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WRITER: Nadine Khalil

When a highly esteemed 220-year-old Swiss watchmaker and an acclaimed Lebanese painter join forces, the result is a wearable work of precision art.

Just in time for an art fair showcasing work from the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia, hosted in Beirut in July, and sponsored by Bespoke, Geneva-based watch manufacturer Girard Perregeaux unveiled a unique collaboration at Menasart. "Wanting to pay tribute to the creativity of a country," in the chairman Stefano Macaluso's words, Girard Perregeaux, also a sponsor of Menasart, decided that they would create something special for Lebanon, whose artists have the highest representation. And according to Macaluso, this is the first time Girard Perregeaux participates directly in an art fair. Why this time? "Because we believe in the potential of Lebanon as a trend setter in the Middle East and beyond."

First, a myth was chosen which had a historical connection to the local culture. The 'Abduction of Europa' was the perfect link between East and West, referring to the beautiful daughter, Europa, of the Phoenician king of Tyre. Zeus, the father of all gods, was so overwhelmed by his love for her, that he transformed himself into a magnificent bull and abducted her, all the way to Crete. The union gave rise to a whole continent. "This part of the world has produced the alphabet," says Hussein Madi, "And I belong to this civilisation. Since I lived in Italy



your picks

Emotion Pictures

Filmmaker Alejandro Landes' glorious contemporary home in Miami, on the shores of Biscayne Bay, is as captivating as a cinematic masterpiece.

The Polymath

Lebanese painter, sculptor and architect Nadim Karam breaks down the barriers that divide his trades. His visionary approach to using space transcends traditional thinking.

The It Factor

She's got 26 million Instagram fans following her every move and desperate to buy whatever she eats, drinks and wears. We meet with the 21-year old social media

for so many years, I feel I also belong to Italian culture."

Madi is one of Lebanon's top contemporary artists and his Cubist-style paintings, which have references to Picasso and Matisse, were perfectly suited to the intricacy of a watch dial etching. His assignment by Girard-Perregeaux was to paint two interpretations of this legend. "His ability to combine colours and forms is very close to our horological approach," Macaluso mentioned. Replicas of Madi's visual renditions were then employed on the dials of two limited watches - a male and a female version, both from the 1966 collection, featuring an automatic movement with a power reserve of 46 hours.

The process of turning fine art into haute horlogerie took 6 months, involving meticulous marquetry and painting on mother-of-pearl. After 700 hours of work, the trajectory from the paintings to their representation and inlay upon the mother-of-pearl mosaic plates of the watch dials was painstakingly completed.

Exhibited for the first time at Menasart, and in collaboration with their agents in Lebanon, Chronora, the Girard Perregeaux lady's watch in pink gold with 68 diamonds is priced at 70,000 USD, while the men's version is 65,000 USD and in white gold. With this exhibition, Girard-Perregeaux continues its over two century-long tradition of balancing the accuracy of its techniques against aesthetic innovation, which in this case, has Middle Eastern origins.

phenomenon and her latest accomplice, Tommy Hilfiger.



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