

## Room 3–4: Multifaceted Emmental. Art from the municipalities of the Regional Conference

### INTRODUCTION

In the spring/summer of 2025, the Museum Franz Gertsch, at the suggestion of the Cultural Commission of the Regional Conference Emmental, which has supported the museum since 2021, will present an exhibition on artistic creation from the Emmental. The exhibition will showcase artworks by Emmental artists or works related to the Emmental, primarily from the possession of the 39 municipalities that have joined the Regional Conference. The exhibition spans a wide range of well-known representatives from the 19th/20th centuries to more recent and contemporary art in mediums such as painting, watercolour, drawing, printmaking, photography, object art, sculpture, and ceramics.

*Featuring works by Andreas Althaus, Hansueli Anliker, Cuno Amiet, Alfred Bachmann, Oliviu Beldeanu, Manuel Burgener, Max Buri, Henri Georges Delacour, Ueli Dolder, Heinz Egger, Erika Fankhauser Schürch, Hans Gartmeier, Werner Gfeller, Jürg Grünig, Roland Kämpf, Sangwoo Kim, Hans Kohler, Selina Lutz, Rebecca Maeder, Willi Meister, Peter Merz, Ueli Mürner, Werner Neuhaus, Hans Nussbaumer, Ernst Purtschert, Aschi Rüfenacht, Jakob Siegenthaler, Hans Stalder, Margrit Stalder, Fritz Steffen und Ruth Steiner.*

Founded in 2013, the Regional Conference Emmental (RCE) represents a coalition of 39 municipalities in Emmental, working toward an appealing living, economic, and recreational environment. It takes on tasks delegated to it by the Canton of

Bern. RCE acts as the voice of Emmental's municipalities and advocates for future-oriented, inter-municipal, and efficient solutions. Geographically, the Regional Conference spans from Schangnau through Langnau and Burgdorf to Bätterkinden, Utzenstorf, and Zielesbach. Lower Emmental is part of the Central Plateau, while upper Emmental, with its renowned hilly landscape, belongs to the Napf Mountain Region.

Culturally, Emmental is highly diverse. Together with the local municipalities and the Canton, the Regional Conference supports seven cultural institutions of at least regional significance. In addition to the Museum Franz Gertsch, RCE supports the following institutions: Casino Theater Burgdorf, Museum Schloss Burgdorf, Burgdorf City Library, Regional Museum Chüechlihus, Langnau Regional Library in Emmental, and the Gotthelf Center Lützelflüh.

Through this exhibition, the Museum Franz Gertsch provides a platform for collections and the diverse artistic creations from Emmental's municipalities within its premises, and conveys these to a wide audience through a versatile event program.

The exhibition was curated by Anna Wesle and Catharina Vogel.

We thank the lenders and the artists involved in the exhibition for their textual contributions, such as quotes and statements about their work and

the exhibited pieces, which they made available to us for the content of this exhibition leaflet. Additionally, information and passages from the exhibition curators were included.

### EXHIBITION TOUR

#### Room 3

The exhibition begins with atmospheric photographs of Emmental landscapes by Ernst Purtschert, alongside painted landscape views from Emmental by Peter Merz, also displayed in this room.

The large-scale photographs by **Ernst Purtschert**, applied directly to the wall, were created for the multimedia project **“Die Emme... ein zorniger Fluss... ohne Quelle! [The Emme... an angry river... without a source!]”** (2016–2018) and bear titles like “Gegenlicht im Nebel auf dem Ahorn [Backlight in Mist on the Ahorn]”, “Wintermorgen [Winter Morning]”, “Berner Alpen von Rafrüti Lüderenalp [Bernese Alps from Rafrüti Lüderenalp]”, “Sommerabend Aemmebire Aefligen [Summer Evening Aemmebire Aefligen]”, “Napf Herbst [Napf Autumn]”, “Schangnau Morgen [Schangnau Morning]”, “Lueg Morgen [Lueg Morning]”, or “Bäume Herbst Eggwil [Trees Autumn Eggwil]”. Ernst Purtschert writes that he once read the phrase: “The Emme not only gives its valley its name, but it also shapes a beautiful part of the

## Room 3–4: Multifaceted Emmental. Art from the municipalities of the Regional Conference

feeling of life here!” He often photographs in this region and has encountered this “feeling of life” many times. “The Emmental is unique – no matter how often I visit the same place, it is never the same and never boring!” Regarding his work, the photographer states: “Being out in nature in the most beautiful morning and evening light, and photographing the landscape in extraordinary light, is a very special fascination. [...] With the creation of a multimedia presentation, I can realize and present photographic ideas in a special way.” Starting from 2018, Ernst Purtschert has been able to present this multimedia project several times, including in 2020, 2022, and 2024 at the “Kunst-Hand-Werk” (Art-Craft-Work) event at Knubel, Eggwil.

The two brightly coloured paintings by **Peter Merz** on the opposite wall depict locations in the Emmental. The painting “**Frühling an der Ilfis [Spring on the Ilfis]**” (2016) captures the atmosphere of awakening nature in the Emmental. The Ilfis, a river flowing through the region, serves as a central element and symbolizes the life and permanence of the landscape. In the foreground, blooming trees and shrubs frame the view of a characteristic Emmental farm scene. Trubschachen, located near the Ilfis, is reflected in this work with its rural idyll and harmonious connection to nature. The painting invites viewers to consciously appreciate the beauty and tranquility of the region and to value the interaction between humans and the landscape.

The painting “**Trub Zürcherhaus Sommer [Trub Zürcherhaus Summer]**” (2016) showcases the

warm and inviting atmosphere of a typical summer day in the Emmental. At its centre is the Zürcherhaus in Trub, nestled in a hilly landscape dominated by vibrant yellow and orange tones. This colour palette brings the summer of the region to life. The clear shapes and composition direct the viewer’s attention to the details of rural life: winding paths, trees in full foliage, and the characteristic architecture of Emmental farmhouses. Trub, one of the traditional communities in the Emmental, is portrayed here in its originality and tranquility. Merz translates traditional themes and views of the Emmental into a modern visual language.

Quotes from the participants about “their” Emmental cover one wall of the exhibition as inscriptions. At the end of the tour, visitors also have the opportunity to put their relationship with the Emmental into words, allowing them to engage interactively and emotionally with the exhibition.

### Room 4

In the next hall, alongside loans from various communities, there are several works from the art collection of the city of Burgdorf, which includes around 700 pieces. This largest municipality of the Regional Conference received its first works as gifts from local companies as well as citizens in the 1930s and 1940s and has been systematically collecting art since 1981. The collection focuses on artists from Burgdorf and the region, but also includes Swiss artists who have exhibited in Burgdorf galleries or spent several months in artist residencies in Burgdorf.

Chronologically, the exhibition begins with landscapes and self-portraits by Cuno Amiet and Max Buri. The view from the Lueg pass summit, which was observed as a photograph in Room 3, now reappears here as a painting.

**Cuno Amiet** is represented with four works from the Burgdorf city art collection. The “**Kopfstudie Ferdinand Hodler [Head Study Ferdinand Hodler]**” is a partial study for one of the five frescoes (supraportes) in the auditorium of the Kirchenfeld Gymnasium in Bern, 1928. It was gifted to the city of Burgdorf in 1971 in memory of Adolf J. and Anny Luethi-Nabholz. The “**Selbstbildnis im Atelier [Self-Portrait in the Studio]**”, created at the age of 45 (1913), entered the collection in 1931 as a private donation, as did the painting “**Riedtwil und Umgebung [Riedtwil and Surroundings]**” (1924). The “**Aussicht von der Lueg [View from the Lueg]**” (1940) was purchased by the city of Burgdorf in 1992.

