

FHH NYC WATCH SUMMIT

The FHH Watch Summit celebrates a successful return to New York, connecting people through watchmaking knowledge and culture



Icons: Cam Wolf, Malaika Crawford, Paul Heavener, William Massena

New York, October 2026 — Following the success of its inaugural edition in 2025, the Fondation Haute Horlogerie (FHH) returned to New York last week for the second edition of its US Watch Summit.

Building on the success of the previous gathering, this year's Summit set out to explore the world of watchmaking through the lens of New York's distinctive culture, creative energy and vibrant collecting community. In doing so, it furthered the FHH's mission to make watchmaking knowledge more widely understood and accessible around the world, offering fresh perspectives on the people, ideas and cultural forces shaping the industry.

Welcoming more than 400 attendees, the Summit brought together industry professionals, members of the press, collectors and passionate enthusiasts for a day of curated panel discussions and lively exchange. Across four thematic panels and a dedicated conversation exploring New York's influence on horological culture, industry insiders examined the many dimensions of contemporary watchmaking. The Summit opened with remarks from Ambassador Felix Baumann, Consul General of Switzerland in New York, highlighting the enduring ties between Switzerland and the United States and the importance of Swiss watchmaking within this key market.



Pascal Ravessoud, Ambassador Félix Baumann

The panels brought together a range of perspectives from across the American watchmaking landscape and beyond, enriching the discussions with expertise spanning media, retail, academia, and collector circles. New York was well represented through NYU Stern and the city's vibrant network of journalists, collectors and designers, while speakers from organisations such as GQ, Hodinkee, Hypebeast, Robb Report, Richemont Americas and the Gemological Institute of America brought perspectives from across the wider US industry.

Throughout the day, the Summit addressed five key themes:

Education is Power: How Knowledge Is Shaping Watchmaking's Future

Moderator: Thomai Serdari. **Panellists:** Christophe Massoni, Johanna Levy, Pascal Ravessoud.

Icons: Watches and Beyond – What Qualifies?

Moderator: Cam Wolf. **Panellists:** Malaika Crawford, Paul Heavener, William Massena.

The New Perceived Value of Watches

Moderator: TanTan Wang. **Panellists:** Brynn Wallner, Derek Mon, Mark Kauzlarich.

The US at the Top: Is It Sustainable?

Moderator: Stephen Pulvirent. **Panellists:** Fred Savage, James Stacey, Paige Reddinger, Thierry Prissert.

A Talk With New York II – A Different Side of NYC Watch Culture

Moderator: Scarlett Baker. **Panellists:** Courtney Bachrach, Maxime Plescia-Büchi, Phil Toledano.

A New Setting for a New Perspective

Returning to New York, the FHH Watch Summit welcomed attendees to a new and refreshing setting at NeueHouse Madison Square, in Manhattan's Flatiron District, near Madison Square Park. Known for bringing together creative minds across culture, design and media, the venue offered an inspiring backdrop for the Summit, reflecting the spirit of a city where creativity and culture continually shape the ideas of tomorrow.

Throughout the day, the Summit fostered an atmosphere of open exchange and shared enthusiasm, bringing together a diverse audience united by a passion for watches and their cultural significance. The discussions underscored a central conviction of the FHH: the future of fine watchmaking depends not only on excellence in craftsmanship, but also on the knowledge, creativity and human connections that give watches their lasting meaning.



Christophe Massoni, Ambassador Felix Baumann, Pascal Ravessoud

Education as Empowerment

The opening panel explored the importance of education, the transmission of knowledge and the development of expertise across the watchmaking industry. Discussions highlighted the growing demand for skilled watchmakers across markets, alongside the opportunities and challenges presented by emerging technologies. "AI for us is an opportunity to amplify human talent, but not to replace it," noted Christophe Massoni, President and Chief Executive Officer of Richemont Americas.

The panel also emphasised the importance of developing knowledge among both professionals and enthusiasts, enabling a deeper understanding of the intricacies of watchmaking. This ambition is reflected in the collaboration between the FHH and the Gemological Institute of America (GIA): from March 2027, the FHH will offer watchmaking courses at the GIA campus in Carlsbad, California.



Education is power: Thomai Serdari, Pascal Ravessoud, Johanna Levy, Christophe Massoni

Evolving Icons

An icon cannot simply be declared. From the Cartier Tank to the Heuer Monaco, the second panel examined what enables certain models to stand the test of time and transcend the boundaries of the industry in which they originated. “Recognition beyond the world or industry in which a product or brand originated is really important,” explained Paul Heavener, Global Editorial Director at Hypebeast.

