

Vacheron Constantin
Métiers d'Art Villes Lumières

- A new artistic craft making its first watchmaking appearance in a dialogue with Grand Feu enamelling
- Aerial views of the world's most beautiful cities
- Hallmark of Geneva certified timepieces

The new Métiers d'Art Villes Lumières collection is an invitation to embark upon a nocturnal journey above cities bubbling with creativity. On dials draped with an enamelled base in deep shades, a wide variety of powders creates a bird's-eye view miniature tableau of these sprawling urban expanses. Traditional Grand Feu champlévé enamelling mingles with hand-applied precious powder, an art never yet used in Fine Watchmaking. The striking and realistic beauty of these Hallmark of Geneva certified timepieces opens up whole new artistic and creative horizons, where traditional skills are constantly nurtured by fresh influences.

The Maison has dreamed up a sparkling encounter between two exceptional arts: Grand Feu champlévé enamelling, a skill passed on for almost three centuries by the Vacheron Constantin artisans; and hand-applied precious powder, a technique mastered by Japanese guest artist Yoko Imai. This is the very first time that this technique has been used on a watch dial to which particles of gold, pearl, platinum and diamond powder are meticulously distilled one by one, endowing the enamel with exceptional radiance. The bright dots of light, placed with the greatest precision, compose a portrait of these broad and majestic urban landscapes. The light effects play across these strikingly realistic roads, rivers and famous landmarks. Certified by the prestigious Hallmark of Geneva, the Métiers d'Art Villes Lumières watches beat to the rhythm of a mechanical Manufacture Vacheron Constantin caliber graced with refined finishing, in accordance with traditional Fine Watchmaking techniques. The first three models in this new collection are dedicated to the nocturnal magic of Geneva, Paris and New York. This night-flight will soon continue over other cities.

An enduring vocation for artistic crafts

The Métiers d'Art Villes Lumières collection perpetuates the age-old Vacheron Constantin tradition of artistic crafts. In 1755, the very first known watch by the founder of the Maison, Jean-Marc Vacheron, already featured delicate engraved arabesque motifs. Ever since, for almost three centuries, gemsetters, enamellers, guillocheurs and engravers have been cultivating and passing on these forms of expertise that have become extremely rare. Today as yesterday, over the years and in step with successive creations, their dexterity has given life to masterpieces of the watchmaking art. These decorative skills have acquired the habit of echoing each other, combining their techniques with art and creativity on watch dials, and often adopting the spirit of lesser known and surprising arts such as illumination, Japanese lacquer, glyptics or gemstone cloisonné effects. In keeping with this tradition, the Métiers d'Art Villes Lumières collection enables Vacheron Constantin to explore new, contemporary and innovative expressive territory for artistic crafts.



VACHERON CONSTANTIN

GENÈVE, DEPUIS 1755

Aerial perspective

Vacheron Constantin has depicted major cities – notably renowned for their artistic influence – through their nocturnal panorama. Individually applying precious powder particles naturally implies extreme dexterity, and doing so on the surface of a watch involves the additional constraint of defining an ideal altitude for each city so as to convey realistically the emotional impact of its urban outlines. The miniature tableaus that Yoko Imai has composed faithfully reproduce the real 'light cartography' of the cities, with their various sorts of light, such as variously animated districts and even traffic density! This incredibly meticulous work on the map of each city called for several weeks of research and trials on various base materials.

Grand Feu enamelling

For each of the dials, the Vacheron Constantin master enameller first examined the possibilities afforded by *champlevé* in order to highlight the shapes of the streets, gardens and stretches of water. After hollowing out the gold dial by hand according to the chosen outlines, he then applied successive layers of translucent coloured enamels. Between each coating, the dial is fired at the extremely high temperature of 850°C. These crucial and delicate stages, masterfully guided by intuition and governed by stringent discipline acquired over time, enable the powdered glass mixed with colouring oxides to be melted, transformed and then vitrified by cooling – with the inevitable risk that the dial may crack or flaws may form. In the *Métiers d'Art Villes Lumières* collection, the master enameller has taken up the additional challenge of composing subtly translucent and dark shades in order to reproduce the singular night-time atmosphere.

Luminous rain

Vacheron Constantin invited the Japanese artist Yoko Imai to associate her art with that of the enamelling artisan. Trained by the great Japanese masters, she has developed her own artistic technique: calligraphy-inspired painting on canvas, inspired by precious powder. For Vacheron Constantin, she has for the first time adapted this process to the enamel of a watch dial, while creating a fascinating *chiaroscuro* effect. To ensure a faithful transcription of the city lights, her deft hands are guided by absolute mastery, unwavering concentration and a special sensitivity, requiring a particular form of concentration and sensitivity.

