

PRESS RELEASE

30 July 2008

SINGAPORE PHILATELIC MUSEUM LAUNCHES “DRAGONS, TREASURES AND MASTERPIECES” EXHIBITION

Stories of the rich cultural heritage of China told through stamps

As part of the National Heritage Board’s “China Modern China Contemporary” festival which coincides with the Olympic Games held in China in 2008, Singapore Philatelic Museum is organising “Dragons, Treasures and Masterpieces” exhibition from 30 July 2008 to January 2009. The exhibition features a rare collection of the first official postage stamps of China from the Qing Dynasty depicting the ‘dragon’ symbol, philatelic materials from the Cultural Revolution period that also served as propaganda tools for communist ideologies, and contemporary Chinese stamps documenting the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the country. The exhibition aims to provide a glimpse into the fascinating cultural heritage to one of the world’s oldest civilisations.

Postage stamps are miniature pieces of paper that document the significant events, history, heritage, culture and people of a country. From mystical dragons to national treasures, and classical literature to paintings from master painters, stamps from China are an archive to the country’s 5,000 years of history.

Highlights of the exhibition include:

Dragon Stamps - The first official postage stamps

The first official postage stamp of China is the Large Dragon stamp issued in 1878 during the Qing Dynasty (1644 - 1911). The block of four stamps of this first issue is valuable as it is a rarity.

The symbol of the 'dragon' aptly represents China. Traditionally, Chinese people believed they were descendants of the dragon. The dragon is featured in Chinese folklore, arts, literature, poetry, architecture, songs and dances. Historically, the dragon is the symbol of imperial power and the emperor of China in many Chinese dynasties.

Cultural Revolution stamps - Stamps as propaganda tools

During the Cultural Revolution (1966 - 1976), postage stamps were used as propaganda tools to further the goals of socialism and communism. The artistic style on the stamps was heavily influenced by Soviet realism from the then Soviet Union, and the colour red was prominently used.

These stamps are part of an award-winning philatelic collection on loan from Mr Charles Loong, an avid stamp collector and member of the Singapore Stamp Club. The collection won a silver award at the Asian-Philately Stamp Competition 2007.

Post- Revolution stamps - Mini- encyclopaedia to arts and culture

After the Cultural Revolution, efforts were made to revive arts and culture in China. Designs on the stamps were more colourful and artistically presented. The range of themes depicted on the stamps include classical paintings, Beijing opera, flora and fauna, classical literature and folklore, historical sites and artefacts, religious objects, and philosophers.

Interactive Exhibits for children

Children can decorate the faces of Chinese opera characters with different colours. At the 'Do You Know?' section, children can match personalities and cultural treasures featured on China stamps, and find out interesting facts about the Great Wall of China.

Ms Tresnawati Prihadi, General Manager of Singapore Philatelic Museum said, "Stamps are visual documents of the history and heritage of a country. This exhibition introduces the stamp as a window to the cultural heritage of China. We hope that visitors will have a better appreciation and understanding of the rich and diverse culture of China."

Details of the exhibition can be found in the attached Fact Sheet.

Details of "Dragons, Treasures and Masterpieces"

Venue: Singapore Philatelic Museum, 23-B Coleman Street, Singapore 179807

Date: 23 July 2008 - January 2009

Opening hours: Mondays (1.00pm - 7.00pm); Tuesday - Sunday (9.00am - 7.00pm)

Admission charge: \$5 (adult); \$4 (child, 3-12 years) \$4 (senior citizen, 60 years and above). Free admission for Senior Citizens every Monday.

Tel: 6337-3888

Web-site: www.spm.org.sg

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ABOUT SINGAPORE PHILATELIC MUSEUM

Singapore Philatelic Museum showcases Singapore's philatelic heritage and postal artefacts since the Straits Settlements era. Throughout the year, the museum organises changing exhibitions that feature rare collections of world-class philatelists, and contemporary collections that explore heritage and cultures of Singapore and beyond. The museum also hosts a range of educational activities including guided tours, camps, talks and workshops. The mission of the Singapore Philatelic Museum is to stimulate interest in philately. The museum is a fully-owned subsidiary of National Heritage Board.

ABOUT CHINA MODERN CHINA CONTEMPORARY

Uncover the rich, diverse and fascinating world of China's fast growing modern and contemporary art and cultural scene. Experience for yourself how Asia's largest country is coming of age and trace its breathtaking cultural progress in the last century or so. Happening right at our doorstep, *China Modern China Contemporary* lets you encounter the rich cultural treasures of modern and contemporary China through more than 20 exciting thematic exhibitions and events, held over 15 museums and galleries. Come face to face with Mao-inspired artefacts, thought provoking art works and captivating stamp collections. Enjoy a rare and exquisite cultural feast of epic proportions, and savour how ancient traditions blend with cutting edge modernity.