

JEWELRY

## Baselworld exhibitors innovate to meet contemporary consumer demands

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*Baselworld 2017*

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By STAFF REPORTS

As it looks to recover from two years of consecutive slowdown, the Swiss watch industry is evolving in reaction to the modern market.

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The 100th annual Baselworld saw watchmakers gather in Basel, Switzerland to showcase their latest designs, some of which included smartwatches and customizable designs aimed at a younger generation. During the event, 1,330 total exhibitors from 40 countries made an appearance, but buyers were down 4 percent from last year's fair.

### Analog adaptation

During Baselworld, held from March 23-30, Michael Kors unveiled its expanded line of Access smartwatches and activity trackers, which will retail in more markets this year. Major focuses were additional men's timepieces and an update to the companion app, which now offers more integration with social media.

At Baselworld, Bulgari launched its first customizable design, Serpenti Skin. Reflecting the growing infusion of technology into the retail experience, a tablet application for sales associates will ease the personalization process in-store ([see story](#)).

Tag Heuer aimed for disruption through an art collaboration. Its "art provocateur" Alec Monopoly spray painted his signature graffiti character on the side of the stand's facade while a crowd watched.



*Tag Heuer's live painting at Baselworld*

Hublot also feted collaboration, unveiling timepieces created in partnership with Italia Independent and its La Ferrari watches.

Despite the modernization trend, traditional craft still abounded.

Chanel launched its second exclusive in-house movement, dubbed the Caliber 2, which has overlapping gears that resemble the house's iconic camellia.



### *Chanel's Calibre 2*

Breguet also looked to its heritage, staging an exhibit on its ties to the Royal Navy during the show.

While Swiss watch sales have been down for two years, the sector has seen its exports double in the last decade. Swiss timepieces have a 60 percent market share within the watch industry, and watches represent the third greatest export for Switzerland.

One way in which the industry is trying to adapt is by featuring more entry-level timepieces with less complications in materials such as stainless steel. They are also adopting the immediate retail format of fashion, producing pieces that consumers can buy on the spot.

For instance, Tag Heuer's Connected Modular 45 launched with a see-now, buy-now retail strategy, allowing consumers to get their hands on the watch from its reveal on March 14 in boutiques, retailers and online ([see story](#)).

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