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## The first stamps of 2015 celebrate Valentine's Day, synchronized skating and the Artists' Association of Finland

Stamp Year 2015 begins in Finland on Monday, January 19, when three new stamp publications will go on sale, in which there will be a total of 13 different stamps. January's stamps will celebrate Valentine's Day, synchronized skating and the 150th anniversary of the Artists' Association of Finland.

### Valentine's Day stamps depict six encounters in the forest

In Finland, Valentine's Day is the second most popular postcard season immediately after Christmas. This year's Valentine's Day stamps have as their theme joyful encounters in the forest. **Ilja Karsikas'** cheerfully designed stamps depict snowflakes, trees, a mouse, birds, berries, and a fox and a rabbit.

The *Friends together* stamp booklet has six 1st class stamps as well as Priority labels designed to go with each of the stamps. Designing his first stamps, Ilja Karsikas, 35, has made many illustrations for companies, publications, associations, publishers and record labels. He has been responsible for, among other things, Ruisrock's visual appearance and artwork in 2013 and 2014, and has also illustrated four children's books.

### Radiant stamp for four-times world champions

The presented discipline in January's sports-related stamp does not need any justification. The subject for the stamp is synchronized skating, in which Finland represents the world's brightest light. The stamp depicts Helsingin Luistelijat ry's *Marigold IceUnity* synchronized skating team, which won its fourth world championship in April 2014.

The *Synchronized skating* stamps were designed by **Ari Lakaniemi** and **Susanna Rumpu**, who are well known for their other award-winning stamp designs. The stamp is based on **Olli-Pekka Juhola's** picture which was taken in competition, and which features a group of four skaters from a 16-person team. The stamp features the skaters **Anni Holopainen**, **Ida Hellström**, **Tiia Aromäki** and **Salla Laukkanen**.

The elegant sheet is printed on a glossy foil paper with a silvery ice crystal pattern added in gloss paint.

This year in Finland synchronized skating will be celebrating its 30th anniversary. The sport was brought to Finland from the United States by **Mrs Jane Erkkö**. Currently in Finland there are 153 synchronized skating teams, with close to 2,800 skaters. This spring, Finland's synchronized skaters will be particularly excited to find out if the International Olympic Committee will include the sport in the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang in South Korea.

### Competition produced visual artwork for six stamps

Posti celebrates the Artists' Association of Finland's 150th anniversary with its own stamps, which feature six works that were chosen in a design competition that was arranged in spring 2014. The stamps feature several areas of the visual arts, including traditional painting and photography.

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The works of art selected for the stamps, the artists and their places of residence are:

- *Viiva-muoto (Line form)*, **Anneli Hilli**, graphic artist/painter, Espoo
- *Piste (Point)*, **Mika Natri**, artist, Turku
- *Taiteilijan vuoristorata (Artist's rollercoaster)*, **Marjo Suikkanen**, sculptor, Viljakkala
- *Dance from the bride*, **Mayumi Niiranen-Hisatomi**, artist, Kajaani
- *Lento (Flight)*, **Laura Konttinen**, artist, Helsinki
- *Hedelmistä puu tunnetaan (You will know them by their fruits)*, **Kalevi Karlsson**, architect/artist, Helsinki

The graphic design for *The Artists' Association of Finland 150 years* stamp booklet comes from Dog Design.

The stamp design competition received a total of 131 works, which were evaluated by a seven-person jury made up of artists and representatives from Posti.

The Artists' Association of Finland is an influencer and expert organization in the visual arts, which represents over 3,000 professional artists. The association was also the subject of a stamp in February 1964 when a postage stamp was published in honor of its 100th anniversary.

### First day event and competition works exhibition at the Postal Museum

On Monday, January 19, the Postal Museum will arrange a first day event for the newly appearing stamps. First Day Cancellations will be available at the museum from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and all of the stamps' designers will sign items from 12 noon to 2 p.m.

On the same day, January 19, the Postal Museum will also open an exhibition in which visitors can become more familiar with the works received by the design competition. The *Taide elämäntyönä (Art as a life's work)* exhibition is open from January 19 to March 1, 2015.

The Postal Museum is located in Museum Centre Vapriikki in Tampere at Alaverstaanraitti 5.

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### Image material for the media:

<http://digilibrary.emmi.fi/?cart=2028-fhgmedleil&l=FI>

All stamps available for sale are featured in Posti's online shop:

[www.posti.fi/goshopping](http://www.posti.fi/goshopping)