F.P.JOURNE
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THE HOUR GLASS

Young Talent Competition

Awarding to the winner at the F.P.Journe Manufacture

April 14, 2026

Since 2015, the Young Talent Competition allows discovering the next generation of most talented young watchmakers in the world, supports them in their route to independence by identifying their achievements and putting them under the spotlight. F.P.Journe organizes the Young Talent Competition with the support of The Hour Glass, luxury watch retailer in the Asia Pacific region. Both Maisons aim to perpetuate and support the art of haute horology and cultivate the appreciation of extensive horological craftsmanship.

The selection criteria are based on technical achievement, the search for complexity in their realization, the quality of craftsmanship as well as their sense of design and aesthetics. Applicants must have independently designed and created a timepiece or an horological construction. The 2026 Young Talent Competition winner receives a diploma and a CHF 50,000.- grant from The Hour Glass and F.P.Journe, which will allow him to purchase watchmaking tools or finance an horological project.

The jury of the Young Talent Competition 2026 is composed of key personalities from the international horological scene: Andreas Strehler, Giulio Papi, Marc Jenni, Michael Tay, Elizabeth Doerr and François-Paul Journe.

Shin Ohno
Fuyu-Geshiki (Winter Landscape)

27 years old - Matsumoto - Nagano - Japan
Graduate of the National Institute of Technology, Toyota College, Japan - March 2020

Introduction_
A simple glance at a landscape through a window can instantly calm and soothe the mind. It is this sense of tranquillity that I seek to bring into my watchmaking creations. This piece is inspired by the winter landscape of Nagano, where I live. Surrounded by mountains, this region is defined by the purity of its air, by the flow of spring water, and by melting snow. I chose to express this landscape through a grande and petite sonnerie, a quarter repeater, and a tourbillon. To me, the acoustic complications evoke the sounds of moving water, while the tourbillon suggests the continuous course of a stream. Sound and motion thus come together to form a living whole.

Training and background_
I acquired the theoretical foundations of mechanical watchmaking and design during my work as an engineer at Seiko Epson Corporation, at the Micro Artist Studio. At the same time, I attended advanced technical training programmes organised by Nagano Prefecture, one of the major centres of the Japanese watch industry, in order to deepen my practical skills, particularly in repair work. Since my work within the company was mainly focused on computer-aided design, I had no opportunity there to learn component manufacturing in a practical way. I therefore had to acquire these techniques by myself, by contacting teachers from Japanese watchmaking schools and studying videos on YouTube. I continue to learn, day after day. Among the people who have played an important role in my development, I would mention Masahiro Kikuno, whose path I discovered in a television documentary when I was a child, Norifumi Seki, winner of the Young Talent Competition 2020, and Ikukiyo Komatsu, who guided me during technical seminars in Nagano and transmitted to me not only fundamental skills, but also a true philosophy of the watchmaker's craft.

Development of the project_
This project required around eleven months of work. I devoted the first two months to research and documentation on striking mechanisms. The following four months were dedicated to design, and the next four to manufacturing the components. The final month was then devoted to stabilising the striking mechanism and refining its sound. I developed this piece alongside my professional activity, which was the greatest challenge of the project. I woke up at 5 a.m. to work on it for two hours before going to the office, then returned to my bench from 7 p.m. until midnight every evening. All of my weekends were devoted to it as well. The project evolved considerably from my initial idea. At first, in order to meet the one-year deadline, I had imagined a simpler piece, with only a petite sonnerie. But as the project progressed, I felt that a work conceived through compromise had no true value. I therefore decided to push beyond my own limits and significantly enrich its specifications. This choice led me to adopt a very rigorous way of life, but I do not regret it.

Aesthetic expression_

Through the design of this piece, I wanted to evoke the experience of a winter landscape observed from indoors, through a window. The ebony and brass case acts as a frame, heightening the contrast between the interior space and the scene unfolding before the eyes. The dial and the movement are built around three main themes: the texture of snow and water, the shimmer of the stream, and the dynamics of the landscape. To express the softness and light-diffusing quality of snow, I applied a frosted finish to the dial and bridges, obtained by emery blasting. By contrast, the wheels and plates are given a satin finish intended to evoke the steady flow of water. To recreate the way sunlight reflects on the surface of a stream, I hand-polished the tips of the wheel teeth one by one until they reached a mirror polish. On the dial, the movement of the hammers evokes, to me, branches parting the snow. This movement is highlighted by the contrast between the frosted surface of the dial and the satin finish of the hammers. Their superposition further reinforces the visual depth of the whole.

