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For members only
Extreme Philately. Part 1
The Most Unusual Stamps of the World

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Postage stamps are no longer just the dull coloured, square or rectangular pieces of perforated paper we stick onto our mail envelopes or parcels. Innovations, advanced printing technologies and creativity have been adopted by numerous postal authorities worldwide to create exciting stamps which, a century ago, were unthinkable.

The atypical postage stamps that were deemed stupefying and wayward were the triangular Cape of Good Hope issues of 1853–64, followed by the more non-conformists series of asymmetrical stamps from Tonga, issued from 1963 and golden foil stamps from Bhutan from 1966. Tonga and Bhutan then became pioneers in issuing unusual stamps. Currently, countries like Austria, Spain, Liechtenstein, Thailand, Hong Kong, Brazil and Australia are followed and anticipated by many for their innovative and creative line up of stamps. Much to the delight of collectors the world over, modern-day stamps are not any more just philatelic items we enjoy to look at, but touch, smell, hear and taste as well!

Here is the first instalment of a selection of our favourites in each of the categories in our collection of the most captivating world stamps that we would think twice to post with.
Three-dimensional Anaglyph Stamps
Requires glasses with red and blue lenses for 3D viewing

Italy. 1st Anniversary of Admission to United Nations
Issued: 29 December 1956 (SG 940–941)
Face value: L25, 60
Anaglyph stamps: by wearing specially issued glasses with one red lens and one blue, viewers can see printed images in three dimensions

South Africa. Dinosaurs
Issued: 2 November 2009 (SG MS1741)
Face value: R4.60 (x 10)
Anaglyph stamps: by wearing specially issued glasses with one red lens and one blue, viewers can see printed images in three dimensions
Brazil. Rio Olympics. Special Edition

Issued: 20 October 2016 (SG xx)

Face value: r$2.60 (x 2)

Anaglyph stamps: by wearing specially issued glasses with one red lens and one blue, viewers can see printed images in three dimensions
Three-dimensional Stereoscopic Stamps
Images can be seen by either placing the stamp close to the eye, then slowly moving it away and allow the eyes to focus behind the surface of the stamp or holding the stamp about 16 cm from the eyes and let them go out of focus, to see the image.

Guernsey. EUROPA. Peace and Freedom
Issued: 9 May 1995 (SG 678–679)
Face value: $0.25, 0.30
Autostereogram stamp; three-dimensional image of doves

Finland. 100th Anniversary of Foundation of "Chemical Technology Association" and "Finnish Society of Chemists"
Issued: 1 November 1991 (SG 1270)
Face value: mk2.10 (x 2)
Stereoscopic image seen when two stamps with a gutter viewed together
San Marino. European Year of Creativity and Inventions
Issued: 25 August 2009 (SG MS2213–2215)
Face value: €1 (x 6)
Stereoscopic stamps; special glasses provided for three-dimensional viewing
Three-dimensional Stamps with Holograms
Requires the stamp to be moved at a certain angle, under sufficient light, to view the three-dimensional image

Austria. Federal Economic Chamber Export Congress
Issued: 18 October 1988 (SG 2176)
Face value: 8c
Hologram on stamp; world’s first holographic stamp

Poland. Phila Nippon 1991
Issued: 16 November 1991 (SG MS3375)
Face value: Zl1,500
Hologram stamp
Kyrgyzstan. World Wide Fund for Nature - The Corsac Fox
Issued: 27 April 1999 (SG 167–170)
Face value: Лв10 (x 2), 30, 50
Hologram stamps

Landing on the Moon
Issued: 8 July 2000 (SG MS3832d)
Face value: $11.75
Hologram stamp
Escaping the Gravity of Earth
Issued: 9 July 2000 (SG MS3832c)
Face value: $3.20 (x 2)
Hologram stamp
3D Stamps with Holographic Foil
Foil applied under heat and pressure to create a bright and dense metallic 3D image

*Singapore. Festivals*
Issued: 21 August 2002 (SG 1237–1248)
Face value: S$0.22 (x 4); 0.50 (x 4)
Diffracting foil stamps
Canada. Chinese Lunar New Year
Year of the Monkey

