

JEWELRY

Van Cleef & Arpels gathers artisans to support creativity, ancestral crafts

January 25, 2017



Van Cleef & Arpels' Automate Fe Ondine

By STAFF REPORTS

French jeweler Van Cleef & Arpels has designed its first "extraordinary object" to bring together traditional jewelry and watchmaking skill for a single piece.

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During last week's Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie in Geneva, Van Cleef & Arpels' debuted the Automate Fe Ondine, or in English, the Green Fairy Automaton, a moving mechanical device. The addition of automation marks a new chapter for the French jeweler by expanding on its range of precious objects which includes carriage and table clocks.

Scenes of the green fairy

The development of Van Cleef & Arpels' Automate Fe Ondine took a number of years and was a complicated undertaking, which brought together a number of craftspeople to work collectively.

Van Cleef & Arpels worked with automaton maker Francois Junod and a cast of craftsmen on each element of the Automate Fe Ondine. From stone polishers, metal workers and wood smiths, nearly all of the components making up the scene were created by hand.



Van Cleef & Arpels' Automate Fe Ondine

In a video shared on its Web site, Van Cleef & Arpels interviewed the individual expert artisans who worked on individual elements of the Automate Fe Ondine such as the lotus petals, the ladybug, the green fairy's face and the butterfly that emerges from a flower as it blooms, among others.

The scene of the Automate Fe Ondine shows a green fairy sitting on a lily pad with two lotus flowers near her. As the automaton moves, the lily pad gently moves, the fairy's body language changes and the flowers bloom, with the larger revealing a butterfly that sporadically flaps its wings, just as in nature.

A ruby-studded ladybug keeps time along the wooden base. Van Cleef & Arpels describes the effort as a testament to "the maison's imagination, creativity and attachment to ancestral crafts."

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Also during SIHH 2017, Van Cleef & Arpels used Instagram to unveil its latest timepieces and its "Poetry of Time" theme through a six-chapter animated narrative.

Each vignette was presented as a ballet, a meaningful aspect of Van Cleef & Arpels history, with the performers and scenery becoming a timepiece from its collections. The effort supports both Van Cleef & Arpels' dedication to artistry and its thoughtful use of nature and good luck motifs in its pieces ([see story](#)).

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