

ROYAL OAK CONCEPT
TOURBILLON “COMPANION”



AUDEMARS PIGUET



KAWS AND AUDEMARS PIGUET *OFFER A NEW TAKE ON HAUTE HORLOGERIE*

Audemars Piguet continues to explore new creative territories, drawing inspiration from and engaging with the wider cultural world. Its latest 43mm limited edition Royal Oak Concept Tourbillon, designed in collaboration with KAWS, brings the subversive nature of the collection to the fore. The futuristic design of this limited edition of 250 pieces, fully crafted in titanium, is imbued with the aesthetic DNA of one of the most popular artists working today,

who has placed a miniature COMPANION at the very heart of the watch. To give pride of place to this cartoon-like character, the Manufacture has literally put time to the side thanks to the use of an innovative peripheral time display. At once universal and provocative, witty and inquisitive, the collaboration invites the viewer to see Haute Horlogerie in a different light and to reflect on the power of the imaginary to push boundaries.



▲ The 43 mm titanium Royal Oak Concept Tourbillon "COMPANION" limited edition reinterprets Haute Horlogerie through the lens of artist KAWS.



“Audemars Piguet has always been part of the culture of the moment, engaging in enriching conversations and collaborations with fields as diverse as art, pop culture, sport and the entertainment industry. KAWS has taken collaboration to a whole new level. By placing a miniature COMPANION at the heart of a Royal Oak Concept, he not only challenged us to push new boundaries, but he also encouraged us to look at our craftsmanship from a more humanistic perspective and reflect on the power of both the imaginary and Haute Horlogerie to inspire curiosity and evoke strong emotions.”

Ilaria Resta
Chief Executive Officer, Audemars Piguet

BRINGING TOGETHER *CULTURE AND CREATIVITY*

The collaboration with the artist KAWS reinforces Audemars Piguet's curiosity and ongoing dialogue with the cultural world. Over the years, the brand has partnered with luminaries across disciplines, including art and pop culture, to nurture its creativity, shake up the status quo and reflect on the meaning of Haute Horlogerie in today's world. KAWS started out as a graffiti artist in New York City in the 1990s, making a name for himself by augmenting ads in phone booths

and bus shelters. His early "ad intervention" work paved the way for his cast of characters, including COMPANION, which have served as experimental platforms to push the boundaries of what is possible in terms of shape, material and size – a strong link to both Audemars Piguet's free-spirited mindset and the groundbreaking nature of the Royal Oak Concept collection in particular.



▲ Through this collaboration, KAWS invites the viewer to look at the creative territory of Haute Horlogerie through his cast of characters and aesthetic codes.

KAWS' COMPANION has travelled across media and the globe, from toy figures and large-scale sculptures to giant floating inflatables and AR versions. Evoking both life and death, the real and the fake, this cartoon-like character is at once endearing and disconcerting. Its inherent dichotomy challenges norms and expectations, while inviting its audience to be curious, get out of their comfort zone and look at the world differently.