Issued: 8 January 2004 (SG MS2248)
Face value: C$1.40

Clear holographic foil using iriodin gold foil in lettering; a total of nine colours used in printing, including custom shades of red and green and a special shade of beige that matches original watercolour
Australia. Jewel Beetles
Issued: 2–6 December 2016 (SG 4622–4625)
Die-cut odd shape, with embossing effect; holographic foil effect
United States of America. Bioluminiscent Life
Issued: 22 February 2018 (SG xx–xx)
Face value: “Forever” stamp (= $0.47 x 10)
Rainbow holographic material stamps

Three-dimensional Motion Flip Stamps
A lenticular flip allows different images to be viewed by changing viewer angles

Great Britain. Thunderbirds
Issued: 11 January 2011 (SG 3136–3141)
Face value: £0.41, 0.60, 0.88, 0.97
Three-dimensional motion flip stamps
Hong Kong. Weather Phenomena
Issued: 27 March 2014 (SG MS1863)
Face value: HK$20
Lithography with lenticular effect on stamp

Spain. Cinema. Star Wars. Solo
Issued: 13 April 2018 (SG MSxx)
Face value: €5
Plastic, lenticular, three-dimensional stamp

Jersey. Frankenstein
Issued: 18 June 2018 (SG MSxx)
Face value: £3
Lenticular, three-dimensional effect on stamp permits eyes to open and shut, as well as flashing lights in Victor Frankenstein’s lab
United States of America. The Art of Magic. Souvenir Sheet
Issued: 8 July 2018 (SG MSxx)
Face value: $0.50 (x 3)
Transparent lenticular stamp; creates illusion of motion by showing rabbit coming out of magician’s hat and disappearing

Three-dimensional Motion Lenticular Stamps
Image information generated allows viewer to see three-dimensional effect

Austria. Centenary of Discovery of Willendorf Venus
Issued: 8 August 2008 (SG MS2938)
Face value: €3.75
Lenticular three-dimensional stamp
Austria. Museum of Auto Cars
Issued: 17 March 2009 (SG 2969)
Face value: €2.65
Lenticular three-dimensional stamp

Spain. Star Wars
Issued: 23 May 2017 (SG MS5145)
Face value: €5
Lenticular stamp with three-dimensional effect

Three-dimensional Motion Stamps with Lenticular Zoom Effect
Image on stamp appears to move closer or further away, depending on the angle

France. World Rugby Championship
France (2nd Issue)
Issued: 6 September 2007 (SG 4315)
Face value: €3
Plastic, three-dimensional stamp; self-adhesive
Jersey. Man of Steel
Issued: 7 June 2013 (SG MS1763)
Face value: £3
Lenticular miniature sheet, when tilted, shows Man of Steel flying across sheet

Three-dimensional Full Motion Video Stamps
Multiple frames used in printing technology, for perception of depth, motion, film or video clips

New Zealand. Olympic Games, Athens. Gold Medal Winners
Issued: 2 August 2004 (SG 2727–2730)
Face value: NZ$0.45, 0.90, $1.50, $2.00
Full-motion video stamps; world’s first four action replay stamps
Ireland. Ryder Cup Golf Tournament
Issued: 19 September 2006 (SG MS1808)
Face value: €0.75 (x 2)
Full-motion video stamps

Finland. Alpine Sports
Issued: 24 January 2008 (SG MS1896)
Face value: €0.70 (x 4)
Full-motion video stamps
The Netherlands. Dutch Film Festival
30th Anniversary of Dutch Film Festival
Issued: 9 September 2010 (SG 2799)
Face value: €5
Full-motion video, playing a 1 second film;
reportedly the world’s shortest and smallest film

Stamps with Fluorescence
Requires ultra-violet light to see hidden images, words or symbols

Australia. Nocturnal Animals
Issued: 1 October 1997 (SG MS1719)
Face value: A$0.45 (x 6)
Extra design of spider and its web, overprinted in phosphor, visible under ultra-violet light
Thailand. Inauguration of 2nd Thai-Laos Friendship Bridge
Issued: 20 December 2006 (SG 2759–2760)
Face value: ฿3 (x 2)
Bridge lights turn on under ultra-violet light

Singapore. Chinese Lunar New Year
Year of the Dragon
Issued: 5 January 2012 (SG uncatalogued)
Face value: S$5 (x 2)
Under ultra-violet light, images of previous and next years’ animal symbols appear (regular issues SG2035–2038)

Canada. Blue Whale
Issued: 4 October 2010 (SG unlisted)
Face value: C$10
Latin name in microprinting; krill and human diver visible under ultra-violet light (intaglio and tagging ink) on stamp
**Optical Variable Ink**
Ink used displays variable colours, depending on the viewer angle

