



## JAEGER-LECOULTRE PRESENTS TWO NEW REVERSO TRIBUTE ENAMEL TIMEPIECES IN HOMAGE TO HOKUSAI

- Exquisitely detailed reproductions of the Japanese artist's woodblock prints, *The Waterfall at Ono on the Kisokaido Road (Kisokaidō Ono no bakufu)* and *The Waterfall Where Yoshitsune Washed his Horse at Yoshino in Yamato Province (Washū Yoshino Yoshitsune uma arai no taki)* on the Reverso case-backs
- Showcasing the expertise of the Manufacture's Métiers Rares™ atelier in the crafts of miniature painting, guillochage and Grand Feu enamelling

Since the early days of the Maison, Jaeger-LeCoultre has adopted Asian motifs and adapted Eastern decorative crafts to embellish special timepieces, embracing and perpetuating the cultural exchange that has existed between Asia and Europe for some 2,000 years. In 2023, La Grande Maison pays homage to this tradition with two new Reverso Tribute timepieces decorated with miniature-painted enamel reproductions of works by Katsushika Hokusai, Japan's most celebrated 19<sup>th</sup>-century artist: *The Waterfall at Ono on the Kisokaido Road (Kisokaidō Ono no bakufu)* and *The Waterfall Where Yoshitsune Washed his Horse at Yoshino in Yamato Province (Washū Yoshino Yoshitsune uma arai no taki)*.

Hokusai's fame rests on the innovative approach he brought to *ukiyo-e* painting, transforming a genre that had been narrowly focused on the hedonistic lifestyle of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Edo Japan's merchant class into a broader genre that included landscapes, plants and animals.

The two works reproduced for the new Reverso Tribute enamel models are from a series of eight *ukiyo-e* paintings titled *A Tour of the Waterfalls of the Provinces (Shokoku taki meguri)* made by Hokusai after he spent two years travelling around Japan's main island, Honshu, from 1831 to 1833, discovering some of its most inspiring landscapes. The master artisans of Jaeger-LeCoultre's Métiers Rares™ atelier have previously paid homage to these works with a Reverso Tribute model in 2021 depicting the waterfall at Kirifuri, followed by the waterfall at Amida in 2022. The two new pieces created for 2023 continue this homage to the Japanese master, choosing subjects that also reflect the deep attachment to nature that is intrinsic to La Grande Maison's spirit.

### **A Great Japanese Master with a Fascination for the Natural World**

Innovative in his composition and use of colour, Hokusai (c.1760–1849) was a highly prolific illustrator, printmaker and *ukiyo-e* artist and, during his lifetime, woodblock printing flourished as a means of reproducing *ukiyo-e* paintings. As a consequence of Hokusai's fame, *ukiyo-e* and woodblock prints became central to forming the West's perception of Japanese art. His monumental series *Thirty-Six*



*Views of Mount Fuji*, includes *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* – one of the world's best-known works of art – which Jaeger-LeCoultre honoured with a limited-edition Reverso in 2018. *A Tour of the Waterfalls of the Provinces* marked the first time that the theme of falling water was approached in *ukiyo-e* painting. Highly expressive, each work is dominated by the waterfall, which dwarfs its human onlookers.

### **Capturing the Beauty and Power of Waterfalls**

The *Waterfall at Ono* portrays a famous site in Nagano Prefecture, on the ancient road that linked the historic capital of Kyoto with the seat of the Tokugawa shoguns in Edo (today's Tokyo). A small Shinto shrine stands on a rocky promontory next to the falls and, on a bridge below it, a group of travellers stand in awe of the power of the falling water. The composition of the painting amplifies this sense of power, with the water plunging in a straight vertical line between two towering cliffs. The Japanese traditionally believed that remarkable physical phenomena indicate the presence of a kami or Shinto god, and Hokusai rendered his scenes with a powerful sense of life, reflecting his animistic beliefs.

The *Waterfall at Yoshino* depicts a famous Japanese tale – an episode from the life of General Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159–1189). Fleeing from his older brother who considered him a traitor for joining forces with the Emperor, Go-Shirakawa, the General paused to rest and bathe his favourite horse amid the mountains of Yoshino (in today's Nara prefecture). In this powerfully graphic composition, the waterfall's strong curves express the full force of the water passing through a deep, tree-lined valley. Evoking an image of a giant hand embracing the earth with fingers spread open, it is a poignant exploration of the relationship between nature, man and animals.