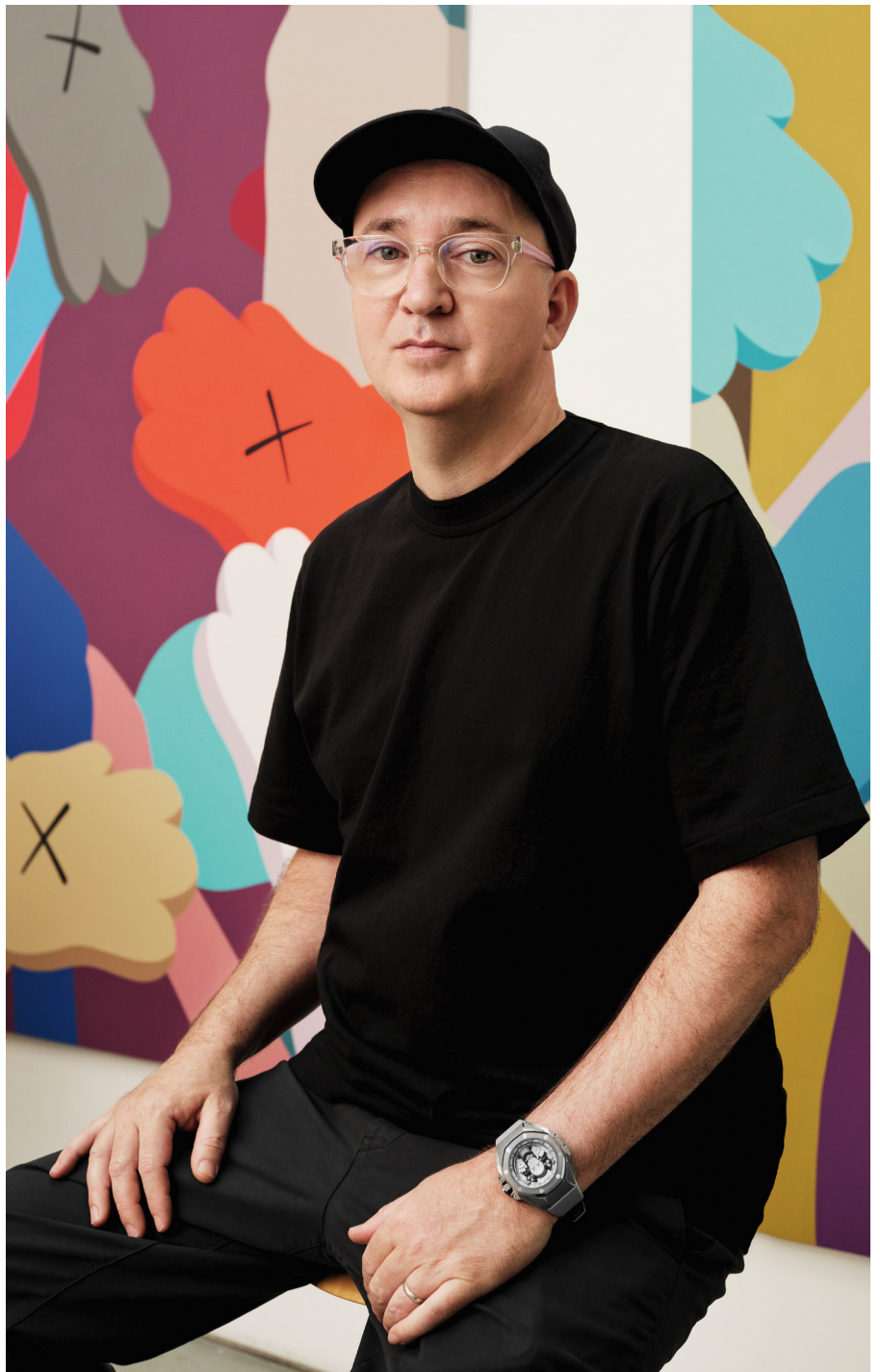
Today, this cultural phenomenon takes on unprecedented miniature proportions to explore the creative territory of fine watchmaking. Placed at the very heart of its eponymous Royal Oak Concept Tourbillon limited edition, this imaginary character both subverts and humanises Haute Horlogerie, pushing the limits of the craft.



▲ KAWS, who started out as a graffiti artist in the 1990s, is one of the most popular artists working today.

“It has been an incredible experience working with Audemars Piguet over the past two years to bring this project to fruition. I find the world of watchmaking fascinating, and the artisans at Audemars Piguet are truly exceptional in their craft. I am honoured to have my watch included in the company’s catalogue, which spans over a hundred years of watchmaking excellence.”

KAWS
Artist



INSPIRED BY *KAWS' AESTHETICS*

The 43 mm Royal Oak Concept Tourbillon "COMPANION" incorporates KAWS' aesthetic on both sides of the watch. In a tribute to the artist's early "ad intervention" work, KAWS' COMPANION appears beneath the watch's sapphire crystal, its face and hands seemingly touching the inner surface of the glass, curiously peering out to see what lies beyond.

