



T A N D E M
Design Associates Ltd

GUNG HAY FAT CHOY!

February 7—FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VANCOUVER, BC—Exceptional skill and love of their craft have led Naomi Broudo and Violet Finvers to a new beginning in the Year of the Rat!

Broudo and Finvers of Tandem Design Associates Ltd. are the designers of this year's Chinese New Year stamps for Canada Post. The Year of the Rat (Feb 7/08-Jan 25/09) is the first in the lunar cycle, but the last in Canada Post's 12-year stamp series. And so Tandem's stamps—ornate, richly intricate and layered with tradition—will take their place among Canada Post's best-selling products and earn a treasured spot in collections around the world.

“Immersing ourselves in another culture was very enriching for us as designers,” says Broudo. “It was an honour.” After extensive research into unfamiliar history and traditions, Tandem selected the elements of love, skill and new beginnings—all qualities of Rat people and the Year of the Rat—as their conceptual starting points.

Tandem then engaged Chinese artist and illustrator Harvey Chan, and together they chose the story of *The Mouse Bride* as the basis for the stamps. A beloved and well-known Chinese folk tale, *The Mouse Bride* depicts attributes of those born in the Year of the Rat: intelligence, charm and attractiveness to the opposite sex. A father mouse is trying to find a partner for his daughter, and auditions the sun, wind and clouds for the role, seeking the strongest and most resourceful husband. But in the end, he realizes the best choice is a most ingenious mouse from his own community. “Sometimes,” says Broudo, “what you're looking for is right there in front of you.”

Toronto-based artist and teacher Harvey Chan brought an intimate understanding of Chinese art and cultural symbolism to the project. The award-winning illustrator of *Roses Sing on New Snow*, Chan used highly detailed, folkloric style that was uniquely suited to the approach Tandem had conceived for their stamps. “The creative process with Tandem Design was seamless,” says Chan. “It was also fun for me to retell this ancient tale with a contemporary twist on the illustrations.”

(continued on page 2)

Every element is layered with meaning, from Chan's woodblock-style illustrations, or *nianhua*, to the colours, accoutrements and clothing worn by the mouse bride and groom, to Tandem's stylistic approach. All 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac encircle the couple, each bearing a gift that symbolizes wealth, peace and good fortune. The stamps themselves sparkle like wedding decorations, tactile with multi-layered embossing and shimmering with gold and pearl foils.

“There was speculation as to what kind of a surprise to expect from the rat, which is described by many as the least attractive animal of the Chinese zodiac,” says Alain Leduc, Stamp Designer Manager for Canada Post. “Naomi and Violet have proven once again they can take on a challenge of this magnitude and exceed expectations.”

Tandem's success was immediately evident. On January 8, Broudo and Finvers attended the Vancouver launch, where stamp products sold out in short order and collectors lined up for over three hours for autographs. Tandem received this email message later that week, from one impressed fan: “Thank you for ... coming out with beautiful designs that honoured my culture. Happy New Year to you and yours.”

For Tandem's Year of the Rat stamp products, visit www.canadapost.ca/collecting or visit any Canada Post outlet in the country.

For more information or to schedule an interview with a representative of Tandem Design Associates Ltd., please:

Call 604 682 6362

Email info@tandemdesign.com

Visit www.tandemdesign.com