**Great Britain. Britannia**
Issued: 2 March 1993 (SG 1658)
Face Value: £10
Queen’s head and a grid of silver crosses change colour when viewed from different angles

**Stamps with Phosphorescence or Glow-in-the-Dark**
Requires UV light to see the images glow

**South Africa. Bats of South Africa**
Issued: 22 June 2001 (SG 1322–1331)
Face value: R1.40 (x 10)
Glow-in-the-dark images on stamps under ultra-violet light
**Singapore. Night Creatures**
Issued: 20 March 2003 (SG MS1272)
Face value: 1st, S$0.40, 1, 2
Under ultra-violet light, the eyes of animals appear to glow

**Hong Kong. Dinosaurs**
Issued: 20 February 2014 (SG MS1855)
Face value: HK$1.70, 2.20, 2.90, 3.10, 3.70, 5
Glow-in-the dark stamps
Argentina. 50th Anniversary of Galileo Planetarium
Issued: 31 October 2017 (SG MSxx)
Face value: $53
Phosphorescent metallic ink on stamp, with glow-in-the-dark effect

Philippines. 75th Anniversary of Quezon City
Issued: 12 October 2014 (SG xx)
Face value: P100
Spot lamination, with glow-in-the-dark effect
3D Stamps with Laminated Prismatic Ribbed Plastic Surface
Thin lenticular plastic placed on images create 3D effect

Bhutan. Space Achievements
Issued: 30 October 1967 (SG 155–166)
Face value: Ch3, 5, 7, 10, Nu2.50, 4, 5, 9
Laminated prismatic ribbed plastic three-dimensional stamps
Australia. Reef Safari
Issued: 1 August 2018 (SG uncatalogued)
Face value: A$1 (x 4), 2 (x 1)
Plastic, lenticular stamps (ordinary gum is SG MS4944)

Bhutan. Cubesat
Issued: 10 August 2018 (SG MSxx)
Face value: Nu250 (x 4)
Laminated prismatic ribbed plastic stamp
Transparent Stamps
Material stamp is printed on is transparent or see-through material

Spain. Málaga Film Festival
Issued: 17 March 2017 (SG 5122)
Face value: €0.60
Transparent acetate stamp; self-adhesive

Australia. Melbourne International Stamp Exhibition. Rare Beauties. Gemstones. Pink Diamond
Issued: 30 March – 2 April 2017 (SG uncatalogued)
Face value: A$2
Transparent stamp; regular issues are SG 4691–4694
Spain. Ancient Crafts. Glazier
Issued: 24 September 2018 (SG xx)
Face value: €2
Premium sheet printed on transparent acetate paper, using 3D ink/varnish to achieve translucent effect of stained glass; self-adhesive

Belgium. International Year of Crystallography
Issued: 9 June 2014 (SG MSxx)
Face value: Undenominated “3” (x 2)
airmail, 100–350 gm
Transparent stamp
Stamps with Optical Effects

Great Britain. 100th Anniversary of the Magic Circle
Issued: 15 March 2005 (SG 2525–2529)
Face value: 1st Class, £0.40, 0.47, 0.68, 1.12
Optical illusion on stamps

Austria. "And Austria Does Move"
Issued: 21 January 2015 (SG 3316)
Face value: €0.62
Optical illusion on stamp
Pearlescent or Iridescent Stamps

**Australia. Pearls and Diamonds**
Issued: 8 August 1996 (SG 1641)
Face value: A$0.45
Contains an exelgram (embossed holographic printing on ultra thin plastic film), forming pearlescent foil

**Thailand. 80th Anniversary of Birth of H.M. Queen Sirikit**
Issued: 12 August 2012 (SG 3382–3390)
Face value: ฿5 (x 8); 40
Embossed pearlescent stamps
Singapore. Wedding Jewellery
Issued: 12 July 2017 (SG 2383–2386)
Face value: S$0.90 (x 4)
Iridescent varnish on stamps

Lacquered Stamps

French Polynesia. Flora and Fauna
Issued: 26 April 2013 (SG MS1273)
Face value: fr20, 40, 190
Lacquered stamps
Liechtenstein. Settlement Areas of Liechtenstein
Issued: 4 September 2017 (SG 1814)
Face value: €1.50
Ultra-violet lacquered stamp

