



ARTS & CULTURE

A Stamp of Approval for Skateboarding in America

March 31, 2023

For many years, skateboarding was considered an activity for young rebels or drug users in city streets, schoolgrounds and public parks.

Those days are long gone. Skateboarding, which has **Indigenous** roots connected to **surfing**, is now an Olympic sport. There are many skateboarding competitions held across the United States and other countries.

Recently, skateboarding was honored with a special recognition: a postage stamp.

The U.S. Postal Service released the stamps at a skate park in Phoenix, Arizona. Four Indigenous artist-skateboarders created the skateboards pictured on the postage.

William Zollars, a member of the USPS Board of Governors, officiated at the event.

“As an American **institution** older than our country itself, the Postal Service is always looking for ways to **highlight** and honor the stories and histories that are **unique** to the United States,” Zollars said. “We are honored to do that again through these ‘Art of the Skateboard’ Forever stamps.”

Di'Orr Greenwood is one of the artists. The 27-year-old was born and raised on the Navajo Nation in Arizona. She said as a child she was always getting pushed out of areas where she would skate. She noted the sport has come a long way.

“Now it's like being accepted on a **global** scale,” Greenwood said. “There's so many skateboarders I know that are extremely proud of it.”

The new stamps call attention to the popularity of skateboarding, especially in Indian Country where the demand for skate parks is growing.

The artists see the stamp as a useable art piece that will be seen across the United States and around the world.

For her skateboard stamp, artist Crystal Worl honored her **clan** and her love of the water. A Sockeye salmon fish is represented against a blue and indigo background.

"There are certain designs, **patterns** and stories that belong to certain clans and you have to have permission even as an Indigenous person to share certain stories or designs," Worl said.

The other artists who created stamps are William James Taylor Jr., an artist from Virginia, and Federico "MasPaz" Frum, a Colombian-born muralist in Washington, D.C.

The USPS will print 18 million of the stamps. For the artists, being part of a project that feels low-tech in this age of social media is energizing.

"Maybe I'll get a letter in the mail that someone sent me with my stamp on it," said the 35-year-old Worl, who lives in Juneau, Alaska. "I think that's when it will really hit home with the excitement of that."

I'm Caty Weaver.

The Associated Press reported this story. Caty Weaver adapted the report for VOA Learning English.

Words in This Story

Indigenous – *n.* of or relating to the earliest known inhabitants of a place and especially of a place that was colonized by a now-dominant group

surfing – *n.* the sport of riding ocean waves, especially on a surfboard

institution – *n.* a significant practice, relationship, or organization in a society or culture

highlight – *v.* to center attention on

clan – *n.* a group of people tracing descent from a common ancestor

unique – *adj.* being without a like or equal

pattern – *n.* an artistic, musical, literary, or mechanical design or form

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