

PRESS RELEASE

"NEUCHÂTELOISES EN EXHIBITION" JOINTLY HOSTED IN LE LOCLE AND LA CHAUX-DE-FONDS

What links Frederick the Great, Ferdinand VI of Spain, Le Corbusier, Princess Grace of Monaco, US president Ronald Reagan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev, Alpine skier Bernhard Russi, and Swiss federal councillors Paul Chaudet, Pierre Aubert, and Pascal Couchepin? They are all owners, or former owners, of a Neuchâtel clock!

2017 marks the centenary of the publication by Alfred Chapuis of his *Histoire de la pendulerie neuchâteloise* (History of Neuchâtel clockmaking), yet it also sees manufactures, and the watch media and enthusiasts, shift their focus to the smartwatch and its potential economic, social and cultural impact. The pendulum clock seems far removed from such concerns. Its history, filled with both triumphs and trials spanning from the 18th century to the present day, remains little known. The Musée d'horlogerie du Locle - Château des Monts and the Musée international d'horlogerie La Chaux-de-Fonds are reappraising the history and destiny of the Neuchâtel clock in a joint, multilingual and international exhibition.

La neuchâteloise, complementary exhibitions taking place simultaneously in Le Locle and La Chaux-de-Fonds from **6 May to 8 October 2017**, will see a collaboration between the canton of Neuchâtel's two watchmaking museums, resulting in the largest collection of this type of clock. It will promote a heritage important to them both, placing it in its original context whilst revealing it in a new light.

In Le Locle, at Château des Monts

The Le Locle watchmaking museum will look at movement technology throughout the centuries, providing an understanding of the typically regional art of Neuchâtel clockmaking. The exhibition highlights the developments in mechanical engineering affecting the Neuchâtel clock from the first half of the 18th century to modern times, and explains how its complications have evolved. Visitors will have the pleasure of discovering the characteristics and specific features of the movements, displayed outside of their cabinets and "stripped back" to allow for better understanding and appreciation. The exhibition, following a history dotted with the biggest names in Neuchâtel clockmaking, illustrates that changes to the mechanism are visible not just in terms of the technology used, but also aesthetically. In fact, the modifications made over time to the striking- and under-dial work encapsulate the manufacturers' desire for improvement, and also their ingenuity.

The public will (re)discover an exceptional output, particularly from an engineering point of view, which bears witness to the intense activity of Neuchâtel clockmakers – some better known than others – over more than three centuries. The Neuchâtel clockmakers took their inspiration from tradition, constantly adapting and innovating to keep up with advances made by their competitors, to better reflect current tastes, and to appeal to connoisseurs. The same logic also informs more recent industrial production processes. Overflowing with history and technical finesse, this rich body of work is a tribute to the incredible expertise and workmanship of the era.

In La Chaux-de-Fonds, at the Musée international d'horlogerie

The Musée international d'horlogerie is devoting its main exhibition hall to a thematic circuit, divided into three parts. After an introduction which commemorates the work published by Alfred Chapuis, the first section of the exhibition looks at the craftsmen involved in Neuchâtel clockmaking. Alongside the clockmakers were people working in a large range of professions, some better known than others, but all essential for the manufacture of clocks: makers of hands, springs, dials, and bronzes, cabinetmakers and cabinet painters. These professions are presented through images and components which demonstrate the manufacturing processes and the diversity of their work. The second section traces the development of the Neuchâtel clock, and its growing success in the 18th century, before the decline and subsequent renaissances of the 19th and 20th centuries. A panorama provides an informative guide to changes in styles and fashion. Commercial success is represented by some iconic names which put Neuchâtel production on the international map. The question of passing on knowledge, first in workshops, then in schools, is also investigated. The last section deals with the image of the Neuchâtel clock. Twentieth century imagery conjures up a clock which is a feature in many Neuchâtel homes, and one which is still loaded with symbolism, even though its economic importance for the canton has declined hugely compared to what it represented two centuries previously.

A richly illustrated publication specially released to coincide with the exhibition

The areas which form the basis for the exhibitions' structure are covered in articles specially published for the occasion by Editions Alphil. The treatments found in this publication are not intended to be exhaustive; instead they have been carefully selected. The 230-page volume contains contributions from fifteen authors from different disciplines, including clock historians and engineers. Its preface is provided by Federal Councillor, Alain Berset. It is designed to provide a summary of Neuchâtel clockmaking, and to reflect the way in which the history of this object is regarded today.

