



PRESS RELEASE August 15, 2002

Swedish stamps judged world-class

Sweden Post Stamps went nose to nose with the world's premier postage stamp printers recently, clinching two prestigious philatelic honors. The two awards—for best overall stamp and best intaglio stamp—were presented to Sweden Post Stamps at the GPSPC conference in Seoul.

- I'm extremely honored and thrilled that industry experts have acknowledged and shown appreciation for our stamps, says Sweden Post Stamps' head of production, Sicco Scheen, who participated in the conference.

The *Great Deeds by Swedish Kings*, issued in 2000, was named best combination-printed stamp and also received the Award of Excellence for the best stamp overall. The Swedish stamp featuring 1996 Nobel Prize Winner in Literature, Wislawa Szymborska, from the Nobel 2000 stamp issue was named best intaglio stamp. Czeslaw Slania, who has engraved stamps for Posten for over 40 years, engraved both stamps.

GPSPC (Government Postage Stamp Printers' Conference) is an international conference for printers of postage stamps. The conference includes a competition portion where participants vote for the best stamps in six printing classes. 14 printers competed at this year's conference.

- Swedish stamps are the result of collaboration at many levels, originating with the initial idea, design, and engraving and culminating with the printed stamp, says Sicco Scheen. In Sweden, we have the advantage of carrying out the entire process under one roof at Posten.

An intaglio (or recess) engraving involves hand cutting a series of lines, dots and crosshatches into soft metal to create highlights, shadows and contours. The engraver produces a mirror-image of the final stamp, the depth of the cuts determining the amount of ink the plate will hold and hence the tone of the printed image. For printing, copies of the engraving are created on the printing plate or cylinder. In combination printing, the background is printed in offset.

The GPSPC is held once every two years. Swedish stamps also received two awards at the previous conference in Rome.

High-resolution images for publication may be downloaded from the Press Room at www.posten.se

Images:

The Award of Excellence in Seoul went to Czeslaw Slania's already award-laden 1000th stamp, which features a ceiling painting from Drottningholm's castle.

This Swedish stamp, featuring an exquisite portrait of Polish poet Wislawa Szymborska, from the Nobel 2000 stamp issue was one of the winners in Seoul.

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