

PRESS KIT

Panorama Switzerland

15.8.25 —
11.1.26

FROM CASPAR
WOLF TO
FERDINAND
HODLER

**KUNST
MUSEUM
BERN**

With the support of:



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Bern



To coincide with the coming autumn exhibition *Kirchner x Kirchner* (12.9.2025–11.1.2026), Kunstmuseum Bern is showing an extensive display of works of Swiss art from the Museum's collection. Featuring selected works by artists from Caspar Wolf to Ferdinand Hodler, between 15 August 2025 and 11 January 2026 *Panorama Switzerland* opens up a unique overview of three centuries of Swiss art.

Panorama of Swiss art

Swiss art forms a significant focus in the Kunstmuseum Bern's collection. The presentation of works from the collection, *Panorama Switzerland*, examines selected aspects of visual art in Switzerland from the late 18th to the early 20th century, and also represents important groups of works from the collection of paintings. The occasion for this comprehensive show is this year's autumn exhibition in Kunstmuseum Bern, devoted to Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880–1938). From 1917 the German Expressionist painter drew inspiration and new motifs from his chosen homeland of Switzerland. With his intensely colourful mountain landscapes from Davos, Kirchner deliberately placed himself within an artistic tradition which at that point extended from the minor Swiss masters to Ferdinand Hodler.

The exhibition of works from the Kunstmuseum Bern's collection includes Symbolist figure paintings from Arnold Böcklin to Ferdinand Hodler, genre scenes from Albert Anker to Max Buri, impressive mountain landscapes from Caspar Wolf to Albert Müller, as well as aspects of bourgeois leisure pursuits from Cuno Amiet to Martha Stettler, opening up a wide panorama of Swiss artists and motifs.

Longings and hidden realities

Kunstmuseum Bern has a high-quality collection of Symbolist representations from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In these figurative paintings, Swiss artists tried to go beyond realistic depictions to reveal hidden truths and emotions. Dance-like movements and rapt gestures, for example were intended to express *joie de vivre* or a sense of oneness with nature, as in Giovanni Giacometti's painting *Das Erwachen* (1919/1920). The longing for a spiritual connection between humanity and nature, against a background of industrialisation,

urbanisation and mechanisation in all areas of life, is characteristic of the turn-of-the-century spirit.

Also falling under the heading of Symbolism, however, were new compositions that moved away from naturalistic representation. At the end of the 19th century, as a counterreaction to the prevailing rationalist image of the world and the dominant position of science, a new attitude came into being, one that questioned visible reality and the power of reason. In Swiss art this brought about a new interest in the 'Other': in the unconscious, the uncanny and the instinctive, in dream and hypnosis, physical and mental illnesses, spirituality and the esoteric, myths and legends. In this field, the leading works of the Kunstmuseum Bern collection include Ferdinand Hodler's painting *Die Nacht* [The Night] (1889–1890) and Arnold Böcklin's *Meeresstille* [Calm Sea] (1887). While Böcklin's work draws on mythology for its inspiration, Hodler created a timeless allegory for his terrifying vision of death.

The realities of Swiss life

In the second half of the 19th century many Swiss representatives of realism also engaged with the theme of transience. Death was often depicted as a part of the reality of everyday life, for example in Albert Anker's *Die kleine Freundin* [The Little Girl Friend] (1862). Alongside religious themes, which retained their popularity, new motifs also make an appearance in genre painting. One particularly sober example of this is Annie Stebler-Hopf's painting *Am Seziertisch* (ca. 1889), which shows an interest in illnesses that is typical of the time, and lends expression to the achievements and methods of medicine.

The second half of the 19th century saw a growth in representations of the milieu of farmers and workers. Farmers and manual workers are shown at work, at rest and merrymaking. The agricultural population embodied a lifestyle that was close to nature, modest and diligent, and which was elevated to an important component of national identity. One example of this is Ferdinand Hodler's iconic composition *Der Holzfäller* [The Woodcutter] (1910).

Ode to the Alps

A typical feature of Switzerland, the Alpine landscape is also a major theme in Swiss art. The Alps became a focus for artists after they were subject to scientific study in the Baroque era. For the first time, artists ventured into the inhospitable heights to make precise reproductions of peaks, glaciers and mountain lakes. One of these was Caspar Wolf, now considered one of the pioneers of landscape painting.

