

WATCHES AND JEWELRY

Van Cleef & Arpels illustrates ode to ballet for new collection

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The Lady Arpels Ballerines Musicales collection aims to give life to the "Jewels" ballet. Image credit: Van Cleef & Arpels

By KATIE TAMOLA

French jeweler Van Cleef & Arpels is highlighting the poetic creation process of its Lady Arpels Ballerines Musicales collection in an intimate new short.

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A behind-the-scenes vignette analyzes the decades-long relationship between the jeweler and the meticulous art of ballet. With insight from jeweler's president/CEO, head watchmaker and a composer, viewers learn about the shared precision in watchmaking and striking the perfect note.

"The story creates desire for this specific watch," said Chris Ramey, CEO of [Affluent Insights](#), Palm Beach, Florida. "This is important because it's a watch for collectors."

Lady Arpels Ballerines Musicales

The vignette starts with closeups of watchmakers and artisans painting detailed illustrations of ballet dancers using soft-colored paints. A harmonious, uplifting and curiosity-inducing soundtrack permeates in the background as a voiceover begins.

Nicolas Bos, president/CEO of Van Cleef & Arpels, explains that ballet has served as an inspiration for the jeweler for decades.

According to Mr. Bos, Claude Arpels nephew of house founder, Louis Arpels met with George Balanchine, director of the New York ballet, in the 1960s.

A vignette from Van Cleef & Arpels explores the connection between the jeweler and ballet.

A three-piece ballet entitled "Jewels," resulted from the meeting and friendship formed between the two men. The ballet explores how jewels can inspire dance.

Now, the Lady Arpels Ballerines Musicales collection aims to give life to the same ballet.

The film also introduces Paulo Da Graca, the head watchmaker at Van Cleef. He is meticulous in every movement, using a range of tools to construct the timepieces.

Since the collection aims to give life to the ballet, Mr. Da Graca and the jeweler want the timepiece to translate the experience of the art as well.

"The goal was to achieve a piece that conveys more than sound and melody: the emotion that accompanies it," Mr. Da Graca says.



The timepieces from the collection feature ballerinas dancing across the watch dials. Image credit: Van Cleef & Arpels

Footage then cuts to Mr. Da Graca in intense conversation with composer Michel Tirabosco who set out to identify three appropriate melodies to be implemented into the watches.

Mr. Tirabosco elaborates on how he found the project interesting as Mr. Da Graca summarizes the feeling of watching all of the jeweler's hard work come to fruition. The head watchmaker describes the timepieces' designs, explaining how the ballerinas dance around the watch dial following a curtain opening as the watch's melody comes to life.

"It's wonderful," Mr. Da Graca says. "It's magic."

Behind the jewels

Several brands are continuously releasing campaigns highlighting historical inspirations and relationships within their houses.

Earlier this month, French fashion label Louis Vuitton honored the 200th anniversary of its founder's birthday with a cinematic new effort and high jewelry collection.

A short film follows brand ambassador and actress Alicia Vikander as she embarks on a journey through a forest and large estate. As she fashions the commemorative Bravery high jewelry collection, Ms. Vikander's journey in the film is reminiscent of that of the label's founder ([see story](#)).

With its latest effort, Van Cleef & Arpels goes beyond this specific collection in showing the quality and construction woven in each of its products. The vignette tells a story, but most importantly reflects the ethos and quality of the brand.

"Luxury always has a narrative," Mr. Ramey said. "[This] is a reinforcement for those who value sophistication and culture."