

JEWELRY

Roger Dubuis points to technical feats through hand-drawn animations

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Roger Dubuis Incredible Calibres illustration

By SARAH JONES

Richemont-owned watchmaker Roger Dubuis is examining some of its most masterful movements through a series of figurative films.

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A nod to the Swiss label's handcrafted timepieces, the brand's four-part "Incredible Calibres Tale" features sketched animations by Cyril Clapin, creator of the award-winning short film "Rain Surfer." This abstract approach enables Roger Dubuis to tell these stories of its manufacture through a new, artistic lens.

"Roger Dubuis is a daring, spectacular watch brand," said Alvaro Maggini, creative director of [Roger Dubuis](#). "We dare to be different, to take risks, to disrupt and reinvent watchmaking codes."

"We do not bear the pressure of a long legacy, on the contrary we write our own story, always in respect of the watchmaking tradition," he said.

"With these short videos, we explored new territories to illustrate four key elements of the brand's DNA: the architectural mechanics of our creations, the transparency of our skeleton calibers, the precision of our manually crafted in-house movements, and the Star, the signature defining Roger Dubuis skeleton movements."

"The animated videos emphasize the quality of the craftsmanship that go into our iconic Excalibur collection, in an artistic, contemporary way that triggers the viewer's imagination and draws an emotional connection."

Inside the lines

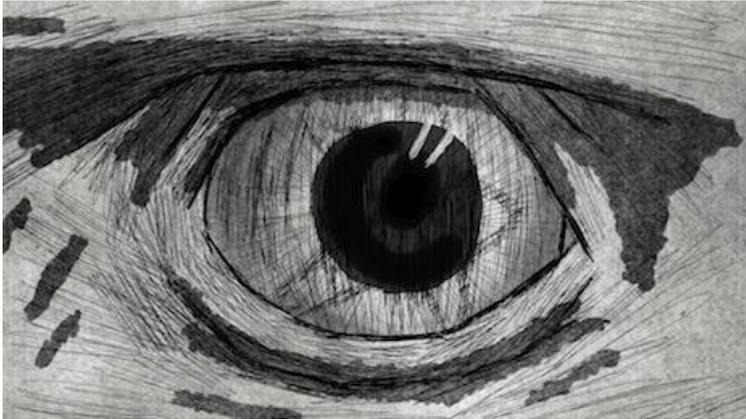
[Roger Dubuis](#)' series is featured on the brand's Web site and its social channels.

The opening episode explores the transparency of the watchmaker's skeleton flying tourbillon through the visual metaphor of a butterfly, meant to represent its artisans. This curious creature is investigating a pillar, fluttering around it or perching atop.

When the butterfly lands, it turns to the side, and its wings suddenly appear see-through, revealing mechanical patterns. The insect then flies away, leaving behind a similarly thin movement inside Roger Dubuis' Excalibur

Spider.

The second chapter, "Architecture," opens on a close-up of an eye. Viewers then find out that this eye belongs to an eagle, a favorite symbol of the brand.



Still from Roger Dubuis' films

This bird takes flight, soaring around a large replica of the Roger Dubuis astral skeleton signature motif. This star shape then finds its way into RD820SQ, the first skeleton timepiece introduced by the brand.

Next is "The Star," which covers the skeleton double flying tourbillon. A hand reaches up and throws a planetary scene into the frame.

The same hand manipulates the solar system, spinning a ring and then moving it over a star, placing the stellar object in the ring's center. The ease with which this hand makes its movement is meant to convey Roger Dubuis' ability to accomplish complex mechanical feats with ease.

Rounding out the series is "Precision," which uncovers Roger Dubuis' attempts to defy gravity through the imagery of four rockets taking off in a kaleidoscopic frame. The Quatuor RD101 calibre's four sprung balances are positioned to counteract the effect of position changes.

Transparency, Chapter 1 of the Incredible Calibres Tale

These rockets take off and launch precisely into waiting crosses, pointing to both the brand's accuracy and Swiss heritage.

"I believe that the main reason Roger Dubuis chose to create this abstract representation of some of its creations to be disruptive," said Donnie Pacheco, principal at [Clean Channel Consulting, Inc.](#), Seattle. "At the top of the videos is the statement 'This is the story of disruption and incredible qualities endowed in each Roger Dubuis timepiece.'

"Not only are they not showing the actual creations, they are using sketches and visualization instead of showing literal footage of a butterfly for example," he said. "This is a big departure for watchmakers as they usually rely on literal imagery of the creations or images to try and draw an emotional connection.

"These videos encourage the view to use their imagination to draw the connection to the actual creation."

Out of the box

While straightforward narratives of watchmaking intrigue enthusiasts, bringing a collaborator into the mix can provide new context.

"They chose to use symbolic imagery rather than more literal footage for two reasons," Mr. Pacheco said. "The first is to tap into the viewer's imagination and have them use that to visualize the different chapters presented by relating each chapter to imagery that while abstract, is familiar to all.

"Everyone can imagine a butterfly, an eagle, a star and space. These connections take the viewer beyond simply looking at the inner workings of a watch and connects it to something more relatable," he said. "It also tries to build a connection that when the viewer thinks about these other things, they will in turn think of Roger Dubuis.

"The second is to be disruptive. Everyone else in the industry shows the actual movement or timepiece. This is a different way of presenting their creations and trying to set Roger Dubuis apart from other watchmakers."

Other brands have looked to outside art forms for creative representations of their watchmaking.

For instance, Swiss watchmaker Audemars Piguet captured the balance between innovation and tradition that goes into its Royal Oak Supersonnerie timepiece through sound.

Audemars Piguet commissioned French DJ and producer Surkin to portray the striking watch's chime in an audiovisual project under his creative entity Gener8ion. Through recorded ambient noise at Audemars Piguet's manufacture in Le Brassus and sounds from the natural world, "Sound Awakens" tells the story of the brand's craftsmanship through a new point of view ([see story](#)).

Others have made comparisons between watchmaking and other forms of art to help educate fans.

Swiss watch manufacturer Vacheron Constantin stressed the importance of architecture in a social video that transported enthusiasts to a world full of watchmaking history.

Vacheron's "A Journey Through Architecture & Openworked Creations" explored the watchmaker's various skeleton timepieces by positioning the watches against a backdrop of architecture to show dedication to craft and innovation. For watchmakers, it is essential to highlight the craft and skill involved in designs so that consumers approach wristwatches as works of art rather than a fashionable tool ([see story](#)).

"Since Roger Dubuis is a relatively young watchmaker, they are playing the role of disruptor," Mr. Pacheco said. "Traditionally brands have focused on images of the watch or movement or drawn on their history to try to connect with customers.

"Roger Dubuis does not have a vast history to draw from so they are taking a different approach and challenging customers to draw on their imaginations to connect imagery with their creations," he said. "This is a clever way of taking a movement or other creation and making them more relatable and powerful by tying it to the flight of a butterfly or eagle.

"This draws parallels to other images that stay with the viewer longer than simply looking at a watch movement that they have seen many times before from other watchmakers."