The portrait of an “**Oberhaslerin**” (around 1906) by **Max Buri** was a 1944 gift to the city of Burgdorf from local companies Aebi & Co, Alpina Käse, Bank in Burgdorf, Losinger AG, J. Lüthi + Co, Gebr. Stauffer AG, and Typon AG. In 1963, the city of Burgdorf acquired the “**Selbstbildnis [Self-Portrait]**” (1914), showing the painter at the age of 46, created the year before his death. The “**Gespräch (letztes Bild, unvollendet) [Conversation (Last Painting, Unfinished)]**” (1915) dates from the artist’s year of death.

## Room 3–4: Multifaceted Emmental. Art from the municipalities of the Regional Conference

Continuing the tour to the left of the entrance, this section features a small group of works centred around Schloss Thorberg (since 1893, a correctional facility in the municipality of Krauchthal), including documentary photographs by inmate Henri Georges Delacour and a sculpture created in prison by the Romanian anti-communist activist Oliviu Beldeanu.

From the photo series **“Thorberg between 1920 and 1930”** four historical photographs by **Henri Georges Delacour** from the collection of the Museum Krauchthal are displayed. Delacour was commissioned by Director Christian Baumgartner to document his living environment and its surroundings photographically. Until his pardon in 1931, Delacour photographed the Thorberg correctional facility, the artisanal and agricultural activities of the inmates, the village of Krauchthal, and the landscape around Thorberg. With around 100 photos, Delacour created a unique historical record of this special institution. The selected four photographs shown here depict: **“The Kitchen”**, **“The Tailoring Workshop”**, **“Potato Harvesting”** and **“The Exercise Yard”**. Delacour himself was also employed in the tailoring workshop, which primarily produced items for the military and the institution, but also for private individuals.

The exhibited sculpture **“Huttenträger”** (1957) is one of around thirty sculptures carved by Romanian citizen, freedom fighter, and patriot **Oliviu Beldeanu** during his imprisonment at Thorberg.

The sculpture was a gift to the director and could symbolize the heavily burdened Romanian people. Beldeanu and three associates occupied the Romanian embassy in Bern from February 14 to 16, 1955. This act was primarily a protest against the rising communist regime and its repressions in Romania. Furthermore, he sought to alert the West that, in his view, the embassy served espionage purposes. Following prolonged negotiations, the men were arrested and sentenced to four years of hard labour. After his early release, Beldeanu moved to Munich and East Berlin, from where he was abducted to Romania. There, after two years of harrowing imprisonment, he was executed in 1960. The 1957 annual report from Thorberg states: “Among the agreeable prisoners were the Romanians known for the attack on the Romanian legation in Bern. They worked cheerfully and were content with their situation. Prisoner O. B. even claimed that his time at Thorberg was one of the happiest periods of his life”. The book **“Between Gallows and Cross”** by Magda Neuweiler provides a detailed account of Oliviu Beldeanu’s life.

As the tour continues, visitors encounter various Emmental houses from the past and present (featuring works by Hansueli Anliker, Margrit Stalder, and Roland Kämpf, among others), as well as finely detailed to generously painted landscapes (by artists such as Werner Gfeller, Hans Gartmeier, Werner Neuhaus, Willi Meister, and Hans Nussbaumer).

The two lithographs **“Haselholz”** (1985) and **“Im Guetisberg”** (1984) by **Hansueli Anliker** depict typical Emmental landscapes with farmhouses. Thanks to his friendship with Werner Gfeller—also represented in the exhibition with a landscape painting—Anliker moved into a residence at the Grabenhalde house. There, he had a beautiful studio where many floral and landscape paintings were created. Initial scepticism among local residents soon faded when they recognized their own farms in the artwork.

Two watercolours by the Wynigen artist **Margrit Stalder** also feature Emmental motifs. Regarding her watercolour **“Winter im Emmental”** (2014), the artist writes: “The foundation of my watercolours are sketches made on-site and photographs. The execution is done at home. I repeatedly attended weekend courses in winter in Emmental with Heinz Kropf, Zollikerberg. Sitting in deep snow with ice crystals on my face, sketching groups of houses with pronounced light and shadow contrasts from a field chair, and later refining these in the warmth of the course room. Capturing the essentials, simplifying, giving mood to colour, and creating a compelling composition. Typically, I use very fine pencil outlines for the most critical points. Ideally, the watercolour execution happens in one go—adding, yes; correcting, difficult.”

The second featured work by Margrit Stalder was a commissioned piece titled **“de Wiud”** (2013), depicting “Haus zum Wilden Mann” in Wynigen. The clients were the house’s owners, Silas Bürgi-

## Room 3–4: Multifaceted Emmental. Art from the municipalities of the Regional Conference

Zentner and Alain Zentner. Regarding its creation, Stalder notes: “I had the opportunity to contribute to the renovation work on and inside the house. Using the smallest of brushes, I corrected tiny flaws on the façade from high up on scaffolding while philosophizing with Silas about life and beyond. The painting comes from Alain’s office at the EDI Bundeshaus West to this exhibition and will subsequently move to the Federal Chancellery, following Alain’s job transition. The watercolour was based on a photograph I took. It was sketched in pencil on watercolour paper and executed in realistic colours according to the clients’ specifications. I have never worked on a painting as extensively as this before or since.” The former inn “Gasthof zum Wilden Mann” is a splendid late Baroque building from 1790 that defines the townscape of Wynigen.

The mixed-media works by **Roland Kämpf** depict important buildings in Koppigen, such as the “**Friedau Koppigen**” (2023) and the “**Landi Koppigen**” (2023). This is the town where the artist has lived and worked for more than 30 years. Kämpf himself shares: “Drawing allows me to develop a deeper connection to objects and their history. For example, when I sketch a building during a vacation and later refine the drawing at home, I retain far more details and impressions compared to a quick phone photo. While sketching, I let the building and its surroundings affect me. Often, I start imagining a story about the object—who built it, how it was used, and what the people who lived there might have experienced.

During the sketching process, I focus entirely on the object. Afterwards, I take a few phone photos to include the surroundings. At home, I decide based on these photos which section of the image I will use. The refinement is done with a digital pencil on the iPad, combining traditional craftsmanship with modern technology. I am particularly fascinated by motifs with a strong connection to form and technique.”

The painting “**Schloss Trachselwald [Trachselwald Castle]**” (2012) by **Ueli Mürner** was acquired during an exhibition at the former Restaurant Bären in Heimisbach. The painting has since adorned the meeting room of the municipal council. For centuries, Schloss Trachselwald, the seat of 75 bailiffs, has stood atop a hill overlooking the village of Trachselwald. Its imposing presence inspired Ueli Mürner, who was born in Reichenbach, to capture it artistically.

The painting “**Hueb**” (1940) by **Werner Gfeller** was acquired by the municipality of Lützelflüh in 1990. The work was intended for the redesign of the municipal council chamber. In the municipal council records, it was referred to as “decor for the council chamber”. The painting depicts a section of the landscape from the Schaufelbühl Egg in the Schmiedshub area of the municipality of Lützelflüh. Werner Gfeller grew up with his two sisters in the Egg schoolhouse, where his parents taught. During his studies in Basel, Werner Gfeller met Werner Neuhaus, his future brother-in-law. The two Werners undertook various painting trips to

Provence. Gfeller’s main body of work was created in his studio in Meienacher, where from 1968 he was the teacher of Hansueli Anliker. The approximately 45 years older Gfeller taught Anliker painting techniques, and the two often painted together. Both Hansueli Anliker and Werner Neuhaus are represented by works in the exhibition.

