

A p h o r i s m s o n t i m e

“

“Nothing, Lucilius, is ours, except time. We were entrusted by nature with the ownership of this single thing, so fleeting and slippery that anyone who will can oust us from possession. What fools these mortals be (...) that they never regard themselves as in debt when they have received some of that precious commodity—time! And yet time is the one loan, which even a grateful recipient cannot repay.

- **Seneca**, *Letters to Lucilius*

*(...) The line it is drawn,
The curse it is cast.
The slow one now,
Will later be fast,
As the present now,
Will later be past.
The order is
Rapidly fadin'.
And the first one now,
Will later be last.
For the times they are a-changin'.*

- **Bob Dylan**

Time goes by, my lady: time goes by,
Ah! It's not time but we ourselves who pass,
And soon beneath the silent tomb we lie:
And after death there'll be no news, alas,
Of these desires of which we are so full:
So love me now, while you are beautiful.

- **Pierre de Ronsard**, *Second Book of Love*

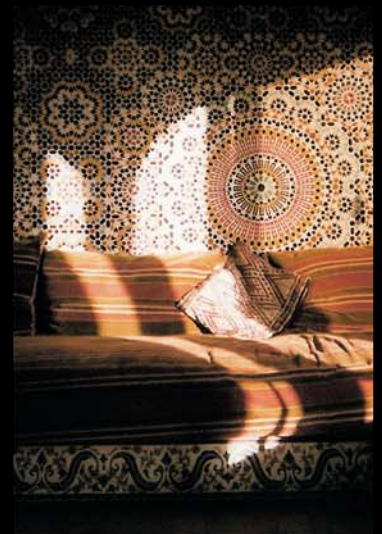
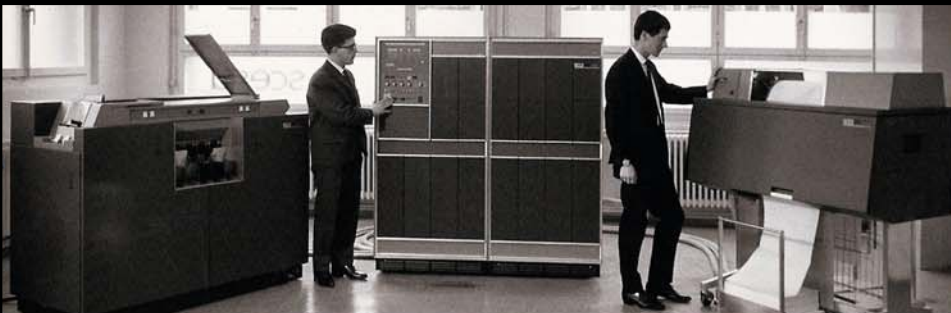
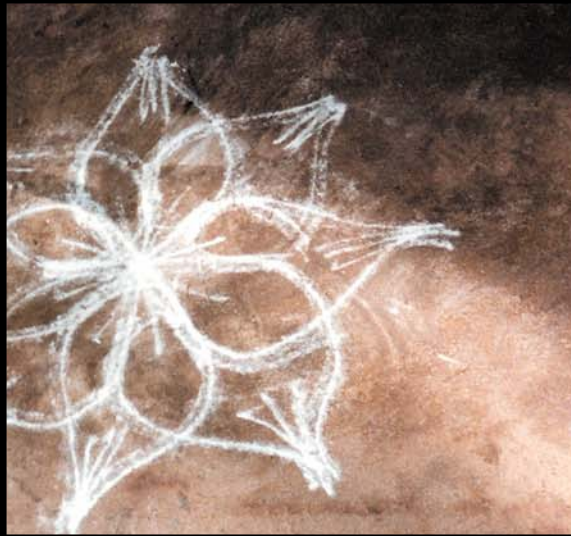
**A scandal, a scandal, to let so much time slip
and I leaning on the bridge watching it go.**

- **Virginia Woolf**, *A Writer's Diary*

Time: It is absolute subjectivity and has the absolute properties of something to be designated metaphorically as "flow", of something that originates in a point of actuality, in a primal source-point, the now, and so on. In the actuality-experience we have the primal source-point and a continuity of moments of reverberation. For all of this, we lack names.

