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The SIHH Welcomes Nine Independent Watchmakers To Its New Carré Des Horlogers




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2016 marks a major turning point in the history of the [Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie \(SIHH\)](#). For its 26th edition, the annual watch trade show is expanding to 24 exhibitors as it launches its very first Carré des Horlogers, a collection of nine artisan-creators and independent workshops that represent watchmaking's "new guard". Measuring approximately 1,500 sqm out of a total floor area of 36,000 sqm, it is like a mini salon within the salon, composed of [Christophe Claret](#), [De Bethune](#), [H. Moser & Cie](#), [Hautlence](#), [HYT](#), [Kari Voutilainen](#), [Laurent Ferrier](#), [MB&F](#) and [Urwerk](#). No small coup, as the SIHH is a highly-selective, elite circle usually closed to outsiders and previously off-limits to these young brands that instead exhibited in nearby locations in parallel to the fair. Despite its evolution thanks to the arrivals and departures of different brands and the mergers and acquisitions by the major watchmaking groups since 1991, growing from 16 to 24 exhibiting maisons in a single edition – a 50 percent increase – is unheard of.

The FHH is indeed redefining the meaning of haute horlogerie through an analysis of quantifiable and objective criteria, and placing special importance on young independent watchmakers in 2016, which will introduce more creativity and innovation to the SIHH. Vincent Perriard, CEO of HYT, notes, "Honestly, our type of watchmaking has become more and more important for the industry. HYT is the right example when talking about true innovation. The industry needs this type of ground-breaking horology as we are strong innovators and code-breakers, which will ultimately influence other brands for different types of clients. Today, you have five to 10 independents that truly influence the design, innovation, technology and marketing of other big names."




HYT Skull Maori showcasing the brand's signature fluid mechanics (Photo courtesy of HYT)

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Vincent Perriard, CEO, HYT



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(Photo courtesy of HYT)

Approached last spring by Lupo, the hydro-mechanical specialist that mixes mechanics and liquid in its timepieces gave its response within two weeks. Perriard states, "We're very proud and honored to participate in the SIHH, after only 2.5 years of existence – I think this is a record and a world-premiere! We were approached thanks to our very close friends at Audemars Piguet (who have exhibited at the SIHH for around 15 years), who thought it made sense to welcome highly-innovative brands such as HYT. We have been an exhibitor at BaselWorld at the Palace and had been asking them to give us more space in a different venue; nothing had changed, so we began to consider the SIHH. We are small, independent and go very fast. I don't think we will lose any freedom. On the contrary, we believe it will boost our visibility, allowing us to reach the best watch retail networks on the planet and dramatically increase our exposure to the press. We will benefit from a very high standard of quality and organization." Happy to be exhibiting close to Richard Mille and Greubel Forsey – two brands it respects and that attract a similar type of clientele – HYT's financial commitment for its 100-sqm booth will be comparable to what it spends at BaselWorld. Having manufactured 405 watches in 2015, it hopes to reach 2,000 pieces annually in the future. "Our business expectations are quite clear. In the first semester of 2015, HYT saw a 45 percent increase in sales compared to the previous year, same period. So we expect to have a solid increase in our business again in 2016, even in this challenging climate." It is showcasing a new "Tradition" piece in association with Audemars Piguet Renaud & Papi at the SIHH, and believes 2016 will be the only year it will exhibit at both the SIHH and BaselWorld... after all, Neuchâtel is closer to Geneva than Basel.