***Hot Balloon***

***Time Takes Flight: The First Suspended Clock***

“To fly, float, glide, navigate in the air, traveling from place to place; to surpass oneself, to go further, higher, faster; or, at a leisurely pace, to take the time to have one’s head in the clouds. L’Épée 1839 has previously included a number of flying objects in its collections, but today it presents the first to have offered mankind the gift of flight: the hot air balloon!”

Immediate boarding on the Hot Balloon, the mechanical clock in the form of a hot air balloon created by L’Épée 1839. This suspended clock follows the brand’s other co-creations – the Vanitas and Arachnophobia wall clocks. Placed simply on a table or suspended from the ceiling as if flying through the air, this kinetic sculpture symbolizes adventure and whimsy while remaining an exceptional mechanical timepiece.

An official partner of l’École cantonale d’art de Lausanne (ECAL), and specifically its Masters program in Advanced Studies in Design for Luxury and Craftsmanship, L’Épée 1839 created this clock on the theme of travel in collaboration with the talented design student Margo Clavier.

Inspired by the hot air balloon and all that it represents – adventure, imagination, discovery, ambition, freedom – Margo and L’Épée 1839 unveil a mechanical clock with impressive, sometimes floating presence which displays the hours and minutes for eight days.

An authentic piece of watchmaking art, Hot Balloon can also be admired from below, just as one might view a hot-air balloon overhead, as is the very first mechanical clock that can be hung from the ceiling.

The clock is set and wound in either position through an ingenious system that combines form and function, design and engineering, precision and durability. To set the time, simply turn the wheel-shaped crown located in place of the balloon’s burner blast valve. Winding the barrel is less intuitive and rather unexpected: the key is the balloon’s basket. Simply turn the basket to power the mechanism.

Full of poetry, Hot Balloon comprises 207 components, all produced in-house at the L’Épée 1839 manufacture, and finished and assembled by hand by a passionate team. The clock, sometimes placed on a table, sometimes suspended, measures 31 cm in height, and 17 cm in diameter.

**Hot Balloon was been created in a limited edition of 50 pieces for each model:**

Palladium, Black and Palladium, Blue and Palladium, Red and Palladium, or Gold.

**Whimsical, Exquisite, Creative**

Designed by Margo Clavier, Hot Balloon embodies the dream of travel and adventure. As her first ECAL project, the collaboration with l’Épée 1839 offered a serious challenge: designing a mechanical clock. After visiting the manufacture in Delémont, Margo quickly seized upon the idea of the hot air balloon, which caused a worldwide sensation when it flew for the first time in 1783. Inspired by the aesthetics of the very first hot air balloons, Hot Balloon is an elegant contrast of visible mechanical parts and a metal parts in a variety of finishes and refined decorations.

Every component of the mechanical clock is designed to resemble the parts of a hot air balloon: turning the basket winds the movement; the burners serve as the escapement; the flame indicates the hour and minutes; and finally, the envelope (the balloon), with its wide openings, lends the piece an imposing transparent, airy aspect.

**Table Clock or Suspension Mechanical Timepiece?**

L’Épée 1839 has imagined its tethered flight in a very specific way, offering a completely new way of presenting time. Hot Balloon can be displayed on a desk, a table or a shelf, and it can also be hung directly from the ceiling, floating in air above it all – a first for a mechanical clock of this scale.

Hot Balloon is therefore be supplied with a suspension kit. A very thin cable, fully incorporated into the clock’s design, attaches to the hot air balloon, allowing it to take flight.

The time is displayed on the balloon’s burner; a two-pointed needle resembling a flame indicates the hours and minutes on two black cylinders stacked one on top of the other.

The crown for setting the time is located under the vertical escapement, and its gear train is located between the basket and burner, in place of the blast valve. Just as the flow of gas inflating the hot air balloon is adjusted with the blast valve, the clock’s time is adjusted with this crown.

