

CLASSIC DRIVER

Swatch Auction in Hong Kong: \$6.3m estimate



Swiss businessman the late Peter Blum and his wife Linda became avid Swatch enthusiasts soon after the very first model was launched in the early 1980s. In fact, they were so keen on the cheap, plastic watches that they amassed a remarkable collection of no fewer than 4,350 examples which Mrs Blum has now decided to offload at auction, nine years after her husband's death.

But while the ubiquitous Swatch might be known for its affordability, this mammoth hoard is expected to realise a large fortune. Being offered as a single lot, the collection is estimated to realise between US\$3.5 and 6.3 million. Yes, *million*.

Auction house Phillips de Pury has been tasked with handling the sale, which includes a large number of prototypes, hybrids and production variants, some of which date from before the commercial release of the first Swatch models. There are also many notable examples of artist collaboration watches, including six Kiki Picasso prototypes, a full run of the Keith Haring designs and the very first of just 120 'Swatch Puff' models produced.

Mr Blum, who ran a major Swiss building supplies company, became hooked on Swatch watches after his daughter began to form a modest collection during the 1980s.

"Our daughter persuaded us to accompany her to a Swatch auction in Luzern in 1990," Mrs Blum told Classic

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“After that, Peter could not get the concept of the Swatch out of his head and, a few months later, he purchased the 1990 Swatch Christmas Special called the Hollywood Dream for a very high price from a retailer. We subsequently attended every Swatch auction in Europe and began acquiring rarities through word of mouth, and by buying prototypes and variations for historical documentation – many from former Swatch workers and external designers at a time when people involved in the development of different models were allowed to keep the unwanted test pieces,” she added.

The sale takes place at 9pm on 24 November at the Four Seasons Hotel, 8 Finance Street, Hong Kong. From 5 – 10 November, the collection will be on display at the [Swatch Art Peace Hotel in Shanghai](#). For full details, see www.phillipsdeputy.com.

Text: [Simon de Burton](#)

Photos: Phillips de Pury & Company

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