While brands can nurture their reputations, a watch’s iconic status also depends on how it is embraced by collectors, celebrities and enthusiast communities, whose influence is increasingly amplified by social media. The discussion also raised questions about the scope for innovation in a market where historic models continue to enjoy considerable success.

Determining Value

Price does not necessarily define value. Movement quality, finishing, complications and materials alone cannot fully explain the attachment people feel towards a watch. The third panel explored the importance of its emotional dimension in a market where rising prices are prompting new questions about what makes a timepiece truly worthwhile. “Price is what this item costs you, but the value could mean all the enjoyment you get,” observed Derek Mon, watch retailer at Carat & Co and creator of @theminutemon.

The discussion also considered the growth of independent microbrands, the expansion of the secondary market and rising expectations around transparency, all of which are encouraging brands to reconsider how they communicate value and build lasting relationships with customers.



Icons: Paul Heavener



The new perceived value of watches: Derek Mon

The US as a Horological Power Player

The United States is far more than a market for Swiss watchmaking; it also plays a decisive role in shaping the industry's cultural reach. As a leading export market for Swiss watches, the country has a distinctive influence on how timepieces are collected, discussed and integrated into contemporary culture. "The Swiss excel at making extraordinary watches. American collectors, meanwhile, excel at making them part of their culture," observed Fred Savage, collector and founder of Timepiece Grading Specialists.

Specialist media, retailers and collector communities are playing an increasingly important role in introducing watchmaking to wider audiences. The discussion also highlighted the diversity of the American market, where cities such as New York, Los Angeles and Miami each have their own distinct collecting communities and cultural dynamics.



The U.S. at the top... is it sustainable?: Fred Savage

Understanding New York's Horological Ecosystem

The day concluded with A Talk With New York II, a discussion presented by Watches and Culture, the cultural arm of the FHH, and dedicated to exploring the city's distinctive watch culture. Design, art, fashion, jewellery and vintage watches provided the starting points for a conversation about creative freedom and new expressions of passion for watchmaking. "I look to jewellery because I think it's incredibly inventive and, in many ways, much more creative and free than watch design," noted Phil Toledano, watch collector, conceptual artist and co-founder of Toledano & Chan.

Analysing the importance of watchmaking when viewed through the lens of other creative disciplines, the discussion highlighted the connections between horology, art and design, as well as the enduring appeal of vintage timepieces. It also explored how New York has fostered its own collecting ecosystem, encouraging different approaches to watch design and appreciation.



A Talk With II: Scarlett Baker, Phil Toledano, Courtney Bachrach, Maxime Plescia-Buchi

A Global Vision for the Future of Fine Watchmaking

With a one-day programme spanning the technical, cultural and commercial dimensions of the industry, the second US edition of the FHH Watch Summit built on the success of its predecessor, bringing together a diverse cross-section of the watchmaking community.

The event welcomed a strong media contingent, with representatives from leading publications and broadcasters, including Ben Clymer, founder of Hodinkee; Ella Kirby and May Garland of WatchPro; Alex Tudela from ICON America and representatives from NBC. Also in attendance was the newly appointed Executive Director of the Horological Society of New York, Gregory Brown, as well as influential voices in contemporary watch culture, including Chris Min, Georgia Benjamin, and Mojdeh Cutter and Trang Trinh, alongside numerous collectors and American participants who had completed the FHH certification, reflecting the growing appetite for watchmaking knowledge and expertise within the region.

The Summit also welcomed attendees from a host of watch brands, including Breitling, Bulgari, Cartier, Chopard, Gerald Charles, IWC Schaffhausen, Jaeger-LeCoultre, Oris, as well as Van Cleef & Arpels. Their presence reflected the event's value as a platform for industry professionals to gain insight into evolving collector preferences and engage with the cultural and commercial trends shaping the future of watchmaking.



Pascal Ravessoud

"The success of the FHH's second Summit in New York confirms the importance of bringing conversations around watchmaking to new audiences and perspectives. At a time when our industry is navigating significant headwinds, from the strong Swiss franc and rising gold prices to luxury fatigue and geopolitical tensions, our ambition was to look beyond technical excellence and explore the cultural forces shaping how watches are understood, appreciated and collected. New York, with its extraordinary creative energy and vibrant community of enthusiasts, offered a particularly inspiring setting for these conversations. The positive energy I witnessed throughout this burgeoning New York watch week gives me great confidence that, by continuing to share knowledge, challenge ideas and deepen appreciation for our craft, traditional watchmaking will continue to thrive."

Pascal Ravessoud

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FHH



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