This miniature 3D character in contrasting shades of light and dark grey is entirely made of titanium and is mounted on the titanium dial plate decorated with a sunburst motif.

Its alternating satin-brushed and sandblasted finishes add texture and depth, while accentuating its rounded silhouette. Its skull-shaped head, X-shaped eyes, gloves and crossbones make it instantly recognisable. The X eyes have been cut into the titanium component and filled with a thin layer of grey lacquer.

Lastly, in a nod to KAWS' dissected series, the chest of the COMPANION reveals its beating heart, the watch's tourbillon, blurring the line between the character and the movement.



▲ The miniature KAWS' COMPANION takes centre stage on the dial, peering curiously out from under the sapphire crystal.

PUTTING TIME *TO THE SIDE*

To ensure an unobstructed view of the miniature COMPANION on the dial side, Audemars Piguet has literally pushed time to the side by using a peripheral time display that offers new aesthetic possibilities for both movement and dial designs. The hour and minute hands rotate around the periphery of the movement and dial, thanks to two visible, superimposed gear wheels driven by

pinions and guided by rollers. The titanium hour and minute hands, both filled with luminescent material that turns blue in the dark, are fixed to their respective peripheral wheel. In addition, the minute hand is openworked to distinguish it from the hour hand and facilitate the reading of time. The five-minute graduations, carved into the titanium inner bezel, also glow blue in dim light.



▲ The timepiece features an innovative peripheral time display to give centre stage to KAWS' COMPANION on the dial.



“As part of this collaboration, we have pushed our limits in terms of watchmaking technology to create a spectacular setting with the character at the centre, surrounded by a brand-new hour and minute display system housed in the periphery of the movement.”

Lucas Raggi,
Research and Development Director, Audemars Piguet

AN INTERPLAY *OF TEXTURES AND LIGHT*

The multifaceted titanium case, finished with an alternation of sandblasting, satin-brushing and polishing, echoes the miniature COMPANION's contrasting textures and grey shades, while the case's titanium inserts augment the Royal Oak Concept's futuristic architecture. Both the bezel and the caseback have been secured to the case middle with eight hexagonal screws subtly marked with KAWS' trademark X. This motif is also engraved on the satin-brushed frame of the sapphire caseback, alongside

KAWS' signature and the words "Limited Edition of 250 pieces." The black ceramic crown, topped with a titanium chip, adds the final touch. The play of textures and light continues on the dark grey calfskin leather strap. The interchangeable system integrated directly into the case and the triple-blade folding clasp allows the wearer to change styles with a quick click and release. The watch comes with a second strap in slate grey calfskin leather, also decorated with a textile pattern, to enhance its contrasting grey tones.



▲ The 43 mm multifaceted titanium case plays with light and texture, while the dark grey calfskin leather strap enhances the watch's contrasting grey tones.

A LATEST-GENERATION *TOURBILLON MOVEMENT*

This limited edition is powered by the new hand-wound peripheral hour and minute movement, Calibre 2979, which gives pride of place to the tourbillon on the dial side at 6 o'clock. This delicate, high-end complication reduces the effects of gravity on the watch's accuracy. The balance wheel and escapement are housed in a tiny rotating cage that completes a revolution every minute to prevent their centre of gravity from staying in the same orientation. The sapphire caseback showcases the movement's black-PVD titanium

bridges, whose padded aesthetic is inspired by KAWS' cast of characters. The gear train bridge opens onto the ratchet wheel, which arms the barrel-arbour when the watch is wound, and which has been crossed out to reproduce KAWS' emblematic X. The click that prevents it from turning in the unwinding direction is also visible at 12 o'clock. The bridges' blackened aesthetic is contrasted by the mention of "Swiss," "39 jewels" and the "Audemars Piguet" signature, all engraved by laser and filled with white lacquer.



▲ Front and back views of Calibre 2979.

