



POSTAL NEWS

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ORIGINAL STAMP ART EXHIBIT OPENS TODAY AT SMITHSONIAN'S NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM

WASHINGTON — One hundred pieces of original stamp art from the past 40 years, including five works honoring Elvis Presley, are on display today through February 24, 2004, at the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum, 2 Massachusetts Ave., Washington, D.C.

Artwork owned by the U.S. Postal Service is featured in the "Art of the Stamp," an exhibition organized by the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum in collaboration with the Postal Service through a generous donation from Avery Dennison Corporation. The Postal Museum also marked its 10th Anniversary with "10 Years of Stamps & Stories 1993 – 2003," a celebration that included an afternoon of postal history and philatelic fun enjoyed by visitors of all ages.

"We're proud to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the National Postal Museum and delighted that this beautifully preserved building, the old Washington, D.C., post office, is home to the largest collection of stamps and philatelic materials in the United States. Visitors have an opportunity to see the most spectacular artwork owned by the Postal Service in the 'Art of the Stamp' exhibit," said Postmaster General John E. Potter, "in addition to the permanent exhibits showcasing the history and evolution of mail delivery and the vital role mail has in everyone's life."

The "Art of the Stamp" exhibit highlights 100 works of original stamp art created by 55 of the top professional illustrators and designers working in the United States. The works include two rarely-displayed original Norman Rockwell pieces commissioned by the Postal Service. Rockwell designed the 4-cent Boy Scouts of America 50th Anniversary stamp issued Feb. 8, 1960, and the 5-cent City Mail Delivery commemorative stamp issued Oct. 26, 1963, marking the 100th anniversary of free city mail delivery.

Allen Kane, director of the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum, praised the exhibit, saying, "The 'Art of the Stamp' exhibit is a wonderful combination of history, art and entertainment. It is a tremendous honor for us to open the exhibit today, on the Museum's 10th anniversary, and we are very pleased to offer this midsummer treat to the millions of Americans who visit Washington."

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Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska); Sheila Burke, under secretary for American Museums and National Programs, Smithsonian Institution; David Failor, executive director, Stamp Services, U. S. Postal Service; and others joined Postmaster General Potter and Director Kane for the opening of the “Art of the Stamp” exhibit and 10th anniversary celebration.

Under Secretary Burke noted that, “The Smithsonian’s National Postal Museum is pleased to celebrate the Postal Service’s commitment to the art of illustration, and to honor the accomplishments of the outstanding stamp artists and designers whose extraordinary images serve as strong statements of our national artistic expression.”

Postage stamps have become cultural artifacts that create a sense of national identity in tiny, but vivid imagery. In 1847, the first American stamps were created bearing likenesses of national leaders such as Benjamin Franklin and George Washington. Since then, the art and design of stamps have evolved into a unique and dynamic form of communication.

Postage stamp design is an unusual art form, requiring exacting skill in portraying a subject within very small dimensions. In addition to Norman Rockwell, other artists featured in the exhibit include Michael Deas (Marilyn Monroe and Cary Grant), Clarence Lee (Lunar New Year) and Whitney Sherman (Breast Cancer Research).

The National Postal Museum is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., except December 25. Admission is free. Call 202-357-2991 or 202-633-9849 (TTY for the hearing impaired), or visit the National Postal Museum web page at www.postalmuseum.si.edu for additional information about the “Art of the Stamp” exhibit, tours and permanent exhibits.

Current U.S. stamps, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available by toll-free phone order at 1 800 STAMP-24. In addition, a selection of stamps and other philatelic items are available at the online Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop (and to see framed stamp art available for purchase, click on the postalartgallery.com link).

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency, the Postal Service visits 140 million homes and businesses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$66 billion, it is the world’s leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The Postal Service delivers more than 43 percent of the world’s mail volume—some 203 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves 7 million customers each day at its 38,000 retail locations nationwide.

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