

PRESS RELEASE

The Jury of the FHH Cultural Council presents the “**Hommage au Talent**” and “**Hommage à la Passion**” awards to the Maison Greubel Forsey and to Franco Cologni.

Composed of around 50 independent professionals and serving under the aegis of the Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie’s Cultural Council, the Jury annually honors exceptional personalities, professionals who have made their mark on watchmaking through their creativity, their enterprising spirit and their mastery of this hugely diverse artistic and technical world.

At the award ceremony of this 6th edition, held during an evening event organized on April 18th in Geneva’s Cité du Temps, the “Hommage au Talent” prize singled out the Maison Greubel Forsey renowned for its virtuoso skills in the field of technical horology; while the “Hommage à la Passion” distinction was awarded to Franco Cologni, who decided to dedicate it posthumously to Nicolas G. Hayek.

Geneva, April 19th 2018 – The Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie (FHH) aims to promote its values in the luxury world. At the crossroads between applied arts and one of the most sophisticated forms of micromechanical engineering, Fine Watchmaking features the particularity of being nurtured by age-old traditions continually invigorated by innovations.

Another hallmark of this industry lies in forty or so professions whose exponents are distinguished by their extraordinary creativity, technical or artistic intelligence and a resolutely enterprising spirit. The FHH believes that these men and women who shape today’s Fine Watchmaking deserve recognition – which is exactly why its Cultural Council composed of around 50 independent professionals annually hands out its “Hommage au Talent” and “Hommage à la Passion” awards.

For the “Hommage à la Passion” award, the FHH Cultural Council decided this year to honor its Chairman, Franco Cologni, a man of strong convictions whose name is inextricably bound up with the extraordinary destiny of Cartier over the past 30 years, as well as with the Richemont’s group deployment in the realm of Fine Watchmaking.

To avoiding potential conflict of interest, Franco Cologni chose to pass on his award to Nicolas G. Hayek, in a posthumous tribute to the Swatch Group founder. Back in the day, this natural-born entrepreneur was tasked by banks with finding a solution to the quartz crisis that had hit the Swiss watch industry very hard. The undertaking might well have seemed insurmountable at the time, yet Nicolas G. Hayek shouldered it as a personal challenge. In doing so, he succeeded in safeguarding a set of industrial facilities that has now firmly established Switzerland’s hegemony in the realm of high-quality watchmaking – as well as laying the foundations of what was to become one of the world’s largest corporations.

Franco Cologni said : *“I wanted to pass on this distinction to Nicolas G. Hayek, who also displayed an ardent passion for watchmaking. This posthumously awarded prize should be regarded as a tribute to this great man without whom the Swiss watch industry would not be what it now is.”*

This year, the “Hommage au Talent” prize rewards two exceptionally talented watchmakers, Robert Greubel et Stephen Forsey, who have made an indelible imprint on the industry since the turn of the 21st century by purely and simply redefining independent watchmaking.

Since the start of their joint endeavors and in less than 20 years, together with CompliTime created in 2001 and through the subsequent launch of their Greubel Forsey signature brand in 2004, they have tirelessly blazed new trails by creating original mechanisms. These have notably included their first fundamental invention, the Double Tourbillon 30°, which instantly caught collectors' attention; a reinterpretation of the GMT function; a masterful perpetual calendar with equation of time; ergonomic bidirectional fast adjustment via a mechanical computer; as well as a new *grande sonnerie* (grand strike) mechanism equipped with 11 safety features ensuring maximum user-friendliness.

All Greubel Forsey timepieces are developed, created and tested with a view to improving their chronometric (precision timekeeping) performances, while demonstrating exceptional mastery of superlative hand craftsmanship. With each new creation, the Maison has commanded respect through the technical nature of its timepieces, the resolutely contemporary architecture of its movements, as well as the almost obsessive care devoted to the finishing of each component. The result is an unmistakable Greubel Forsey style that has become an inescapable fixture in the contemporary watchmaking world.

Stephen Forsey and Robert Greubel commented : *“This award highlights our entrepreneurial spirit that enables us to give concrete shape to our ideas with a sense of complete freedom – the fundamental prerequisite for creating authentic and uncompromising timepieces. We are delighted and thankful for this distinction bestowed on us by the Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie, as we are proudly embedded in the Fine Watchmaking culture and do everything in our power to safeguard this heritage by focusing our energy on innovation and research.”*

Winners of multiple chronometry competition prizes, five Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève prizes including two “Aiguille d’or” Grand Prix (Best in Show) awards, as well as the 2009 Gaïa Prize in the “Spirit of Enterprise” category, Robert Greubel and Stephen Forsey are both deeply concerned by the progressive loss of watchmaking know-how in an era of ever-growing industrialization and massive recourse to automation. It was to combat this tendency that they created the Time Æon Foundation, whose action is part of an ambitious program that is more necessary than ever in perpetuating and passing on these unique skills, sparking vocations and supporting the training of future independent watchmakers.

This 6th edition was held with the support of the City of Geneva as part of the 2018 European Artistic Craft Days.

For more information, visit www.hautehorlogerie.org

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The Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie

A not-for-profit foundation set up under private law in 2005 by Audemars Piguet, Girard-Perregaux and the Richemont Group, the objective of the FHH is to promote and spread the reputation of Fine Watchmaking around the world. It provides information on the latest news, history and skills within the watchmaking professions. It trains, assesses and certifies horological knowledge. It organizes large-scale events and encounters intended for both the general public and professionals. A creator of content, competencies, connections and experiences, the FHH is supported by 42 partner brands. Various great names in the watch industry and independent creators thus actively contribute to the deployment of its activities.

The 42 partner brands

A. Lange & Söhne, Audemars Piguet, Armin Strom, Bovet, Bulgari, Cartier, Chanel, Chopard, Christophe Claret, Chronométrie Ferdinand Berthoud, De Bethune, DeWitt, F.P. Journe, Girard-Perregaux, Greubel Forsey, Grönefeld, Hautlence, Hermès, H. Moser & Cie, HYT, IWC, Jaeger-LeCoultre, Kari Voutilainen, Laurent Ferrier, Louis Vuitton, MB&F, Montblanc, Officine Panerai, Parmigiani Fleurier, Piaget, Ressence, Richard Mille, Roger Dubuis, Romain Gauthier, RJ, Speake-Marin, Tag Heuer, Ulysse Nardin, Urwerk, Vacheron Constantin, Van Cleef & Arpels, Zenith