

JEWELRY

Faberg pays tribute to 1917's Constellation Egg in new timepiece

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Fabergé's Visionnaire Chronographs

By STAFF REPORTS

Russian jeweler Fabergé is linking the events of 100 years ago with today through a chronograph inspired by an unfinished work.

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Fabergé's Visionnaire Chronograph pays tribute to the unfinished Constellation Egg of 1917, a piece that was never completed due to the breakout of the Russian Revolution a century ago. When the revolution was at its height, Fabergé's jewelry business shut its doors for nearly a century.

History retold

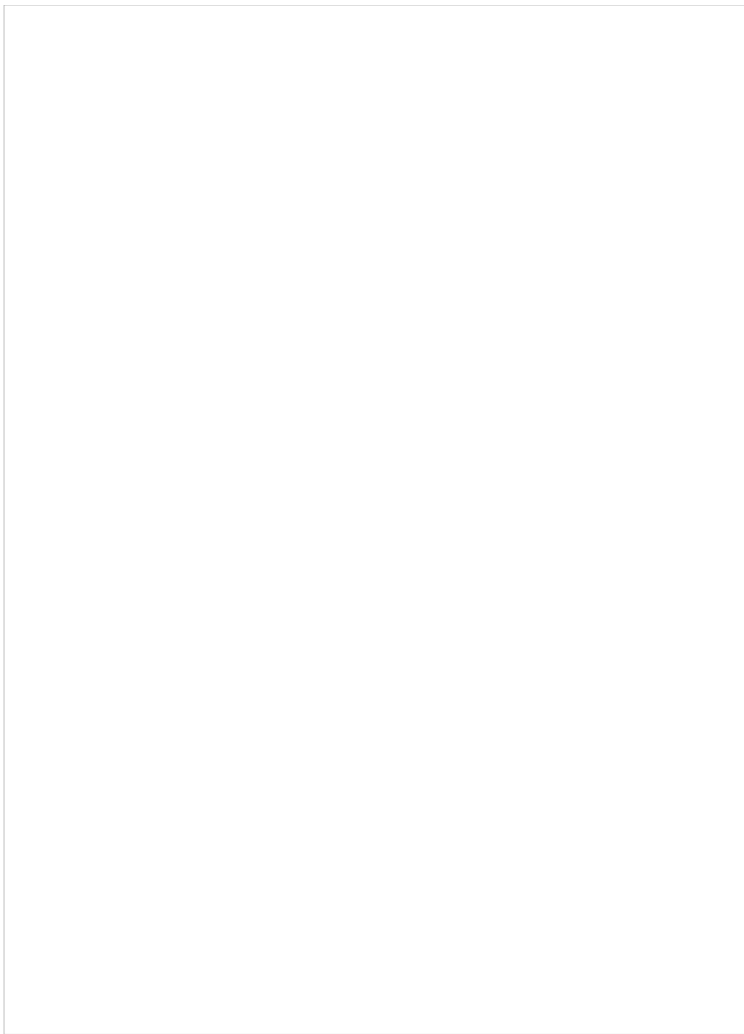
The Russian jeweler is perhaps best-known for its decorative Easter eggs often fit with automata, mini paintings, portraits and set gemstones and intricate detailing. The objet d'arts were commissioned by the Romanov family between 1885 and 1917, becoming the brand's signature.

During the commission period, Fabergé created 52 Imperial Easter eggs for the Russian royal family, but one was never finished.

The Tsarevich Constellation Egg was intended to be an Easter 1917 gift for Tsarevich Alexei, the only son of Nicholas II and heir apparent to the Russian throne. The planned egg featured a constellation of Leo, Alexei's zodiac sign, and blue glass engraved with constellations on a cloud-shaped pedestal of opaque rock crystal.

When the 1917 revolution began, Tsar Nicholas II was forced to abdicate the throne and was soon executed along with his wife and children. At this time, the Fabergé family went into exile and the Constellation Egg, near complete, vanished.

Years later in 1922, the Constellation Egg resurfaced but only in a letter sent between Eugene Fabergé and Francois Birbaum, the jeweler's chief designer from 1895 to 1917. But, in 2000, components of the unfinished egg, including the halves of the blue glass egg and rock crystal cloud, were discovered in the Fersman Mineralogical Museum's storeroom in Moscow.



Sketch of 1917's Constellation Egg by Faberg

The discovery is recounted in Faberg's documentary, "Faberg: A Life of its Own" ([see story](#)).

Unfortunately, the clock mechanism and concentric outer ring to indicate the time and evoke rings rotating around stars and planets, has never been found.

As homage to the lost Constellation Egg, Faberg designed and developed the Faberg Visionnaire Chronograph. Three years in the making, the watch includes a laser-engraved etching of the egg, visible to only those who know where to look.

Also, the Visionnaire Chronograph evokes the outer time-telling disc that was planned for the Constellation Egg as well as rotating rings. The innovative calibre was designed for Faberg by Agenhor.

Faberg will unveil the Visionnaire Chronograph, in white and black, at BaselWorld 2017 March 23-30 in Basel, Switzerland.