Jersey. Marine Life VI. Sea Shells
Issued: 4 April 2006 (SG MS1270)
Face value: £2
Fluorescent varnish stamp
Macau. Traditional Handicrafts
Issued: 1 December 2008 (SG MS1674)
Face value: mp10
Varnished stamp

Costa Rica. Las Baulas National Park
Issued: 24 August 2016 (SG MSxx)
Face value: c1,100, 1,370, 2,100
Embossed, varnished stamps
Brazil. Works of William Shakespeare, 1564–1616
Issued: 26 October 2017 (SG MSxx)
Face value: R$4.20 (x 6)
Spot-varnish, embossed stamps

Singapore. Chinese New Year
Year of the Dog Collector’s Sheet
Issued: 5 January 2018 (SG uncatalogued)
Face value: S$5, 10
Gold varnish. Also printed using offset lithography, with highly reflective index transparent hologram, with morphing effect (similar design to SG 2429–2431)
Metallic Multi Images

Japan. Philately Week. Inauguration of Japan Post
Birds and Flowers of the Four Seasons
Issued: 1 April 2003 (SG 3127–3136)
Face value: ¥80 (x 10)
Metallic multi-image stamps; self-adhesive

Japan. Philately Week
Issued: 20 April 2015 (SG 6201a–6204)
Face value: ¥82 (x 10)
Metallic multi-image stamps

Japan. Philately Week
Issued: 20 April 2016
Face value: ¥82 (x 10)
Metallic multi-image stamps
Jap

Japan. Philately Week
Issued: 20 April 2017
Face value: ¥82 (x 10)
Metalic multi-image stamps

Liechtenstein. Chinese Lunar New Year. Year of the Dragon
Issued: 14 November 2011 (SG MS1600)
Face value: Fr1.90 (x 4)
Filigree style with laser technology, creating silhouette effect on stamp
Liechtenstein. International Year of Light
Issued: 1 March 2015 (SG 1718)
Face value: €1.90
Perforation design visible under light

United Nations 2018 Macao Stamp Show - Hua Mulan
Issued: 21 September 2018 (SG MSxx)
Face value: US$1.15 (New York City); SFr2 (Geneva); €1.80 (Vienna)
Sheet printed using a special laser-cut technology. Design on US$1.15 stamp shows Bao Zheng (also known as Justice Bao); SFr2 stamp features Guan Yu (warrior and general); €1.80 features Hua Mulan (heroine of folktale of girl who joins army in place of her elderly father)
Stamps with Perforation Designs

Hong Kong. Christmas
Issued: 24 November 2002 (SG 1146–1149)
Face value: HK$1.40, 2.40, 3, 5
Perforations on stamps used to outline figure shapes

Canada. Jean-Paul Riopelle
Issued: 7 October 2003 (SG MS2237)
Face value: C$1.25
Perforations in the shape of dove on stamp sheetlet
The Netherlands. Olympic Games – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Issued: 18 July 2016 (SG MS3287)
Face value: ‘HHF’, ‘HHG’, ‘HHF’ (= €0.78)
Unusual perforation design in the shape of boxes on stamps

Scented and Flavoured Stamps

Bhutan. Roses
Issued: 30 January 1973 (SG listed, unnumbered)
Face value: Ch15, 25, 30, Nu3, and Nu6, 7 (air)
Scented stamps (first scented stamps in the world)
Norfolk Island. Perfume from Norfolk Island
Issued: 29 June 2001 (SG MS766)
Face value: $3
Jasmine-perfumed stamp

Russia. Gifts of Nature. Fruits
Issued: 27 August 2003 (SG 7210–7214)
Face value: ₽5 (x 5)
Scented (pineapple, strawberry, apple, pear and melon) stamps
India. Sandalwood
Issued: 13 December 2006 (SG MS2371)
Face value: ₹300
Sandalwood-scented stamp

Brazil. National Campaign for Prevention and Control of Forest Fires
Issued: 1 August 1999 (SG 3021)
Face value: R$0.51
Burnt wood-smell on stamp
Belgium. Chocolate Postage Stamps
Issued: 23 March 2013 (SG MS4500)
Face value: €1.24 (x 5)
Chocolate-scented and flavoured stamps

Spain. Protected Denominations of Origin
Issued: 21 September 2018 (SG xx)
Face value: €2
Iberico ham scented and flavoured stamp; self-adhesive