Watch architecture and technical choices_

In this piece, I considered the striking mechanism as a central element in the expression of the landscape. For this reason, I conceived its visual composition, serviceability, usability, and reliability as a whole. The striking mechanism, usually hidden beneath the dial, is here positioned on the movement side. This choice creates visual depth and fully integrates the superposition of the components into the overall landscape of the piece. The gongs are made from piano wire, chosen to produce a peaceful sound. The movement also adopts a modular construction separating the timekeeping function from the striking mechanism, allowing each complex mechanism to be adjusted more precisely and more easily. I also wanted to integrate the quarter repeater activation into the crown, without a separate pusher, in order to preserve the purity of the case while allowing simple operation, even when the piece is placed on a desk. Finally, to prevent any mechanical incident, I designed a system that automatically deactivates the striking mechanism when the power reserve becomes too low. Once the mechanism is engaged, a locking device also prevents any pressure from being applied to the crown. This safety system is driven by planetary gears and cams.

Making process and way of working_

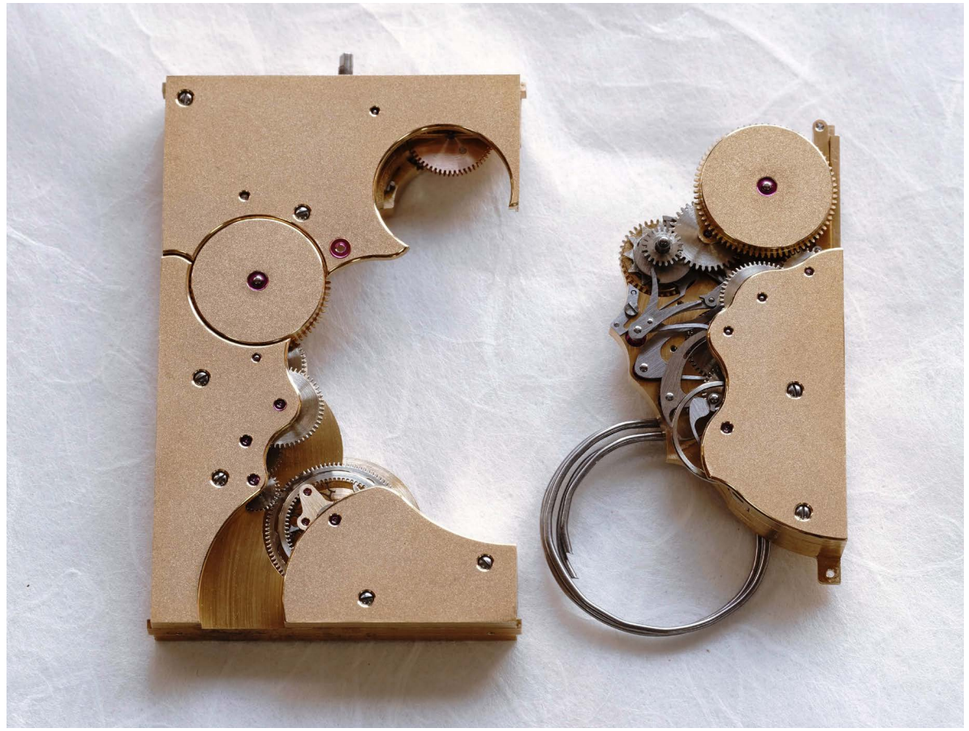
I work in a workshop I have installed in the largest room of my flat. As neighbours live on the floor below, I am always careful not to make too much noise. I mainly use a desktop CNC machine and a watchmaker's lathe. My approach is to carry out every stage of the process myself, from design and manufacturing to final adjustment. It is important to me to be able to say that this is truly my own creation. My philosophy also consists in not reproducing existing movements or components. On the contrary, I seek to bring my own interpretation and my own design to every element. With the exception of the rubies, ball bearings, crystal, mainsprings, and hairspring, every component was designed and manufactured in my own workshop. There is therefore no base movement. The project developed in several stages: defining what I wanted to express through the piece, visualising the overall layout through sketching, then checking the mechanical feasibility in CAD, adapting the component shapes to the real constraints of the tools and machines, manually correcting manufacturing tolerances, disassembling to apply the finishes, reassembling, and then repeating the process as many times as necessary until the desired result was achieved.

