

## ARTY CATS, *continued*



**Lion Attacking a Horse (1762), by English painter George Stubbs, is on a recent stamp from the Republic of Guinea.**

### **A Lion Attacking a Horse, Stubbs By Greg Balagian**

George Stubbs (1724 -1806) was an English painter and printmaker, best known for his paintings of horses. In his lifetime, Stubbs was classified as a sporting painter, and as such was excluded from full membership of the Royal Academy. Having studied anatomy, Stubbs's pictures of horses are among the most accurate ever painted.

Stubbs was permitted to observe the more exotic animals like lions and tigers in private menageries.

Obsessed with the subject of a lion attacking a horse, Stubbs painted numerous versions of the theme, from stalking, to attacking, and ultimately death of the horse.

*A Lion Attacking a Horse (1762)* is among Stubbs's most recognized works and is depicted on a 2012 stamp from the Republic of Guinea. [See page 48.] The lion has mounted the terrified horse for the final death bite.

The large oil on canvas painting, 96 x 131 in (243.8 x 332.7cm), is in the Mellon Collection of the Yale Center for British Art in Hartford, Connecticut. 🐾

### **Shishi, Guardian Lions By Greg Balagian**

*Shishi*, or Chinese guardian lion first appeared in China during the Han Dynasty (206-220 B.C.). They traditionally stand in front of palaces, imperial tombs, temples, and homes of high ranking officials or wealthy noblemen.

In modern times, guardian lions often appear as decorative elements in front of restaurants, hotels or markets.

Chinese guardian lions always appear in pairs. The male lion stands with its paw atop the globe symbolizing dominance and the lioness has her paw restraining a lion cub, a symbol of nurturing.

*Shishi* also appear on small artifacts made from various materials like jade, clay, stone, glass, or bronze.

In Western cultures, Chinese guardian lions often called "Foo Dogs," "Fu Dogs," "Fu Lions," "Fo Lions," or "Lion Dogs." Reference to dogs may be due to the Japanese calling them "Korean Dogs" as they were transported to Japan from China through Korea, or to transliteration of names of some Chinese dog breeds, like Chow Chow (Puffy-Lion Dog) or Shih Tzu (Lion Dog).

Perhaps the most prominent pairs of guardians are placed at the entrance to the Palace of Tranquil Longevity on (Grenada 3798) and the Imperial Palace of Ming and Qing Dynasties in Beijing's Forbidden City.

*Shishi* are depicted on hundreds of stamps and philatelic materials.

Shishi on  
Grenada 3798



## ARTY CATS



**The Lion Fountain in Floriana, Malta is pictured on Scott 1481.**

### **Lion Fountain, Cedric Galea Pirota By Greg Balagian**

On March 27, 2013 MaltaPost continued its "Treasures of Malta" series with a set of three stamps commemorating the island's historic and illustrious fountains. [The Mew Listing is on page 124.]

One of the stamps depicts the Vilhena Fountain in Floriana, which is also known as the Lion Fountain (Scott 1481). It was built in 1728 by the order of Antonio Manoel de Vilhena (1663-1736), the 66th Prince and Grand Master of the Order of Malta.

The centerpiece of the ornate Baroque style fountain is the statue of the seated lion with its paw atop of Vilhena's Coat of Arms [shown on page 120]. Vilhena Fountain is included in the Antiquities Protection list.

The original artwork for this stamp set is by the self-taught Maltese artist Cedric Galea Pirota (b. 1971), using his technique of watercolors, penstrokes and washes of ink.

Pirota told me via email, "Maltapost decides on the theme, I collect info and take pics, verify historical info and after all is approved, paint as commissioned. The originals are kept in Maltapost's vault."

View numerous works by Cedric Galea Pirota displayed on his website at [www.cgp71.com](http://www.cgp71.com). 🐾