A series of events, invitations to discover the many facets of Neuchâtel clocks aimed at young and old alike

A series of events has been organised to accompany the exhibitions. To guide the public through the many facets of the exhibitions, the two partner museums are offering themed, guided tours, and activities to coincide with Neuchâtel Museum Night, International Museum Day, and the Heritage Days. A closing conference will discuss the future of the Neuchâtel clock.

At both sites, activities specially designed for a younger audience are available for families. Information and details can be found in the exhibition flyers or on the websites for the Musée international d'horlogerie in La Chaux-de-Fonds www.mih.ch and the Musée d'horlogerie du Locle - Château des Monts www.mhl-monts.ch.

"NEUCHÂTELOISES EN EXHIBITION" IN LE LOCLE AND LA CHAUX-DE-FONDS reappraises the history and destiny of the Neuchâtel clock, in a joint international exhibition.

Two exhibitions intended to raise awareness and promote the rediscovery of these objects now so often discarded, if not forgotten completely. We hope they will encourage visitors to reappropriate these pieces, to ensure that in future, they are better appreciated, better respected and, ultimately, better preserved.

Two exhibitions which aspire, more generally, to encourage a new understanding of this object and help preserve the history of its techniques and arts, with the aim of ensuring this heritage has a promising future.

La Chaux-de-Fonds, Le Locle, 27 April 2017

Information

Musée international d'horlogerie (MIH)
Rue des Musées 29
2300 La Chaux-de-Fonds
+41 32 967 68 61
mih@ne.ch
www.mih.ch
Tuesday - Sunday 10am - 5pm

Musée d'horlogerie du Locle - Château des Monts
Route des monts 65
2400 Le Locle
+41 32 933 89 80
mhl@ne.ch
www.mhl-monts.ch
Tuesday - Sunday 10am - 5pm

Pictures



Alfred Chapuis au milieu d'inconnus, collectionneurs ou scientifiques, vers 1950.
Fonds Alfred Chapuis © Musée d'horlogerie du Locle - Château des Monts, Le Locle.



Pendule neuchâteloise type « Bracket clock ». Cabinet recouvert d'écaille estampillé D. Jacot ébéniste à La Chaux-de-Fonds. Vers 1770. Musée international d'horlogerie, La Chaux-de-Fonds, © MIH.



Anonyme, vers 1775. Cabinet peint de motifs floraux polychromes et orné de bronzes ciselés et dorés. Musée international d'horlogerie, La Chaux-de-Fonds, © MIH



Pendule Louis XVI anonyme. Cabinet peint de motifs floraux polychromes. Musée international d'horlogerie, La Chaux-de-Fonds, © MIH



Robert et Courvoisier, La Chaux-de-Fonds. Cabinet peint de motifs floraux à la feuille d'or sur fond marron foncé, cadran signé «Robert & Courvoisier». Musée international d'horlogerie, La Chaux-de-Fonds, © MIH



Signatures de penduliers réputés au dos des mouvements.



Pendule du Conseil fédéral exposée à la maison Beatrice von Wattenwyl entre 1958 et 2016. Office fédéral des constructions et de la logistique, Berne.



Pendule n°57 acquise en 1917 par le Musée d'horlogerie de La Chaux-de-Fonds à la Commission de secours par le travail pour le prix de 215 francs. Musée international d'horlogerie, La Chaux-de-Fonds, © MIH



Appartement sis Place d'Armes 3 et 3a à La Chaux-de-Fonds avant transformation, Fernand Perret, 1940. Bibliothèque de la Ville de La Chaux-de-Fonds, Département audiovisuel (DAV), Fonds Fernand Perret.



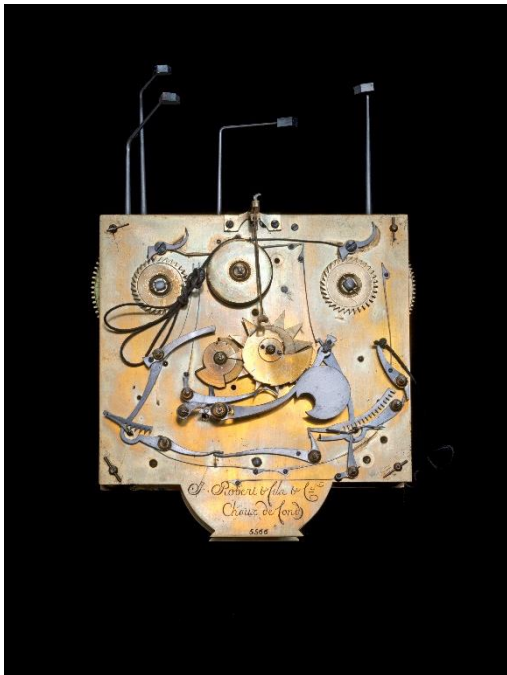
Photo officielle du Conseil d'État neuchâtelois, législature 2013-2017. Photo SP.



