

WATCHES AND JEWELRY

Patek Philippe expands watch discovery through digital format

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The digital exhibition features nearly 60 unique creations. Image credit: Patek Philippe

By NORA HOWE

Swiss watchmaker Patek Philippe is honing in on its expertise and brand history through a new online exhibition showcasing its Rare Handcrafts collection.

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In a bid to present its collection to a wider audience and watch fanatics around the world, the historically digital-skeptical watchmaker has leaned into the virtual reality space following its physical exhibition in Geneva in April. Digital visitors may navigate virtual rooms, discovering intricate details of various pieces and the history behind the brand's craftsmanship.

From physical to digital

The Rare Handcrafts 2022 exhibition first debuted in person from April 6-23, 2022 at the Patek Philippe studio in Geneva, where guests had the opportunity to view unique pieces and limited editions up close.

From pocket watches to dome table clocks, the exhibit displayed nearly 60 bespoke creations before they were delivered to private collections around the world.

Guests were also able to watch Patek Philippe artisans demonstrate their skills and expertise firsthand.



The interactive format allows viewers to get a close-up look at some of the brand's most detailed pieces. Image credit: Patek Philippe

Each exhibit paid tribute to the traditions of the brand's watchmaking abilities, such as manual engraving, cloisonné enamel, miniature painting on enamel, flinqu enamel on guilloché backgrounds, paillon enamel and wood micromarquetry.

In an attempt to expand its presence beyond strictly physical interactions and reach a wider audience, Patek Philippe now brings this exhibit into a virtual environment.

Through a digitally immersive tour, site visitors may discover the same creations that were on display in April, including 24 dome table clocks, 10 pocket watches and 25 wristwatches.

Visitors may travel through different rooms where they can zoom in to examine the intricate details of the collection or watch short videos that explain the history and traditions of the brand.

Artisans are featured in short videos throughout the exhibit

Upon entering the site, visitors may opt for free exploration, in which they determine where they travel throughout the exhibit, or they may opt for the introductory tour, in which a narrator carefully guides the user through the collection.

The digital plunge

While the online exhibition is the brand's first of its kind, it is certainly not its first interaction with the digital world perhaps, though, it is still trying to catch up.

Only four years ago did Patek Philippe finally launch its Instagram account a shock to many fans of the brand as it remained absent from social media for so long.

The launch was a part of the brand's digital revitalization, as more luxury marketers were forced to take on the digital and social worlds they previously strived to avoid ([see story](#)).

In November 2021, Patek Philippe became the latest luxury brand to see its goods become NFTs after a client created the first NFT of one of the brand's timepieces.

The rare Nautilus model from the Swiss watchmaker is now embodied in an NFT, created by a private owner of the watch in the Middle East and was auctioned off later that month. The auction was on the SM-ART platform, an NFT and non-fungible asset (NFA) platform, over a three-day period ([see story](#)).