

CAPRI — SKAGEN — MONTE VERITÀ
30.10.26 — 31.1.27

JOURNEY INTO FREEDOM

PRESS KIT

**KUNST
MUSEUM
BERN**

With the support of:



Kanton Bern
Canton de Berne

Michael Ancher, Anna Ancher and Marie Krøyer out for a walk (detail, cut out), 1897, oil on canvas, 174 x 45.5 cm © Skagens Museum



Three places, one promise: freedom. Between 1830 and 1930 artists from all over Europe moved to the edges of the continent: to the island of Capri near Naples, to Skagen on the northern tip of Denmark and to Monte Verità in the Ticino. Far from the industrialised cities they sought a different life: closer to nature, closer to what they saw as ‘authentic’. The exhibition *Journey into Freedom. Capri – Skagen – Monte Verità*, which can be seen in the Kunstmuseum Bern from 30 October 2026 until 31 January 2027, follows this longing. Around sixty outstanding works, many of which have never been shown in Switzerland before, show both the utopian idyll and the sobering reality of everyday life.

In the early years of the 19th century, the technical inventions of the industrial revolution marked the transition from an agrarian to an industrial society, and introduced a profound social transformation in Europe. The steam engine, electrical technology and the railway led to a universal acceleration, products were made in factories rather than workshops, life in the country and in small towns made way for life in the cities. A small group of people, many of them artists and intellectuals, felt alienated in a disenchanted world informed by bourgeois constraints. They fled into alternative worlds where they hoped to find simpler and freer ways of life. The exhibition *Journey into Freedom. Capri – Skagen – Monte Verità* presents three such places of longing.

Utopia and reality

In the 19th century, Capri, Skagen and Monte Verità were barely frequented, and the few foreigners who ventured there were able to live outside social control. Beyond art, this meant that alternative lifestyles and social utopias could be tried out, subjects such as women’s emancipation, queer identity and a connection with nature moved into the centre, and a freer sexuality and more diverse gender roles could be explored.

The exhibition follows this artistic experiment and the yearnings associated with it. But it also emphatically shows the friction between utopia and reality: idyllic and idealised representations of landscape and people are juxtaposed with sobering naturalistic scenes from the everyday lives of the local population: fishermen who risk their lives, hard-working women, children and old people, poverty. Thus, specific local qualities become just as much apparent as the themes and motifs present in all three places.

Water, light, renewal

Capri, Skagen and Monte Verità are all distinguished by particular lighting conditions and a proximity to water. At the same time, Capri and Skagen are opposite poles to one another: in Capri, with its warm light and ancient Roman ruins, artists from Northern Europe sought a legendary Arcadia – not only as an idyll for shepherds, but as a place of ecstasy, physicality and unleashed joie de vivre. For them, Capri provided scope for new ways of living that were pursued elsewhere: women painted and travelled independently, men loved men. Juxtaposed with them were the fishermen who cast their nets, pulled them out, mended them and cast them again. Although the growing tourism brought money, it did not eradicate poverty; it only made it more picturesque. Hence, alongside intensely coloured landscapes, the exhibition also features depictions of orange-pickers and agricultural labourers.

Until 1871, Skagen, where the North Sea and the Baltic meet, could only be reached by ship or via a field path, and after that by a narrow-gauge railway. Life in the poor fishing village was characterised by hard work, constant danger on the sea and the wind-lashed landscape. In this wild terrain, with its spectacular light, artists felt close to the elements. Aside from this experience of nature, they longed for 'authenticity' – unfiltered life. Portraits of fisherfolk and intimate scenes from everyday and family life provide impressive testimony to this.

Monte Verità is the youngest of the three colonies, and acts as a bridge between the poles of north and south: it is the stage for the back-to-nature *Lebensreform* movement. Around 1900, the founders of Monte Verità strove for a radical renewal of the relationship between humanity and nature, for the dissolution of the individual into the community and hence for a free, ideal and creative society. The works in this context are intensely colourful, expressionistic and partially abstract. They tell stories of escapes and new beginnings.

The exhibition invites the viewer to discover these fascinating places with all their contradictions through the eyes of the artists.

Opening

The opening of the exhibition will take place on

Thursday 29 October 2026 from 18:30 (doors open at 18:00).

Admission to the exhibition is free on this evening.

Co-Curators

Livia Wermuth and Andreas Schwab

With the support of

Kanton Bern, UNIQA. Fine Art Insurance, Ursula Wirz-Stiftung, Ruth und Arthur Scherbarth Stiftung, Verein der Freunde Kunstmuseum Bern

Media preview

We cordially invite you to the media preview with co-curators Livia Wermuth and Andreas Schwab on Wednesday, **28 October 2026 at 10:00 at the Kunstmuseum Bern.**

Please register via press@kunstmuseumbern.ch.



Digital Guide

There is a freely accessible Digital Guide to accompany the exhibition. It can be accessed from Thursday, 28 October 2026 via QR code or guide.kunstmuseumbern.ch/en/reise-in-die-freiheit.

