



## Press Release

24 January 2012

United Nations Postal Administration



# United Nations AUTISM AWARENESS Stamps Announced

The United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA) will issue stamps and first day covers on 2 April 2012 in recognition of World Autism Day. The stamps, and the artists who designed them, will together raise awareness about this important global cause.

The final selection of the artwork was the result of a worldwide search for talented artists with autism who were eager to share their designs with the United Nations Postal Administration. Creative Director, Ms. Rorie Katz, decided to feature artwork of people with Autism to educate others of their passion, talents and creativity.

“It was an extremely difficult and challenging process to choose only eight designs from all of the artwork submitted”, noted Katz. “All of us were personally touched by the stories of the artists and their families who are extremely passionate and supportive about raising awareness for Autism.”

The stamps will be issued in three separate panes for each of the three United Nations Post Offices – New York, Vienna and Geneva. Each pane will contain 20 stamps repeating two different designs ten times. Additionally, first day covers featuring the artwork of two other artists will be issued along with the stamps.

The United Nations Postal Administration thanks all of the artists and their families for submitting a wide range of wonderful designs. The UNPA also thanks the Autism Speaks organization for their help and support with identifying these talented artists.

To purchase these stamps when they go on sale on 2 April 2012 and find out more about their release, please visit <http://unstamps.un.org>.

For more information about Autism Speaks, please visit [www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org).

**For further information, please contact:**  
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**Hannah Kandel (U.S.A.) -  
“Crazy Love”**

At age nineteen, Hannah Rose Kandel has already achieved many of her life goals. Hannah’s parents, Dr. Joseph and Merrylee Kandel, started early interventions to address Hannah’s autism when she was eighteen months old. Over time, Hannah learned

how to communicate and is now able to speak about her personal experiences.

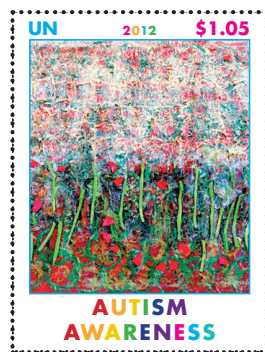
Hannah is working towards earning her GED and then plans to attend college. Her hobbies included gymnastics, Irish Step dancing and Special Olympics Equestrian. By sharing her story, Hannah hopes to help educators teach other students like her.

Hannah had the following to say in one of her speeches: “I dream that I will become a preschool teacher, teach the little kids and become a Hollywood actress. I believe that I will live independently, get married, and have children someday. I have completed fourteen years of my education and learned and achieved many goals in my life. As my family says, “Dream it, believe it, achieve it”!

“Crazy Love” began as a project created by Masterpiece Mixers Paint and Party Studio, for a group of developmentally disabled adults, as an expression of the love they have for one another and the love they have inside of them. It has become a signature painting for their studios.

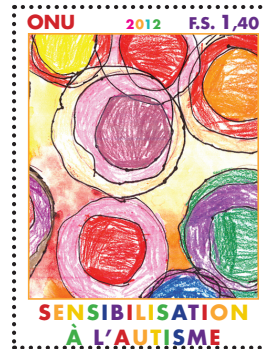
**Trent Altman (U.S.A.) -  
“An Abstract Garden II”**

Trent Altman is an award-winning artist who exhibits his work nationally in fine art shows and galleries. He paints expressionistic abstract pieces in acrylics and mixed media collages on canvas. Although Trent has autism, he expresses through artwork his perception of the world. His work reflects a freedom of expression, movement, and energy through the multiple methods used in applying paint and collage materials. Trent is also a wonderful example of how



someone who has autism can face challenges “with supports” to live a full life as a contributing member of society. Art has enabled Trent to live life with increased independence.

