



WATCHMAKING AND LEATHER: COMBINED DESTINIES

THE HISTORY OF WATCHMAKING BECAME ASSOCIATED WITH LEATHER AS SOON AS THE TIMEKEEPER LEFT THE POCKET FOR THE WRIST. APART FROM TEMPUS COMPUTARE, THE ONLY WATCH BRAND INVOLVED WITH VEGANISM, OTHER BRANDS HAVE USED IT...

In 1571 or 1572, the Earl of Leicester offered Queen Elizabeth 1st of England a round watch set with diamonds suspended from an armlet. For Dominique Fléchon, first historian of the Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie in Geneva, “historians believe this watch to be the ancestor of the wristwatch. Almost a century later, in his *History of Port Royal*, M. Gazier indicates that Pascal (1623–1662) wore his watch on his wrist.” Finally, and it’s by then the great time of the arrival of the wrist watch, in May 1927, the *Revue Horlogère* published an engraving, in which one of the four horse riders is apparently wearing a watch on his wrist. Little by little, from the twenties on, the pocket watch emerged from its hiding place. In order to show itself off and be seen on the wrist, it left the waistcoat of the elegantly dressed men and the female accessories, where it had been hidden away in a highly

miniaturised form. Such a revolution greatly favoured the leather bracelet, as this material was available in many different finishes and from various sources. Moreover, its processing, as part of the art of watchmaking, involves many craftsman skills and practical know-how. It was in fact during this period that the Hermès brand, originally a master craftsman in harness-making and saddlery, became interested in watchmaking. Firmly believing in a strategy of involvement aiming to establish itself everywhere that expertise was present in its most concentrated form, the brand acted as precursors and established itself already in 1978, in Brügg near Biel. Quite recently, the knot has been fully tied: La Montre Hermès has now started producing leather bracelets. “Since 2006, our factory in Brügg has integrated the leather bracelet workshop, thus combining its saddlery know-how with its watchmaking creativity. Thanks to the Hermès heritage, our leather ▶