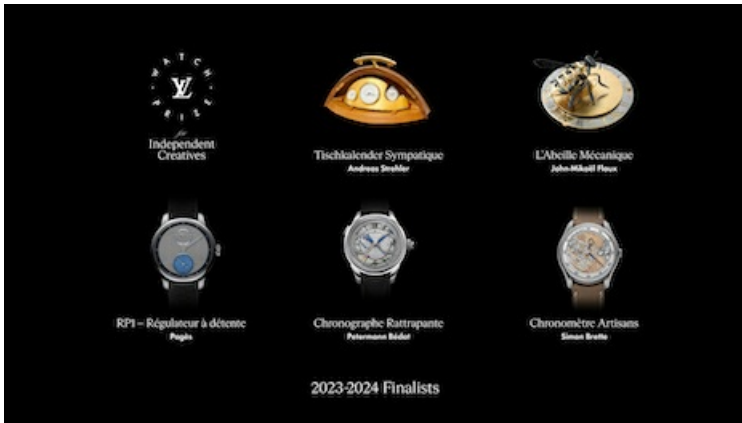


WATCHES AND JEWELRY

Louis Vuitton reveals Watch Prize for Independent Creatives finalists

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Five inaugural participants will present timepieces to a panel of experts in Paris on Feb. 6, 2024. Image courtesy of Louis Vuitton

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

French fashion house Louis Vuitton is platforming an effort that offers money and mentorship to individual horologists.

The launch of a newly established biennial competition continues as a shortlist of finalists is revealed. The five inaugural Louis Vuitton Watch Prize for Independent Creatives participants will present their projects to a panel of experts at the Fondation Louis Vuitton on Feb. 6, 2024, where a winner will be chosen that evening.

“The Louis Vuitton Watch prize exists because we believe that the future of watchmaking belongs to the dreamers and rule-breakers who meet the highest standards of craftsmanship,” said Jean Arnault, director of watches at Louis Vuitton, in a statement.

“I would like to congratulate our five finalists in your hands, the horizon for Independent Watchmaking is looking very bright indeed.”

The “who”

Nearly 1,000 submissions were received for the very first round of the Louis Vuitton Watch Prize for Independent Creatives, announced last November.

Of the applicants, 20 semi-finalists were pre-selected and presented to a committee of 45 watch enthusiasts in April 2023 ([see story](#)).

One candidate was selected for each of five categories: design, innovation, craftsmanship, creativity and technical complexity.

The fate of these final five watchmakers now lies in the hands of an expert set of jury members, which Louis Vuitton has just made public.

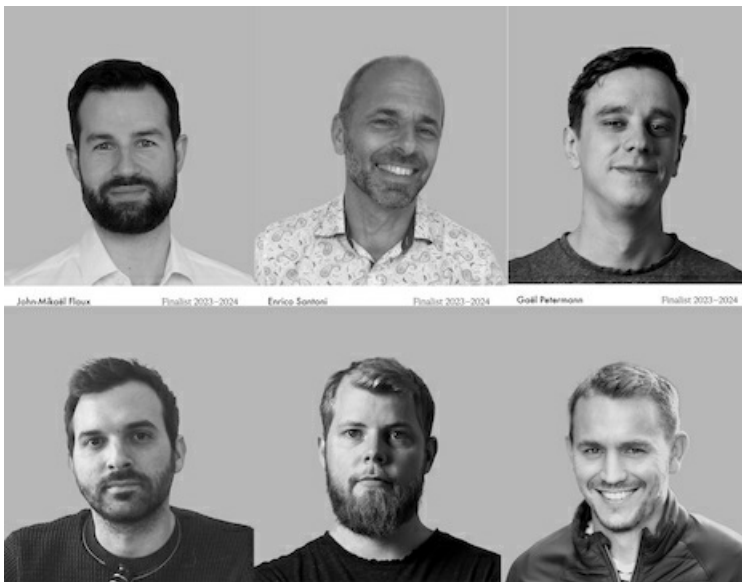


The fate of prize finalists now lies in the hands of five expert jury members. Image courtesy of Louis Vuitton

Nominated by peers, the panel includes Carole Forestier-Kasapi, director of movements at Tag Heuer and winner of the 2021 Gaa Prize; Auro Montanari, watch collector, watchmaking expert and writer; Rexhep Rexhepi, founder of Atelier Akrivia and independent traditional and contemporary watchmaker.

Jiaxian Su, founder of SJX Watches and freelance journalist specializing in watches and Michael Tay, group managing director of The Hour Glass and president of the jury, are also named.

Ultimately, the award winner will receive a monetary prize and a year's worth of mentorship by experts at La Fabrique du Temps Louis Vuitton in Meyrin, Switzerland.



The Louis Vuitton Watch Prize for Independent Creatives finalists. Image courtesy of Louis Vuitton

Finalist Simon Brette has run his namesake company since 2022. His work involves the Chronometre Artisans, a neoclassical timepiece with an in-house caliber, manual-wind mechanical movement, balance wheel and visible gear train.

John-Mikal Flaux, an independent watchmaker since 2018, entered with the L'Abeille Mcanique, a silver and gold mechanism with manual winding, carousel movement, a key, an AB-01 movement and a stinger for a poetics hours indicator, and was selected as well.



Mr. Flaux's L'Abeille Mcanique, or "The Mechanical Bee," is nature-inspired. Image courtesy of Louis Vuitton

"What immediately appealed to me about this initiative was the recognition it offers to the world of independent watchmakers, and the trust it places in us," said Mr. Faux, in a statement.

Independent timepiece craftspeople since 1995, Andreas Strehler and Enrico Santoni, will also be headed to Paris in 2024.

Together, they created the Tischkalender Sympathique, a time object that has a gilded brass and mechanical perpetual desk calendar beset with lapis lazuli. The invention is additionally fitted with a pocket watch -- the "master timekeeper" features Damascus steel and sapphire crystal.



Mr. Strehler and Mr. Santoni's entry is minimalist in design. Image courtesy of Louis Vuitton

Finalist Ral Pags has been a Swiss independent watchmaker since 2012. His entry is the RP1 Rg ulateur Dtente, a manual-winding stainless steel wristwatch with an in-house caliber.

Fitted with pivoted detent escapement, Mr. Pags designed and handcrafted the item himself.

Gal Petermann and Florian Bdat, the duo behind Swiss watch store Petermann Bdat, round out the finalist list. Independent horological artisans since 2017, their entry is the Chronographe Rattrapante Reference 2941, a pocket watch-inspired mono-pusher split-seconds platinum timepiece that comes with a jumping minute counter and open case back.

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