To learn more about Trent visit [www.trentsstudio.com](http://www.trentsstudio.com)



**Michael Augello (U.S.A.) - “Untitled”**

Michael Augello, seven years old, was diagnosed at three with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

His family had the following to say about Michael: “The diagnosis certainly changed our lives, but the

one thing it did not change is the love that we have for our Michael. He is an amazing little boy and brings us joy in so many different ways and on many different levels. The best way to explain Michael is that he has Michisms (not really a word), but it really defines what makes him unique. Michael spent two years at the Hagedorn Little Village School in Seaford, NY - a place we hold near and dear to our hearts. He was in a special needs classroom and received many services such as Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy. Michael also received in home assistance with a wonderful therapist who is still a part of our family. We are fortunate his therapists took such wonderful care of him and he worked so hard that he has been mainstreamed into a typical school classroom. We are humbled by his strength and grateful he continues to teach us on a daily basis what the word tolerance really means.”

Michael is a proud Cub Scout, plays on a Little League baseball team and loves playing the piano. He also attends Sunday school classes at a YJCC KISS (kids in special services) programme which has helped Michael interact socially. In addition to all of his activities, Michael has a wonderful group of teachers, friends, family, and support in his community for which his family is truly grateful.

## J.A. Tan (Philippines and Canada) - "Victory"

Mr. Tan describes himself as an artist with autism. Diagnosed as a high-functioning autistic child before his third birthday, J.A. aims to show through art how his mind works. J.A. was born and raised in the Philippines and is now based in Vancouver, Canada, having completed his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver.

Of his art, he says: "I have come to the realization that I have always used art as a way of helping myself bring out my thoughts, feelings, and ideas. I consider it an integral part of my existence as each work is a personal journey of myself with myself, and myself with the world, bringing a feeling of peace and happiness since things become clearer to me through the images and visual pictures before me.

Coping with everyday life as an artist challenged with autism, I strive to make a difference in the world. Through my work, I hope to make the world less of a mystery and less scary for everyone. I hope to be able to make concrete images of how someone like me thinks, feels, and interacts with people".

To view more about Mr. Tan visit [www.artofjatan.com](http://www.artofjatan.com)



uses a variety of techniques to create texture. From layering paint to dripping it, using his hands or objects such as balloons and piping bags, Colm has a great sense for colour. In his work, every colour seems to compliment the next.

Colm and his twin brother, Eric, both have severe autism - they have no speech and cannot read or write. They have been influenced greatly by their mentor/teacher Aine Crowley.

## Ryan Smoluk (Canada) - "The Path"

Ryan Smoluk is an award winning Canada based artist. Ryan's art has been showcased throughout Canada and internationally. He has excelled in a number of mediums including oils and acrylic, illustrative art, pottery and clay sculptures. Ryan also is an effective spokesperson and advocate for autism awareness. He was nominated by Toyota Canada for the "Never Quit Award". Ryan is currently completing a bachelor's degree in fine arts at the University of Manitoba.

Ryan had the following to say about this design: "Everyone has a path and journey in life. When I approached this piece at 15 years old I tried to express the need for people to walk with each other and share in each others journeys regardless of difference. The rainbow symbolizes the diversity of everyone's path and yet the beauty that results when we all share in the same journey".

To learn more about Ryan visit [www.ryansmoluk.ca](http://www.ryansmoluk.ca)

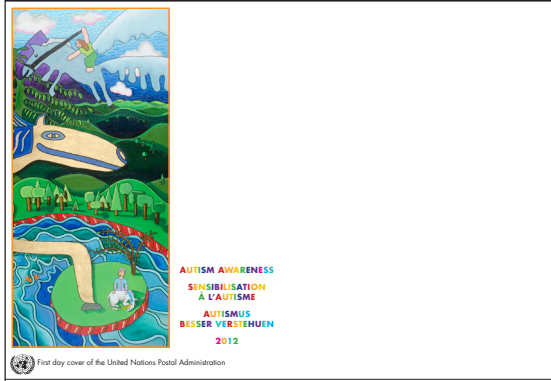


## Colm Isherwood (Republic of Ireland) - "Untitled"

Irish artist Colm Isherwood has enjoyed working with a variety of media for many years, but has recently concentrated on painting.