The painter **Alfred Bachmann**, who lived in Kirchberg, captured the original appearance of the Dählmoos in 1940 in an impressive oil painting before the landscape was irretrievably lost due to exploitation and extraction. The painting “**Dählmoos Lyssach**” (1940) was created during the Second World War, when around 18,000 cubic meters of peat were excavated, dried, pressed into cubes, and sold to the citizens of Burgdorf as a substitute for disrupted coal imports from abroad. The excavations were carried out on behalf of the Burgdorf gasworks by the Losinger construction company. The distribution of the heating material “peat” was overseen by the Burgdorf gasworks. Extraction began in 1941 and ceased in 1946. The available peat deposits were almost exhausted, and demand was insufficient as other, now available fuels were sought after. The painting came into the possession of the municipality of Lyssach in August 2004 as a gift from Martin Bürgi of Kirchberg and Jürg Roth of Lyssach.

The municipality of Röthenbach in Emmental purchased the painting “**Znüni auf dem Feld [Morning Snack in the Field]**” (undated) by **Hans**

## Room 3–4: Multifaceted Emmental. Art from the municipalities of the Regional Conference

**Gartmeier** in 1988 from an inheritance. Descendants of Hans Gartmeier informed us: “The nature-inspired depictions of everyday life on homeland soil were meant to convey calm, joy, peace, and contemplation”. Hans Gartmeier’s homeland was Emmental. This landscape, with its valleys, heights, and solid farmhouses, offered him a wealth of motifs for his work, such as the large-format landscape “**Rüegsegg**” (circa 1970).

**Ueli Dolder** is represented in the exhibition with two landscape paintings: “**Spätsommer in den Buchsibergen. Blick auf den Jura bei Niederbipp [Late Summer in the Buchsi Hills. View of the Jura near Niederbipp]**” (September 2019) and “**Sonniger Winter. Im Senggen Eggiwil [Sunny Winter. In Senggen Eggiwil]**” (December 2000). Regarding the latter, which he describes as a quickly captured impression, he notes: “As I could hardly leave home due to caring for my bedridden mother, I was deeply inspired and impressed by the nearby surroundings of the Emmental.” He writes that he has lived in the Emmental since September 2000, adding: “The Emmental has always fascinated me – the hilly landscapes, with their beautiful atmospheres. The houses and their stories from Jeremias Gotthelf. And not least, that my hometown is Schangnau.”

Three small-scale landscape depictions by **Jakob Siegenthaler** from the Museum Krauchthal’s collection are on display: “**Frühling [Spring]**” (undated), “**Winterlandschaft [Winter Landscape]**”

(undated), and “**Sommerlandschaft [Summer Landscape]**” (1937). His subjects are mostly drawn from the immediate and wider surroundings of Krauchthal, as well as from the Grisons region and Ticino. His painting style reflects his character: delicate, pastel-coloured, transparent, never garish, but restrained, discreet, and simple in composition. During his teaching years from 1917 to 1943 in Hub/Krauchthal, he devoted his free time to painting, and after his retirement, he was able to pursue his great passion even more intensely.

The painting “**Im Wald (Nähe Oschwand) [In the Forest (Near Oschwand)]**” (1922/23) by the Emmental artist **Werner Neuhaus** was a gift to the city of Burgdorf on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Schoch AG company. Werner Neuhaus stayed with Cuno Amiet in Oschwand from 1921–22, shortly after which this painting was created. Initially aligned with Expressionism and inspired by the example of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, he transformed with his move to the Emmental “from an Expressionist to the quintessential painter of the Emmental” (Der Bund, 9 June 1984, Vol. 135, p. 3). On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the artist’s death in 1984, the city of Burgdorf dedicated a large exhibition to him in the municipal hall.

**Hans Stalder** had his studio at Alpina Burgdorf from 1994 to 2011, where the featured work “**Pensées**” (1982) was created. It is part of the artist’s significant series “Pensées” (French for

pensies or thoughts). The work was acquired by the city of Burgdorf from the artist’s studio in 2023 and is usually displayed in the city’s Presidential Directorate. The artist primarily works in series, operating with specific themes to which he returns throughout his career. His floral paintings resemble planar arrangements of forms, mostly in vibrant colours, executed in a dry and distinctly non-gestural painting style.

In the adjoining part of the room, Ruth Steiner is represented with a vivid depiction of Burgdorf. More abstract and intricately designed works by Hans Kohler, active in the field of Art Brut, and Jürg Grünig, are exhibited opposite. Also displayed is the “Thought Wall” by Heinz Egger, from his Burgdorf studio, on which he pinned his sketches, thoughts, newspaper clippings, and other materials.

The artist **Willi Meister** is represented in the exhibition with two large-scale works: “**Grosse Winterlandschaft [Large Winter Landscape]**” (1965) and, opposite, the painting “**Bahnhof [Train Station]**” (1976). The centre of Willi Meister’s artistic work was the Emmental village of Heimiswil, where he lived in the old schoolhouse in the upper village from 1944 to 1989. Willi Meister’s motifs navigate between the themes of the Emmental landscape and the world of technology. The artist had an affection for winter and transitional seasons, showing the land in the change of seasons, as in the

## Room 3–4: Multifaceted Emmental. Art from the municipalities of the Regional Conference

**“Grosse Winterlandschaft [Large Winter Landscape]”** with the gentle green of meadows and the rusty brown of the earth. His interest in technical-industrial subjects is evident in the painting **“Bahnhof [Train Station]”** (1976). Alfred Werner, who founded an engineering and consulting office in Burgdorf in 1965 (now Werner + Partner AG), financed a stay in Hamburg for the artist in 1976. Upon his return, Willi Meister brought back several works created there, including the painting of the Hamburg train station. These works were subsequently displayed in an exhibition organized by Werner in Burgdorf. The artist, born in Olten, had already painted the Olten train station in 1968 (now in the Olten Art Museum).

The starting point of **Hans Kohler’s** paintings, who is represented with two works on paper, both **“Untitled”** (circa 1985; circa 1980), was always the top-left corner of the sheet, as Reto Mettler writes in the publication for the artist’s retrospective at the Kunsthaus Interlaken in 2012. The texture of the painting then spread diagonally across the surface to the bottom-right corner, where the work concluded with the HK signature. First, the contours of the main motifs were outlined with a pencil; Kohler’s steady hand guided the pencil with firm pressure, without the need for an eraser. Then, starting again from the top-left, the motifs were overlaid with the characteristic gridwork, with the network structure executed in black paint, ranging from the finest filigree to strict delineation. At this point, the colour selection began: sufficient portions of watercolour were mixed in small jam

jars and tested on a sample sheet, defining the entire palette of the painting. Contrary to the spontaneous gesture of the drawing, the colouring in Kohler’s work followed a predetermined concept. Kohler’s “carpets of colour” grew cell by cell over weeks or even months, with his tobacco pipe always smouldering perilously close to the paper. From the radio, “Ergellimusig” played, and in his hearty Hasli dialect, he would typically comment on his art, “Beautiful, isn’t it?” – as recounted by Reto Mettler. Kohler’s work is particularly connected with Langnau: teacher Hans Ulrich Schwaar began collecting his works early on, leading to the growth of a representative body of work in Langnau since the 1970s. In 1999, the Langnau Cultural Commission organized a comprehensive retrospective for the then-unknown artist. A monograph was published by the municipality, with a second edition documenting the continuation of Kohler’s work up to his death in 2006.

