



The coin

The obverse portrays the old town of Bern, reduced to the quintessential contours. The bridges and the Minster appear particularly striking. At the top, the inscription «BERNER ALTSTADT» is shown in one line.

An image of the upper part of the old town with the Clock Tower dominates the centre of the reverse. As on the obverse, the artist has again reduced the image to the most important lines. At the top, parallel to the edge, is the inscription «2003 HELVETIA», with the country name broken by the top of the tower. At the bottom is the nominal value, «20 FR», and below it the mint mark «B».



Characteristics

Subject of the coin

«Old town of Bern»

Artist

Franz Fedier, Bern

Technical data

Alloy: Silver 0.835

Weight: 20 g

Diameter: 33 mm

Legal value

20 Swiss francs

Date of issue

5th June 2003

Mintage

Standard coinage, uncirculated:

max. 75 000 coins

Proof coin in presentation case:

max. 10 000 coins

Coined and issued by

swissmint

Official Mint of the

Swiss Confederation

CH-3003 Bern

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2003



Old town of Bern

SERIES

WORLD HERITAGE

A splendid piece of Switzerland

The commemorative coins of Switzerland are designed by important native artists. Elegant, valuable and timeless, they epitomise the country's solid cultural heritage. As tasteful collectors' pieces available at attractive prices, they are also extremely popular. The commemorative coins have a legal face value and are minted in limited series. The net profit from their sales is used by the Confederation to promote cultural projects in Switzerland.

The old town of Bern

The old town of Bern holds an unfathomable fascination for visitors staying in Switzerland's capital for the first time. Is it the virtually endless, romantic arcades lined with tasteful shops that captivate newcomers, or the historic fountains from the Middle Ages, or the unique rooftop skyline with its countless gables and chimneys? Who knows? Or perhaps it is the striking edifices such as the Minster, the Clock Tower or the Town Hall, which lend an air of grandeur and significance to what at first glance appears to be a rather provincial town. In any case, the idyllically located old town with its typical sandstone façades seems to leave no-one indifferent. Contributing

to this is the unparalleled view of the high Alps during good weather and the constant presence of the River Aare, that meanders around the old town.

Founded in 1191 by Berchtold V of Zähringen, Bern figures among the most splendid examples of mediaeval urban development in Europe. The main section of the city was renovated in the Baroque style during the 18th century, but was able to preserve its original character. For this reason, UNESCO included the old town of Bern in its list of World Cultural Heritage Sites in 1983.

The artist

Franz Fedier was born in Erstfeld on 17th February 1922. After his schooling, he completed an apprenticeship as a painter in Brugg from 1939 - 1941 and for one semester attended the School of Applied Arts in Lucerne. In 1945, he moved to Bern where he worked as a draughtsman in a publicity office. After that, he studied in Paris at the «Grande Chaumière» Academy, the «Fernand Léger» Academy and the «Atelier 17», with Stanley W.

Hayter. Since 1952, Franz Fedier has been an independent painter in Bern. He is known as one of the leading exponents of abstract painting in Switzerland. Between 1966 and 1987, he headed the painting classes at the Basel Design School. From 1987 – 1992, he was the Chairman of the Federal Art Commission. Numerous exhibitions in Switzerland and abroad. His oeuvre covers oil and acrylic painting, lithography, silk-screen printing, collages, wall murals and art on buildings.

