

Press Release

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The Patek Philippe Salons in Geneva present the “Rare Handcrafts 2018” exhibition

From April 19 to 28, at its Salons on Rue du Rhône, the Genevan manufacture will showcase its entire collection of the rare handcrafts timepieces that premiered at Baselworld 2018. It is a one-of-a-kind opportunity to discover the fifty exceptional dome table clocks, pocket watches and wristwatches before they continue their journey to private collections all over the world.

Undisputedly, Patek Philippe is one of the most dedicated guardians of grand traditions. Under the auspices of president Thierry Stern and his wife, Creative Director Sandrine Stern, the family-owned manufacture spares no effort to preserve all artisanal skills that for centuries have been used to adorn timepieces and are intimately linked to watchmaking artistry: manual engraving, various grand-feu enameling techniques (miniature painting on enamel, cloisonné, champlevé, paillonné, flinqué, grisaille, plique-à-jour, Limoges enamel painting, etc.), as well as gemsetting and hand guilloching. The Genevan brand is also committed to further evolving such skills and broadening the portfolio by refining new crafts such as wood micromarquetry or combining several techniques to create breathtaking works of art. Every year, the result of this intensive involvement with tradition and innovation is presented by Patek Philippe with a rich palette of one-of-a-kind treasures and limited editions that meld sublime craftsmanship with the ultimate in creativity and aesthetics.

A rich harvest in 2018

The 2018 collection, highlighting fifty creations for dome table clocks, pocket watches and wristwatches (some with minute repeaters) experienced its debut at Baselworld and pays tribute to a suite of rare handcrafts manifested by an extensive range of creations that have taken their inspiration from many different sources.

Engraving, the most venerable craft in the service of watchmaking, is prominently represented, especially with the low-relief of a galleon on a pocket watch case. On the “Whirling Dervishes” pocket watch, damascening is the ancient technique used to embed fine rose-gold threads into a white-gold background.

Among the Grand Feu enameling techniques, cloisonné enamel – with its color cells enclosed by thin gold wires – enjoys prominence on many dome table clocks. This applies to the “Cubist Fantasy” model, for example, with its cubistic color ornaments, and to other unique pieces with themes ranging from nature (birds, flowers, savannah at sunset, planets), to the fine arts



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(Persian porcelain, Art Deco butterflies) and to different world cultures (Indian women, Arabic calligraphy). Cloisonné enamel is often adorned with gold dust, white- or yellow-gold paillons as well as white- or yellow-gold leaf and used to decorate wristwatch dials with eclectic motifs from around the globe (Bhutan Textiles, Chart of the Caribbean, Tropical Plants, Tropical Fish).

The highly complex art of miniature painting on enamel is a grand Genevan specialty practiced exclusively by an elite of the most gifted artisans. It unfolds its magic on the backs of pocket watches or on wristwatch dials with sublime reproductions of a Vermeer painting or the exquisite details of Portuguese azulejos.

For the 2018 lineup, the manufacture also commissioned other very rare and challenging enamel arts such as enamel reliefs (also referred to as Fauré enamel) with its spatial renderings that require the utmost in firing expertise, or the famous Longwy enamels on ceramics with its motifs framed in black.

Wood micromarquetry is another specialty that has been promoted by Patek Philippe for several years. The Genevan manufacture executes this exclusive technique for adorning wristwatch dials or the backs of pocket watches at the highest level of artistry. It is used to product small, fascinating images of incredible detail such as the “Roped Alpinists” composed of 262 parts and intarsias with 27 species of wood.

The Genevan manufacture also lets its creativity roam free with several “mixed-technique” pieces that combine different artisanal skills. “Italian Scenes” is one example with cloisonné enamel dials on manually guilloched backgrounds ennobled with miniature painting on enamel. The three “Pictures in Relief” wristwatches feature hand-guilloched dials decorated with tiny gold appliques.

The exhibition also showcases two new models from the current Patek Philippe collection. They, too, celebrate the rare handcrafts professions. The first one is a limited-edition Golden Ellipse commemorating the 50th anniversary of this iconic watch. This model has a hand-engraved black enamel dial and comes with matching cuff links. The second one is the new Ref. 5531 World Time Minute Repeater that always strikes local time. The center of its dial is adorned with a cloisonné enamel depiction of the Lavaux wine-growing region overlooking the shores of Lake Geneva.

Numerous masterpieces reflecting contemporary inspirations combined with centuries-old skills can be admired from April 19 to 21, 2018, at the exclusive “Global Finissage” in the Patek Philippe Salons in Geneva. The exhibition is open to the public from 10 am to 6 pm.

