

Press release

Patek Philippe, Geneva
“Rare Handcrafts 2024” exhibition
April 2024

The Patek Philippe Salons in Geneva exhibit the largest “Rare Handcrafts” collection ever presented by the manufacture.

From April 13 to 27 2024, the public and connoisseurs have the chance to discover, in the historic building on the rue du Rhône, the new Patek Philippe “Rare Handcrafts 2024” collection, with a total of 82 timepieces combining technical prowess with unlimited creativity. Live demonstrations by artisan engravers, enamellers, *guillocheurs* (engine-turners) and wood-marquetry makers are a feature of the event.

As heir to, and guardian of, the great Genevan watchmaking tradition, Patek Philippe has made a point, ever since its foundation in 1839, of perpetuating all the rare handcrafts associated with the decoration of timepieces for almost five centuries. The four generations of the Stern family, which took up the torch in 1932, have also devoted themselves to preserving these precious skills.

True to its “tradition of innovation” the manufacture is also intent on enabling all these exceptional techniques to progress, by constantly pushing the boundaries of possibility and drawing on increasingly varied sources of inspiration. Every year a new collection of one-of-a-kind and limited-edition pieces illustrates this alliance of virtuosity and invention.

Variety is the key word

The “Rare Handcrafts 2024” collection (a total of 82 pieces, comprising 27 dome clocks and small dome clocks, 3 table clocks, 9 pocket watches and 43 wristwatches) once again shines the spotlight on a vast range of artistic skills, whether centuries-old techniques (*Grand Feu cloisonné* enamel, miniature painting on enamel, *grisaille* enamel, *flinqué* enamel, *paillonné* enamel, *champlevé* enamel, hand engraving, hand-executed *guilloché* work, or gemsetting) or techniques that are innovating in horology, such as micro wood marquetry and Longwy enamel on faïence. And not forgetting the growing number of pieces adorned with what are known as “mixed techniques”, uniting, for example, *cloisonné* enamel and hand-executed *guilloché*, or hand-engraving and wood marquetry.

As regards themes, the “Rare Handcrafts 2024” collection is also extraordinarily rich in creativity, drawing on multiple sources of inspiration, with motifs ranging from traditional art forms to modern leisure activities, and with subjects inspired by the cultures and landscapes of every continent.

These 82 pieces, with their ever-more original and astonishing decorations are presented to great effect in an elegant, specially devised decor divided into three areas.

All the constellations of the zodiac

Visitors are greeted in the central area by an outstanding group of twelve Calatrava wristwatches, their dials adorned with *grisaille* enamel *au blanc de Limoges*, *Grand Feu cloisonné* enamel and *paillonné*



enamel representing the constellations associated with the signs of the zodiac. These decorations, drawn from ancient engravings but interpreted in a strikingly modern style with a fascinating sense of depth, are proposed in twelve limited editions of two watches each –such as the pair presenting the constellation Leo (5077/100G-066) or Sagittarius (5077/100G-070), or Scorpio (5077/100G-069) or Pisces (5077/100G-073).

In tribute to the beauties of nature

The salon facing the lake, with a fine view of Geneva harbor, groups all the pieces paying tribute to the beauties of nature –its flora, fauna and landscapes –in extremely refined decorations.

Birds occupy a place of honor in the 2024 collection, with a special emphasis on the graceful white egrets, presented on four pieces by means of various techniques –such as the pocket watch Reference 995/143G-001 “Portrait of a White Egret” depicted in wood marquetry of extraordinary finesse.

A large display case invites the visitor on a tour of the world’s most beautiful gardens (taking in Japan, the Netherlands, Versailles, Andalusia and England). On the Golden Ellipse wristwatch 5738/50R-001 “The Japanese Garden (Nihon teien)” the dial was first hand-guilloché with a sunburst motif, designed to create splendid plays of light beneath the translucent enamel of the sky, before receiving its *Grand Feu cloisonné* enamel decoration. On the Golden Ellipse Reference 5738/50G-035 “Springtime in Holland” the enameller used the same technique to conjure up the shimmer of the water.

The voyage continues through a succession of spa towns and aquatic landscapes –whether the inspiration was Chinese junks in the province of Zhejiang; old sepia-toned postcards of Geneva harbor, rendered here in miniature painting on enamel; a view of the Rialto Bridge in Venice by Canaletto (interpreted in miniature painting on enamel and hand-engraving); or a landscape with Lake Thun, inspired by the great Swiss painter Ferdinand Hodler, gracing a World Time Minute Repeater wristwatch. On the pocket watch 992/184G-001 “Lake Geneva in Winter”, the background was first hand-guilloché with a radiant sunburst for the sky and a pattern of waves for the lake and coated with opalescent enamel to bring out the reflections of the soft winter light. The enameller then built up his picture in miniature painting on enamel, using 11 colors applied in small deft touches.

The plant world deploys its astonishing repertory of shapes and colors in glowing decors –ranging from enchanted jungles to floral motifs of Art Deco inspiration and the delicate hawthorn blossoms adorning the dome table clocks in Longwy enamel on faience.

The back of the pocket watch 995/144J-001 “Bear and Salmon” owes its stunningly realistic scene to a work of wood marquetry comprising 315 tiny veneer parts and 75 even tinier inlays, together spanning a palette of 38 species of wood of different colors, textures and veining.

Patek Philippe is also unveiling its first table clocks with decorations in wood marquetry, represented by three unique pieces adorned with carp and water lilies.

Celebrating human endeavor

The salon looking onto the Rue du Rhône gives center stage to legendary examples of human endeavor (spanning arts, traditions and sports) while varying and mixing the techniques used with complete freedom.



