National Postal Museum Announces New Exhibit
“Pacific Exchange: China & U.S. Mail”

“Pacific Exchange: China & U.S. Mail,” a new exhibit opening March 6 at the Smithsonian’s National Postal Museum, will showcase the National Philatelic Collection’s outstanding Chinese and U.S. postage stamps and mail, most of which have never been on display. The exhibit tells the story of the Chinese and U.S. relationship through the unique lens of stamps and mail. It taps into America’s strong interest in China and promotes a richer understanding of the two countries.

Today, China and the U.S. are the world’s two largest economies, major powers that often cooperate strategically. They also share a complicated history. The two have been World War II allies and Cold War enemies, partners and rivals. Using mail and stamps, the exhibit brings a human scale to Chinese–U.S. relations, and also explores Chinese immigration to the U.S., now home to 4 million Chinese Americans.

Located in the Postmasters Gallery within the museum’s new William H. Gross Stamp Gallery, the exhibit features outstanding U.S. artwork and die proofs related to China and the Lunar New Year and is organized into three thematic areas: commerce, culture and community. The sections about commerce and culture focus on the decades between 1860 and 1980, including very rare proofs of stamps from the Chinese Bureau of Engraving and Printing (1912–1928). The section on community tells the story of Chinese Americans from the Gold Rush to today’s celebration of the Lunar New Year.

“We are excited about publically displaying some of this beautiful artwork for the very first time,” said Allen Kane, director of the museum.

“Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping told an American audience that ‘Our two countries are neighbors on opposite sides of an ocean,’” said Cheryl R. Ganz, museum curator. “This exhibit illustrates how we communicated as neighbors from mail by ship in 1849 to President Richard Nixon’s visit to Mao Zedong in 1972.”
The National Postal Museum is devoted to presenting the colorful and engaging history of the nation’s mail service and showcasing one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of stamps and philatelic material in the world. It is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C., across from Union Station. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed Dec. 25). For more information about the Smithsonian, call (202) 633-1000 or visit the museum website at www.postalmuseum.si.edu.

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