

FINE WATCHMAKING MANIFESTO

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THE FOUNDATION HIGH HOROLOGY

Watchmaking excellence is a world of specialised skills and knowledge: a fact known to connoisseurs and collectors but one that is less familiar to the wider public, who are the watch enthusiasts of today and tomorrow. For this essential reason, the Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie was established in 2005 by Audemars Piguet, Girard-Perregaux and the Richemont Group.

The role of the Foundation is to promote the culture of watchmaking, and the artistic and cultural value of the watch as a demonstration of excellence, among the largest possible audience worldwide. It publishes information on the profession's history and expertise, as well as the latest updates. It trains in, evaluates and certifies watchmaking knowledge. It organises events for the public and for professionals. It creates content, competencies, connections and experiences. The industry's leading names and independents actively contribute to its activities.

The Foundation was thus established as a body that brings the industry together. Numerous brands have acknowledged the importance of its work, which serves the interests of an entire profession.

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE FOUNDATION

OUR ACTIVITIES

The FHH brings the culture of watchmaking to life through original content creation, education and by building connections between stakeholders. The Foundation counts three centers of activity which are:

Watches and Culture by FHH – Educate new audiences on watchmaking

For those who have yet to discover the riches - and occasional mysteries - of watchmaking.

Watches and Culture encompasses a range of initiatives: curated exhibitions for the general public; a digital platform with no end of information on watches and watchmaking; the Watch Essentials mobile app and a social media presence including the @watches__cltr Instagram account: a gateway for audiences who are new to watchmaking.

FHH Academy – Inform, train & certify

The FHH Academy delivers training and certifications in 11 languages across all the main markets. Courses are led by approved instructors and cover every aspect of watchmaking and sustainable development, from introductory to professional level.

FHH Forum – Help craft the industry of tomorrow

The FHH Forum is an in-person and online platform for information and debate, developed by and for the industry. It addresses topics in five key areas: sustainability, heritage, innovation, customer experience and industry.

THE CULTURAL COUNCIL

From the very beginning, the Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie established a Cultural Council which acts as a think tank for the industry and an advisory board for its activities.

Cultural Council members are all acknowledged in their field. They contribute their expertise to the FHH for its various contents.

In order to guarantee the Cultural Council's independence, members, who have all accepted a pro bono role, are not from watch brands or groups.

The current list of members is published on [hautehorlogerie.org](https://www.hautehorlogerie.org)

MANIFESTO

The FHH Cultural Council experts have, by common consensus, laid the framework for a reference which everyone can use. Its purpose is to enable a better comprehension of the various elements that converge into excellence in watchmaking.

This reference - the Manifesto you are reading - is about definitions. Firstly, a definition of fine watchmaking with its various segments, of its values, the characteristics of its products and, lastly, the distinctive attributes which equate fine watchmaking with excellence. This is, of course, by no means an exact science but a guiding principle; an intention that points the way and illustrates the ambition of a brand, an independent watchmaker, even a movement manufacturer.

These criteria do not carry the same importance for each brand; nor do they carry the same importance for each customer or collector.

The role of the FHH, the cultural arm of the Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie, is anchored in the discovery and promotion of fine watchmaking, in the widest sense and in a spirit of openness.

The purpose of this Manifesto is therefore to provide the watch-loving public, at every level of interest, with the keys to understanding what we have called “excellence in watchmaking”. It also seeks to encourage the industry’s players to pursue this excellence, to surpass themselves and always aim higher.

DEFINITION OF FINE WATCHMAKING

Fine watchmaking is a highly complex notion. In its simplest form, its definition could be:

« **Fine Watchmaking is the reflection of excellence in watchmaking; the subtle alliance of the watchmaker's art and the applied arts. »**

VALUES

Fine watchmaking is a complex value chain that includes the brand (or maker) and the product. It is an art composed of:

- **tradition and innovation**
- **science and technique**
- **creation and the transfer of expertise**
- **ethics and culture**

These common values are to:

- Safeguard, develop and pass on the culture and expertise of fine watchmaking
- Demonstrate a willingness and capacity to invest in research and development, and to integrate this unique expertise
- Build legitimacy, affirm an identity, be distinctive, aim for longevity and actively combat counterfeiting

- Earn the recognition and esteem of enthusiasts and connoisseurs
- Deliver efficient customer service to the highest standard before, during and after the sale to win the customer’s confidence and trust
- Uphold socially responsible and ethical behaviour

ACTORS AND SEGMENTATION

The representatives of excellence in watchmaking are, by nature, extremely diverse, and this diversity is also one of its strengths.

The FHH Cultural Council has identified these actors based on four segments:

- **Historic Maisons** – A Maison that is heir to a long tradition and whose legacy extends across several generations. If the House has ceased activity at any time, this must have resumed in the spirit intended by its founder, for at least one generation.
- **Contemporary Brands** – Brands that are representative of the current era, including those recently established under a historic name.
- **Luxury Brands** – Multiproduct luxury brands which demonstrate creativity, innovation, a desire for excellence and respect for the watchmaker’s art.
- **Artisans-Creators** – Independent watchmakers who draw on particular expertise and (for the most part) make, retail and service their products themselves.

THE PRODUCT

Excellence in fine watchmaking cannot be defined by the brand alone. Fine watchmaking is materialised first and foremost by the watch itself.

For a watch to be considered a fine watch and therefore an expression of excellence, it must be the sum of several factors (listed under the criteria below). These factors are incorporated to varying degrees, depending on the brand or maker.

CRITERIA INDICATIVE OF EXCELLENCE

Having taken the above-mentioned factors into account, the FHH Cultural Council has drafted a certain number of criteria (below) which are indicative of excellence. These criteria can apply to the product or its maker. Again, the intention is to recognise the pursuit of excellence.

In the majority of cases, only certain criteria will be fulfilled. In the event that every criteria is met, this would indicate a truly exceptional brand (through its creator) and/or product.

We can therefore infer a brand's ambition for its product and level of excellence from the criteria it satisfies.

R&D, PRODUCTION AND TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

- Collection includes in-house movements (Historic Houses and Artisans-Creators), or exclusive and/or original movements (Luxury Brands and Contemporary Brands)
- In-house production of the regulating organ (balance spring)
- In-house design and production of external parts (case, metal bracelet, dial)
- Hand-executed decoration (chamfering, polishing, brushing)
- Range features one or more technical innovations: function, display, material, etc.
- Adherence to in-house and/or external standards
- Gem-set watches and/or made from gold, platinum or special alloys

STYLE/DESIGN AND ARTISTIC EXPERTISE

- Original product designs (= differentiation)
- Authenticity (consistent with brand codes)
- Innovative and creative product aesthetic and decoration
- Métiers d'art integrated into the design
- Quality finishing and decoration
- Legible display of time and other functions
- Ergonomics and user comfort

HISTORY AND DNA

Historic Houses

- Authentic and continuous history
- Respects the spirit in which it was founded
- Owns or is in the process of creating a heritage collection; conserves and makes use of archives

Others

- Established with the intention to contribute to progress in watchmaking
- Develop an authentic and documented history that is specific to them
- Are in the process of creating a heritage collection; conserve and make use of archives

ETHICS AND TRANSFER OF EXPERTISE

- Ethical principles: social responsibility, eco-compatibility, ethical sourcing of materials, etc.
- Product lines with a strong identity, which are recognised by peers and by customers
- Quality selective distribution and a respectful price policy
- Engages with enthusiasts and collectors
- Passes on expertise to staff across all departments (technical, sales, etc.).

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