Materials, finishes, and adjustment_

The case is made of ebony and brass. The bridges are in brass, the wheels and hands in German silver, while the hammers, levers, and springs are in steel. The greatest technical difficulty of the project was manufacturing precision. At the centre of the movement, I adopted a construction bringing together on the same axis more than ten different components, including the hour snail cam, quarter snail cam, surprise piece, and star wheel. At first, it did not work at all. The smallest manufacturing errors in each of these components accumulated into a much greater problem. I therefore had to rethink the manufacturing process for each part one by one before achieving stable operation. The other major difficulty concerned the sound. The tone changed completely depending on the movement of the hammers, the way the gongs were fixed, and even their shape. A sound that seemed ideal when the piece was lying on the bench could change as soon as I picked it up in my hand. I therefore had to go through a great many trials in order to stabilise a satisfying sound. I continue this search even today in order to achieve a tone that is as accurate as possible.

Technical specifications_

Dimensions: 59 x 41 x 14 mm / **Weight:** 122 g / **Complications:** grande and petite sonnerie, quarter repeater, tourbillon / **Power reserve:** approximately 50 hours / **Total number of components:** 395 / **Case:** ebony and brass / **Bridges:** brass / **Wheels and hands:** German silver / **Hammers, levers, and springs:** steel / **Gongs:** piano wire / **Finishes:** frosted finish on the dial and bridges obtained by emery blasting, satin finish on the wheels and plates, mirror-polished tips of the wheel teeth / **Manufacture:** with the exception of the 68 rubies, 11 ball bearings, crystal, 3 mainsprings, and hairspring, all parts were designed and manufactured by Shin Ohno in his workshop, with no base movement.



Interview
Shin Ohno

About you:

When did your interest in watchmaking begin?
My fascination with watchmaking began when I was around fifteen, after watching a documentary about the independent watchmaker Masahiro Kikuno. I had always been captivated by the intricate mechanisms of traditional Japanese karakuri dolls, but discovering his work convinced me that high-end watchmaking represented a kind of culmination of that craftsmanship. A few years later, in 2020, I learned that Norifumi Seki had won the Young Talent Competition. Seeing a Japanese watchmaker of my own generation receive such international recognition had a strong impact on me. That was the moment when my passion for watchmaking truly took shape, and when I knew that I too had to take on this challenge.

What was your first horological creation?
My very first piece was a pocket watch that I made two years ago. It was a simple hand-wound movement showing only the hours, minutes and small seconds. However, because of flaws in the initial design and insufficient precision in some of the components, the watch stopped running about a month after it was completed.

About the project:

Your project is inspired by the landscape of Nagano. At what moment did you realise that this could become the central idea of the watch?
While walking in the mountains near my home, I was struck by the sight of a small stream. In its clear flow and quiet presence, there was a kind of deep serenity, an almost mysterious feeling, that made me want to gaze at it endlessly. At that moment, I felt the desire to recreate that peaceful landscape within a timepiece, so that I could find that same serenity again at any time, whether it was in my hand or placed on my desk. The frosted finish on the bridges (and the dial) represent snow, while the gear train, tourbillon, and sonnerie visible between bridges represent a mountain stream.

A watch combining grande and petite sonnerie, quarter repeater and tourbillon is an especially ambitious project. Why was it important for you to bring together complications of this level in a single piece?
First, I needed this great challenge in order to measure my true potential as an independent watchmaker. But beyond that, these complex mechanisms were necessary to express the serene beauty of Nagano that had deeply moved me. Under the snow, a stream appears extremely simple and still. Yet when one looks more closely, the water moves in complex ways, it produces sounds, and one can also hear the wind and the birds. I realised that the source of this serenity lay in the harmony between outward simplicity and inner complexity. That is why I gave the case and the bridges a calm appearance and finish, in order to create a clear contrast with the moving gear train, the tourbillon, and the striking mechanism.

Among these complications, was there one that came first and determined the rest of the construction?
The striking mechanism. The position of the levers, hammers and governor was the most decisive part of the movement architecture. Their arrangement determined the entire structure of the watch.

Why did you choose to create this piece as a pocket watch, but also as a small desk clock?
What did this format allow you to do, both technically and aesthetically?
My intention was to transform any space where this watch is placed into a peaceful place. Whether it stands in a private room or on a desk in the middle of a working environment, I wanted it to carry with it the quiet landscape of Nagano. It can be taken anywhere, and as soon as it stands upright on its own, it becomes almost part of the landscape. By moving away from the extreme constraints imposed by the wristwatch, I freed myself from the need for absolute compactness. This gave me more freedom to design the shape and position of each component, and to make each of them an element of expression.

