

ARTY Cats

Mkrtich Chanchanyan, Armenia
by GREG BALAGIAN

On December 26, 2016 Armenia issued a set of three stamps denominated 100 dram each in the series, Children's Philately. Three native Armenian animals are depicted: mouflon, gull and Van cat.

These three animals are found in the Lake Van region of Eastern Turkey, the heartland for Armenians who lived there from the 3000 B.C. right up to the late 19th century when the Ottoman Empire seized all the land.

A very talented Armenian artist and graphic designer, Mkrtich "Mukuch" Chanchanyan, designed the beautiful stamps. With the help of a couple of good friends back in Armenia, I was able to contact the artist for an interview.

G.B. Please tell me briefly about yourself, your education, and what you are you currently working on.

M.C. My father was an artist and as long as I remember I was always drawing from the very early years of my life. In 2008, I graduated from the Armenian State Academy of Arts in Yerevan and I am currently a freelance graphic designer and illustrator. I work with a variety of companies and other entities that are interested in my art.

G. B. Have you designed any other stamps?

M.C. No, this set is my first experience with such a unique art form, as the art of making postage stamps definitely has its specific difficulties due to the small size. But this project was really fun.

Armenia issued this Van cat stamp by Chanchanyan in 2016.



G.B. Was the idea of portraying these particular animals and the style of images yours, or was it at the request of the officials from Haypost?

M.C. I chose the animals myself and because the set is dedicated to children's philately, I decided to draw them in an animated style to make them attractive for young viewers. I also had a goal to educate children about our native animals. I made a few hand-drawn sketches, but the main work was done by using computer graphics and digital techniques.

G.B. Did you use any models for your animal images?

M. C. For the Armenian mouflon and gull I just observed various photographs and prints to come up with my own designs, but for the Van cat I actually had a live model. A close friend of mine has a Van cat as his pet, and I very often cat sit for this beautiful creature in my studio when my friend travels for business. [See his photo on page 42.]

G.B. I hope to see more of your beautiful Armenian stamp designs to be issued in the future. It was a pleasure to talk to you.

M. C. – It was my pleasure and I hope that I will design more Armenian stamps very soon. Thank you for your interest. 🐾