**Manuel Burgener** had his studio in the Kulturfabrik Burgdorf for 16 years, from 2007 to 2023. The work **“Disbelief (8)”** (2019) was acquired by the city of Burgdorf in 2023 from the artist’s studio. It is part of an eight-part series. The glass used originates from an industrial production error. As viewers pass by, shifting colours appear in the glass. Burgener’s works embody an understanding of the potential transformation of his materials: aluminium and glass are materials that can be “recycled” into other forms.

The artist **Jürg Grünig** had his studio in Burgdorf from 1990 to 2024. The work **“Untitled”** (2009) was acquired by the city of Burgdorf from the artist’s studio in 2022. The countless overlapping lines, executed in egg tempera on canvas, interweave into a shimmering surface. Upon closer inspection, the appearance, which seems restless to the eye from a distance, unfolds into a clearly structured network of lines. Konrad Tobler described the creation of the paintings as “line service”: “Grünig’s long journey begins. [...] Grünig himself calls it ‘madness’, what he does: when he draws his strokes over the paper or canvas for six to eight hours, always in the same rhythm, diagonally from bottom left to top right, then diagonally from top left to bottom right, pulling the thin, narrow brush – No. 6 – freehand, supported only by the painting stick that provides him stability and direction. Brushstroke by brushstroke, pencil line by pencil line. [...] Line by line – there he draws his path, leaving no trace of himself.” (Konrad Tobler, exhibition catalogue “Jürg Grünig. Painting, Drawing, Copper Engraving”, Haus der Kunst St. Josef Solothurn, 2008). Grünig painted works in this “line service” style over several months. The artist also created such compositions in print graphics. As a Burgdorf resident, he could often still be found in the museum and Artcafé until recently.

In 2002, the municipal council of Lützelflüh decided to acquire two paintings by **Fritz Steffen** for the newly renovated council chamber. One of the paintings, titled **“Au dernier port”** (2002), was commented on by the artist: “A painting needs a

## Room 3–4: Multifaceted Emmental. Art from the municipalities of the Regional Conference

title – a life, a final port”. The work, dated 2002, was created four years after the diagnosis of multiple sclerosis. In Werner Eichenberger’s text for the 2018 retrospective exhibition, it is stated: “After a time full of anxiety, he emerges from the crisis, gains strength, and continues on his path. ‘My works are becoming more abstract, I am mastering colours and forms, engaging with lines and surfaces, grappling with squares and circles.’” The artist similarly expressed this in the quote: “I draw on my forms and colours from the sewing box in the attic between my ears.”

The artwork **“Anaronda”** by **Andreas Althaus**, born in Burgdorf in 1951, was purchased directly from the artist’s studio by the city of Burgdorf in 1982, the year it was created. The intricate, delicate composition features elements reminiscent of reptiles. On the right side of the painting, one can discern a lizard. Could the title “Anaronda” perhaps refer to the snake species anaconda?

Since 2023, artist **Selina Lutz** has had her studio in Kulturfabrik Burgdorf. This led to works like the featured piece **“Come, come, come”** (2021) being acquired and displayed in the Presidential Directorate of the city of Burgdorf. The oil pastel on paper exhibited here was shown at the annual exhibition of the cantons Bern and Jura (Cantonale Berne Jura) in 2021, where the gallery text noted: “Selina Lutz seeks faces that radiate a certain ambiguity. These images can be found anywhere – in magazines, advertisements, or on Instagram. With oil pastel, she ‘applies makeup’ to the face on the

white paper surface. Through the painterly approach, new characters emerge. In the series ‘Come, come, come’, the portrait template comes from the backside of a magazine cover.”

**Heinz Egger**, born in Aarwangen in 1937, had his studio in Burgdorf for 30 years, which he had to close due to age in 2024. The **“Denkwand [Thinking Wall]”** (1992–2024) which he gifted to the city of Burgdorf in 2024, had been used as a “mood board” since 1992, onto which he pinned his own works, as well as texts from newspapers and other materials. Heinz Egger also recorded quotes, thoughts, and observations in his diaries, which were first displayed alongside his paintings and print graphics in an individual exhibition at the cabinet of the Museum Franz Gertsch in 2013. Two additional works, a small-format **“Selbst-porträt [Self-Portrait]”** (2016/17) and the painting **“Blauer Wald [Blue Forest]”** (2010), were purchased by the city of Burgdorf in 2024 upon the closure of his studio. “The works show a strong grounding in the representational. Even where the paintings seem to dissolve entirely into flatness, they are never just colour harmonies. Titles often help identify landscape elements or spatial situations. [...] In the open but mysterious form of his paintings, Heinz Egger reflects a world that eludes direct access and gently counters excessive thirst for knowledge with subtle enchantment.” (Alice Henkes in Kunstbulletin, Issue 3, 2007). Heinz Egger often made the short journey from his studio to the museum and enjoyed an espresso at the Artcafé.

Monumental and vividly coloured, **Ruth Steiner’s** painting **“Burgdorf”** (1967) depicts the city panorama, with the castle on the left and the Reformed Church on the right. The artist had her studio in Burgdorf from 1953 to 1970. The chosen format evokes classic panoramic views, while the choice of colours is modern, departing from realistic representation and imbuing the view with atmosphere and a personal touch.

The two landscape paintings by **Hans Nussbaumer**, both **“Untitled”** and undated, were acquired by the municipality of Rüegsau, where the artist was born and raised, presumably around 40 years ago. The specific circumstances of the acquisition at that time are no longer known, according to the municipality of Rüegsau. Hans Nussbaumer did not attend an art school; he spent several years at the Woodcarving School in Brienz and was a student of the artist Paolo, Paul Jakob Müller, in Bern. In 1968, at the age of 48, he moved to western Switzerland. The two paintings do not depict the Emmental hills but instead landscapes of western Switzerland. By 1979, he had already returned to his native region for the fourth time, as “the Emmental painter who emigrated to Vaud”, exhibiting at the Kulturmühle Lützelflüh. His works were described as follows: “It is a peaceful world that Nussbaumer captures; no people, no animals, no dwellings. Only nature. And yet: how much life can be felt here. Soft colours exude contentment and an almost reverent stillness. Those who, like the reviewer, are fortunate enough to meet the artist in person will find their impression

## Room 3–4: Multifaceted Emmental. Art from the municipalities of the Regional Conference

confirmed: Such images are the result of a search for harmony, successfully endured through trials” (Burgdorfer Tagblatt, Vol. 149, No. 67, 5 April 1979).

On a long pedestal in the centre of the room, we present a group of contemporary ceramics by artists Erika Fankhauser Schürch, Rebecca Maeder, Sangwoo Kim, and Aschi Rüfenacht.