Exhibited Artists

Oswald Achenbach (1827–1905)
Anna Ancher (1859–1935)
Helga Ancher (1883–1964)
Michael Ancher (1849–1927)
Luise Begas-Parmentier (1841–1920)
Emmanuel Benner (1836–1896)
Oscar Björck (1860–1929)
Karl Theodor Boehme (1866–1939)
Karl Willhelm Diefenbach (1851–1913)
Holger Drachmann (1846–1908)
Hans Peter Feddersen (1848–1941)
Filippo Franzoni (1857–1911)
Gustav Gräser (1879–1958)
Alexej von Jawlensky (1864–1941)
Viggo Johansen (1851–1935)
Christian Krohg (1852–1925)
Marie Krøyer (1867–1940)
P. S. Krøyer (1851–1909)
Käte Lassen (1883–1964)
Karl Lindemann-Frommel (1819–1891)
Carl Locher (1851–1915)
Elise Mahler (1856–1924)
Friedrich Missfeldt (1874–1969)
Emilie Mundt (1842–1922)
Edmond-Jean de Pury (1845–1911)
Louis Léopold Robert (1794–1835)
Susanne Schwob (1888–1967)
Marianne Stokes (1855–1927)
Friedrich Thöming (1802–1873)
Bertha Wegmann (1847–1926)
Marianne von Werefkin (1870–1938)

Press images

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01

Michael Ancher

Anna Ancher and Marie Krøyer at Skagen Sønderstrand, 1897

Oil on canvas

47,4 × 45,3 cm

Skagens Museum



02

Anna Ancher

Plucking geese, 1904

Oil on canvas

55 × 67 cm

Statens Museum for Kunst/National Gallery of Denmark



03

Anna Ancher

A Girl in the Garden in Summertime. Skagen, 1914

Oil on canvas

35 × 28 cm

Skagens Museum



04

Oscar Björck

Skagen Fishermen Smoking Pipes, 1889

Oil on Canvas

112 × 86,5 cm

Museum Kunst der Westküste, Alkersum/Föhr

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05

Holger Drachmann

Rocky Coast, n. d.

Oil on canvas

47 × 66,5 cm

Skagens Museum



06

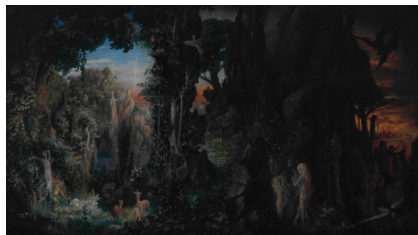
Filippo Franzoni

Undergrowth with Spring and Nudes (Monte Verità), 1900-1903

Oil on canvas

61 × 41 cm

Collezione della Città di Locarno



07

Gustav Gräser

Der Liebe Macht [The Power of Love], 1898/1899

Oil on canvas

107 × 187 cm

Monte Verità Museum Complex, Casa Anatta, Ascona



08

Alexej von Jawlensky

Variation: Herbstlicht, [Variation: Autumn light] 1919

Oil on canvas-textured cardboard

52,6 × 42,8 cm

Kunstmuseum Bern, donation of Livia Klee, Bern, 2001

Photo: Kunstmuseum Bern



09

Christian Krohg

Port your Helm!, 1879

Oil on canvas

99 × 70 cm

Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design, Oslo

Photo: Børre Høstland

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10

Peder Severin Krøyer

Italian workers in Atrani near Amalfi, 1890

Oil on wood

23,8 x 32,8 cm

Skagens Museum



11

Käte Lassen

Three women on the Beach, 1909

Oil on canvas

168 x 140 cm

Museumsberg Flensburg

Photo: Museumsberg Flensburg



12

Elise Mahler

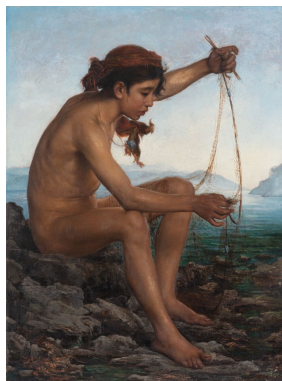
The Faraglioni, 1903/04

Oil on canvas

54,5 x 85 cm

Museumsberg Flensburg

Photo: Museumsberg Flensburg



13

Edmond de Pury

Capri Fisherman, n. d.

Oil on canvas

123 x 91,3 cm

Musée d'art et d'histoire, Neuchâtel



14

Louis-Léopold Robert

Orange Pickers on Capri, 1824

Oil on canvas

47 x 37 cm

Aargauer Kunsthaus, deposit of the
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Culture, Gottfried Keller Foundation

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15

Susanne Schwob

Capri (verso: Seated girl, half-length),
1924

Watercolour on paper

23,5 × 35 cm

Kunstmuseum Bern, Bequest of
Susanne Schwob



16

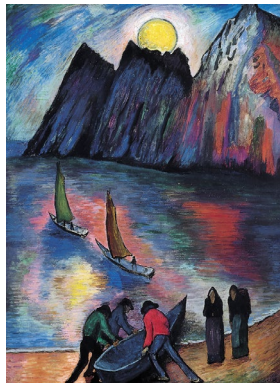
Friedrich Thöming

The Blue Grotto, around 1833

Oil on canvas

16 × 21 cm

Private collection



17

Marianne von Werefkin

The Great Moon, 1923

Tempera on paper mounted on
cardboard

75,5 × 77,5 cm

Museo Comunale d'Arte Moderna,
Ascona, Fondazione Marianne Werefkin

Current and upcoming exhibitions at the Kunstmuseum Bern

Franz Gertsch. Blow-Up (Part I)
until 17 January 2027

Journey into Freedom. Capri – Skagen – Monte Verità
30.10.2026–31.1.2027

Franz Marc. The Quest for a Better World
26.2.–4.7.2027

Opening hours

Tuesday
10:00–20:00

Wednesday–Sunday
10:00–17:00

Monday closed

On Thursday, **24 December 2026**, and Friday, **25 December 2026**, the Kunstmuseum Bern will be closed. On Monday, **28 December 2026**, the Kunstmuseum Bern will be open from 10:00–17:00.

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.