

# Eric Giroud

## The luxury designer

From Harry Winston to Tissot, via Rebellion and Swarovski, Eric Giroud has dedicated his overflowing creativity to luxury watch-making. A rare interview with someone who is passionate about his art and has views on both it and the world.

By Nicolas Berger.

**You set up your own design agency in 1998. Is being independent primordial for you?**

A part from a few times when I was on a company pay-roll, and even then never full time, I have always worked for myself. I like independence, be it professional, moral or intellectual. I am a free electron who works in collaboration with different brands or rather people I should say. I appreciate the one-to-one and the idea of responsibility for a project or a concept. That goes even further given that I work alone!

**Could you tell us about your adventure with Opus, exceptional timepieces, with Harry Winston?**

The Opus projects for Harry Winston are a magnificent platform for creativity and human adventure. I have participated in two Opus so far, 9 and 11 which was presented at the last Basel watch-making fair in the spring. Opus is a way of working which suits me well because it brings together a brand, a watch-maker and a designer. This formula is the best way for me and my method to get results which allow one to exceed oneself and open new doors as far as watch creation is concerned. It is a pure pleasure! Not forgetting Harry Winston who provided the know-how so that Opus could become an exceptional piece with each new watch.

**How does the creation of a watch happen?**

The process is as follow: gather information from a watch-making brand and then raise questions and put forward ideas. I work with sketchbooks that I show so that I can share my queries and propositions. Once the project is defined I quickly make up scale plastic models so as to understand the size of the object and its relation to the wrist as well as to light. To sum up, I would say a project is an accumulation of questions and a product is one sole answer.

**You were an architect until the age of 30. Has this experience been decisive in your evolution?**

Absolutely because the study and practice of architecture are very rounded and bring an awful lot in

terms of the approach, reflection and work methods. For example, in architecture you have to know how to make friends with constraints so they end up becoming the strong point of the project. One sentence sums it up well: "Freedom is born beyond the rules." And then again you can consider watches like so many mini architectures.

**Nowadays there is a tendency to use the word "design" for anything and everything. How would you define it?**

Design is a way of replying to many factors and constraints with a product. You mustn't forget industrial design was invented to sell products, to make them more practical and attractive! Besides, a product is a mirror of the era in which it is created. It's wonderful to be part of this dynamic and to generate deeper reflections than one would have thought. I believe design is a real protagonist in our consumer society, in every sense of the term.

**You are also a great collector of modern art. Who are your favourite artists?**

The world of modern art is vast but as a collector, there are two answers to your question. There are artists I collect and because of that there are artworks I live with on a daily bases because that is the aim of a collection. In this respect I really like Daniel Hesidence and Luc Mattenberger. I only buy questions and never answers, so that I can contemplate the works in my collection and get away from everything. As far as contemporary artists who fascinate me are concerned, there is Anish Kapoor who I find exceptional, among others.

**Your work involves making time look beautiful. How do you see time yourself?**

I would say quite simply I always take time. I have lived in Africa and the Middle East and that has brought me an awful lot. As they say so well over there, you have to give time time - and live in the present!