The ceramicist **Erika Fankhauser Schürch** chose eight sections for the reliefs “**Heimatland**” (Home-land, 2011) that were formative for her during her childhood or as a young teacher in the Wynigen Hills. Using maps from the national topography, she recreated these sections in plaster. By making both a positive and a negative of each square kilometre using stoneware clay, then coating them with porcelain slip and glazing them white, the landscape reliefs are strongly abstracted. Nevertheless, for locals, the terrain forms on the ceramic objects are recognizable. Of the total eight sections, six are displayed. Can you identify which reliefs represent the positive and negative forms of the areas *Fankhus*, *Wynigen*, *Mistelberg*, *Lueg*, *Rotmoos*, and *Chnube*? Regarding her artistic work connected to Emmental, the ceramicist writes: “The movements of the landscape, the interplay between mountain and valley, the dynamics that can be recognized therein, always inspire me anew. My eyes scan the hills and ravines, absorbing the harmonious and dissonant forms.

These become the inspiration for my ceramic objects. The aesthetic experiences outdoors I translate into my language of ceramics.”

From the municipality of Röthenbach in Emmental, two objects are displayed on the pedestal. The works by **Rebecca Maeder** and **Sangwoo Kim** are related to the event “Holz+Ton” (Wood+Clay), which took place from August 22 to 29, 2009, in Würzbrunnen. The purpose of this event was to showcase sculpture and the vibrant ceramic scene. At various stations, wood sculptors as well as ceramicists worked with their materials over the course of a week. The theme “Ton” was intended to be understood in the dual meaning of the German word, as stated in the exhibition flyer: “Ton in the ear and clay”.

In 2003, **Rebecca Maeder** completed her studies at the École d’Arts Appliqués in Vevey with works referred to as “Zoophytes”. Regarding her “**Zoophyte Bowl**” (2008), the ceramicist wrote on the aforementioned exhibition flyer: “My zoophytes [Zoophyte = animal-plant] live throughout the entire process: from the free movement in construction through coils to deformation through perforation, they constantly change their appearance. The more the pieces dry, the more they solidify, until they become immobile during firing, where they lose all their water.”

**Sangwoo Kim**’s object titled “**Sun**”, also created in 2008, is made of clay, which has been polished and solidified through pit firing. A very similar object on the artist’s website, also titled “Sun”, is

completely smooth, without the script-like markings that interrupt the glossy surface. Kim prefers working with the traditional Korean pottery technique Onggi: “He shapes his art objects from clay. [...] Before firing, the art objects are polished. The pit firing itself, which the artist personally influences, gives the ceramics their final design. This design varies in its colour tones, ranging from black to shades of grey to the colour of the raw material. ‘This process during pit firing, influenced by wood, fascinates me because the resulting patterns exhibit endless variety’, explains Kim.” (Text from the Gallery for Contemporary Art Elfi Bohrer, Bonstetten/ZH). Inspiration for this work may come from inorganic nature as well as cultural artefacts.

The ceramicist **Aschi Rüfenacht**, who runs his pottery in Affoltern in Emmental, showcases five ceramic objects or vessels. Regarding the theme of “vessel design”, which he has exclusively focused on in recent years, he is interested in the following: “It might be the flowing movements, but certainly the rhythm of breathing, the letting go of thoughts, and the creation of something new. I shape my vessels with plenty of freedom. I am on the eternal quest for the plastic world. [...] [The ‘vessel design’] is a small world with great aspirations. The firing of the vessels in the wood kiln, as well as their painting, is central to this process.”

(translation by Uli Nickel, Münster)



## Room 3–4: Multifaceted Emmental. Art from the municipalities of the Regional Conference

### SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF THE ARTISTS

#### Andreas Althaus

Born 1951 in Burgdorf. Painter, illustrator, graphic artist and sculptor. Solo and group exhibitions (selection): 2018 'Arbeiten 1999–2018', Galerie Kunstreich, Bern, 2016 'Sculpture and Painting', Showroom Jäggi, Burgdorf, with Pi Ledergerber, 2015 kunsthautrot, Köniz, with Christina Wendt, 2020/21 'Cantonale Berne Jura', Kunsthaut Langenthal, 2016 'Traumdepot. Stein & Malerei', Tramdepot, Bern. Andreas Althaus lives and works in Burgdorf.

#### Cuno Amiet

Born in Solothurn in 1868. Drawing lessons at the cantonal school in Solothurn. 1883, at the age of 15, first *Self-portrait*. 1884 meets the painter Frank Buchser, a friend of his father's, with whom he takes lessons. 1886 Matura, high school cantonal school Solothurn. 1886–88 stays in Munich; studies at the Academy; meets Giovanni Giacometti, who is the same age, beginning of a lifelong friendship. During the holidays, he paints at Buchser's. 1888 visit to the *International Art Exhibition* at the Munich Glaspalast, Amiet and Giacometti impressed by French painting, decide to continue their studies in Paris. 1888–92 in Paris together, sharing a house and studio. Studying at the Académie. Summers in Solothurn and in Stampa with Giacometti. 1891–92 attends non-commissioned officers' school, returning to Paris in spring. Increasing dissatisfaction with the teaching at the academy, move to Pont-Aven. 1892–93 in Pont-Aven, living in an artists' pension;

many encounters with artists and their work. 1893 return to Switzerland, studio in Hellsau. 1894 exhibition at the Kunsthalle Basel, which, with the exception of one positive critique, is met with rejection. Summer 1896 stayed with Giacometti in an Alpine hut in Bergell; met Giovanni Segantini. 1897 participated in the *International Art Exhibition* in Munich. Acquaintance with the Biberist paper manufacturer and art theorist Oscar Miller, who commissioned him to paint a *Portrait of Ferdinand Hodler* (1898, Solothurn Art Museum). Intensification of contact with Ferdinand Hodler. 1898 Marriage to Anna Luder von Hellsau, move to Oschwand. 1900 Silver medal at the Paris World's Fair. Various commissioned works and intensive exhibition activity. 1906 participation in the first Brücke exhibition. 1907 trip to Paris to the first major Cézanne retrospective. 1909 trip to Florence with Oscar Miller. 1911 Trip to Munich, where he meets Kandinsky, Klee, Macke and Campendonck. 1912 conversion of the barn near the house into a studio. Oschwand becomes a meeting place for artists, collectors and writers. Numerous students, including Werner Neuhäus. 1914 major solo exhibition at the Kunsthaut Zürich. 1919 honorary doctorate from the University of Bern. 1920s several mural commissions. 1931 fire at the Munich Glaspalast, loss of important paintings, including works from his time in Brittany. 1953 death of his wife Anna Amiet. Passed away at Oschwand in 1961.

#### Hansueli Anliker

Born in Walkringen in 1941. Apprenticeship as a typesetter. 1963–64 attended the Bern School of Applied Arts as an external student. 1965–70

worked as a graphic designer in Bellinzona and Bern, including at the Wander Company in Gümli- gen, where he designed the advertising for Ovomaltine. From 1968, Anliker learned painting techniques through his friendship and support of Werner Gfeller. 1972 Scholarship from the Canton of Bern. Then worked as a freelance painter. Moved with his family to Grabenhalde. 1974 first exhibition at Heimisbach, in the school building in Thal. The family with the three children had to leave the house in Grabenhalde and Anliker bought a house in Goldbach in 1992. The marriage broke up. Anliker fell into a rather gloomy phase of his work. This "grey phase" was followed by another phase in which he created very abstract images. Longer stays abroad, return to his old homeland, where he died in 2008.