A group of timepieces celebrate surfing –such as the Calatrava wristwatch 5089G-129 “Morning on the Beach” with its portrait of a surfer in wood marquetry –and its country of origin, Hawaii, with its enchanting landscapes, its dancers and all the exuberance of its traditional decorative motifs.

The American dream shines brightly on the dome table clock 20155M-001 “American Trains”, with its steam locomotives and its New York skyscrapers in *Grand Feu cloisonné* enamel, the windows lit by silver spangles or *paillons* embedded beneath translucent enamel. Four Calatrava wristwatches lend their dials to the most beautiful American cars of the 1960s, depicted in settings evoking the West Coast of the United States.

A passion for billiards inspired an unusual modern decor on the pocket watch 995/142J-001 “Billiard Balls”, notably its case back in *Grand Feu cloisonné* enamel calling for 72.10 cm of gold wire and translucent, semi-opaque and opaque enamels in 40 colors, its hand-engraved motifs, its dial in wood marquetry and its highly original stand in yellow gold adorned with a cue ball in white agate and cues in gold and Macassar ebony. Two Calatrava wristwatches take up the same theme.

Inspired by one of the world’s very few round-shaped postage stamps, the Calatrava wristwatch 5089G-119 “Southern Brown Kiwi” showcases one of the oldest and most precious of the rare handcrafts: hand engraving. The technique of line engraving was used here to incise the background foliage and the bird in the white gold of the dial. The picture was then coated with translucent green enamel.

The dome table clock 20157M-001 “The Muses” in *cloisonné* enamel enriched with miniature painting on enamel conveys all the magic of the work of the celebrated Czech painter Alfons Mucha (1860–1939), with its stylized vegetal forms and plays of feminine curves. The tribute to painting continues with a “tree of life” after Gustav Klimt, (small dome table clock 10037M-001) and a “pond with white water lilies” after Claude Monet (dome clock 20158M-001).

Among the other sources of inspiration that fired the designers’ imaginations and the artisans’ virtuosity were the tikis of Oceania, roofs in the Burgundian style, the Paris Olympic Games of 1924, the designs of mandalas, the famous French cloth known as *toile de Jouy* and the fables of La Fontaine.

The fine art of horology also contributes a theme, with three small dome clocks in *cloisonné* enamel presenting a most unusual geometric decor of stylized horological parts.

Demonstrations by artisans

The exhibition at the Patek Philippe Salons also enables the public to see top-flight artisans at work, practicing a range of techniques (hand engraving, enameling, marquetry, and hand-executed guilloché work). These refined skills are also illustrated by videos and a selection of tools connected with several of the rare handcrafts.

An exhibition open to the public with free admission

The “Rare Handcrafts 2024” exhibition bringing together these 82 creations is open to the public from April 13 to 27 2024 in the Patek Philippe Salons in Geneva at 41 rue du Rhône every day except Sunday, from 11.00 to 18.00 (last entry at 17.00). Visitors are invited to register online beforehand on the site patek.com.



The “Rare Handcrafts 2024” exhibition will then be presented, from June 7 to 16, in the Patek Philippe Salons in Bond Street, London. It constitutes a grand premiere for those emblematic premises, which have just been renovated.

These two events are unique opportunities for visitors to admire the entirety of these outstanding creations before they rejoin private collections all over the world.





Techniques used in the “Rare Handcrafts 2024” collection

Hand engraving

The oldest form of decorative art used to embellish timepieces, hand engraving and its various techniques (line engraving, low-relief engraving, etc.) adorn case backs, dials, hands, bezels and bows.

Grand Feu cloisonné enamel

This technique, which has long been used in watchmaking, creates motifs with luminous, enduring colors. The artisan shapes the contours of the motif with a fine gold wire and then fills the resulting “cloisons” or cells with translucent, opaque, semi-opaque or opalescent enamels.

Miniature painting on enamel

A grand Genevan specialty since the 17th century, this technique serves to create small pictures in tiny deft touches using a minuscule brush and powdered enamels mixed with lavender oil, on a base layer of white enamel.

Paillonné enamel

This traditional technique consists of embedding small gold- or silver-leaf *paillons* (punched spangles) in translucent enamel so that they remain visible and illuminate the decoration.

Hand-executed guilloché work & flinqué enamel

In hand-executed guilloché work, ancient manually controlled machines are used to carve fine geometric patterns in a metal surface on which light seems to dance. When these shining patterns are coated with translucent enamel, the technique is referred to as *flinqué* enamel.

Champlevé enamel

This ancestral technique consists of hollowing out areas of a metal plate, and then filling these cavities with enamel by means of several firings.

Grisaille enamel au blanc de Limoges

In this technique of French origin, the oil-based white enamel known as “blanc de Limoges” is modeled using a tiny brush and a needle on a base of dark-colored enamel to create skillful monochromes.

Longwy enamel on faïence

In this technique, for which the town of Longwy in northeastern France is renowned, the enameller lays out his design by drawing the characteristic black outline or “cerne”, and then fills the cells with colors using a brush and creating a slight relief.

Wood micromarquetry

This extremely elaborate technique, introduced by Patek Philippe to decorate dials and case backs, is used to produce small pictures composed of several hundred tiny veneer parts, shaped from woods of different species, colors, and graining.

Gemsetting

Gemsetting with diamonds and other precious or semi-precious stones such as blue topazes lends an irresistible sparkle to the bezels of Calatrava wristwatches. The fully handcrafted pocket-watch stands in 18K gold are also set with a wide variety of gems in subtle, elegant shades.
