

TIME CHANGERS O-YOROI

It is always with great pleasure that we devote pages to emerging realities, with serious projects behind, with ideas and determination to succeed, much more if they are rooted in Italy. Walking through the salons of Baselworld, in fact, we ran into the resourcefulness topped by an overflowing passion of Roberto Janniello, Fausto Lancini and Romano Alberti, founders and “conductors” of Time Changers, based in Bergamo, and we were immediately impressed by the originality and creative philosophical and cultural references of their first models. Inevitably we took an appointment to return to carry out all the necessary investigations, to fully understand the DNA of the company and its goals and to discuss together of their fascinating creations. Janniello told us: “In many years of practice of Aikido I have learned that it is always an invisible part to drive the visible, it is the inner state to determine the outer movement. This premise is necessary to understand the Time Changers project, because its true roots are the passions of its founders. We speak of love of art, culture, history, traditions and excellence in craftsmanship, born even before o passion for watches. When we met, we realized that we have together a great creative potential and the desire to make objects that give emotions. Our personal qualities are a high aesthetic sense and a great ability in research, design and modeling. The being is expressed only in the doing, and then our vocation is art and craft: we want to give a concrete form to our ideas,

working with our own hands as much as possible. Watchmaking is an outstanding field for this: on the one hand offers great possibilities of expression to our passions, on the other poses significant challenges. It is definitely not easy, for example, to bring in the dimensions and in the elements of a watch the result of an historical research and an aesthetic canon, reworking it in an original way. This challenge excites us and we feel that makes our life much more interesting. Let us be frank: we have not conducted large market researches and we are confident that there is always a potential niche market for creations truly original and of the highest quality. So we decided to leverage our strengths and ‘get up on the shoulders of giants’ regarding the mechanical complications. Hence, the

decision to develop our Italian projects on a mechanical heart Swiss Made. In the end, only customers will decide if we still have a mission to accomplish; it will be their attitude towards us to determine our success. We might even be wrong, but excluding large mechanical complications, we see little courage on the part of large groups in proposing really new models. It is obvious that there are good economic reasons for their part in not taking certain risks. Although for us it is exactly the opposite, and worth to freely express ourselves. From the point of view of the market objective, we do not focus on large numbers, but on



■ Roberto Janniello.



the fact of being able to reach an exclusive limited audience that, hopefully, will be thrilled to discover a new and unique Italian style. Hence the choice of developing some special projects, such as O-YORO, only in a limited series. "Already in Basel, however, the project Time Changers has aroused interest, as highlighted by Janniello:" The feedback has been very positive, especially from part of the international public. If I had to rank the interest by region, I would start from the East (India, Singapore, Russia, Japan), to go to the West (US-Mexico). However, I must say that the biggest surprises were the compliments of some Swiss personalities who have had the courage to admit that they would never have expected to find such amazing creations in the salon of emerging companies. But let's step back and see how it has developed the cooperation between the three partners of Time Changers: "I met Roman Alberti many years ago in a dojo (a place where you perform workouts with martial arts) of Aikido (martial art of which we are both experts and practitioners for a long time), but only after a few years he shared with me his idea of creating a watch inspired by the great Samurai armor from the Edo period" confides Janniello. Perhaps the speech would not go beyond the natural curiosity to see the design, if it was not that this project was already visible in a prototype made by an artisan, Fausto Lancini, modeler by profession and with a



strong passion for watches. As soon I discovered the creative potential of this couple, I began to consider which might be the way to turn those prototypes into real masterpieces. Hence, the establishment of the company together with them to build the model O-YOROI. This timepiece has absolutely no standard components (not even hands), which results

in high manufacturing time and costs. We believe that this type of project fits for an exclusive audience of connoisseurs and collectors, who will find the originality of design, the quality of construction and the limited series as a warranty for increasing value over time. “In parallel of the O-YOROI watch, made in limited series of 150 pieces and offered in a wood box decorated by hand, Time Changers brought forward another concept timepiece with a different brand and intended for a different target, the NAKED BIKE “Paul Ashter” inspired by the most significant historical and modern motorcycles, replicated in model form. A choice motivated, as highlighted by Janniello, by the desire to

“let the creative designers the freedom to explore new boundaries.” Here we will limit ourselves to illustrate only the O-YOROI, to return on NAKED BIKE in future issues, but it is interesting to know, in general terms, before going into the details of a watch with a thousand meanings, the distribution strategies of Time Changers. Janniello says: “So far we have worked mainly to make an amazing product and present it in the right locations (Baselworld and magazines). In the coming months we will begin to go door to door to those stores in Italy and Europe that may be the right showcases for our creations. We want to have the closest relationship as possible with our customers and with the boutiques that have their trust and know their expectations. “