Winding the clock involves the whole basket. Regardless of how Hot Balloon is displayed, to wind the clock, simply turn the base several times (generally six turns), to provide enough power for eight days of flight. For greater ease of use, especially when Hot Balloon is placed on a table, L’Épée 1839 has also made it possible to wind the clock by turning the basket’s upper ring, to avoid having to lift the clock.

**Hot Balloon: Mechanical Poetry and Whimsical Technology**

To give the design an airy feel, while providing excellent stability, the balloon, which measures seventeen centimeters in diameter, was conceived as a hollow element, so as to allow light to pass through it. Incorporating complex, curved lines into the design was not insignificant for designer Margo Clavier. It is, however, a choice that demanded more from the engineers and machinists, since many hours of turning and machining are required to create this piece. A block of material had to be turned and machined to hollow out the balloon before creating its pockets and curves. The balloon is formed from one single piece, and a vast one in comparison to typical dimensions of watchmaking.

The basket becomes the mechanical movement, and the mechanical movement becomes the basket. The design of Hot Balloon’s movement resembles that of a watch, but on a larger scale. The plate and the bridges of a watch’s movement become in this instance the two upper parts of the basket. The second level is therefore the primary, multi-level plate. The barrel and all its gear trains can also be admired from the underside of the basket through the mineral glass.

While a watch’s movement is often merely a technical component, sometimes visible but never exposed to the owner's fingerprints, at l’Épée 1839, the movement becomes an object in its own right, designed to be touched, with all the resultant constraints and challenges for the finishes and surface treatments. This perfect combination of form and function is the well-known signature of the brand.

**The Hot Air Balloon: A Creation of Science, Ambition and Adventure**

Humans have always wanted to fly: from Icarus to Leonardo da Vinci, not forgetting the wide-eyed child in every one of us. Early on, science identified the Archimedes principle, which although more commonly applied to liquids, can also be applied to gases. Drawing upon this principle of fluid mechanic~~s~~, we can imagine an enormous balloon capable of lifting people up into the air. A bit of genius, and undoubtedly a significant element of folly, allowed the first hot air balloon to take off in the late 18th century, ready to fulfill the ambition and dream of exploring the skies.

The hot air balloon inspired numerous writers, philosophers, filmmakers and adventurers. To this day, it remains the symbol of new worlds, unknown horizons and great discoveries.

**HOT BALLOON**

**Technical Specifications**

**References:**

74.6002/104: Palladium

74.6002/204: Black and Palladium

74.6002/404: Blue and Palladium

74.6002/504: Red and Palladium

Limited Series: 50 per configuration

Dimensions: Height 31 cm; Diameter (balloon) 17.2 cm; Height (basket) 8 cm

Weight: 3.9 kg

217 components

**FUNCTIONS:**

Desk clock and suspension clock

Time displayed on two stacked cylinders; flame-shaped indicator serving as hour and minute hands

Wound by the basket

Time setting via the button above the basket

**L’ÉPÉE 1839 MOVEMENT**

L’Épée 1839 Movement, designed and manufactured in-house

1855 LR Caliber

Balance vibrations: 18,000 vph – 2.5 Hz

Single barrel

Power reserve: 8 days

Number of jewels: 17

Number of components: 207

Incabloc shock protection system

Palladium plated mechanism

Materials: brass and stainless steel

**THE BASKET**

The basket is an essential piece of the movement since it serves to wind the barrel.

Materials: brass and stainless steel

Finish comprised of polishing, sand-blasting and satin finishing.

**THE BALLOON**

Materials: brass and stainless steel

Finish comprised of polishing, sand-blasting, satin finishing and painting.

A system for ceiling suspension composed of a cable and a hook at the top of the balloon.

