



*Some of the staff at the Nobel Museum in their new offices at Kungl. Myntkabinettet discussing various design proposals for the Centennial Exhibition. From left to right: Dr. Olov Amelin, Senior Curator; Kersti Johnson, Chief Administrator; Fredrik Skog, Curator; Marika Hedén, Curator; Dr. Ulf Larsson, Senior Curator. (Photo Lars Falck)*

## A Mission Statement for the Nobel Museum

Editorial note: Professor Roald Hoffmann, who shared the Nobel Prize in chemistry in 1981 with Kenichi Fukui, has most kindly put down his thoughts on a mission statement for the emerging Nobel Museum. The editors are grateful for Professor Hoffmann's permission to publish this in the Newsletter of the Nobel Museum.

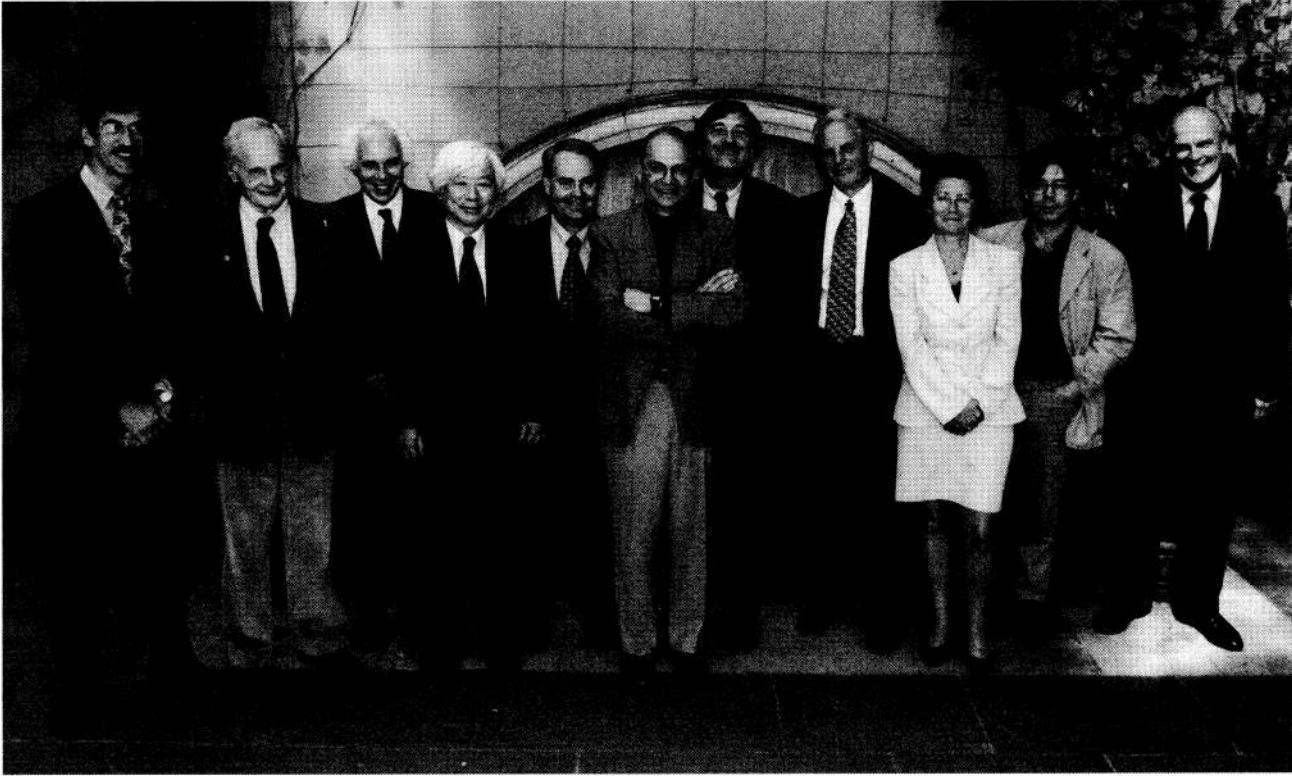
»A museum is a veritable time machine. It is an arrow pointing back in time, turning itself, pointing into the future. A museum preserves the past and interprets it for its visitors. In that action it shapes the lives of those, especially young people, who will create the future.

But a Nobel Museum is special. Let me try to explain. Human beings are capable of great cruelty and destruction. And of acts of sublime creation, and of caring service to others. The century of the Nobel Prizes, the century just ended, gives us ample evidence of both the terror and the beauty of human action.

It is much harder to acclaim than to condemn (witness not only the press, but the subject matter of poetry!). But, as Rilke and Ecclesiastes wrote, there is a time to praise. And the institution of the Nobel Prizes, uniquely in the 20th century, has praised. Yes, individuals, from countries. But much more importantly it has praised beauty, understanding, good for others, knowledge of the beautiful (and terrible) world within us and around us.

The Nobel Prizes recognize artistic and scientific ideas, knowledge and understanding. Artifacts too – accelerators, therapeutic techniques, molecules that heal or may hurt, books and poems. But the ideas more than the objects are what the Nobel Institution celebrates.

Most museums preserve and interpret objects. A Nobel Museum's mission is unique: its 'acquisitions' are just those ideas that have served human beings and given them understanding and spiritual, yes, spiritual satisfaction. It is not at all evident how one might transmit to the future the intangible, the stuff of the mind. The way of preserving and passing on ideas – stronger than any can-



*The first meeting of the International Advisory Committee of the Centennial Exhibition was held in late May 1999 at the Nobel Foundation. Left to right: Professor Robert Friedel, Professor Thomas P. Hughes, Museum Director James A. Bennett, Professor Hiroyuki Yoshikawa, Professor Paolo Galluzzi (Chair), Professor John Heilbron, Museum Director Prof. Dr. Wolf Peter Fehlhammer, Dr. Bernard S. Finn, Museum Director Dominique Ferriot, Dr. Simon Schaffer, Museum Director Sir Neil Cossons. (Photo Lars Falck)*

non, more precious than any royal treasure or painting – must be inherently different from that of objects. I think it must be through the widest dissemination of ideas, across cultures, in every possible medium.

A Nobel Museum recognizes and praises the best in human beings.«

*Roald Hoffmann*

### Cooperation between Teknikens Hus (Luleå Science Center) and the Nobel Museum

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An important part of the Nobel Foundation's Centennial Exhibition is the activity intended to involve schoolchildren aged 10 and upwards. The Nobel Museum wishes to interest pupils in science, literature, peace studies, and

economics. The pupils need to understand how enjoyable, inspiring, exciting, and important it is to work in these fields.

To develop this side of the Centennial Exhibition the Nobel Foundation has turned to the Science Center in Luleå, »Teknikens Hus«, which has many years of experience in museum education for schoolchildren. Teknikens Hus is now in the process of developing a mobile exhibition addressed to pupils aged 10 to 15. The idea, then, is that this mobile exhibition, »the Nobile«, will visit schools in the Stockholm area and provide the basis for projects involving the pupils, their teachers, and the instructors at the Nobel Museum. A visit to the Centennial Exhibition at the Stockholm Stock Exchange is also included in the project. The Nobel Museum wants the Nobel theme to serve as an inspiration to teachers in the long term as well.

The theme of the mobile exhibition, like that of the