### **Artistry and Precision in Miniature**

The miniature paintings on the Reverso case-backs were executed using the Geneva technique, involving at least 14 layers of enamel, each fired at 800°C before the next can be applied, and requiring a total of 80 hours' meticulous work. As well as the technical feat of reproducing Hokusai's original colours (including the graduated *bokashi* effect) in an entirely different medium, the enameller faced the challenge of precisely reproducing every detail with pinpoint accuracy, on a scale approximately one-tenth of the original. Most remarkable, perhaps, are the cartouches near the top of each frame, in which the original captions have been hand-written on a microscopic scale while remaining perfectly accurate and legible. Beyond mastering this technical feat, the enameller seeks to express the original artist's intention and touch, imbuing each work with emotional resonance and a sense of soul.

The simplicity and discreet styling of the watches' front dials – with the faceted appliqué hour-markers, Dauphine hands and chemin-de-fer minutes track characteristic of all Reverso Tribute timepieces – provides a contrast to the intricacy of the miniature paintings. However, this apparent simplicity belies the highly complex craftsmanship behind their creation. The background of both dials has been guilloché by hand: the pattern on the *Waterfall at Ono* piece is a classical barleycorn design, requiring three to four hours of painstakingly accurate work. For the *Waterfall at Yoshino* the craftsman applied a lozenge pattern comprising no fewer than 800 lines, each of which required five passages of the lathe (4,000 passages in total), representing eight hours of work only for the guillochage. Once the



guillochage is completed, four to five layers of translucent green enamel are applied, with each layer requiring separate firing and drying – representing a total of eight additional hours of work, over the course of a week.

Embodying La Grande Maison’s vision of the world of art and culture, and showcasing the talents housed in the Métiers Rares™ (Rare Handcrafts) atelier within the Manufacture in the Vallée de Joux, the two new Reverso Tribute Enamel timepieces are a noble addition to the continuing story of the Reverso and its boundless scope as a canvas for creative expression.

## **TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS**

### **REVERSO TRIBUTE ENAMEL HOKUSAI – The Waterfall at Ono**

**Case:** White Gold

**Dimensions:** 45.6 x 27.4 mm x 9.73 mm thick

**Calibre:** Manually wound Calibre 822

**Functions:** Hours, Minutes

**Power Reserve:** 42 Hours

**Front dial:** Barleycorn guilloché, Grand Feu enamel

**Caseback:** Closed – miniature-painted Grand Feu enamel

**Strap:** Black alligator

**Reference:** Q39334T5

**Limited edition:** 10 pieces

### **REVERSO TRIBUTE ENAMEL HOKUSAI – The Waterfall at Yoshino**

**Case:** White Gold

**Dimensions:** 45.6 x 27.4 mm x 9.73 mm thick

**Calibre:** Manually wound Calibre 822

**Functions:** Hours, Minutes

**Power Reserve:** 42 Hours

**Front dial:** Lozenge guilloché, Grand Feu enamel

**Caseback:** Closed – miniature-painted Grand Feu enamel

**Strap:** Black alligator

**Reference:** Q39334T4

**Limited edition:** 10 pieces



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**About Jaeger-LeCoultre – The Watchmaker of Watchmakers™**

Since 1833, driven by an unquenchable thirst for innovation and creativity, and inspired by the peaceful natural surroundings of its home in the Vallée de Joux, Jaeger-LeCoultre has been distinguished by its mastery of complications and the precision of its mechanisms. Known as the Watchmaker of Watchmakers™, the Manufacture has expressed its relentlessly inventive spirit through the creation of more than 1,400 different calibres and the award of more than 430 patents. Harnessing 190 years of accumulated expertise, La Grande Maison's watchmakers design, produce, finish and ornament the most advanced and precise mechanisms, blending passion with centuries-old savoir-faire, linking the past to the future, timeless but always up with the times. With 180 skills brought together under one roof, the Manufacture creates fine timepieces that combine technical ingenuity with aesthetic beauty and a distinctively understated sophistication.

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