**Margo Clavier, ECAL and the Masters in Advanced Studies in Design for Luxury and Craftsmanship**

Twenty-five-year-old Margo Clavier has always been attuned to the world of craftsmanship. From a family of artisan chocolate-makers, Margo was raised to value tradition. She naturally turned towards the creative professions. After obtaining her diploma in product design in Roubaix (France), and studying at the National Academy of Art in Sofia (Bulgaria), Margo earned a Bachelors degree at La Cambre, a national university for visual arts in Brussels (Belgium) in 2017. To further develop her skills in arts and crafts, she decided to enroll in the Masters program in Advanced Studies in Design for Luxury and Craftsmanship at ECAL. Created almost 10 years ago, this program exposes students to the real world of luxury design, providing opportunities to gain professional experience in table arts, fashion, gastronomy, cosmetics and fine watchmaking.

Internationally recognized for industrial design, graphic design, photography, filmmaking, new technologies and art, ECAL consistently ranks in the top five schools worldwide for art and design. Overseen by Director Alexis Georgacopoulos since 2011, ECAL has established itself as a leading institution for creative design education, notably by fostering contact with internationally recognized designers, and through numerous collaborations with and commissions from companies and institutions. Students thereby gain not only solid theoretical education, but also benefit from stimulating real-world experiences.

This exceptional program is designed for graduates of Bachelors or Masters degree programs who wish to enhance their training in the field of design, gaining knowledge specific to high-end sectors ranging from fine watchmaking, gastronomy, the Métiers d'Art, and the use of noble materials with special techniques. Every year since 2012, more than a dozen students from around the world have had the opportunity to work on collaborative projects with prestigious companies with age-old heritage, and in workshops managed by leading players on the international design scene.

***L’EPEE 1839—Switzerland's leading clock manufacture***

L’Epée has been a prominent clockmaking firm for more than 180 years. Today, it is the only manufacture in Switzerland to specialize in the production of high-end clocks. Founded in 1839 by Auguste L’Epée in France’s Besançon region, the company originally focused on producing music boxes and watch components. Even at this early stage, the brand was synonymous with entirely hand-made pieces.

Starting in 1850, the manufacture became a leader in producing escapements and began to develop special regulators for alarm clocks, table clocks and musical watches. It gained wide recognition and filed numerous patents for special escapements, particularly for use in its anti-knocking, auto-starting and constant force systems. L’Epée became the principal supplier of several famous clockmakers and went on to win many gold medals at World Fairs.

During the 20th century, the firm owed its success largely to its remarkable travel clocks. Many associate the L’Epée brand with influential individuals and people in positions of power. Members of the French government often gave clocks to their distinguished guests. When the Concorde supersonic airplane began its commercial flights in 1976, L’Epée fitted the cabins with wall clocks to give passengers the time. In 1994, the brand demonstrated its penchant for challenges by constructing the largest pendulum clock in the world, the “Giant Regulator”, which features in the Guinness Book of Records.

L’Epée 1839 is currently based in Delémont in the Swiss Jura Mountains. With CEO Arnaud Nicolas at the helm, it has developed an exceptional collection of table clocks that includes an entire range of sophisticated clocks.

The collection focuses on three themes:

Creative Art - Artistic pieces first and foremost, often developed in partnership with external designers as joint creations. These clocks surprise, inspire and even shock the most seasoned collectors. They are intended for those consciously or unconsciously looking for exceptional objects that are one of a kind.

Contemporary Timepieces - Technical creations with a contemporary design (Le Duel, Duet, etc.) and minimalist, avant-garde models (La Tour) incorporating complications such as retrograde seconds, power reserve indicators, moon phases, tourbillons, chiming mechanisms or perpetual calendars.

Carriage Clocks - Lastly, classic travel clocks, also known as “officers’ clocks”. These historical pieces issued from the brand’s heritage also feature their fair share of complications: chiming mechanisms, minute repeaters, calendars, moon phases, tourbillons and more.

All pieces are designed and manufactured in-house. Their technical prowess, combination of Form and Function, very long power reserves and remarkable finishes have become signature features of the brand.