

JEWELRY

## Only Watch 2017 to auction one-off experiences alongside commissioned timepieces

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*Watchmakers from around the world will participate in this year's auction. Image credit: Amin Strom*

By DANNY PARISI

Trade show and auction Only Watch 2017 is encouraging watchmakers to provide unique experiences alongside some of the world's most-expensive timepieces sold.

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Timepiece brands such as Chanel, Chopard and Tag Heuer are heeding the call, offering trips and unique experiences with the purchase of a watch, a move that offers horologists and brand enthusiasts a memory beyond the material. The Only Watch 2017 auction will be held Nov. 11 and will be hosted by auctioneer Christie's.

"We are committed to fully integrate the Only Watch campaign to all our activities across categories and the globe," said Alexandra Kindermann, co-head of communications at **Christie's**, London. "We are the world's leading auction house and we are certain that the worldwide exhibition tour throughout 9 cities will attract high interest amongst existing and new clients.

"It is a real pleasure to work with Luc Pettavino, founder of Only Watch and President of L'Association Mongasque contre les Myopathies, his enthusiasm is spreading rapidly across all our departments," she said.

### Brand experiences

Watches are consistently some of the highest-fetching pieces at auctions. The long tradition of watchmaking combined with the movement complexity and rarity of the materials means that they are sought-after accessories for wealthy consumers.

Only Watch is taking advantage of that standing to raise funds for research on Duchenne muscular dystrophy. Portions of the proceeds from the Only Watch 2017 auction will fund research into this condition.

The auction is being held in Geneva for the second time since the show's inception in 2005, at the Four Seasons Hotel des Bergues. Christie's will conduct the auction for the first time.

Timepieces to be auctioned include pieces designed by watchmakers such as Andersen Genève, Bell & Ross,

Chanel, Chopard, H.Moser & Cie, Louis Vuitton and Tag Heuer. Each watch is unique and estimated to sell for hundreds of thousands of dollars.



*Bovet 1822's watch for Only Watch. Image credit: Bovet 1822*

Before the 49 timepiece lots head to the auction block, they will be put on display in eight cities around the world. The first stop on the world tour of these watches will be held at the Monaco Yacht Show from September 27-30.

This year, Only Watch is encouraging participating brands to offer something a little extra along with the watch. The organization has asked brands to package their watches along with a once-in-a-lifetime experience or meeting with a brand ambassador, or anything that consumers would not be able to get anywhere else.

For example, Tudor is selling a unique Black Bay Bronze watch at Only Watch 2017 and the winning bidder will also receive an all-expenses-paid trip to Switzerland to visit Tudor's manufacture and view the watchmaking process up close.

Another watch, the Armin Strom Manual Hunt Slonem Edition, was created in collaboration with American artist Hunt Slonem, whose work is printed on the back of the timepiece.

Watchmaker Bovet 1822 is inviting the buyer of its contribution to the auction to join them at the Artists for Peace and Justice Gala dinner in December as an honored guest.

These are just a few of the experiences being offered by watchmakers at Only Watch, though not every watch will have an accompanying experience.

#### Swiss dominance

Watches are a timeless luxury investment and are one of the biggest draws at auctions for luxury buyers.

The lineup at Only Watch is filled with Swiss watchmakers, who still remain a dominant force in the industry.

According to the Federation of the Swiss Watch Industry's monthly temperature check, Swiss watchmakers saw strong growth for May 2017.



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*A few of the watches on sale. Image credit: Only Watch*

For the month of May, Swiss watch industry exports were higher than the previous year by 9 percent, with total value totaling 1.7 billion Swiss francs, which is about an even exchange to the United States dollar. The Federation of the Swiss Watch Industry takes May's positive performance as a sign that recovery, while slow, has been under way since the beginning of the year ([see story](#)).

With brands from Switzerland and around the world lining up to take part in Only Watch, it is the unique brand experiences that will shine brightest for buyers.

For true watch enthusiasts, the chance to tour a watchmaking facility or meet with designers will be a major draw.

"Obviously we all hope for the highest outcome possible since the entire hammer price and we have lifted our buyer's premium will go to charity," Christie's Ms. Kindermann said.

"Only Watch is a very noble and important cause supporting scientific research and we hope our clients, collectors, friends and those to become will see the double benefit in bidding in the Only Watch auction supporting a charity by securing a unique piece by the world's most renowned watchmakers," she said.

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