Annonce Zenith, 1948. Revue internationale d'horlogerie, 1er novembre 1948. Musée international d'horlogerie, La Chaux-de-Fonds.



Pendule neuchâteloise Louis XIII, Jacques Sandoz, La Chaux-de-Fonds, vers 1700-1720. Musée d'horlogerie du Locle – Château des Monts © MHL/R. Sterchi (Photo)



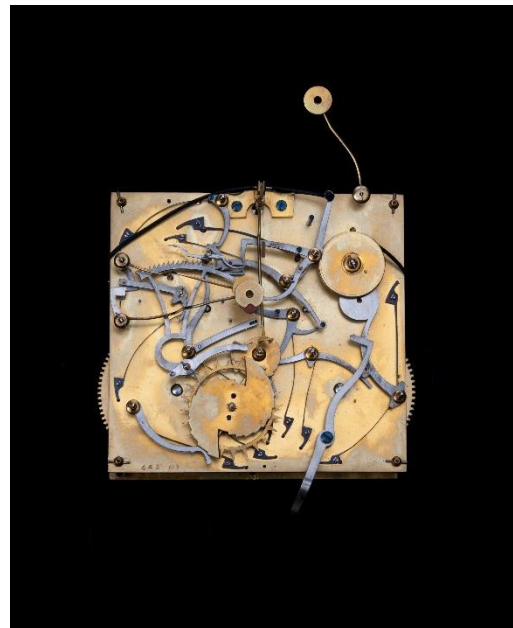
Mouvement de pendule neuchâteloise « Grande sonnerie », Josué Robert, La Chaux-de-Fonds, vers 1760. Musée d'horlogerie du Locle – Château des Monts © MHL/R. Sterchi (Photo)



Mouvement de pendule neuchâteloise « Grande sonnerie », « Petite sonnerie » ou « Silence », attribuée à Henri-Louis Maillardet, La Chaux-de-Fonds, vers 1830. Musée d'horlogerie du Locle – Château des Monts © MHL/R. Sterchi (Photo)



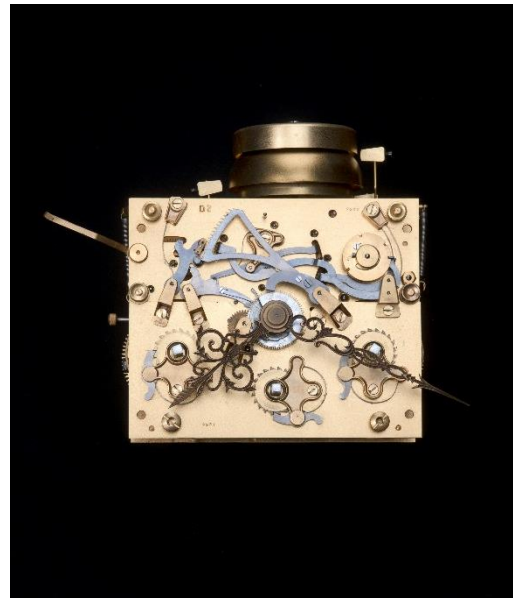
Pendule neuchâteloise Louis XVI, Isaac Favre, Neuchâtel, vers 1790. Musée d'horlogerie du Locle – Château des Monts © MHL/R. Sterchi (Photo)



Mouvement de pendule neuchâteloise « Grande sonnerie automatique », Abram-Louis Borel, Couvet, vers 1860-70. Musée d'horlogerie du Locle – Château des Monts © MHL/R. Sterchi (Photo)



Régulateur de précision, Frédéric-William Dubois, Le Locle, 1843-1846. Musée d'horlogerie du Locle – Château des Monts © MHL/R. Sterchi (Photo)



Mouvement de pendule neuchâteloise « Grande sonnerie », « Petite sonnerie » ou « Silence », Zenith, Le Locle, vers 1950. Musée d'horlogerie du Locle – Château des Monts © MHL/R. Sterchi (Photo)