**Q&A Zhang Yong**

1. **How did your involvement with the IOM Post Office come about?**

A friend talked to me that the IOM Post Office is looking for paintings by a Chinese artist for a stamp collection for the Year of the Pig. When I heard the news I thought it is meaningful and important to pass Chinese cultures to other countries, so I took on the project.

1. **You have been tutored in Chinese painting since childhood, how did you discover a passion for painting?**

I love painting since I was small and I just kept working hard on it. It’s a joy doing what you really like.

1. **Was the Lingnan School of painting a deliberate choice in your education?**

Lingnan School means a kind of painting style from south of China. I’m from the south and my teacher is also a Lingnan School artist and naturally I became an artist of Lingnan School.

1. **Would you describe yourself as a typical Lingnan School artist or have you been influenced by other styles?**

I am a traditional Lingnan School artist, however I have absorbed a lot of good elements from other styles of painting as well, including some techniques of western paintings.

1. **Were any special techniques utilised in the paintings?**

Most of my painting techniques are traditional Chinese painting skills, I adopt this technique from learning to application.

1. **Where do you get your inspiration for your artworks? What inspires you?**

First I selected some real images of baby pigs and I see the cuteness in them, that’s the basic inspiration I got.

1. **How do you know when your work is finished?**

I painted different versions, but after the finished these (four) , I felt that I expressed what I wanted to say, then I confirmed, yes, its done!

1. **What is your most important artist tool? Is there something in your studio you can’t live without?**

Actually all tools for painting are important, like brush, ink, paper etc… However, if there’s something I must have, that is, wine, or whisky (laughs)

1. **Is this your first design work for a stamp collection?**

Yes, it is.

1. **Is the process of developing these images any different from your other paintings?**

It’s very different actually, as it’s the first time in my life to create Pig images in my artwork.

1. **What do you think makes this collection so special?**

The pigs are vivid and lively; their cuteness is highlighted.

1. **Why were the featured colours chosen?**

I didn’t intentionally choose these colours, they were most apt for the subject matter, but in traditional Chinese paintings, you always need to balance the colours to have the harmonious feeling.

1. **Do you have a favourite design and why?**

I like all of them, every one of them is like my baby. I need to love them!

1. **How important are the Chinese Zodiac Signs to your culture? And what do they mean to you personally?**

Zodiac signs are traditional Chinese culture, all Chinese people grow up in this culture. It influences our daily life for this generation, for all next generations.

1. **Do you have a special connection to the year of the pig?**

My zodiac sign is Sheep, I don’t know exactly how the year of pig will influence on me, as it needs some specialist to make analysis.

1. **How do you celebrate the Chinese New Year?**

We have a lot of activities, like drinking and eating too much (laughs) and spending time with loved ones…. We also used to enjoyed fireworks before, however, it’s prohibited now.

1. **Are you a stamp collector yourself?**

Yes, I am. I started collecting stamps when I was little.

1. **What does it mean for you to be featured on a stamp collection?**

It’s very meaningful to me. As I just mentioned, it’s the first time I created artwork for a stamp collection. I appreciate that the Post Office gave me this opportunity.