- **Edmund Husserl**,

*On the Phenomenology of the
Consciousness of Internal Time*



Actual life was **chaos**,
but there was something terribly logical in the **imagination**.
Oscar Wilde



With these personal photos, Eric Giroud, one of the foremost watch designers of the moment (he is the man behind Harry Winston's Opus 9 and MB&F's Horological Machines, among others), shows us a small part of his creative imagination and the sources of his inspiration.

Trends and other effects of fashion

Barth Nussbaumer and Manuel Romero, white – brand design

Classic is trendy, or the sheep effect

What generates trends, who creates them, where do they come from?

For the past two years the world of watchmaking, whether or not at the top of the range, has confirmed the great return of the classic watch, through both its production and the first trade shows of the year.

What triggered this great return to a form of watch design that many brands had forgotten or abandoned, or, for the more recent, had never even known? The economic crisis? Improbable economic forecasts or poor vision of the future, even in the short term? A simple cyclical effect after a decade of unbridled creativity? Or, more prosaically, is it a type of response, a revolt against all these watches from the first decade of the millennium brimming with testosterone, sandwiched between a thousand new materials and built with screws and other visible components that are sometimes as unaesthetic as they are useless? It was the era of "more is more".

Perhaps it was a little of all of the above!

But let us leave the wonderful microcosm of watchmaking for a moment.

Fashion and trends

In the world of fashion, which creates, lives and feeds off trends, there are numerous examples of trends that we have all experienced. Trends are like an item of clothing. They are created and

constructed by choice, by fortunate coincidences, by the street, in times past by the audacity of some dandies or more simply for economic reasons*.

Today's fashion trends come from the growing influence of the big brands and their marketing bulldozers. But their origin can always be found in the spirit of the times (which depends on the era), in urban tribes or even in a TV series. Because all artistic directors read the same influential blogs, read the same magazines, visit the same exhibitions by the same contemporary artists or photographers. Trends can also come from next door. Briefs from fashion brands very often refer to objects, colours, jewellery or clothes seen at competitors (this also applies to the car and watchmaking industries). And here, everything can move very fast. Because the embryo of a trend that has been spotted will immediately be "moodboarded", adapted, adopted, produced, presented, marketed and then consumed en masse more or less quickly. This is why today's fashions converge more than they diverge. Even trends are globalised.

What makes a trend?

For a simple effect of fashion to become a lasting trend it must above all be perennial and capable of evolving, to gradually become a new standard until it is replaced. Consider as an example the tightening of trousers, which has seen the cut of all types of trousers – from basic jeans to three-piece suits – slimmed down over the past ten years. Rest assured that you will be able to wear comfortable clothing again some time in the future.

The car, another good example.



Nearly a decade ago, in 2003 to be precise, Audi presented a concept car with an oversized grill: the Audi Nuvolari. One year later the first car of the modern era with a gaping grill rolled off the production line: the Audi A3 Sportback. Since then, how many brands have adopted this code and reinterpreted it on their range? Almost all of them. It has become so well integrated in car design that cars with a large grill have now become the norm. Audi started the trend.

Let's get back to watch design

What is the big trend of the moment? We alluded to it in our introduction: it is definitely the return to sober and classic designs that respect the codes of the past. At least that is what the world of watchmaking is showing us.

Why this return?

In this world of watchmaking that is so dear to us and which seeks to renew itself by any means, to reinvent itself incessantly, everyone seems to have forgotten that you cannot wipe the slate clean of your past with a magic wand. Too many brands have forgotten this. With a worrying abandon they have sold part of their soul by giving in to the sirens, or perhaps we should say to the bleating of the first sheep.

From 2002 to 2007 everything was going so well that all you had to do was produce watches similar to your daring competitors and the money would come in by supertanker. Which brand did not want to mix materials in its collection, or add some screws (let us spare a thought here for Gérald Genta, who designed the Royal Oak, which was launched in 1972), add carbon fibre plates or other exotic metals? In short, every brand wanted their Richard Mille (2001), or a Big Bang (2004). It was a time of mixing materials and complicated watches and movements—in all

senses of the word. It was the hallowed era of “more is more” in a herd. Because watch brands are made by people much more than by their products and their marketing campaigns and these people are in every sense identical to the artistic directors mentioned above. Some of them are simply more visionary, more coherent or more daring.

A dark day in September 2008 was all it took to bring this beautiful machine, which had become almost crazy, to an abrupt halt. From one day to the next and without any kind of discretion, practically all investment, and with it all innovation and creation, was frozen. And now what are we going to do?

