

FACES



MAXIMILIAN  
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# MAXIMILIAN BÜSSER

FOUNDER/CEO, MB&F

## MAKE A WATCH FOR WOMEN? NEVER

BY KARMAN TSE

### IN HIS OWN WORDS

“People have asked if I’m going to make a watch for women soon, and I say, ‘Never.’ Because I don’t make watches for men either. We create these horological machines (HM) for ourselves — it’s a very selfish creative process, but it’s the only way we can be so extreme in our creativity.

Of course, when you create something as extreme as what we do, you’ll have 95 percent of the population who won’t understand it and hate it, but that is the price to pay if you really want to create your own path instead of walking down the same line as everybody else. But when you do find clients who share and understand what you are doing, the reward is phenomenal.

I have a client, an incredibly avid watch collector who owns HM1 and 2. She emailed me one-and-a-half years ago after she bought No 1, and said, ‘You don’t know me, but I bought a new piece, and it was incredible. I just wanted to tell you that.’

We started emailing back and forth, and she wanted so much to see HM3 that she flew her own jet up from northern California to New York to have lunch with me and see the watch. She loved it. That was... wow!

And last year, when I was going around the world presenting No 2, I had dinner with one of my retailers and his wife. They spotted the HM2 I was wearing — the rose-gold piece — and I showed it to the wife, explained it to her briefly. She literally didn’t say anything but continued looking at it. And then, suddenly, she looked up at her husband — he’s one of the top 10 retailers in the world who has practically every high-end brand you can think of — and said, ‘You’ve been asking me what I want for my second son (she was four months pregnant), I want this.’ Then she looked at me with a mischievous smile and asked, ‘Can we put a few diamonds on it?’

My jaw dropped open! It was incredible! I mean she could have anything, and she chose one of our machines. She couldn’t say what it was exactly she loved about it, and that was what’s so wonderful.

Men to go into all the details of a watch’s movement and all that. Women, I think, need a more emotional connection — stories have to be told here, and not just of the technical or aesthetic elements which you can immediately see, but more about why a piece is being created, and why the creator made it this way... because if you find an emotional link to the creator, you get a bit of that person’s soul when you buy his creation. I think that’s much more important.” ❀

### ABOUT MAX

Max was 10 years old when he watched *Star Wars* in 1977. He was completely dumbstruck for two hours. “When Darth Vader came on, I could barely breathe. In fact, there’s a bit of Darth Vader’s helmet here,” he says, pointing to one of the cones of the HM3.

To Max, what is most important about a Max Büsser & Friends creation is the “why” and “how” — the “what” is merely a consequence. Most brands, he says, tell you about the functions of their watches. But not MB&F, whose founder considers it infinitely more interesting to understand why a timepiece is created, the ideas behind it, and how it is crafted.

HM3 was originally conceived to be something very technical, but Max wouldn’t, and couldn’t, let it slide. So he said to his team, ‘No, let’s craft a spacecraft.’ The HM3 you’re looking at now — the one he wears in the picture — “is a child’s perspective of a spacecraft”, says the 41-year-old fan of sci-fi classics like *Star Trek* and *Thunderbirds*.

Born in Italy and raised in Switzerland, Max graduated in Lausanne with a Masters degree in micro-technology engineering, and fell in love with haute horlogerie during his seven-year stint at Jaeger-LeCoultre. After another seven years with Harry Winston Rare Timepieces, it was time to follow his heart and “create his own route” — one that would lead him to becoming the horological genius he is.

“I’m not sure everyone understands the product, but I think people in my life are very proud of the fact that I’m following my own way instead of following everybody else’s avenue. I think that is very inspiring to all of them,” he says.