

SUMMARY OF THE 88th AUCTION

AUKTIONEN DR. CROTT



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The Specialists for Vintage Horology • Proprietor Stefan Muser
since 1975

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SHERATON HOTEL, FRANKFURT AIRPORT

Full house in the Sky Loft of the Sheraton Hotel at Frankfurt Airport: the floor in front of the podium was packed to the last seat when auctioneer Stefan Muser kicked off the auction at 12 o'clock, well aware of the fact that it would be a long day - the catalogue for this auction contained 679 lots waiting for their new owners. The Dr. Crott team looked after the many national and international telephone bidders wanting to get their share of the horological and historical works of art the auction house had assembled in the course of the last six months in their usual attentive manner.

In recent years Auctioneers Dr. Crott has come to be a globally accepted marketplace for fine enamels on high quality pocket watches as well as on ornamental and musical boxes; so the interest in the early 19th century pieces on offer was tremendous.

There was for example a gentleman's impressive gold pocket watch studded with half pearls and with quarter repeater, musical movement and two automatons, created by Piguet et Meylan for the Chinese market in 1815. Especially striking are the exquisite enamel miniatures decorating the watch, which sold for **106.500 euros**: the cuvette shows a man playing the lute and a lady playing the harp, the hunter case is painted with a fictive Swiss seascape with a mountain range and an enchanted sky fashioned from translucent enamel.

Piguet et Meylan were also the makers of a fine gold enamel watch with quarter repeater that has its hunter case decorated with an enamel miniature painted after motifs of the poem „Autumn“ by James Thomson: „Lavinia receives Palemon's letter“. The watch in its original case fetched as much as **302.400 euros**.

The proud sum of **223.300 euros** was achieved by a gentleman's very fine pocket watch created for the Chinese market by Bovet of London in 1815; the technical excellence as well as the artful finishing make this a truly fascinating timepiece with duplex escapement and centre seconds. The painted harbour view of Canton with warehouses and fortress is incredibly detailed and attributed to enamel painter Jean-Louis Richter.

HIGHLY SOUGHT AFTER: ENAMEL MUSICAL BOXES

Sène & Detalla à Genève created the extremely rare Swiss musical box dating from circa 1810, which changed owners for the sum of **68.200 euros**. The lid of the rectangular box shows an allegory of „Bellicosity and Meekness“, the other sides shine in translucent cobalt blue enamelling.

As many as three great craftsmen left their mark on a lavishly decorated gold Empire-style musical box with a glazed ivory portrait of Hortense de Beauharnais, Queen of Holland and stepdaughter of Napoleon Bonaparte: watchmaker Isaac Daniel Piguet, engraver Louis Golay and miniature painter Alexandre Chaponnier. The beautiful work of art dating from 1817 found its new owner for the sum of **316.800 euros**.

Another intriguing piece was a gold enamel singing bird box studded with half pearls that was produced for the Chinese market and features automaton, musical movement and clock with quarter repetition. The magnificent feathered bird with moving head, beak, wings and tail is hidden under an enamel plaque with a painting of „Vertumnus seducing Pomona“ and was created in 1815 by Frères Rochat; Georges Rémond & Compagnie perfected the work by integrating the complicated mechanism and the whistle with moving piston in a rectangular cobalt blue enamel box. This treasure, which came in its original case, sold for **475.000 euros**.



Lot 251, Piguet & Meylan à Brassus

Lot 244, Sène & Detalla à Genève

Lot 249, Bovet, London



A DAZZLING ARRAY OF POCKET WATCHES, WRISTWATCHES AND CLOCKS

To mention but one of the range of outstanding and often highly complicated pocket watches: Breguet's marvellous „Montre à tact“ was certainly one of the highlights at the 88th auction. It was sold in 1824 to a high-ranking Hungarian courtier at the Austrian imperial court. Here, „a tact“ does not stand for „tactful“ or „discreet“ but for tactile: the time of day can be read inside the waistcoat pocket through a hand on the outside of the case - which does, in fact, make this a very “tactful” watch! The extremely rare and very fine piece was knocked down for the sum of **45.900 euros**.

A very different style is embodied by the platinum Art Deco „tutti frutti“ bracelet watch created 1929 in Paris by Audemars Piguet and Eguivillon Lafon & Cie. The luxurious bejeweled watch with its rectangular-shaped movement sold for **172.800 euros**.

Indeed a stroke of luck - these are the words auctioneer Stefan Muser used to describe the astronomical precision regulator by Robert Robin, clockmaker to the royal court and maker of this fine mantel clock dating from circa 1790. Rare and highly complicated pieces such as this hardly ever last the centuries without suffering damage of some kind and to find one in the condition of this exceptionally high quality clock is even more rare. The regulator with centre seconds is equipped with half hour/hour strike, day and date indicator, moon phase, moon age and, most importantly, Robin's innovative detent lever escapement with lever and chronometer wheel. This precision clock changed hands for **90.500 euros**.

However, even from this extraordinary range of magnificent watches and clocks one piece stood out above all others; the absolute highlight of the 88th auction was undoubtedly the longitude clock created by Christiaan Huygens in 1685.

Prominently featuring on the cover of the auction's catalogue, this unique timekeeper is the earliest known clock for determining the longitude; its mechanism was most likely the inspiration Harrison needed to build his famous „H4“. It is also the oldest existing clock with an attempted frictional rest escapement, maintaining power and a „perfect marine balance“ (balancier marin parfait); it certainly embodies the culmination of Huygens' life's work. The lucky buyer must have been well aware of the horological and historical importance of this timepiece because after a fierce bidding war the auctioneer's hammer fell at **835.000 euros**.



Lot 250, Isaac Daniel Piguet à Paris / Louis Golay à Paris / Alexandre Chaponier

Lot 247, Piguet et Meylan à Brassus

Lot 252, Frères Rochat / Georges Rémond & Compagnie à Genève