Let’s go back to O-YOROI, for which design, prototyping and engineering are made in Italy, while the assembly and quality control, given the movement and the certification Swiss Made, are of course carried out in Switzerland. We now leave the word to its creator, Romano Alberti, who immediately begins by pointing out that: “watches are witnesses of the past and reveal valuable information about ancient times, as the aesthetic taste and degree of scientific



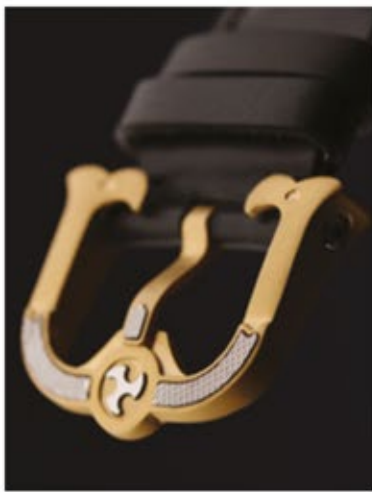
■ Romano Alberti.

and social progress.” Then he adds: “O-YOROI is the deep synthesis and the union of my three passions: the oriental culture, art and watchmaking. The more than thirty years of passion for Japanese culture, born and raised in my heart through daily practice of noble martial arts, such as Aikido, Ken-jutsu and Iai-do (art of extracting the katana), and the methodical research of the perfection of movements, are the main inner forces that led me to realize the O-YOROI as an object of art and design. This watch is my way of paying a tribute to the magical Japanese culture and above all a tribute to the legendary figure of the Samurai and his philosophy of life, which forged my

personality over the years. In the development of O-YOROI, lasted about four years, I tried to apply and merge into one harmonious shape the seven virtues of Bushido (or Way of the Warrior), just like the ZEN culture says, aware of everything, everything becomes one.” And now we come to the structural details of this complex and “elaborated” timepiece: “All elements of the watch recall the various parties that made up the armor of the Samurai - Alberti precise - but here they take a more philosophical and abstract connotation. Nothing is left to chance, just like the Eastern philosophy wants. The armor of the Samurai was composed of the following protections: head protection, Kabuto, whose features we find represented on the watch dial and crown; shoulder protection (Sode), whose features are present in the protection for the crown; protection for arms (Kote), bust (Do), belly (Kuzazuri), legs (Haidate), and feet (Suneate), whose profiles we find represented around the case and in the bends. Looking at the clock sense the vibrations of a ‘duel’ between two Samurai who are represented by the lugs, a reference to “Kabuto maedate” (front crest of the Samurai armor helmet), symmetrical to each other in a constant study and observation,



concentrated in the front direction. Finally, the handle of the legendary Katana (Tsuka), usually made of wood and covered in stingray leather (Same), covered with strips of silk, cotton or woven leather (Tsuka-ito), is immediately recognizable in the watch strap,



made of calfskin leather with inserts in stingray skin. "Let's focus now on the dial:" Watching him, we recognize the typical and specific processing of an ancient helmet of the Samurai, the Suji Bachi Kabuto, made from strips of iron overlapping each other with pronounced ribs and joined with rivets flat head. At the center of the dial is placed the Tehen Kanamono, which supports the unique hands, once considered the access of gods energy to help the Samurai; here in the watch is the driving force of the hands themselves. These represent a 'duel' between two Samurai, creating geometric shapes overlapping between night and day. This eternal 'duel' is always accompanied by the harmonious continuous rotation of the second hand, characterized by stylized flower chrysanthemum, emblem of Japan. The numbers of hours are written in Japanese, placed on the flange inclined at 20 ° and hidden by a second flange colorful dish that represents the universe with the stars, on which four circles represent the eyes of the two Samurai in the duel. The large window

of the date the O-YOROI takes the stylized form of the typical hole of a Tsuba (hand protection in a katana), called Kozuka hitsu ana, which allows you to simultaneously view the present day, the past and the future. "What else to add, except that the case is steel 43 mm and 11.5 mm thick (water resistant to 3 atmospheres), with PVD treatments of components, that the protective shoulders are resin and the bottom case is open with an integrated mineral glass (to see the caliber automatic Sellita SW-260-1, 31 rubies, 28,800



alternations / hour, power reserve of 38 hours, with rotor worked "Cotes de Geneve"); the black dial with sunray processing in relief includes Superluminova on indexes and hands, while the buckle is in steel and PVD gold. The O-YOROI is priced at € 10.880 and is just the first of a long creative process, as confirmed by Romano Alberti: "I am currently designing the second collection, this one inspired by another legendary figure of the past in the art of fighting, no longer tied to the Oriental culture but our classical culture." A profound cultural background that is reflected in the communication strategies, highlighted by Janniello:" For the project O-YOROI, as well as future projects of Romano Alberti, we will use both traditional channels and events related to the cultural themes developed in the individual projects. We think, for example, to partnership with cultural associations, foundations, museums and projects for restoration and recovery of historical, artistic and environmental heritage."