Did this format influence the proportions, the movement architecture, or the way the piece was conceived?
I began the design by first defining the size and shape of the piece very precisely. I wanted a format that would feel natural in the hand, while also providing perfect stability when placed on a desk. This form directly influenced the layout of the movement inside, and I had to ensure that the mechanism would appear at its best when the watch stood upright. I also decided to integrate the repeater control into the crown, placed at the top of the watch, in order to make it easier to use when the piece is standing on a desk.

In your presentation, the striking mechanism is described not only as an acoustic device, but also as a central part of the visual expression of the piece. Was it important for you that the mechanism itself should remain visible and take part in the composition?
In a world filled with electronic devices, where everything works like a kind of black box controlled by integrated circuits, I believe we are naturally drawn to objects whose movement remains visible. It is an instinctive fascination. I belong to a generation that grew up surrounded by highly technological objects. But that is precisely why I was so deeply drawn to mechanical watches and karakuri dolls. Seeing the components work together with such precision captivates me deeply.

You mention a modular construction separating the timekeeping and striking functions. Why was this choice important in the development of the watch?
In order to complete this project in just one year, this modular construction was an essential strategy for controlling risk. If I had integrated all the mechanisms on a single main plate, even the smallest correction to the striking mechanism would have forced me to rebuild the entire timekeeping section as well. By separating the two assemblies, I was able to preserve their independence and limit development risks. In addition, a construction on a single main plate creates overlapping areas that prevent certain components from being seen from the side. Modularity allowed me to observe the mechanism from different angles, to control its operation directly, and to ensure precise adjustments throughout the project.

What part of the making process did you enjoy the most?
Honestly, I enjoyed every stage of the process.

Is there an anecdote or a memorable moment from the making of the piece that you would like to share?
The most moving moment was when I brought together the striking section and the timekeeping section for the first time. It was the first time that the striking mechanism was triggered automatically and the hammers began to move. At that stage, the gongs had not yet been adjusted, so there was no sound at all. But seeing the mechanisms working together gave me the feeling that the watch was truly coming to life. That movement, almost like a heartbeat, is an image I will never forget.

About the future:

Why did you decide to take part in the Young Talent Competition?
I see this competition as a true gateway to success for young watchmakers who wish to become independent. Actually, this was my second attempt, following a deeply disappointing rejection in 2025. At that time, I was convinced my work was perfect, but looking back a year later, I can now see many immature areas. Of course, the financial award itself is attractive, but its real value lies above all in the opportunity to have one's work judged fairly by world-class experts. While I feel my current winning piece is complete, I hope that in another year, I will look back and feel it is "not enough" once again-as that would be the clearest proof of my continued growth as a watchmaker.

What would this recognition represent for you, personally and professionally?
On a personal level, this distinction would be a sign to me that the path I believed in was the right one. But on a professional level, I also know that it would not be an endpoint. This recognition would be an important encouragement, without making me satisfied with what I have already accomplished. I want to keep moving forward.

What would you like to continue exploring in your future creations: acoustic complications, traditional craftsmanship, or something else?
Like this theme of simplicity and complexity that runs through my work, I wish to continue creating while remaining attentive to the emotions that nature awakens in me. In order to express these sensations ever more accurately, I am ready to study and embrace new techniques, new methods of manufacture, and new mechanisms.

Do you already imagine a next piece, or a continuation of this approach in another form?
After completing this project, I decided to leave my current position in order to devote myself fully, from May onwards, to my work as an independent watchmaker. I am fortunate already to be able to count on the support of people who believe in my vision. My priority now is to prove worthy of that trust. There are still so many watches that I want to create. In order to bring all these ideas to life, I will continue refining my skills and going further in my work. This is only the beginning of my journey.

www.fpjourne.com

The independent F.P. Journe Manufacture produces around 1,000 precision mechanical watches per year with 18K rose Gold movements, the brand's exclusive signature. The label "Invenit et Fecit" engraved on all its watches, guarantees and highlights the importance of an in-house calibre entirely designed and constructed in its workshops.

F.P.Journe organizes the Young Talent Competition and brings more than 40 years of expertise in authentic haute horology. François-Paul Journe's historical knowledge has led him to show a timeless consistency in his research on precision and innovative prowess. It is a real honor for him to encourage these young talents by sharing his knowledge, his passion and his determination on a daily basis. He supports them as he was supported at their age.

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