#### Alfred Bachmann

Born in 1880 in Kirchberg. Apprenticeship as a decorative painter in Aarwangen. 1901–03, attending the School of Applied Arts in Basel during the winter, and travelling in between. He painted and drew in Nuremberg, Munich and Heidelberg. He earned his living by teaching painting courses. After extensive travels in Italy and France, he found shelter as a young journeyman with carpenter Kräuchi in Alchenflüh. His first job as a decorative painter: a detached house in Seeberg. 1905 Marriage to Emma Jörg from Kirchberg and acquisition of the property on Eystrasse. On the second floor of the existing carpentry workshop, he set up an apartment, and later a studio above it. For decades, he could only paint in his free time. He decorated house facades with colourful ornaments, artistic lettering on Art Nouveau buildings and gilded the dial of the

## Room 3–4: Multifaceted Emmental. Art from the municipalities of the Regional Conference

Lyssach church. At the age of 74, he passed on the painting business and thus had time to devote himself to art. 1956 death of his wife. In the 1950s, Bachmann created many landscape paintings, portraits and theatre decorations. He participated in exhibitions several times. Passed away 1964 in Burgdorf.

### **Oliviu Beldeanu**

Born in 1924 in the Romanian city of Dej. Beldeanu was an anti-communist activist and in 1955 he initiated and led the occupation of the Embassy of the Romanian People's Republic in Switzerland, which became known as the "Bern Incident". After lengthy negotiations, the group was arrested and sentenced to four years in prison. After his early release, Beldeanu went to Munich and East Berlin, from where he was kidnapped and taken to Romania, where he was shot in 1960 after two years of torturous imprisonment.

### **Manuel Burgener**

Born in Thun in 1978. 2001–04 Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts, Bern University of the Arts HKB. Lives and works in Bern. Participation in group exhibitions in Switzerland and abroad as well as solo exhibitions in Switzerland, Europe and Brazil on the strength of a scholarship. Several awards, primarily in Switzerland, most recently the Manor Art Prize (2018) and the Paul Bösch Prize (2021).

### **Max Buri**

Born in Burgdorf in 1868, he grew up in a wealthy merchant family in Burgdorf. During his time at

grammar school, he took private drawing lessons in Bern. His sister died when he was twelve and his father when he was fifteen. 1885 the Mother and her five sons move to Basel. Studies at the Basel Drawing and Modelling School. 1886 enters the Academy in Munich, but soon transfers to the private school of Hungarian painter Simon Hollósys. 1889 visits the World's Fair in Paris; enters the Académie Julian as a student of Jules Lefebvre and Adolphe William Bouguereau. Travels to Brittany, London, Spain, North Africa, Holland and Belgium. 1893 in Munich. Until 1895 student of the Munich-based painter Albert von Keller, who was born in Switzerland. From 1886 own studio. 1898 marriage to Frida Schenk. Numerous study trips, often via Paris. From 1899 he lived with his wife in Lucerne. 1903 move to Brienz. 1900–15 creation of the main works, which earned the artist the name "Painter of Brienz". Several honours and awards for works from this period. Buri died in 1915, at the height of his career, after falling into the Aare in Interlaken due to a dizzy spell. That same year, a memorial exhibition was held in his honour at the Kunsthaus Zürich.

### **Henri Georges Delacour**

Born in Paris in 1878, the son of a wealthy timber merchant family. He grew up in an upper-middle-class environment. He studied piano at the Paris Conservatory for four years. He lived in Istanbul from 1886 to 1890. In 1901, he worked as an assistant accountant for a French railway company in Syria, and later in China. In 1908, he became the chief accountant for the Lötschbergbahn in Frutigen; in 1911, he worked for the Grenchen-Moutier tunnel construction company. He met the

accountant Maurice Cerisier and his wife Charlotte. He manipulated their accounts. The love triangle ended on 18 January 1913, with Maurice Cerisier being fatally shot. Delacour was convicted of murder and embezzlement (CHF 180,000) and sentenced to life imprisonment at Thorberg. Around 1920, he was commissioned to photographically document the penal institution and the daily lives of the inmates. In 1931, he was released from prison by pardon, after which he worked as a nurse for lepers in the Charterhouse of Valbonne in the French department of Gars. He was employed as a porter at a Salvation Army home in Marseille, where he died. The exact date of his death is not known.

### **Ueli Dolder**

Born in 1951 in Nieder-Wichtrach/BE. School days in Niederbipp. Apprenticeship as a window dresser at the Coop in Solothurn, with attendance at the vocational school in Olten and with the permission of the Coop management to attend further training during working hours at the Bern School of Applied Arts. 1972 study trip from Niederbipp to Auvers-sur-Oise by horse and cart: a pilgrimage to the grave of Vincent van Gogh. 1973 meets Professor Kurt Löb from Amsterdam at the Kokoschka School in Salzburg. 1974–79 studying painting and graphic arts at the Royal Academy in s'Hertogenbosch (NL). The fifth year of study was made possible by a scholarship from the Canton of Bern. 1975 idea of founding an International Summer Academy, supported by teacher Professor Kurt Löb, implemented in the summer of 1976 in his youth village Niederbipp. 1989 invitation from the Fishermen Travel Club to a painting trip to Lapland and an exhibition

## Room 3–4: Multifaceted Emmental. Art from the municipalities of the Regional Conference

in Kiruna (SWE). 1990 Exhibition at the Galerie Max Mäder, Gümligen. Has lived and worked in Emmental since September 2000.

### Heinz Egger

Born 1937 in Aarwangen/BE. 1955–58 Apprenticeship as a postal official. 1955–64 studied music in Basel and Lausanne; member of the *Big Band de Lausanne*, a Swiss jazz group of the 1960s. Attended the teacher training college. 1965–68 studied German and history at the University of Bern. 1974–78 training as an art teacher at the School of Design in Bern and Basel. Taught in Burgdorf and Bern. Since 1976 numerous individual and group exhibitions in Switzerland and abroad. Since 1978 intensive engagement with literature. Since 1980 regular illustrations of the books of the writer Klaus Merz. 1984–2006 work as a stage designer for the Burgdorf theatre group and at the Bern City Theater. From 1986, he devoted himself to printmaking, initially under Peter Kneubühler in Zurich and, from 2000, under Michèle Dillier at the Atelier de gravure in Moutier. His works are part of major public collections. 2013 solo exhibition at the Museum Franz Gertsch. He is active in a wide range of artistic fields, including painting, drawing, printmaking and stage design. He lives and works in Burgdorf.

### Erika Fankhauser Schürch

Born 1969 in Herzogenbuchsee. Attended the teacher training college. Works as a specialist teacher at the adult education centre, including textile, technical and visual design. Extracurricular attendance of the preliminary design course in Olten,

training as an adult educator. Attended courses at the Bern University of the Arts. 2000–04 ceramicist in the ceramics class at the Bern University of the Arts: Biel, including under Aschi Rüfenacht, and studied education. 2010–13 Master of Arts in Design, Product Design & Management, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts. She has exhibited widely in Switzerland and elsewhere in Europe. Alongside her work in the studio, she teaches at the ZHdK. She has received several awards in Switzerland and, most recently, in South Korea at the 32nd Icheon Ceramics Festival. She is a member of [swissceramics.ch](http://swissceramics.ch) and [keramikforum.bern](http://keramikforum.bern.ch). She lives and works as a ceramist in Wynigen in the Emmental.