From as early as the mid-18th century, the Alps also became a tourist destination. In art, in parallel with this, genre scenes were made featuring cowherds, alpine huts and wanderers, with the almost untouched mountain landscape stylised into an idyllic place of retreat. Over the course of the 19th century artists of the Romantic movement such as Alexandre Calame emphasised the awe-inspiring impression of the Alps with dramatically stormy atmospheres and lighting effects. In the modern age, alpine painting underwent a further development as artists adopted more abstract approaches. Ferdinand Hodler was particularly important in renewing the genre: his works continue to shape the image of the Swiss landscape into the present day.

Curator

Anne-Christine Strobel

With the support of

Kanton Bern

Media tour

We cordially invite you to an individual media tour with **curator Anne-Christine Strobel** at the Kunstmuseum Bern.

To arrange your appointment please contact press@kunstmuseumbern.ch.

Digital Guide

There is a freely accessible Digital Guide to accompany the exhibition. It can be accessed from Wednesday, 13 August 2025 via QR code or guide.kunstmuseumbern.ch/en/panorama-schweiz.



Press images

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01

Franz Niklaus König

Der Staubbach im Lauterbrunnental

[The Staubbach Falls in the Lauterbrunnen Valley], 1804

Oil on canvas

136,2 × 108 cm

Kunstmuseum Bern, Bernische

Kunstgesellschaft, Bern

Donation from the heirs of Mrs Sulzberg-König, Frauenfeld



02

Caspar Wolf

Die Schwarze Lütschine, aus dem

Unteren Grindelwaldgletscher

entspringend, 1777

Oil on canvas

54 × 82 cm

Kunstmuseum Bern, Verein der Freunde

Acquisition with funds from the bequest of Anna Adele Burkhart-Gruner



03

Giovanni Giacometti

Das Erwachen, 1919/1920

Oil on canvas

200 × 135 cm

Kunstmuseum Bern, Verein der Freunde



04

Ferdinand Hodler

Die Nacht [The Night], 1889-1890

Oil on canvas

116 × 299 cm

Kunstmuseum Bern, Staat Bern

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05

Arnold Böcklin

Meeresstille [Calm Sea], 1887

Tempera and varnish paint on wood

103 × 150 cm

Kunstmuseum Bern



06

Albert Anker

Die kleine Freundin [The Little Girl Friend], 1862

Oil on canvas

79 × 94 cm

Kunstmuseum Bern, Staat Bern



07

Annie Stebler-Hopf

Am Seziertisch (Professor Poirier, Paris), around 1889

Oil on canvas

114 × 147 cm

Kunstmuseum Bern

Donation by the spouse from the artist's estate



08

Martha Stettler

Le parc [The Park], around 1910

Oil on canvas

81 × 116,3 cm

Kunstmuseum Bern

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09

Ferdinand Hodler

Der Holzfäller [The Woodcutter], 1910

Oil on canvas

262 × 212 cm

Deposit of the Swiss Confederation,
Bundesamt für Kultur, Bern



10

Albert Müller

Bergwald [Mountain Forest], 1925

Oil on canvas

112,3 × 113,7 cm

Kunstmuseum Bern

Donation Schweiz. Volksbank, Bern



11

Ferdinand Hodler

Das Jungfraumassiv von Mürren aus
[Jungfrau from Mürren], 1911

Oil on canvas

60 × 90 cm

Deposit of the Swiss Confederation,
Bundesamt für Kultur, Gottfried Keller-
Stiftung, Bern

Current and upcoming exhibitions at the Kunstmuseum Bern

Marisa Merz. Ascoltare lo spazio / Listen to the Space

until 17 August 2025

Kunstmuseum Bern of the Future. The Architectural Competition

until 28 September 2025

Kirchner × Kirchner

12.9.2025–11.1.2026

Opening hours

Tuesday

10:00–20:00

Wednesday–Sunday

10:00–17:00

Monday closed

Contact

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Accreditation for media representatives

Admission to all exhibitions at the Kunstmuseum Bern is free for media representatives with a valid press card. Please fill in the digital accreditation form which you can either access via kunstmuseumbern.ch/en/press/media-accreditation or by screening the QR-Code before your visit.

