



## Press release

Bern, 8th June 2005

### The landmark of Lucerne on a commemorative coin

The Chapel bridge of Lucerne makes part of the most important historical monuments of Switzerland. Now *swissmint*, the Swiss federal mint, dedicates a 20 francs silver commemorative coin to the symbol of Lucerne. The coin was designed by the sculptor Hans-Peter von Ah. The "Chapel bridge Lucerne" special coin will be on sale as of today's day of issue: it is available from the official points of sale and from *swissmint*. The new silver coin with a legal tender of 20 Swiss francs makes part of the series "Famous Monuments" started in 2004.

The covered wooden walkway built in the 14th century linking both banks of the River Reuss at the point where it flows out of the lake was originally planned as part of the city defences. In the 17th century a series of painted panels was hung beneath the eaves. Today the bridge with its decorative paintings is the most famous landmark of Central Switzerland's metropolis. The 34-meter-high Water Tower, dating from the 13th century, was also originally part of the fortifications of Lucerne. Since then it has served as an archive, a prison and a torture chamber. It hardly seems possible now that back in 1870 the idea of demolishing the bridge was proposed. At that time, the spirit of the age was not well disposed towards historic architectural monuments. Moreover, fears were expressed that with the construction of the modern Seebrücke bridge, the lake outflow would be impeded by the consecutive bridges, which would lead to an increase in the risk of flooding.

At more than 650 years of age, the Chapel bridge ranks as the oldest wooden bridge in Europe. Had it not been for refurbishments at regular intervals, however, it would scarcely have withstood the centuries. Catastrophes involving severe damage to the Chapel bridge have been a regular feature of its eventful history. The most recent episode is still fresh in people's minds. In August 1993, a large part of the bridge was destroyed in a major fire. Thanks to an unparalleled effort, the missing section of the bridge was reconstructed within 8 months.

#### Culture promotion with *swissmint* special coins

Since 1974, *swissmint* has been issuing official Swiss commemorative coins every year. The profits from the sale of the coins, i.e. the "coin income", are used to support cultural projects throughout Switzerland.

#### Note for editors:

This text and photo material is available for downloading at:

<http://www.swissmint.ch/e/presse/index.shtml>

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**Press release, Commemorative coin "Chapel bridge Lucerne" - Annex**



Date of issue	8 <sup>th</sup> June 2005
Coin picture	Chapel bridge Lucerne
Artist	Hans-Peter von Ah, Ebikon
Face value	20 Swiss Francs
Alloy	Silver 0.835
Weight	20 g
Diameter	33 mm
Mintage	Standard coinage, uncirculated: max. 65,000 Proof coin in presentation case: max. 8,000
Coined by	swissmint, Official Mint of the Swiss Confederation, Bern
Prices	CHF 20 standard coinage CHF 50 proof coin in presentation case

**The artist: Hans-Peter von Ah**

Hans-Peter von Ah was born in Sachseln (OW) on 24th June 1941. From 1956 to 1959, he completed an apprenticeship as a wood sculptor while at the same time attending the Lucerne School of Art as a guest student. From 1960 to 1965, he attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna under Prof. Fritz Wotruba, graduating with a degree in academic sculpture. Since 1966, he has held the post of lecturer in three-dimensional design at the School of Design, a part of the Lucerne School of Art – today the Lucerne School for Art and Design. His work has been recognised with prizes from the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna in 1963 and the Pro Arte Bern Foundation in 1974. In addition to sculpture, his artistic spectrum covers sketches and watercolours, sculptures in public open spaces and choir room designs in old and new churches. Numerous contributions to exhibitions in Switzerland and abroad. Member of various commissions and committees, including the Federal Art Commission 1985 - 1996, Vice-president of the Lucerne Art Society since 1991.