This unexpected knockout and the long period of convalescence that followed were not used to the same effect by everyone. There were a number of lost sheep. They had to take a step back, refocus and be introspective. Was it this renewed lucidity and humility that led to the return of classic watches? Or is it the new customers from China, who are the driving force behind the growth of the entire industry and who prefer these classic watches? Or is it simply the fact that trends follow cycles? It's a little of all three!

In summary, the watchmaking industry was undoubtedly at the end of a cycle and was thus ripe for this return to classicism. It was just given a little extra push to return it to its past. And once again, the best will know how to adopt these classic codes, reinterpret them in the spirit of the times and transcend them.

So we can look forward to beautiful watches for a long time to come. Because doesn't the very strength of a Classic (with a capital “c”) lie in the fact that it never goes out of fashion?

*Read Icons of Men's Style by Josh Sims.



Against the clock

Quotations and images taken from *Contre la montre* [Against the clock, 45 min., 2011], an illustrated conference by Alexis Guillier presented at the School of Visual Arts in Bern and Bienne on 15 September 2011 at the 15th edition of the Biel/Bienne Festival of Photography.



The Ancient of Days, William Blake, 1824.

Tempus rerum imperator.

Motto of the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers.

'I regulate my watch? Never!'
'Well, then, it will not agree with the sun.'
'So much the worse for the sun, monsieur.
The sun will be wrong, then!'

Around the World in Eighty Days, Jules Verne, 1873.

La montre OMEGA règle le soleil.

OMEGA advertisement.
(OMEGA watches regulate the sun)



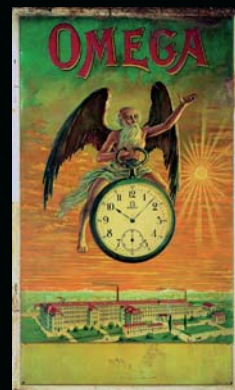
The Clock of the Long Now.

'Well, I'd hardly finished the first verse,' said the Hatter,
'when the Queen jumped up and bawled out,
"He's murdering the time! Off with his head! "'

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll, 1865.

Wherever we are, whatever we do,
Time flies in spite of us,
Then disappears, leaving us only ashes,
Serious or crazy, sad or tender,
To know the time, my friend, is to forget that it passes.

OMEGA advertisement



OMEGA sign, 1910.

Impassive clock! Terrifying, sinister god,
Whose finger threatens us and says : "Remember!"

The Clock, in *Flowers of Evil*, Charles Baudelaire, 1857

Alice in Wonderland, (Walt Disney Productions), 1951.





Maria Belville, 1892.



Louis Pion advertisement.

It goes without saying that many are still waiting with interest for this signal and that each of them, after taking their watch out of their pocket, will check its operation against this precise signal that will be put so obligingly at their disposal.

Revue Internationale de l'horlogerie et des branches annexes, 15 July 1914.



Around the World in 80 Days, Michael Anderson, 1956.



Two Indian natives shoot at Globo's clock, Brazil, 2000.

That's the trouble with the world: time.
There's too much of it.
Greenwich time, mean time, mountain standard time,
double British summer time.
There's too much of it.
Down with it all. Man against time.
Tonight we fight behind the barricades.

The Big Clock, John Farrow (Paramount Pictures), 1948

On the first evening of fighting it turned out that the clocks in towers were being fired on simultaneously and independently from several places in Paris.

Theses on the Philosophy of History, Walter Benjamin, 1940.



The Natural, Barry Levinson (TriStar Pictures), 1984.

I am a connoisseur of the time piece. I've got 40 watches. But - man, you'll really love this - not one of them has the right time.

Time out with Usher; Daily Mail, 14 June 2008.



Arceau le Temps Suspendu, Hermès, 2011.

Flavor Flav, American rapper and TV personality



The Super Hero Time Machine (advertisement), 1977.



The People That Time Forgot, Kevin Connor (AIP), 1977.



Rolex advertisement, 23 November 1981.



OMEGA advertisement, 1895.

Heston and Rolex. Equally extraordinary.

If some circumstance of fate had steered Charlton Heston from his chosen career, the adjective heroic would still dominate any description of the man. The six-foot-three frame barely contains the deep, resonant voice; the soaring eyes exude command. He has brought to life presidents, saints, geniuses, leaders... men driven by an inner vision, in pursuit of soaring goals.

