

TPG Post and Atos Origin issue unique moving images of Olympic winners on their own postage stamp

Atos Origin
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Skating legends Ard Schenk and Yvonne van Gennip 'Going for gold'

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TPG Post and Atos Origin are honouring the top sport by immortalising two special athletes on the postage stamp 'Going for gold'. It has unique moving images of Dutch skating legends Ard Schenk and Yvonne van Gennip. These special postage stamps have been produced by TPG Post in collaboration with Atos Origin, Worldwide IT Partner for the Olympic Games through to the 2012 London Olympic Games. Today Yvonne van Gennip and Wilbert Kieboom, CEO of Atos Origin Northern Europe, receive the first postage stamp, offered by Harry Koorstra, chairman of TPG Post. The special stamps come at just the right moment, as tomorrow 2,500 top athletes from 85 countries are hoping, just as Ard and Yvonne did in their days, to win a gold medal at the Torino 2006 Olympic Winter Games. Among them are 26 compatriots in contention for a place on the podium of honour.

A venerable skating history

As one of the world's greatest skating nations, the Netherlands has a high reputation to maintain at the forthcoming Olympic Winter Games. The tradition is rooted not only on Olympic ice: European and World championships also guarantee gold for Netherlands. In 1893, Jaap Eden got the very first world title for long-distance skating in Amsterdam. Over the years, an impressive sequence of Olympic champions was built up from Holland: Kees Verkerk, Stien Baas-Kaiser, Piet Kleine, Marianne Timmer and Gianni Romme, to name just a few of the gold-medal winners. Among these, Ard Schenk and Yvonne van Gennip deserve a special place. At one session of the Games, they each won no less than three gold medals. Ard achieved this outstanding result at the 1972 Olympic Winter Games in Sapporo. Ard Schenk about the design: "The full motion aspect displays the image like I remember; a long hard race with wind and well-used track as I was skating in one of the last pairs during these 10,000 meters. The 39 eurocent is like the electronic ticking clock". Yvonne achieved her exceptional result in 1988 in Calgary: "It's an honour to be on these stamps, or rather to be skating on them. I revive the last meters of the three kilometres thanks to the moving stamps and definitely see them as a special memory to my skating career".

Collaboration between TPG Post and Atos Origin

To honour both these two greatest Dutch skating legends and to mark the Torino 2006 Olympic Winter Games, TPG Post and Atos Origin have taken the opportunity to issue a special postage stamp, **a stamp on which both skaters are seen in action through the use of an innovative 'lenticular' technique**. In this way, the stamps fit in perfectly with the complex technological work done by Atos Origin at the Olympic Games. Atos Origin has primary responsibility for Information Technology, relating to IT consulting, systems integration, operations management, information security and software applications development for the Olympic Games.

Moving images

To achieve the impression of movement on the stamps, TPG Post had to print the stamps onto plastic for the first time. **Lenticular technology makes it possible to have Ard and Yvonne skating around the stamps. There is a sequence of twelve film stills taken from the winning races at Sapporo and Calgary, to portray Ard and Yvonne skating in full flight over four square centimetres.** The snowy images of Ard in 1972 and those of Yvonne come from the early years of colour TV, presenting the designers with a major challenge. Lenticular technology has existed for a long time past, but up till now it has not been possible to reproduce the level of detail needed, which is essential on postage stamps. A firm in New Zealand was able to provide the level of detail required for lenticular technology and the stamps were printed at a specialist printing-press in Australia. As these stamps printed onto plastic were new for TPG Post, they were tested thoroughly at sorting offices.

Austere design

Apart from its moving images and the subject-matter chosen, the stamp is also striking for its crisp, austere design. "Solar Initiative is noted for its clear, conceptual designs, with discriminating use of the smallest possible number of graphic elements", says Miguel Gori, art director at Solar Initiative. "In order to approach the atmosphere of the competition as closely as possible, the

time-indicator moves with the camera, just as in TV broadcasts. Another special feature is that the movement of the film image can also be seen in the lettering of the stamp. This produces a surprisingly spacious effect."

Format

The stamps are somewhat larger than usual at 52 x 30 millimetres, resulting in a clear image of the greatest Dutch skating champions. All other Dutch gold-medal winners at Winter Olympic Games are also honoured on the stamp by displaying their names below the two stamps.

Issue and availability

The 'Going for gold' stamps have a face value of € 0.39. The stamps have a print-run of 700,000 sheets and are available from today at post offices or through the TPG Post website at www.tpgpost.nl.

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