### Hans Gartmeier

Born in 1910 in Langnau in the Emmental, as the only son of a cabinetmaker. Grew up in Konolfingen. Apprenticeship as a cabinetmaker. Apprenticeship at a lithographic institute in Bern. 1926–27 Technical college in Burgdorf. 1927–28 trained with the painter Hans Zaugg in Bern. 1928–30 Basel School of Design; trained with Albrecht Mayer, Arnold Fiechter and Alfred Soder. 1930 returned to his parents in Konolfingen. 1931–33 long stay in Düsseldorf, attending the State Academy of Art, training with Prof. Junghanns (animal painting) and Prof. Herberholz (painting technique). 1933–36 Bern School of Applied Arts. In 1935, at the age of 25, he met his future wife at the Kurhaus Chuderhüsi. 1936 marriage, move to a house in Kaltacker near Heimiswil. 1942 construction of a home in Meienried in the municipality of Röthenbach in the Emmental. From 1946 various study trips in Europe,

for example to Florence, Munich, Antwerp, Vienna, Paris. Passed away 1986 in Langnau.

### Werner Gfeller

Born in Lützelflüh in 1895, the son of Simon Gfeller, a poet, and Meta Gfeller, née Gehrig. 1911–15 training as a primary school teacher at the Hofwil seminar. 1919–22 attended art classes at the general trade school in Basel. During his training in Basel, Werner Gfeller met Werner Neuhaus, who would later become his brother-in-law. He was a member of the expressionist artists' group Rot-Blau. The two Werners undertook various painting trips to Provence. After stays in Munich and Paris, 1928 marriage to Emmi Grütter, a language teacher from Basel. Purchase of the Meienacher in the municipality of Lützelflüh, where he lived with his wife until her death in 1984 and where his main work was created. From 1946, repeated stays in Sugiez as well as trips to Italy. From 1968, teacher of Hansueli Anliker. Passed away in 1985 at the age of 90 in Rüegsauschachen.

### Jürg Grünig

Born in Burgdorf in 1939. Trained as a signwriter in Bern. 1960 started working with visual design, photography and film experiments. Set up his own studio, worked in advertising art. 1974 left advertising. Began a long career as a scientific illustrator at the University of Bern's dental clinics, while also creating illustrations for medical publications, books and training materials. Since 1985 freelance painter, draftsman and printmaker. 1987–2002 studio exhibitions. 1990 construction of his own studio in

## Room 3–4: Multifaceted Emmental. Art from the municipalities of the Regional Conference

Burgdorf, where he worked until 2024. 1994 work stays in Tuscany. Beginning of monochrome painting. 2003 installation in the Burgdorf studio with large-format, monochrome coloured pencil drawings. Works of art in construction and art in public spaces. Exhibitions mainly in the Canton of Bern. 2011 exhibition at the Oktogon Art Space as part of the publication of the artist's book *Mezzotinto* by Rothe Drucke. The artist lives in Burgdorf.

### **Roland Kämpf**

Born in Burgdorf in 1961, he grew up in Kirchberg. He completed an apprenticeship as a machine draftsman, followed by further training to become a certified mechanical engineer TS/HF. He is a self-employed business consultant in the automotive industry and teaches product development. A few years ago, he developed an interest in drawing in Tyrol. Since then, he is often out and about with a pencil and sketchbook, choosing subjects with a strong connection to form and technology. He is active on various stages as a bassist. He has been living and working in Koppigen for more than 30 years.

### **Sangwoo Kim**

Born in Korea in 1980, childhood in the countryside. He soon became interested in materials such as wood and clay and their design possibilities. 1998–2004 studied art theory and arts and crafts at Chonnam National University in the city of Gwangju, South Korea (Bachelor's degree). Until 2006, training in the traditional Korean Onggi technique in various workshops. Setting up of own

workshop and production of utensils. Trip to Europe, experiencing ceramics as a purely artistic object. Learning of techniques of potters. From 2014, master's degree in ceramics at the National University in Seoul, South Korea. Exhibitions in South Korea, Europe and Taiwan from 2007. Travel to the symposium La Borne, France, with first exhibition. Works in international public collections. Recipient of several awards in ceramics. In 2007, while training with a ceramist in South Korea, he met his future wife, the Swiss artist Rebecca Maeder. Joint exhibitions, for example in Würzbrunnen in 2009. Sangwoo Kim lives and works in Switzerland and South Korea.

### **Hans Kohler**

Born 1939 in Meiringen. He lived with his parents in Meiringen all his life, and after the death of his father in 1991, with his mother. He was not able to cope with the demands of everyday life due to his mental disability, so he poured all his energy and passion into painting. At the age of 23, the unskilled laborer began drawing strange, delicate ornaments on lined writing paper. A book about Paul Klee, borrowed from his former teacher, provided the decisive impetus. Here he found an elementary vocabulary that he soon melted into his own visual language. In a good 40 years of creativity, an extensive body of work emerged. He died unexpectedly of heart failure in Meiringen in 2006.

### **Selina Lutz**

Born 1979 in Zurich. 2013–15 BA Fine Arts, HKB Bern. 2012–13 BA Art and Education, HSLU Lucerne. 2010–11 Preliminary Design Course, sfgb-b,

Biel. Since 2020 part of the curatorial team Milieu Bern, with Livio Casanova and Hannes Zulauf. Has exhibited primarily in Switzerland. 2016 Aeschlimann-Corti Scholarship. 2019 travel grant from the Canton of Bern. 2020 work grant from the Canton of Appenzell Ausserrhoden, art and architecture, Heilpädagogische Schule Bern. 2024 Jungck Female Artist Prize (first prize). Selina Lutz lives in Bern and works in Burgdorf.

### **Rebecca Maeder**

Born 1978 in Biel. Grew up in the Jura hamlet of Les Rouges-Terres. Apprenticeship with Eric Rihs, ceramist and glassblower. 1999 Entered the École d'Arts Appliqués in Vevey, under Jacques Kaufmann. Internship with Seung-Ho Yang, a ceramist from Korea, in his studio in Röthenbach in Emmental. Learning to work with minimal means. 2003 Graduation with her "zoophytes" and opening of her own studio in Kaufdorf. 2004 first participation in a symposium in Gmunden, Austria. 2005 first award at the Grassmesse in Leipzig (DE). 2007 First prize at the Biennale for Ceramics in El Vendrell (E). 2007, her work is recognized at the 4th World Ceramic Biennale in Korea, where she travels to. She meets Sangwoo Kim, the two become a couple and move to Emmental. She spends part of the year in Korea, where she makes wood-fired porcelain tea cups and jugs. 2009 Participation in the "Holz+Ton" event in Röthenbach im Emmental. 2011–15 scholarship from the Korean government, attending the master's program at Seoul National University. Numerous exhibitions in Europe and Asia, numerous awards and scholarships. 2015 return from Korea. Lives and works in Burgundy (France).

## Room 3–4: Multifaceted Emmental. Art from the municipalities of the Regional Conference

### Willi Meister

Born in 1918 and raised in Olten. 1941–44 attended the Basel School of Design. 1944–89 lived in the former school building in Oberdorf in Heimiswil. 1952–54 three Swiss art scholarships. Humanitarian work in the homeless shelters of the Frenchman Abbé Pierre, such as a stay in 1954 in one of Abbé Pierre's camps in the slum of Noisy-le-Grand, in 1956 in Lille in the "Communauté de Chiffonniers", in 1962 in Duisburg-Hamborn, Zeche Thyssen-Hütte. 1975–77 stays in Hamburg, 1986 in Göschenen. The human being was at the center of his artistic activity, as well as technical-industrial themes and landscapes. Exhibitions in galleries and art spaces in the Bern region, as well as "Anerkennung gestern und heute" (Recognition Yesterday and Today), an exhibition of Bernese award winners of the Swiss Federal Art Scholarship 1955 and 1975, White Hall, Museum of Fine Arts Bern. Passed away 2012 in Bern.

