

From Discovery to Dialogue: The Fondation Haute Horlogerie Guides Visitors Through the Journey of Watchmaking Knowledge at INHORGENTA 2026



Munich, 24 February 2026 From first curiosity to structured expertise and forward-looking debates, the Fondation Haute Horlogerie (FHH) returned to INHORGENTA 2026 with a clear ambition: to guide visitors through the complete journey of watchmaking knowledge.

Held from 20–23 February 2026 at Messe München, INHORGENTA once again confirmed its international standing, bringing together approximately 900 exhibitors, 1,200 brands from 35 countries and occupying 65,000 square metres across six halls.

Within this dynamic environment, the FHH Cultural Space in Hall A1 was not conceived as a commercial stand, but as a structured pathway into watchmaking culture — accessible to all, regardless of prior knowledge.

As Pascal Ravessoud, Vice President of the Fondation Haute Horlogerie, explained during the press opening conference: **“Watchmaking is far more than a product. The visible object is only the surface. Behind it lies an invisible world of craftsmanship, intelligence, patience and transmission. Our role is to open that door — and take people by the hand.”**



Stefanie Mändlein, Pascal Ravessoud, Aurélie Streit, Stefan Rummel, Lena Hähnlein

Discover & Experience

Sparking Curiosity Through Watches and Culture



The journey begins with emotion.

Through its Watches and Culture pillar, the FHH creates exhibitions, experiences and content designed to spark curiosity and make watchmaking tangible.

At INHORGENTA 2026, this first step took shape through the travelling exhibition «Watch Makers» — an immersive and experiential project highlighting the human skills and métiers behind the finished timepiece.

Originally presented in Geneva, Watch Makers continued its international journey in Munich, transforming the Cultural Space into a living atelier. Rather than focusing on finished watches, the exhibition revealed what lies behind them: movement assembly, decorative finishing, engraving, gem-setting and decorative arts.

Visitors did not simply observe craftsmanship — they encountered it.

FHH partner brands Piaget and Oris actively brought this dimension to life through live demonstrations and storytelling sessions, reinforcing the central message of the fair's 2026 theme: craftsmanship is tangible, human and alive.



Piaget Booth at the FHH Cultural Space



Moritz Taylor and Konstanze Becker,
Press & Public Relations Northern Europe at Piaget



Rolf Studer, CEO of Oris, and Pascal Ravessoud,
Vice President of Fondation Haute Horlogerie

This is where interest begins.

Where watchmaking stops being intimidating — and becomes meaningful.

Deepen knowledge & get certified

From Curiosity to Knowledge Through the FHH Academy



For those who wish to go further, the journey continues with the FHH Academy.

If the exhibition sparks curiosity, the Academy brings structure, rigour and credibility.

At INHORGENTA, this second step was made visible through free, hands-on watchmaking workshops. Visitors were invited to disassemble and reassemble a mechanical movement under expert guidance.

Curiosity became understanding.

Observation became experience.

These workshops illustrated how the Academy translates complexity into clarity — providing a common language for professionals, enthusiasts and newcomers alike.

Beyond the fair, the Academy now offers public online courses, including the Watch Essentials certification programme — a structured pathway into horological knowledge.

By making education accessible, the FHH ensures that watchmaking culture is not exclusive — but transmissible.

Share, Debate & Project

Dialogue and Perspective Through the FHH Forum

Knowledge does not end with learning.

It evolves through exchange.

At INHORGENTA 2026, this third stage of the journey unfolded through the Watch Talks programme — a curated series of panels and keynote conversations bringing together brand leaders, designers, retailers, journalists and new-generation voices. Within the FHH Cultural Space, watchmaking was not only explained; it was examined, challenged and projected into the future.

How Do Watchmaking and Jewellery Intertwine?

Moderated by Scarlett Baker, international watch journalist, this discussion brought together Jean-Bernard Forot (Piaget), Francesca Grima (Grima Jewellery) and Scott Wempe (WEMPE) to explore whether watchmaking and jewellery are fundamentally distinct disciplines — or whether their separation is largely cultural.

The exchange moved beyond a simple opposition between function and ornament. While a watch measures time and jewellery adorns, history reveals a far more fluid relationship between the two.

Wristwatches themselves emerged from jewellery traditions, particularly in the early 20th century, when they were worn primarily by women. The arrival of quartz in the 1970s marked a turning point. As timekeeping became technically accessible and hyper-precise, the functional necessity of the mechanical watch diminished. Paradoxically, this shift reinforced its emotional and aesthetic dimension. When accuracy was no longer the differentiator, design, craftsmanship and identity took centre stage.

Francesca Grima noted that, from a designer's perspective, the boundary between watch and jewel is often aesthetic rather than structural. Scott Wempe emphasised that the mechanical movement remains the defining "heart" of a watch, yet acknowledged that contemporary clients increasingly approach watches as vehicles of self-expression. Jean-Bernard Forot illustrated how, at Piaget, creation often begins with narrative rather than category, stating: "We are not thinking in terms of function or category — we are thinking in terms of self-expression."

The conversation ultimately suggested that quartz did not weaken the bond between watchmaking and jewellery — it accelerated their convergence. Once time could be measured by any device, the watch reclaimed its status as an object of artistry, emotion and cultural meaning, bringing it closer than ever to the language of jewellery.

Through the Eyes of the Voices of Today

Moderated by Clio Godrèche (FHH), this dynamic session gathered Julia Carrier-Angel (@wristmarvels), Andrea Casalegno (@IAMCASA), Tom Exton (@TGE) and Marc-Henri Ngandu (@marckenrii), offering insight into how a new generation engages with watchmaking through digital platforms and community-building.

