MEDIA RELEASE
The museum at a glance

Rooted in Bern – connected to the world

The Bernisches Historisches Museum is one of the most important Museums of cultural history in Switzerland. Its collections of history, archaeology and ethnography include approximately 500,000 objects dating from the Stone Age to the present and representing cultures from all over the world. The hydria from Grächwil, the Burgundian tapestries, the diptych from Königsfelden and a series of ethnographical objects as well as coins and medals are all of international renown. Besides these highlights, the permanent exhibitions of the Bernisches Historisches Museum also include the spectacular Bernese sculptures, two Bernese mayoral thrones and much more. The integrated Einstein Museum offers an account of the life and work of the physicist and places it in a fascinating manner in the context of world history. Temporary exhibitions are regularly staged in the generously proportioned exhibition hall.

Exhibitions: insight into past times and foreign cultures
The permanent exhibitions of the Bernisches Historisches Museum give visitors an understanding of a number of different epochs and cultural spheres. They are a key to the history of Bern, allowing a comparison between the Bernese way of life and that of other societies. The scope of the triple-branch institution ranges from the Late Stone Age to the present. The archaeological exhibition shows the most important prehistoric periods from the Late Stone Age to the Celts to the Roman conquest of the Alpine region. The historical department presents the changes that occurred from the Early Middle Ages to the Ancien Régime to the 20th century. The ethnographical displays are dedicated to Asia, Oceania, Ancient Egypt, the North American Indians and the Islamic cultures from North Africa to Central Asia.

Highlights: Exhibits of world renown
The collections of the Museum comprise exhibits of world renown including the hydria from Grächwil, a Greek bronze luxury vessel, the precious grave offerings of a Bronze Age leader from Thun and the mysterious Roman bronze figurine of the bear goddess Dea Arto. The highlights also include a sensational assemblage of Late Gothic stone sculptures from the Cathedral in Bern. These had fallen victim to iconoclastic riots during the reformation and were only rediscovered in 1986. The millefleurs tapestry from the legendary Burgundian Booty belongs to one of the most important collections of late medieval tapestries worldwide. The Königsfelden diptych is both a rare and outstanding masterpiece of 13th century Venetian goldsmith’s art. Unique within Europe are two mayoral thrones from the 18th century which strikingly represent the claim to power of the Municipal Republic of Bern. Particularly impressive objects from cultures outside Europe are an Hawaiian feather cloak and feather helmet traded on one of James Cook’s expeditions, a collection of Japanese screens and a tobacco pipe that once belonged to the legendary Chief Sitting Bull.
Einstein Museum: follow in the footsteps of a genius
Albert Einstein lived in Bern in 1905 when his theory of relativity turned perceptions of space and time upside down. The Einstein Museum in the Bernisches Historisches Museum commemorates this outstanding event. Elaborately staged originals as well as written material and film documents illustrate the life of the genius while at the same time highlighting the great themes of world history at the time. Animated films illustrate his groundbreaking physical theories.
An audio guide in nine languages, inductive headphones and a video guide for the deaf and hearing-impaired make the Einstein Museum accessible to a wider audience from all over the world.

Symbiosis of tradition and modernity
The time-honoured main building, a castle built in the historicist style in 1894, is located in the centre of the City of Bern in a listed park. A modern annex which opened in 2009 adopts the shapes and colours of the old building while still maintaining a distinct contemporary contrast. The relationship between the two buildings is at the same time exciting and harmonious. This makes them a symbol of the Bernisches Historisches Museum which strives to bring together the people of today with history and other cultures, the past and the unfamiliar.

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