Colm's first solo exhibition was in 2010, which featured sixteen acrylic and mixed media paintings on canvas. Colm spent 2011 working on a new series of paintings that will be exhibited in early 2012.

Colm's paintings are very sensory and tactile which has always been a big part of Colm's life. Colm



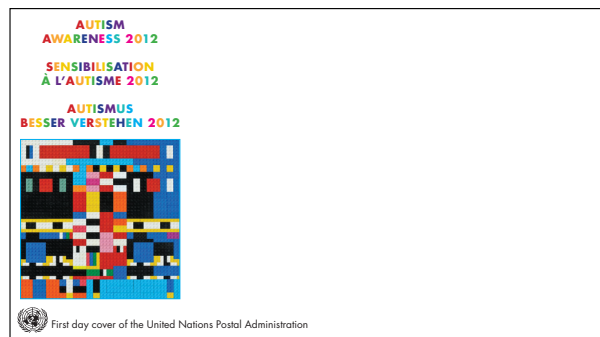
### Seth Chwast (U.S.A.) - “Mythic Creatures Mural”

Seth Chwast was diagnosed with autism as a very young child, and lived for years in a world of roller coasters, haunted houses, and classical music. When her autistic son turned 18, a vocational counselor told Debra Chwast that Seth was unsuited for anything more challenging than janitorial work. He could not cross the street alone, or even be left home alone, or have a conversation. Debra then gave up her career as a therapist and devoted herself full time to finding a meaningful life for her son. A dramatic change came in 2003, when at age 20 he took an oil painting class at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Seth, who rarely speaks, began describing his world in paint. It turned out he has an innate ability to mix colours and create amazing works of art that reflect his vision of his world and the world around him. At 23 he was on the Today show as an artist, at 24, he returned to the Today show and was featured on New Year’s Day as their most inspirational story of the year.

Seth regularly flies to New York to paint with Kip Jacobs, a bold, edgy, accomplished artist, creating Manhattan cityscapes and mobiles. Friendly, cheerful and optimistic, Seth wants his art to travel the world. He has had solo exhibitions in Galapagos, the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands, and Curaçao. Seth’s paintings went to the United Nations and to the Museum of Modern Art of the Ukraine in Kiev. In the United States, he has opened at Dartmouth, the Cleveland Clinic, and twice at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Seth is thrilled to have his art on a United Nations stamp!

Seth had the following to say about his “Mythic Creatures Mural” painting: “This painting feels peaceful and gleeful. I feel happy about this Painting”!

To learn more about Seth visit [www.SethChwastArt.com](http://www.SethChwastArt.com)



### Alex Masket (U.S.A.) - “Untitled” Kinetic Blue

Alex Masket is a completely self-taught artist whose work is focused on the interaction of colour and form. Now 24 years old, Alex has severe autism, which greatly inhibits his ability to communicate verbally.

Alex is driven by his creative impulse and is completely unaffected by outside influences or the expectations and judgement of others. He began making sophisticated graphic compositions with Lego® bricks as a young child, and is still passionate about this art form. Alex has also garnered a great deal of attention for his mixed media works, which draw on his lifelong fascination with numbers and letters, and for his colour collages, which are noteworthy for the sense of movement he creates. His art ranges in size from small canvases to his largest creation – his duct-taped bedroom.

Since 2009, Alex’s art has been the subject of ten solo and five group exhibitions, including several shows in New York City. Two of his exhibitions featured a full sized, freestanding installation of his bedroom, complete with the original duct tape art.

Alex and his unique process are the focus of the award-winning documentary “Breaking Boundaries: the Art of Alex Masket”, by filmmaker Dennis Connors. The film has been touring the United States, Mexico and Canada for the past two years.

To learn more about Alex visit [www.alexmasket.com](http://www.alexmasket.com)