

press release

A VIBRANT EXHIBITION FULL OF SUMMER ENERGY OPENS ITS DOORS AT MIH

Time for all, a watch for everyone. This is the title of the new temporary exhibition at the Musée international d'horlogerie (MIH) in La Chaux-de-Fonds, sounding as catchy as a slogan. Devoted entirely to watch advertising from the 20th century, it will be inaugurated this Saturday 15th June at 5 pm together with a performance of the artist Mandril. The exhibition will run until the 13th October 2019.

A century of watch advertising

Operating in an increasingly competitive international market, the watch industry uses posters and advertisements to promote its products, often demonstrating conformity – sometimes originality – in the creation of its marketing designs.

Through the posters and advertisements which are the backbone of brand communication in the 20th century, the exhibition offers an original view of the economic, technological and cultural history of watchmaking, from the beginnings of the wristwatch to the technological revolution of the quartz watch.

A consumer-led approach

The parties behind the project – MIH and the Institute of History at the University of Neuchâtel – have demonstrated a crucial independence from the brands still active today. The exhibition is based on a study of more than 2500 visual documents. It explores the practices and topics in marketing which mark the transition from *time for all* to *a watch for everyone* through six subject pairs:

Time and astronomy

The watch is a tangible consumer good. However, the thing that it measures – time – remains invisible and intangible. Illustrators have used a range of strategies to represent this concept. They developed themes relating to the stars and nature, the observation of which was the first and, for a long time, only way humans had of tracking the passage of time.

Accuracy and reliability

The hallmark of a quality watch, accuracy is the beacon of sales pitches presented by watch brands. Countless texts and slogans refer to accuracy. However, no specific image exists to clearly represent it. In the early 20th century, images would translate it via the execution of the drawing itself. From the 1950s, photography provided an additional means of creating realistic images. Accuracy came to be a part of daily life to such an extent that punctuality became a key factor in success in both professional and private scenarios.

Technology and features

Advertisements often focussed specifically on the technical developments introduced for the wristwatch: on one hand, water resistance, shock resistance, antimagnetism; on the other, automatic winding. No longer just an accessory, the watch contributed to the new lifestyles of the second half of the 20th century, in which time seemed to become both more compact and more personal. It was no longer a case of selling time for all, but rather a watch for everyone.

Sport and performance

The practice of sport at a high level requires dynamism, rigour, and endurance, values with a particular appeal to watch brands. They also attract the type of people who embody the spirit of adventure, pushing themselves to extremes, and providing the consumer with an idealised reflection of the world. In times of war, the heroic figure of the soldier replaced the peacetime image of the sportsman.

Individuals and society

In advertising, the watch denotes a certain social status. Individuals shown in relation to others are denoted by means of their activities through stereotypical items, clothing and accessories. Until at least the late 1960s, the imagery in adverts perpetuated the dichotomy between the ladies' jewellery watch and the masculine high-tech watch.

Production et distribution

From the late 19th century, manufactures realised that they could profit from exploiting their own brand image showcasing their establishment through monumental architecture, a sign of their industrial power and their standing with the public. Images emerged which demonstrate a conflict between hyper-local production, symbolised by the imagery associated with Switzerland, and the global distribution of products.

230 original documents

Presenting the public with over 230 documents in the form of posters, adverts, original sketches, and commercials from cinema and television, taken from the MIH collections, other conservation institutions, and private collections, the exhibition is also designed to give a panoramic view of the history of advertising, graphic design and the consumer society.

All parts of the exhibition are presented in French, German, and English.

Publication

A book is published to complement this exhibition. This richly-illustrated full-colour work comprises 268 pages; it is published by Editions Alphil-Presses Universitaires Suisses, as a limited edition of 1000 copies in French. It provides the opportunity both to create a more lasting format for this

exhibition, and to examine its subjects in more depth, thanks to the input of fifteen Swiss and international authors who are all specialists in their respective fields of watchmaking, advertising, consumer affairs, posters and photography.

Free guided tours

Guided tours of the exhibition may be booked at any time. As part of the *On the Stroke of Midday* presentations at MIH, free guided tours will be offered on Wednesday 3rd July and 4th September at 12:15.

Does creating an advertising poster sound like child's play?

During the exhibition's run, a workshop allowing both children and adults to design their own adverts is available. Everyone can test their advertising powers by composing their own poster using the elements encountered in the exhibition, which can then be submitted for potential consumers to admire by sharing it on the MIH Facebook and Instagram accounts #museeinternationaldhorlogerie, @musee_mih.

Partners

Université de Neuchâtel, Loterie romande, Rolex, Fondation Philanthropique Famille Sandoz, Union des fabricants d'horlogerie de Genève, Vaud et Valais (UFGVV), Association patronale des industriels de l'Arc horloger (APIAH), TSM Assurances, Laboratoire Dubois.

La Chaux-de-Fonds, 12th June 2019



Time for all, a watch for everyone
Musée international d'horlogerie
Tuesday-Sunday, 10am – 5pm

Rights-free posters available on:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1x4Qf_8k853NDhsy4MF7Acy8-DxCcMKy8?usp=sharing



Affiche L'heure pour tous, une montre pour chacun, 2019.jpg



Aquastar 1966, collection MIH.jpg



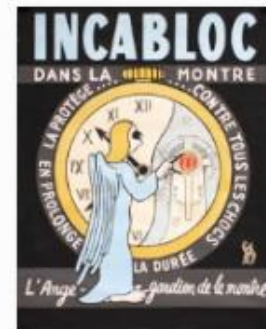
Bulova 1974, collection MIH.jpg



Eberhard & Co 1920, collection MIH.jpg



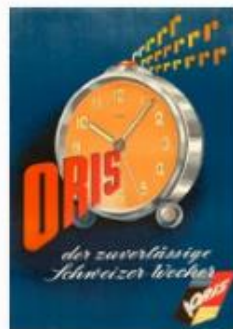
Herodia 1958, collection MIH.jpg



Incabloc 1940, collection MIH.jpg



Omega 1929, collection MIH.jpg



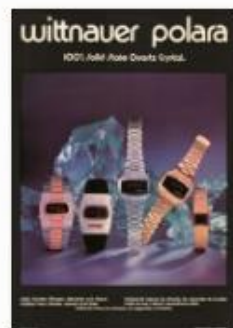
Oris 1942, collection MIH.jpg



Oris Watch 1927, collection MIH.jpg



Watchmakers of Switzerland vers



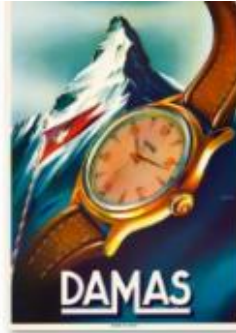
Wittnauer 1975, collection MIH.jpg



Zenith 1954, collection MIH.jpg



Cyma 1928, collection MIH.jpg



Damas 1950, collection MIH.jpg



Doxa 1961, collection MIH.jpg



Just 1912, collection MIH.jpg



Moeris 1948, collection MIH.jpg



Mollar 1940, collection MIH.jpg



Reconvilier 1913, collection MIH.jpg



Seiko 1973, collection MIH.jpg



Seliva 1948, collection MIH.jpg