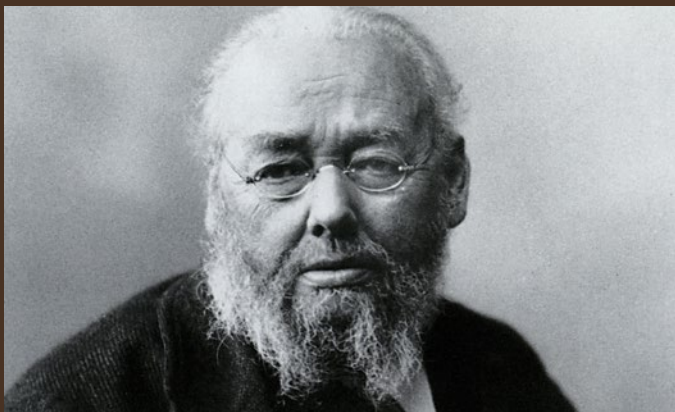


Rudolf Johann Koller

Born in Zurich on 21 May 1828, the painter attended the *Cantonal Industry School* in Zurich from 1840 to 1843 but left in favour of a course of study in drawing in Zurich. He set out to become a horse painter. In 1846/47 there followed a study visit to the Academy of Art in Dusseldorf where he struck up a friendship with Arnold Böcklin. After spells in Paris and Munich, in 1851 he settled down at the Zürichhorn, at that time still a rural area, purchasing a house there in 1862. As an animal painter, he kept various animals in order to be able to study them as carefully as possible. In 1868/69 he lived in Florence, Rome and Naples for half a year studying nature. From 1869, he taught in his studio. An eye condition increasingly affected his work. In 1873, at the height of his artistic skills, he received a commission from the Swiss North-East Railway which was seeking a gift for Alfred Escher, the retiring Chairman and father of the Gotthard tunnel which was under construction at that time. Koller, renowned for his romantic and realistic animal and landscape depictions, chose the Gotthard mail coach as his subject which was to become his most famous work. In 1898, Rudolf Koller was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Zurich. He died in Zurich on 5 January 1905.

Source: Wikipedia



Rudolf Koller 1888, photo: Rudolf Ganz

Characteristics

Effigy

«Gotthard Mail Coach»

Artist

In the style of Rudolf Koller

Technical data

Alloy: Gold 0.900

Weight: 11.29 g

Diameter: 25 mm

Legal face value

50 Swiss francs

Date of issue

6 June 2013

Mintage

Proof coin in presentation case:

max. 6000 coins



Coined and issued by

Federal Mint Swissmint

CH-3003 Bern

Tel. +41 (0)31 322 60 68 (Marketing)

Fax +41 (0)31 322 60 07

www.swissmint.ch

Official commemorative coin 2013

Gotthard Mail Coach



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Swissmint



Official commemorative coins

Each year, the Federal Mint Swissmint issues a small number of commemorative coins featuring carefully selected subjects. The coins in bimetal, silver and gold bear an official nominal value and are available in various minting qualities. The net proceeds from the sale of the coins are used to promote cultural projects throughout Switzerland.

Gotthard Mail Coach

For many years, the Schöllenen gorge formed an insurmountable barrier on the route over the Gotthard Pass. The opening-up of the Schöllenen gorge by means of the Twärenbrücke bridge – a walkway alongside the vertical cliff face – as well as the construction of the first wooden bridge over the River Reuss (The Devil's Bridge) and the two to three metre wide mule track surfaced with gravel and granite slabs helped the Gotthard Pass enjoy a rapid boom in the 13th century. Since its creation, the old mule track dating from the Middle Ages had been gradually improved so that by the end of the 18th century, sections were also passable by the Gotthard mail coaches.

In 1830, the new Gotthard road was opened and by 1831 as many as 900 mail coaches rolled over the pass. A regular service operated three times a week in each direction between Flüelen and Chiasso using small one-horse carriages with two or three seats. The heyday of the Gotthard mail coaches only began in 1842 however with the introduction of a daily five horse, ten-seat coach in each direction. The journey from Como to Flüelen took almost 23 hours. Whereas there were still only two mail coach connections a week in 1835, from 1849 a twice daily service was already in operation. With the opening of the Gotthard railway in 1882, the Gotthard mail coaches lost importance overnight. From then on, travellers and goods were conveyed by rail through the newly constructed Gotthard tunnel, dispensing with the need for the arduous and hazardous journeys over the pass.

Source: Wikipedia

Photo: Gotthardpost by Rudolf Koller, © Kunsthaus Zürich