

INTERNET

Van Cleef & Arpels looks to astronomy for \$333K watch

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By JEN KING

France's Van Cleef & Arpels is exploring the cosmos with a dual social video approach that traverses the jeweler's celestial inspirations and its core values.

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The first Facebook video focuses on Van Cleef & Arpels' Midnight Planétarium wristwatch and its relation to astronomy, while the second examines the brand's overall relationship with what it calls "Poetic Astronomy." By creating coupled videos that support both a product and the brand's DNA, consumers will have a better understanding of Van Cleef & Arpels' creative process.

"I'm sure people can appreciate this watch for its whimsy, but I don't see how it has any brand value," said Rob Frankel, branding expert at marketing consultancy firm [Frankel & Anderson](#), Los Angeles.

"It's like chicken soup, it can't hurt, but it doesn't help, either," he said. "It seems like there isn't any consistency here, people are confusing what they sell with what their brands are.

"Product is product, brand is brand. Product is the truth of what your brand promised."

Mr. Frankel is not affiliated with Van Cleef & Arpels, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Van Cleef & Arpels did not respond by press deadline.

Lucky stars

The first of the two Van Cleef & Arpels videos concentrates on the Midnight Planétarium watch. The Midnight Planétarium debuted at the SIHH 2014 in Geneva.

Midnight Planétarium features Van Cleef & Arpels' new poetic complication, 396 pieces, and is highlighted in an accompanying 3D social video to help the consumer have a better sense of the watch's movements.



Van Cleef & Arpels' Midnight Planétarium watch

The video begins with the view of a stage where planetary globes are moving around a central point similar to how a student would construct a model of the solar system. The model is shown at different angles before the camera pans beneath the floor to show the mechanism causing the model to rotate.

Movements continue to spin as the viewer notices text that explains that watch mechanisms move in a way similar to the orbit of the planets. The text goes on to explain that the watch can be set to a lucky day, the shooting star on the face tells time while the raised globes symbolize the six planets seen from Earth, each in real-time “orbit” and the caseback features a calendar.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/sw5S2-T-Ogk](https://www.youtube.com/embed/sw5S2-T-Ogk)

SIHH 2014 - 3D video of the Midnight Planétarium Poetic Complication

The Midnight Planétarium watch is available in a limited-reserve of 396 in 18-karat rose-gold for \$245,000. A diamond decorated version is priced at \$333,000.

Van Cleef & Arpels' second video explores the jewelers' interest in astronomy and its

association with luck. The video begins as clusters of stars become brand symbols and filigrees before the stardust ends at the telescope of an observatory.

The viewer is then taken inside the observatory where Van Cleef & Arpels' president/CEO Nicolas Bos explains the concept of Poetic Astronomy. Mr. Bos explains that the planets, stars and constellations encourage imagination and dreams, common themes in Van Cleef & Arpels jewelry.

Mr. Bos is joined by astrophysicists André Brahic who then explains why human beings have been fascinated with the universe throughout history.



Still of Mr. Brahic

The pair explain that Van Cleef & Arpels aimed to capture this curiosity, beauty and science all within the Midnight Planétarium watch and others inspired by the constellations or “lucky stars.”

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/wi2CzUEM5_Y](https://www.youtube.com/embed/wi2CzUEM5_Y)

SIHH 2014 - The Poetic Astronomy™ by Van Cleef & Arpels

Gazing upward

The connection between art, philosophy, technology and the universe are a common theme among watchmakers.

For example, France's Chanel encouraged enthusiasts to explore the phases of the moon through a Web site that illuminates its newly revealed J12 Moonphase wristwatch by presenting its aesthetics and functions.

The J12 Moonphase watch joins the J12 collection that debuted nearly a decade ago. Chanel has been steadily advertising its fine watch collections throughout various media as of late to show consumers that its expertise extends beyond fashion ([see story](#)).

In addition, Switzerland's Jaeger-LeCoultre broadened its affiliation with the world of cinematography through a partnership with Elle magazine and filmmaker Ry Russo-Young that uses film to create brand mythology.

As part of Jaeger-LeCoultre's ongoing 180th anniversary celebration, the watchmaker leveraged its affinity for film to reach new audiences. The “Leda & Zeus: A Trilogy in

Time,” directed by Ms. Russo-Young creates a context and narrative for the watch brand’s Rendez-Vous Celestial that fosters a deeper brand connection by channeling a sense of otherworldliness ([see story](#)).

Even if a product is aesthetically pleasing it must still clearly relate to the brand's DNA.

"At this price point, people are trying to justify the price, but there's no rational behind it," Mr. Frankel said.

"Beauty has its value too, but building a brand on just beauty, I don't see it," he said.

"I think it is a design thing, but there's no clear brand there, no one would know the difference if it was another watchmaker."

Final Take

Jen King, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/pRvUBsDNJdg](https://www.youtube.com/embed/pRvUBsDNJdg)

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