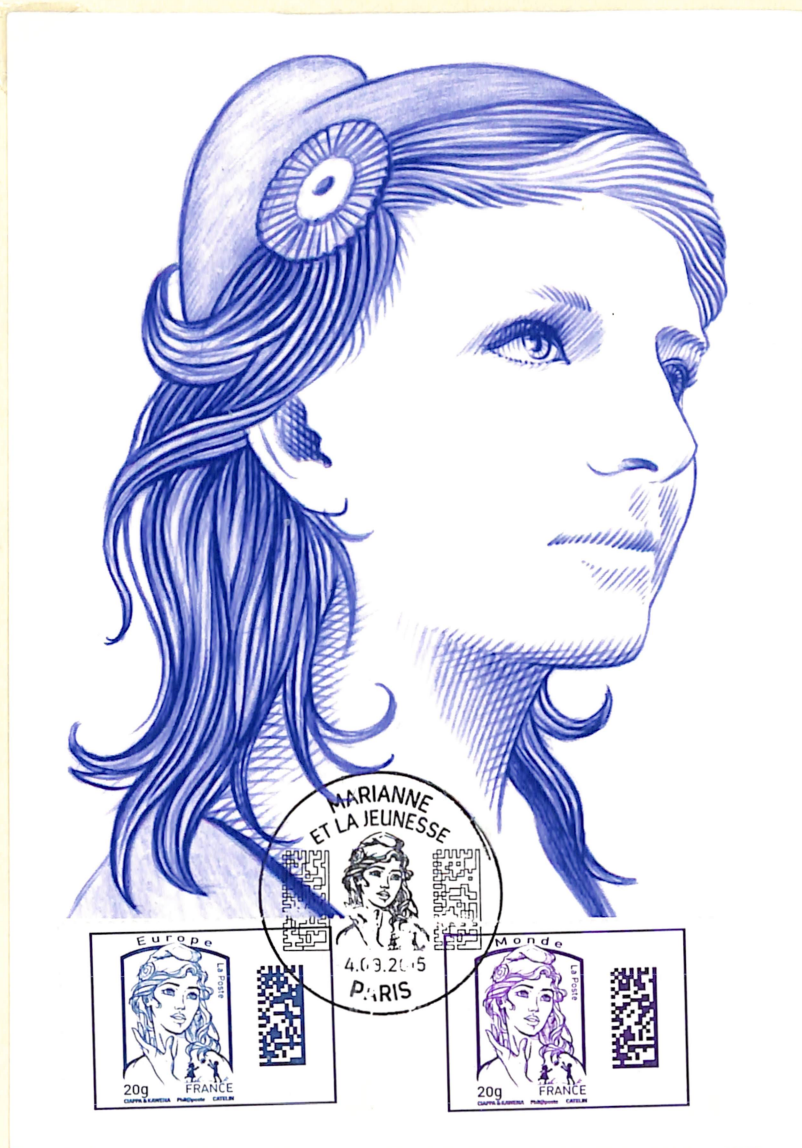
Issued 2015

*designers: David Kawanna/Oliver Ciappa
engraver: Elsa Catelin*

Marianne featured on the first Datamatrix stamps for standard postage introduced in France in 2015. This improved mail tracking and security, and allowed automated electronic cancelling of the stamps.



Datamatrix stamps for European and International destinations



*First Day of Issue
Art Card by Elsa Catelin*

DIGAN MARIANNE

Issued 2018-2023

Designer: Yseult Digan

Engraver: Elsa Catelin

Commissioned by President Francois Hollande, and selected by President Macron this design represents *Marianne l'engagée* (as in committed to social consciousness or political action). The portrait was created by Yseult Digan, known as YZ, a prominent French street artist based in Ivory Coast and is said to embody modernity and youth and a contemporary reflection of the aesthetics of street art. Engraved by Elsa Catelin, this was the first all female team to produce a Marianne issue.



The initial issue featured a full range of four denominated stamps and five non-denominated stamps to cover the principal mail categories, including the Datamatrix options for foreign mail.



In 2019 the Europe and Rest of the World Datamatrix categories were combined as one International rate.



A Service Plus issue was introduced Jan 2023 to provide a premium domestic mail service involving tracking, notifications and compensation if delayed



BALEZ MARIANNE

Issued 2023

designer: Olivier Balez
engraver: Pierre Bara

The current French definitive stamp is Marianne of the Future (*Marianne de l'avenir*) and is the second Marianne design to be approved by President Macron. The final design was selected by sixty young people on voluntary National Service. It represents Marianne as serene and confident patron of environmental sustainability. Set against a background of greenery and the planetary globe it is intended to continue the theme of contemporary values and challenges around transition to a more sustainable future.



Souvenir Sheet including the Datamatrix and Service Plus issues and the initial values of the series.



Booklet of 12 self-adhesive stamps issued 2025

STAMP DAY

France has recognised an annual Stamp Day (*Journee du Timbre*) since 1945, with subjects reflecting postal or philatelic themes. In 1995 the 50th anniversary of the issue of Gandon's Marianne was celebrated. In this booklet a proportion of the stamps were surcharged 60c for the *Croix Rouge*, the French Red Cross.



Commemorative booklet –
three of the seven stamps
were surcharged 60c for charity



Cinquantenaire de la Marianne de Gandon
1^{er} JOUR D'EMISSION
JOURNÉE DU TIMBRE 1995



PHILEXFRANCE

PhilexFrance is the International Philatelic Exhibition held periodically in Paris, and marked by special stamp issues. In 1982, a tribute to Jean Cocteau depicting his Marianne was featured, but subsequent Exhibitions in 1989, 1999, and 2024 have featured the current Marianne definitive.



*PhilexFrance 1982
Cocteau Marianne Tribute*



*PhilexFrance 1989
Pierre Gandon Liberty*



*PhilexFrance 1999
Eve Luquet 14 July*



*PhilexFrance 2024
Olivier Balez Future*