TECHNICAL *SPECIFICATIONS*

Royal Oak Concept Tourbillon "COMPANION" / 43 mm

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Limited edition of 250 pieces

FUNCTIONS

Tourbillon, peripheral hours and minutes.

CASE

Sandblasted titanium case, black ceramic crown with titanium chip, double glareproofed sapphire crystal, sapphire caseback, water-resistance to 100 m.

Case thickness: 17.4 mm

DIAL

Sunburst titanium dial plate with miniature titanium KAWS' COMPANION in shades of grey, sandblasted light grey titanium inner bezel, peripheral titanium hands and hour-markers with luminescent material glowing blue in the dark.

STRAP

Interchangeable light grey calfskin leather strap with textile effect, titanium triple-blade AP folding clasp. Second interchangeable slate grey calfskin leather strap with textile effect.

MOVEMENT SPECIFICATIONS

Hand-wound Calibre 2979

Total diameter	32.3 mm (14 ¼ <i>lignes</i>)
Total thickness	10.4 mm
Number of parts	332
Number of jewels	39
Minimum power reserve guaranteed	72 h
Frequency of balance wheel	3 Hz (21,600 vibrations/hour)



Press release and visuals

- ▶ <https://audemarspiguet.picturepark.com/s/Vzeo1DDj>

For additional information, please visit our website

- ▶ <https://aplb.ch/en/royal-oak-concept-kaws>

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<https://www.youtube.com/c/audemarspiguet>

About KAWS

KAWS (b. 1974, Jersey City, New Jersey; lives and works in Brooklyn, New York) engages audiences beyond the museums and galleries in which he regularly exhibits. His prolific body of work straddles the worlds of art and design to include paintings, murals, graphic and product design, and large-scale sculptures. Over the last two decades KAWS has built a successful career with work that consistently shows his formal agility as an artist, as well as his underlying wit, irreverence, and affection for our times. His refined graphic language revitalises figuration with both big, bold gestures and playful intricacies.

KAWS often appropriates and draws inspiration from pop culture animations, forming a unique artistic vocabulary across mediums. Admired for his larger-than-life sculptures and hardedge paintings that emphasise line and colour, KAWS' cast of hybrid cartoon characters are the strongest examples of his exploration of humanity. As seen in his collaborations with global brands, KAWS' imagery possesses a sophisticated humour and reveals a thoughtful interplay with consumer products. With their broad appeal, KAWS' artworks are highly sought-after by collectors inside and outside of the art world, establishing him as a uniquely prominent artist and influence in today's culture.

KAWS has exhibited extensively in renowned institutions, including solo exhibitions at – The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (2024); Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada (2023); Serpentine Gallery, London, United Kingdom (2022); Mori Arts Center Gallery, Tokyo, Japan (2021); The Brooklyn Museum, New York (2021); The National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia (2019); Fire Station, Qatar Museums, Doha, Qatar (2019); Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas (2016) which traveled to the Yuz Museum, Shanghai, China (2017); Yorkshire Sculpture Park and Longside Gallery, West Yorkshire, United Kingdom (2016); Centro de Arte Contemporáneo, Málaga, Spain (2014); Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia (2013); High Art Museum, Atlanta, Georgia (2011); and Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut (2011).

About Audemars Piguet

Audemars Piguet is the oldest fine watchmaking manufacturer still in the hands of its founding families (Audemars and Piguet). Based in Le Brassus since 1875, the company has nurtured generations of talented craftspeople who have continuously developed new skills and techniques, broadening their savoir-faire to set rule-breaking trends. In the Vallée de Joux, at the heart of the Swiss Jura, Audemars Piguet has created numerous masterpieces, testament to the Manufacture's ancestral savoir-faire and forward-thinking spirit. By pushing the boundaries of what is possible and building bridges between different creative worlds, Audemars Piguet has been able to explore new horizons and build an inspired community. **Seek Beyond.** — www.audemarspiguet.com

Image credits

Courtesy of Audemars Piguet