He has earned a special reputation portraying extraordinary men, cloaked in legend, with a deceptive ease that hides his dedication to his art.

And dedicated he is. The movie roles have piled up two a year since his film debut in 1950, an output prestigious by any standards. The characters spring easily to mind: Moses, El Cid, Jefferson, Jackson, Michelangelo, great men all. Mr. Heston's interpretations have defined the archetypes.

Less well known is Mr. Heston's commitment to the stage, with his recurrent explorations of Shakespeare, O'Neill, Shaw

and Arthur Miller.

And still he has found the time to serve six terms as president of the Screen Actors Guild, seven years on the National Council for the Arts, Chairman of the American Film Institute, and currently as Co-Chairman of the President's Task Force on the Arts and Humanities.

By any measure, Mr. Heston is an extraordinary man. And he wears an extraordinary watch.

Rolex. The ultimate in handcrafted perfection. The famous Oyster case is carved step by careful step from a solid block of gold or stainless steel. Rolex sets the standard for durability the world around. And its style stands unequalled.

Mr. Heston has found fulfillment in his search for perfection. It's a process we understand entirely.

ROLEX



The Omega Man, 1971, Boris Sagal (Warner Bros. Pictures), 1971.

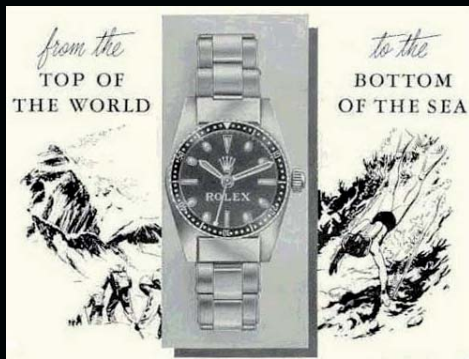
That day, reflecting on the grown-up world and my own future, I decided to call a halt to stop growing then and there and remain a three-year old, a gnome, once and for all.

The Tin Drum, Volker Schlöndorff (Argos Films), 1979.



Hook, Steven Spielberg (TriStar Pictures), 1991.

Rolex advertisement, July 1954.



In freediving, the objective time measured by watches conflicts with the subjective notion of time that is ingrained in our being (...) As if the second you experience is no longer the second that is timed.

Jacques Mayol, French freediver.

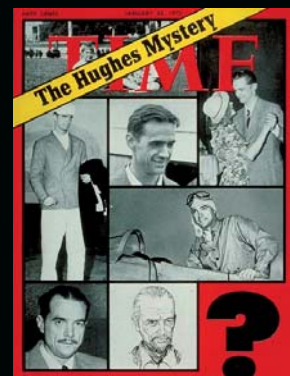


The Adventures of Tintin, The Shooting Star, 1942.
("Judgement is upon us! Repent! The end of the world is at hand!")

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, Richard Fleischer
(Walt Disney Productions), 1954.



TIME Magazine cover, 14 January 1972.



I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

The Bible, Revelation 22:13.

The only reason for time is so that everything doesn't happen at once.

- Albert Einstein

Time is not a line, but a series of now points.

- Taisen Deshimaru

You could not step twice into the same river; for other waters are ever flowing on to you.

- *Heraclitus, Fragments*

"This second envisioned from a mathematical point of view is not the same for this ant and for this diamond. If, for this one, a minute becomes a year and for this one a century is only minute, then both of them, by relativity, are correct.

- Abel Gance, *Prisme*

We do not think real time.
But we live it, because life transcends intellect.

- Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*

I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE FIRST AND THE LAST, THE BEGINNING AND THE END.

-REVELATION 22:13

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Time is Money – How to compute present value:

The amount you would need today to be indifferent between the lump sum and the future lump sum payment.

$$PV = \frac{PMT}{(1 + k)^n}$$

To compute the present value of a future sum (PMT), just divide by the quantity one plus the interest (or discount) rate and raise the rate to the nth power where n is the number of periods. (...) So we have seen why money has a time value, how to compute what that value is, and have touched on how it might impact an everyday situation. Clearly, the time value of money is a powerful concept for those who understand it".

- Dan Parlagreco, *Time Value of Money*, Financial Management I and II University of Phoenix Online