Far from being superficial, their perspectives revealed a deep desire for authenticity and understanding.

Julia Carrier-Angel described her mission to make horological knowledge accessible, particularly for women entering a traditionally male-dominated space, by simplifying complex concepts without diminishing their substance. Tom Exton emphasised that credibility stems from genuine passion and personal commitment, observing that audiences quickly recognise when enthusiasm is authentic. “If you’re not passionate about watches, there’s no way we can help you,” he remarked — underlining the importance of sincerity in digital storytelling.

The discussion also highlighted the limits of social media. While platforms spark curiosity, true engagement often happens offline — through dinners, manufacture visits and physical encounters with the object. Younger audiences are not rejecting heritage; they are asking for transparency, emotional resonance and meaningful connection. Digital tools serve transmission, but community creates permanence.



Craftsmanship and the Human Value in Watchmaking

In his keynote address, Pascal Ravessoud, Vice President of the Fondation Haute Horlogerie, reflected on the invisible dimension of value in watchmaking — one that extends beyond materials and technical specifications.

He spoke of generational transmission, long-term research and the irreplaceable role of the human hand in an increasingly technological world. Craftsmanship, he argued, should not be misunderstood as nostalgia. “Craftsmanship is not nostalgia — it is a forward-looking responsibility.” In this sense, innovation and human skills are not opposites; the latter gives depth and legitimacy to the former.

His intervention reinforced the idea that preserving know-how is not about resisting progress, but about ensuring that progress remains anchored in meaning.

Craftsmanship in Watchmaking

Moderated by Elizabeth Doerr, international watch journalist, this panel brought together Serge Michel (Armin Strom), Matthias Stotz (Tutima Glashütte) and Lorenzo Maillard (Watches_and_Culture), to examine how craftsmanship is defined and practised today.

The discussion addressed the relationship between handwork and machinery, precision and spirit. Serge Michel emphasised the role of individual artisans within independent manufacture, where finishing techniques and creative freedom remain central to identity. Matthias Stotz highlighted how craftsmanship at Tutima is rooted in historical continuity, yet must adapt to contemporary production realities. Lorenzo Maillard framed craftsmanship not only as technique, but as intention — the will to do something well for its own sake.

A recurring theme was transparency. As Stotz expressed, if a brand claims craftsmanship, it must clearly explain what is done by hand, what is produced by machine, and how the two collaborate. In today's context, craftsmanship is not defined by the absence of technology, but by the human spirit guiding its use. Precision tools and skilled hands are not adversaries; they are partners in achieving excellence.

Within a single Cultural Space, visitors could move from discovery to experience, from structured understanding to debate.

This continuity defines the mission of the Fondation Haute Horlogerie: to act as a facilitator — opening the door to a world that can sometimes appear complex or intimidating, and making it accessible, structured and meaningful.

A Cultural Door, Open to All

By structuring its presence around Discover, Deepen and Share, the Fondation Haute Horlogerie reaffirmed its positioning as a neutral reference in watchmaking knowledge — acting as a facilitator, a guide, a gateway into a world that can otherwise appear complex or reserved.

From first encounter to informed dialogue, the journey remains open.

And it continues.

A Long-Term Cultural Partnership

With two successful editions, the collaboration between the Fondation Haute Horlogerie and INHORGENTA has evolved into a forward-looking partnership rooted in shared values.

The FHH Cultural Space has become an integral part of INHORGENTA's watch segment — bringing cultural depth, structured knowledge and meaningful dialogue to the fair.

As INHORGENTA expands its international reach, the FHH ensures that this growth is anchored in transmission and understanding.

Together, both institutions remain committed to strengthening watchmaking culture as a long-term European reference.

The journey does not end in Munich.

It continues — across generations, beyond borders, and levels of expertise.

About Fondation Haute Horlogerie

Founded in 2005 by Audemars Piguet, Girard-Perregaux and the Richemont Group, the Fondation Haute Horlogerie (FHH) has since focused its mission on the international influence of watchmaking culture and positions the watch as an object of art and culture. The FHH serves as a neutral reference in watchmaking, supported by three pillars. 'Watches and Culture' brings watchmaking culture to life through original content, events, and international meetings for both the public and professionals. The 'FHH Academy' offers training and certification for current professionals and future enthusiasts, with courses available in over 20 countries, both in-person and online. The 'FHH Forum' is an industry-driven platform for discussion and debate, connecting leaders to shape the future of watchmaking. Around 40 watch brands actively support the FHH's mission to preserve and promote watchmaking culture and heritage.

About INHORGENTA

INHORGENTA is Europe's leading platform for jewelry, watches and gemstones—a key meeting point for the industry and a reflection of the market in all its diversity. Across six halls at Messe München, exhibitors from around the world present their latest creations. With a comprehensive supporting program and special events such as the INHORGENTA AWARD and TRENDFACTORY, the trade fair offers deep insight into global trends and developments. In 2025, the fair welcomed 1,334 brands from 38 countries and attracted around 25,300 trade visitors from 97 nations. Based on this success, the next INHORGENTA will be held from 20 to 23 February 2026 in Munich.

About Messe München

As one of the world's leading trade fair organizers, Messe München hosts around 90 trade shows worldwide—showcasing the world of tomorrow. Among them are twelve of the world's leading trade shows, including bauma, BAU, IFAT and electronica. Its portfolio covers investment and consumer goods, as well as emerging technologies. Together with its subsidiaries, Messe München organizes events in China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Turkey, Singapore, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Thailand and the USA. With over 15 subsidiaries and almost 70 representations worldwide, Messe München is active in more than 130 countries. Every year, more than 150 events attract around 50,000 exhibitors and some three million visitors.

For all complementary information or press requests:

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