The technique of applying precious powders borrows a fundamental principle from the art of calligraphy: the quest for balance and purity. Using a thin stylus, the powder particles are individually affixed using a technique that remains a jealously guarded secret. The luminous magic of the completed tableau depends on this extremely rigorous approach: each fragment is perfectly positioned in its rightful place and there is no room for anything random or superfluous.

Each of the powder specks is thus chosen according to its size and its shimmer, then worked on from several angles and with various types of light, so as to ensure enhanced radiance and realism. First of all, tiny gold grains form the luminous backdrop. Then diamond and platinum powder are successively applied to create shiny and dark effects, punctuated by pearl spangles. Their varying brightness makes it possible adjust the direction and size of the luminescent areas, in order to infuse the dial with life and warmth. On the enamel base, between the raised gold ridges, tens of thousands of spangles shine in the light. The particles of precious powder, all of varying shades and degree of luminosity, interact both amongst themselves and with the dark shades of the Grand Feu enamelled background. The radiance of the composition is more intense in the dial centre and gradually softens towards the outer edges of the dial.



Hand-crafted during more than three months and born from a mingling of artistic crafts, each dial is truly unique. A magnifying glass provided in the presentation box of the timepiece provides a chance to admire the workmanship in all its glorious detail.

The lights of Geneva, Paris and New York

The flyover begins with Geneva, the cradle of technical and precious watchmaking, renowned for having nurtured the art of miniature painting on enamel. Vacheron Constantin was born in the heart of the town, in the St-Gervais district, where the cabinetiers had their workshops.

Then comes Paris, the "City of Light" par excellence, a favourite among artists, philosophers and writers, known the world over for the inimitable elegance of its style. The aerial view of the capital retraces the life of iconic landmarks such as the Place de l'Étoile and the Champs-Élysées, the Seine, as well as the Eiffel Tower famed for its light effects, viewed from above and engraved in gold.

Finally comes New York, the city that never sleeps, a symbol of dreams and effervescence, where everything is possible. Reproducing it stretches the technique of applying precious powders to its absolute limits, with the highest vantage point that could possibly be depicted. Sprinkled across the Grand Feu enamel, tens of thousands of precious dots animate the luminous outlines of Manhattan Island with Central Park, the Hudson River and Brooklyn.

Horological excellence

The timepieces of the Métiers d'Art Villes Lumières collection are certified by the Hallmark of Geneva, a sure token of precision and reliability issued by an entirely neutral and independent body. Manufacture Vacheron Constantin mechanical self-winding Caliber 2460 SC drives a display of the hours, minutes and seconds. Visible through the transparent case-back, the 22K gold oscillating weight features a finely executed decoration inspired by the Maltese cross, the Vacheron Constantin signature emblem. Each of the components, whether visible or hidden, is adorned with finishes crafted in accordance with the finest watchmaking skills exemplified by bevelling, circular-graining and polishing. The movement is protected by a precious white gold case.

The Métiers d'Art Villes Lumières collection is a horological and artistic creation in keeping with the purest Vacheron Constantin traditions. Its striking dials, like authentic miniature tableaux, offer an original view of fascinating cities and of the watchmaking art itself, perpetually inspired and constantly reinvented.

TECHNICAL DATA

Métiers d'Art Villes Lumières

References

86222/000G-B101 – Geneva
86222/000G-B104 – Paris
86222/000G-B105 – New York
Hallmark of Geneva certified timepieces
Only available in Vacheron Constantin Boutiques

Calibre

2460 SC
Developed and manufactured by Vacheron Constantin
Mechanical, self-winding
26.2 mm (11¹/₄) diameter
3.6 mm thick
Approximately 40 hours of power reserve
4 Hz (28,800 vibrations/hour)
182 components
27 jewels

Indications

Hours, minutes and center seconds

Case

18K white gold
40 mm diameter, 8.9 mm thick
Transparent sapphire crystal caseback
Water-resistance tested at a pressure of 3 bar (approx. 30 meters)

Dial

18K gold dial with Grand Feu champlevé & translucent enamel and powder of precious stones (diamonds, pearl) & precious metal (gold, platinum) filled by hand

Strap

Black Mississippiensis alligator leather with alligator inner shell, large square scales

Buckle

18K white gold buckle
Polished half Maltese cross-shaped

Presentation box

Luxury model

Accessory

Delivered with a magnifying glass

Numbered limited production

The name of the city is engraved on the back of the timepiece