



TAKING CREATIVE LICENCE

If Roger Dubuis is the enfant terrible of the conservative watch industry, then its creative director Alvaro Maggini must be the leading mischief maker. Maggini tells Ho Yun Kuan where he gets his ideas.

Photos GETTY IMAGES, LAZIZ HAMANI, WAYNE ZHOU



Roger Dubuis at the 24th edition of Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie. Its booth paid tribute to the reinvigorated Hommage collection.

Which comes first - the watch or your visual story? There is no finished product

when we start the creative process so I don't have exact information about the watches. The most important starting point for me is the focus of the year's collection. For example, two years ago, it was calibres. Last year, it was all about Diva. For 2017, our focus is disruptive materials (editor's note: "disruptive" here can be taken to mean unconventional and perhaps controversial). I take this core element, and build a story around it. So what story are you trying to tell with the visual environment for Roger Dubuis' booth at SIHH 2017? It's very simple. In order to build something new, I need to destroy (the old or familiar) first. What I have done is to destroy so that we can rebuild.

The mechanisms in Roger Dubuis watches are already outstanding. What do the visuals you create add to them? The visual world is an extension of the story driven by the timepieces. The product is always the star, but it needs something visual to support it and build a story around it. It is essential in the luxury business. SIHH is our best stage for storytelling. The Roger Dubuis booth always creates an impact and dictates the visual direction for the



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From above:
Alvaro Maggini;
The Velvet by Massaro was
inspired by Greta Garbo.



rest of the year. Post-SIHH, these elements are then used to drive the same message in all brand activities worldwide. The images remain relevant for up to two years. For example, elements of the Astral world presented at SIHH 2015 were adapted for a pop-up store in Harrods in July 2016. The worlds we create for the brand are much stronger than just an advertising visual. Our visual elements just add another dimension of indulgence.

You used to work for Dior and Chanel. How is creative work different or similar in a watch brand? There are no similarities at all. To me, fashion is very sexy, while watches are more utilitarian. Fashion is like falling in love at first sight. It is passionate, but it doesn't last long. Watches, on the other hand, are more intellectual and slow-burning, like being in a long-term relationship.

Which part of the creative process is most challenging to you? It is to ensure that the product is respected. When I work with a new product, it becomes like my child. Like a proud parent, I always want to come up with a story that showcases my child in the best light.

Which part of the creative process do you enjoy the most? It is always the production process – the time when an idea becomes reality, when I am working with different people on

Roger Dubuis World at SIHH 2016 evoked the world's most glamorous film events with its dramatic setting.

bringing different aspects of my idea to life, such as the design, construction or being on the set of a photoshoot. Creating something concrete out of nothing is always so exciting!

If you must choose one, which would be your favourite visual you have created for Roger Dubuis? It will be the entire concept for 2017, including the booth and advertising campaigns. My favourite is always the latest one. It is my new love, and I will be in love until I move on to create my next visual world.

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