

to make farming profitable? Their complex biology and their social relations make it completely resistant to captivity. And while only five cases of mortal attacks are recorded each year, we continue to kill several million every year!”

As in other luxury sectors, watchmaking is increasingly being swept by purifying winds. The market is demanding more transparency. Materials have to be accompanied by certificates of traceability that provide details of their genuine origin. Leather is no exception. Added to this there is the phobia of dangerous materials. The new European REACH standards, although suspected of European protectionism, concentrate these fears into one new regulation. However, the watch industry is already ahead of the game, and has not waited to get equipped with analysis and testing facilities.

Raphaël Schwarz, chemist at the Dubois Laboratory in La Chaux-de-Fonds, is a “torturer” of watch bracelets. Uncompromising towards every factor that can attack a leather or a polymer, he talks about the hard life of a bracelet, subjected to torsions and other kinds of bad



treatment, exposure to sunlight, UV rays are real enemies, oxygen, which apparently oxidizes, heat, salt water, or worse, lotions and other particularly voracious cosmetics that have their impact during the bracelet’s shelf-life! It is necessary to anticipate, test, dissect, and thoroughly examine down to the finest detail, to ensure solidity and resistance, and the brands spare no expense. For thirty years this laboratory has been validating watches and bracelets, armed with its battery of tests. Our chemist even has a recipe for synthetic sweat in his armoury. This is logical, since sweat destroys watch bracelets and it is not easy to harvest...

Yvan Arpa uses his brand ArtyA as the object of disruptive exploration. It was he

who saved the Romain Jerome brand from extinction, by inventing the Titanic-DNA watch, and one day he could well cross swords with the Society for the Protection of Animals. On the register of unique articles, he provides a dial made of petrified dinosaur dung. “Is it shit? Yes it is!” he dares to assert. Not content with obtaining an unspeakable crudeness with his watch cases, thanks to a Faraday cage, which transforms their accelerated deterioration into a street performance, he spatters his dials with butterfly wings or lake fish scales. Now he is even cutting his bracelets out of a leather made from toad! Why not? It looks beautiful and is pleasant to touch. Why should the stingray, which is used less and less, the snake or the crocodile—always farmed—be considered to be nobler than the giant frog? ■

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