



## Press release

### 6th Forum de la Haute Horlogerie

#### What's Next

#### An eye on the future

The 6th Forum de la Haute Horlogerie ended on November 13th, following a day of intense and fruitful exchange on the forward-looking theme of "What's Next". A think tank for the watch sector, the Forum considered the implications for the luxury industry of society's propensity to move always faster, with insightful and varied contributions from eminent speakers. Organised by the Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie and hosted by the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) in Lausanne, for the past three years this platform has also provided an opportunity to acknowledge two leading figures in watchmaking. Accordingly, watchmaker Philippe Dufour and entrepreneur Henri-John Belmont were presented with the "Hommage à la Passion" and "Hommage au Talent" awards, which honour the dedication and expertise of outstanding personalities.

Geneva, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014 – The curtain has come down on the 6th Forum de la Haute Horlogerie, a day of informed commentary and lively debate. As always, the chosen theme inspired speakers and fuelled productive debate between the 300 people who came to reflect on watchmaking within this wider scheme. Foremost specialists took the floor to shed an original light on a question - What's Next - that holds numerous uncertainties. In a world that won't stand still, attitudes towards luxury are changing too. New demographics are taking precedence over pre-digital consumers, and these digital natives inevitably have an impact on products, markets and business. Are these fleeting trends or, on the contrary, here to last? What economic context will prevail in the future? How will the major luxury brands remain desirable in a society in constant flux?



# 6<sup>e</sup> FORUM de la HAUTE HORLOGERIE

Throughout the day, business leaders, economists, authors and philosophers presented their enlightened analysis of these societal issues. Stéphane Garelli, professor of world competitiveness at IMD, opened proceedings by outlining this new context for competitiveness. Patrick Warnking, country director, Google Switzerland, then shared the internet giant's vision of the future. Axel Dumas, CEO of Hermès International, and Elizabeth Paton, Financial Times luxury correspondent, concluded this first session with their perspective on the impact these changes will necessarily have on the luxury segment.

This economic analysis was balanced by a philosophical and societal perspective from authors Frédéric Lenoir and Carl Honoré, and sustainability expert and consultant Diana Verde Nieto. She brought her understanding of Millennials - the hyper-connected generation who grew up with the internet and mobile phones - and their way of thinking, and gave pointers on how to engage them. Carl Honoré then offered an uncompromising view of our obsession with speed, which erodes health, happiness, productivity and human relations, and spoke in praise of slowness in a fast-forward world. The debate ended with philosopher and sociologist Frédéric Lenoir's thoughtful analysis of the search for happiness. An invitation to press "pause" for one day, this 6th Forum was an opportunity for sharing and reflection: time out from the everyday.

### **Presentation of the "Hommage à la Passion" and "Hommage au Talent" awards**

For the third consecutive year, the organisers of the Forum de la Haute Horlogerie in collaboration with Bank Julius Baer chose this out-of-time moment to acknowledge two exceptional personalities who, through their dedication and expertise, have contributed to the eminence of Fine Watchmaking. Chosen by a panel comprising representatives of the Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie Cultural Council,



representatives of Bank Julius Baer, and Franca Zigliotto, these eminent figures of today were distinguished with the "Hommage à la Passion" and "Hommage au Talent" awards.

The 2014 "Hommage à la Passion" award went to Philippe Dufour, a talented watchmaker in La Vallée de Joux and for many a living legend, particularly in Japan where he teaches his art. Philippe Dufour's handcrafted timepieces are the symbol of horological excellence. After graduating from the École Technique in Le Sentier in 1967, he honed his skills at Manufacture Jaeger-LeCoultre before working for the most prestigious names in La Vallée de Joux. He then took the step to open his own workshop as a restorer of antique watches, until 1989 when he set up as an independent watchmaker. He imagines each unique creation which he then executes entirely by hand and with a rare attention to detail.

This year's "Hommage au Talent" award distinguished Henri-John Belmont, a name invariably associated with Jaeger-LeCoultre. Born in France and holder of an MBA, he took the helm of the Manufacture in the late 1980s, and put the brand back at the centre of the watchmaking map. When in 2000 Jaeger-LeCoultre was taken over by Richemont Group, together with IWC and A. Lange & Söhne, Henri-John Belmont oversaw the integration of the three brands, following which he was given charge of the Group's industrial production. He has also been instrumental to Montblanc's ascension in fine watchmaking.

#### **6th Forum de la Haute Horlogerie – "What's Next"**

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#### **Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie**

Communications & PR: Christine Noussan Hodara

[christine.noussan@hautehorlogerie.org](mailto:christine.noussan@hautehorlogerie.org)

Press Relations: Agnès Le Métayer

[agnes.lemetayer@hautehorlogerie.org](mailto:agnes.lemetayer@hautehorlogerie.org)

22, Avenue du Mail • CH-1205 Geneva

[www.hautehorlogerie.org](http://www.hautehorlogerie.org)