

International Watch Museum

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International Watch Museum

At the beginning of the century, a small museum of old watches was opened in the School of Watchmaking and Engineering at La Chaux-de-Fonds (Neuchatel—Switzerland); by 1967, owing to its steady growth over the years, it had already been enlarged on three occasions. A few years later, it became apparent that the premises available were no longer suited to a permanent and functional display of the rich collections; consequently it was decided to build in the capital of Swiss and world watchmaking a whole new complex of ultra-modern buildings to house the new international museum. Inaugurated in October 1974, the museum was designed to be a meeting place and focal point for international watchmaking circles, unique of its kind in the world from the scientific, technical and documentary points of view. The main feature of the museum, emphasised by its architecture, is its dynamism. Placed under the sign "Man and Time", it is not limited to displaying exhibits from the past, but is also wide open to the future. After admiring the collections of antique and hand-made items and watching various audio-visual shows, the visitor is shown a workshop where old watches are restored. He then enters an information area which introduces him into the heart of contemporary watchmaking. The section "Modern Times" shows all the production sectors in existence today and the latest technical achievements, while a documentation centre offers those interested an opportunity to consult the specialised library. In this way, every visitor to the museum, whether amateur or professional, can relive the wonderful history of timekeeping. (SODT)

Swiss Know-how for Construction Cranes

Realising the difficulties involved in the importation of heavy, bulky equipment like construction cranes, a factory at Beringen (Schaffhausen—Switzerland) specialising in this sector, proposes a system of co-operation with firms in other countries; this new system enables properly equipped foreign firms to build their own construction cranes according to the designs of the Swiss firm and to market them on their own markets. In fact, the Swiss factory places at the disposal of their clients all the technical specifications, as well as the plans and instructions, for the metallic construction of the crane; in addition, it provides the knowhow and delivers all the precision and complicated components, such as the hoisting gear, slewing platforms, trolleys, electrical equipments, etc. The parts are ready for mounting and all that the client has to do is screw or bolt them on to the metal constructions made in his own works of structural steel, sheet steel or steel pipe. This scheme has the advantage of cutting out transport costs and customs duties on all metal parts, while offering the possibility of benefiting from the experience of the Swiss firm, without having to invest in special equipment for the manufacture of very technical parts. (SODT)