### Peter Merz

Born in 1942, he spent his youth in Wiggen and Trubschachen. 1958–62 apprenticeship as a typographer. 1962–64 worked as a typographer in Pontresina. 1964–66 attended the Bern School of Applied Arts. Worked as a graphic designer and advertising manager, among others at Nestlé and the SBB. Since 2003, he has devoted himself entirely to art. 2021 exhibition "80 pictures for 80" in Langnau im Emmental. Lives in Trubschachen and works in his studio in the former train station of Worb.

### Ueli Mürner

Born in 1953 in Reichenbach. He grew up with four siblings on his parents' farm and was a farmer by profession. Even as a young boy, he felt magically attracted to pencils. After leaving school, he took over the farm. This gave him the time and space to devote himself to his passion, painting. At the age of 39, he emigrated with his wife and brother to Verneix (Central France), where, in addition to managing a farm, he had time to paint. His first works were in the oil painting technique. All his works are painted accompanied by classical music. Ueli Mürner now lives and works in Gunten on Lake Thun.

### Werner Neuhaus

Born in 1897 in Burgdorf. 1913 moved to Basel. Apprenticeship as a lithographer. Worked in Laupen. 1920–21 attended the Basel Gewerbeschule, with lessons from Arnold Fiechter and Albrecht Mayer. 1921–22 stayed with Cuno Amiet at Oschwand. 1923 had his own studio in Binningen, near Basel. Friends with Hermann Scherer and Albert Müller. Orientation towards Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1923 Kirchner exhibition at the Basel Kunsthalle). 1925 move to the Freidorf cooperative settlement in Muttenz. 1925–27 membership of the Rot-Blau group. Summer 1925 together with Camenisch, Scherer and friends in Castel San Pietro. The Mendrisiotto was a favourite place to stay for the Rot-Blau artists. 1926 marriage to Hedwig Gfeller, daughter of the dialect writer Simon Gfeller. 1927 move to the Emmental, first to Reckenberg near Rüegsau and in 1929 to Grabenhalde in Lützelflüh. Died in 1934 as a result of a traffic accident.

### Hans Nussbaumer

Born in 1920 in Rüegsausachen, municipality of Rüegsau. He began his artistic training at the woodcarving school in Brienz until the sudden and premature death of his father. Hans Nussbaumer was a student of Paolo (Paul Jakob Müller) in Bern. He did not attend art school. In 1968 he moved to western Switzerland. Hans Nussbaumer died in Chevilly/VD in 1985.

### Ernst Purtschert

Born in Langenthal in 1950. Trained as a cabinet-maker, with a master's diploma since 1978. Until an accident in 1995, he had his own carpentry workshop in Aefligen. After that, he worked as a consultant and planner for interior design. 2003–18 president of the Aefligen cultural association. Self-taught in photography. From 2006, every four years, exhibition "KunstRaum Aefligen" with about 25 artists from various fields, in the old village center of Aefligen. From 2005, various group exhibitions. From 2018, performances with the multivision "The Emme... an angry river... without a source" (2016–2018), for example in 2020, 2022 and 2024 as part of "Kunst-Hand-Werk" on the Knubel, Eggwil. 2025 exhibition "Kunstkreis" in Aarwangen. Ernst Purtschert lives in Aefligen.

### Aschi Rüfenacht

Born in 1952 in St. Gallen. Appenzell mother and Emmental father. Trained as a potter at the School of Applied Arts in St. Gallen and Zurich. At the age of 21, back to "Ättiland". Worked as a potter in Aefoltern in the Emmental. During 31 years teaching

## Room 3–4: Multifaceted Emmental. Art from the municipalities of the Regional Conference

at the Schools of Design Bern and Biel, as Teacher and lecturer at the ceramics class. Teaching assignment 3D preliminary course / propaedeutic in Bern, Biel and Lucerne. Exhibitions at home and abroad (Europe, Japan). Several public works (architecture, art in architecture). Aschi Rüfenacht lives and works in Affoltern in the Emmental.

### **Jakob Siegenthaler**

Born in Düringen in 1885, the son of a cheese maker. After compulsory schooling, in 1902 he entered the Hofwil Seminary. He learned the basics of painting from the painter and drawing teacher Emil Prochaska. 1917–43 teaching 5th to 9th grade in Hub/Krauchthal. Marriage to Marie Iseli. In his free time, painting landscapes in the near and far surroundings. For many years, he also worked as a choir conductor and secretary of various committees. After his retirement, he moved to Stettlen. Here, Federal Councillor Ernst Nobs, a fellow seminarian, was a frequent guest and admirer. After the death of his wife, Siegenthaler lived in Liebefeld for the last few years. Until his death, he devoted himself to painting. Siegenthaler passed away in 1969 at the age of 84 in the Zieglerspital in Bern. He did not show his pictures in public, but some were purchased from him as gifts of honour and then given as presents.

### **Hans Stalder**

Born in Bern in 1957. Trained as a speech therapist. Self-taught in art, initially in drawing and later in painting. From 1985, solo and group exhibitions. 1994–2011 studio at Alpina Burgdorf. Various

grants, including the Aeschlimann-Corti grant in 1997 and the Bern Art Commission's advancement award in 2000. Designs CD covers, for example for the band Stiller Has. Works in the collections of renowned art institutions such as the art museums in Bern, Lucerne and Thun. Hans Stalder lives and works in Bern.

### **Margrit Stalder**

Born in Kernenried/BE in 1956. Trained as a primary school teacher. Many years of further training in creative courses for teachers, including with Bernhard de Roche and Alex Zürcher. 1997 first attempts at watercolour painting with Maria Zürcher, Huttwil. Since then, further watercolour courses with Jolanda Lachat, Burgdorf, and Gabriela Gfeller, Beitenwil. She works as a course instructor. She has had several exhibitions, for example at the Kulturmühle Lützelflüh. Margrit Stalder lives and works in Wynigen.

### **Fritz Steffen**

Born in 1947 in Ramsei, municipality of Lützelflüh. 1963–67 precision engineering apprenticeship in Lützelflüh. 1968 change to arts and crafts and signwriting (collaboration with his father). 1974–75 Bern School of Applied Arts, design course. 1976–77 teaching with Hans Schwarzenbach and Carl Speglitz. Since 1978 freelance painter, illustrator and cartoonist. 1978 first exhibition in Bad Ey, Sumiswald. Since then, various solo and group exhibitions. 1998 diagnosis of MS (multiple sclerosis). 2018 retrospective at the Kulturmühle Lützelflüh.

Since 2003, Fritz Steffen has been living and working in Grünenmatt, municipality of Lützelflüh.

### **Ruth Steiner**

Born in 1931 in Sumiswald, grew up in Kirchberg/BE. She acquired her technical skills from Walter Soom and Willi Meister in Heimiswil. Worked as a graphic designer. From 1953, studio in Burgdorf. Various exhibitions, including in her Burgdorf studio and in the Bertram Gallery, Burgdorf. Married in 1963. Various trips, for example to Greece and France. Since 1970, has lived and worked in Münsingen. Various exhibitions in her studio, in Münsingen, Bern, Interlaken, St. Moritz, Thun and also abroad. Steiner designed numerous tapestries for churches and parish halls, which were realized in collaboration with women's groups. The art collection of the city of Burgdorf includes 15 works by Ruth Steiner. The artist passed away in Münsingen in 2022.