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Luxury watchmakers leverage film to transport consumers to SIHH

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Cartier Hypnose timepiece

By SARAH JONES

Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie in Geneva provides a platform for watchmakers to showcase their latest innovations and designs, but a number of participating exhibitors looked at this year's show as an opportunity to reinforce heritage.

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Weaving a story around their creations, watchmakers including Jaeger-LeCoultre, Cartier and IWC Schaffhausen used video to delve into their history or provide more perspective on new timepieces. With SIHH celebrating its own 25th anniversary transformation, this modern yet historic approach from the watchmakers is a fitting way to prove their staying power.

"The show is dedicated to showcasing novelties, but brands are really trying to get their story across in order to connect with consumers," said Donnie Pacheco, founder/CEO of [Clean Channel Consulting, Inc.](#), Seattle. "More and more consumers are wanting to purchase brands that tell a story that connects with them and that is what they are trying to do."

"Additionally, with social media, these brands have the opportunity to reach a new audience that may not be familiar with these brands," he said. "It is also a way to highlight history and craftsmanship in a world that is dominated by fashion brands that may come and go and new technology that quickly becomes obsolete."

"The Jaeger-LeCoultre video emphasizes not only their history, but connects it to generations showing that a well-crafted watch is something that can be passed from generation to generation instead of being disposable."

Horology haven

This year, SIHH ran from Jan. 18 through 22. Exhibiting brands included Audemars Piguet, A. Lange & Shne, Baume & Mercier, Cartier, Greubel Forsey, IWC Schaffhausen, Jaeger-LeCoultre, Montblanc, Panerai, Parmigiani Fleurier, Piaget, Richard Mille, Roger Dubuis, Vacheron Constantin and Van Cleef & Arpels.

For this 25-year milestone, SIHH's salon got a makeover with more modern architecture.

Jaeger-LeCoultre feted the 85th anniversary of its Reverso watch while at SIHH. A short film follows the evolution of home environments from the watch's creating in 1931 through the present day, showing how it became both an "icon" and a "legend."

Reverso, the birth of an icon.

Once the brand has proven the timelessness of the style, it shows a mother with her child in a modern house, explaining that the watch is a "promise made to your future."

Giving the Reverso a new look, Jaeger-LeCoultre teamed with fashion designer Christian Louboutin, who kept the Art Deco shape and watch face much the same but who took creative liberty with the watch strap.



Christian Louboutin for Reverso

Throughout the week, Jaeger-LeCoultre turned to a Snapchat account to capture the event.

IWC also spotlighted the vintage, timeless appeal of its timepieces through a video recap of the launch of its new Pilot's Watches. Actor and brand ambassador Dev Patel narrates as the film takes the viewer into the ambiance of a jazz-infused event hosted by IWC during SIHH, designed to bring them back to the "golden age of the flying pioneers" in the 1930s.

IWC Pilot 2016 - SIHH Recap

Vacheron Constantin portrayed the "spirit of travel" with a film for its new Overseas collection, which promises "a unique perspective on the world." Shots of boats and trains take the viewer on a global tour, stopping at cathedrals and bridges to take in the views of Paris or New York.

The watches are only shown momentarily within the film, allowing it to be more about branding than a product push.

Overseas - A unique perspective on the world

Those that did choose to focus on watches themselves found ways to show off their creations in a creative manner.

Cartier's Hypnose timepiece was introduced through a series of optical illusions, looking to recreate the eye-catching allure of its graphic design.

Audemars Piguet chose to illustrate its innovations in sound and technology within its Royal Oak Concept Supersonnerie, such as a silent striking mechanism regulator and its gong performance, by showing conceptual imagery including water droplets and a satellite dish. Consumers can eventually see the watch itself at the end of the film.

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Royal Oak Concept Supersonnerie From pioneering sound developments to technological achievements. Discover our 2016 novelties <http://bit.ly/APNovelties2016> #SIHH #SIHH2016 #APSIHH #APSound

Posted by **Audemars Piguet** on Friday, January 22, 2016

Craftsmanship was another theme of brand videos, as Parmigiani Fleurier delved into the artisan skills it used to restore a 200-year-old pistol. Its restoration workshop, in which only two watchmakers work full-time, managed to repair the faulty interventions on the automaton over the years.



Pistol restored by Parmigiani Fleurier

"The best way for watchmakers to engage customers is to tell the whole story in a way to connect with the customer," Mr. Pacheco said. "They need to link together the brand's heritage and craftsmanship in an engaging manner that then transitions into showcasing their novelties.

"Watches are both visual and technical so they need to have a visual component plus lots of great information for the customers that seek this information," he said. "It should be easy to find and consume, but not overt as to overwhelm the casual consumer that simply wants to see what they look like."

Fleeting glimpse

For Piaget, SIHH marked its entrance on live-streaming app Periscope. The jeweler took fans into its booth at the show to hear about its craftsmanship and its consistent motif, the rose.

This year, Piaget unveiled a timepiece which has a rose engraved in its face, creating an optical illusion of volume which a brand representative explains was a challenge due to the thin case of the brand's watches.

Montblanc used Snapchat to offer an exclusive first look at timepieces that would be exhibited.

Other industries have turned to Snapchat to virtually bring their followers to an event.

Fashion brands embraced Snapchat during the fall/winter 2015 season to give their consumers secret insider content, providing more access to the inner workings of putting on a runway show.

Michael Kors and Valentino were among the brands that took advantage of the application's ability to share fleeting glimpses of personal moments, inviting them into a form of community. Snapchat users tend to skew younger, opening up labels to a new generation of consumers ([see story](#)).

As consumers are waiting for a reveal, brands can meet their curiosity with immediacy via live apps.

British automaker Rolls-Royce introduced its latest bespoke offering with a modern twist by broadcasting the official vehicle launch on the live-streaming application Periscope.

"Wraith Inspired by Fashion" is a new model that aims to take the personalization of haute couture to the automobile industry. Its release on Friday, May 8, 2015 at the Pratt Institute's Women of Influence in the Business of Style panel discussion will be streamed live via Periscope, allowing consumers to experience the event on their mobile devices ([see story](#)).

"Historically, the watch industry has drastically lagged behind when it comes to technology," Mr. Pacheco said. "This is evidenced by the fact that none of the brands mentioned above do not sell online, with the exception of Cartier.

"This is an attempt to catch up based on the fact that their fashion luxury counterparts live stream fashion week and

to cast as broad of a net as possible when it comes to social media," he said. "In many cases, fashion does not have broad appeal, particularly when it comes to men. Watches have that broad appeal as someone that may not be into fashion understands and likes watches.

"Lastly, the brands featured at SIHH have very limited distribution and are not accessible to the majority of people; this provides them with that accessibility."

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