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PRESS RELEASE

THE IMPERIAL PATEK PHILIPPE

Phillips to Unveil Patek Philippe Wristwatch and Historically Important Artefacts Once Belonging to Aisin-Gioro Puyi, the Last Emperor of the Qing Dynasty

World Tour to Follow the Unveiling in Hong Kong on 18 March at the Opening of Phillips' New Asia Headquarters



A Patek Philippe Reference 96 Quantieme Lune formerly from the collection of Aisin-Gioro Puyi and a Paper Fan featuring a poem personally inscribed by the Emperor himself



Aisin-Gioro Puyi (1906-1967) Photo by Ullstein Bild via Getty Images

HONG KONG – 16 MARCH 2023 – Phillips in Association with Bacs & Russo is honoured to announce the unveiling of several artefacts once belonging to Aisin-Gioro Puyi, the last Emperor of the Qing dynasty, at the opening of Phillips' new Asia headquarters in Hong Kong's West Kowloon Cultural District. A Patek Philippe Reference 96 Quantieme Lune, an inscribed paper fan, a manuscript notebook, watercolour paintings and a leather-bound printed edition of Confucius' *Analects* will all be exhibited, offering a rare insight into a remarkable chapter in history. From 1945 to 1950, the deposed Emperor was held prisoner in the USSR. During these five years, a Soviet official who spoke fluent Mandarin served as the Emperor's interpreter and tutor. These artefacts spotlight the extraordinary friendship which developed between Puyi and his Russian translator. Phillips is proud to unveil them in Hong Kong, where they will be on view from 18-31 March; this will be followed by an international tour to New York, Singapore, London, Taipei and Geneva, with the pieces being offered for sale at a later date.

Aisin-Gioro Puyi, The Last Emperor of the Qing Dynasty (1906-1967)

Born in 1906, Aisin-Gioro Puyi was the last Emperor of the Qing dynasty, ascending the throne as the Xuantong Emperor at nearly three years old in accordance with the Empress Dowager Cixi's decree. When the Japanese forces surrendered in 1945, Puyi was captured at Shenyang Airport by the Soviet Red Army.

After he was detained, Puyi was held first in Chita as a prisoner of war, then incarcerated in a Khabarovsk detention camp for five years. During his time in the Soviet Union, Puyi developed a close friendship with his interpreter, Georgy Permyakov. After Chairman Mao Zedong's victory in China, he visited the Soviet Union in 1950 and authorities agreed to Puyi's repatriation. According to a first-hand account by the Emperor's nephew, it was at this time that Puyi gifted the watch to his friend, the interpreter.

In August 1946, Puyi testified at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East as a historical witness. Four years later, in 1950, Puyi was extradited back to China before eventually being granted amnesty several years later and becoming a citizen of New China. He was also appointed Commissioner on Cultural and Historical Materials by the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

On 17 October 1967, Puyi passed away of illness in Beijing at age 61. His life would later be dramatised by Bernardo Bertolucci's 1987 cinematic masterpiece, *The Last Emperor*.

The Watch

Truly the first of its kind, a legendary reference, a tremendous importance to Patek Philippe's heritage, the present Patek Philippe reference 96 with triple date and moon phase transcends as one of the most crucial examples ever to resurface. While only seven Patek Philippe reference 96 of such complication were previously known, the present example is fresh-to-the-market and is the eighth example to appear.

The Calatrava case in platinum was crafted by Antoine Gerlach and identified by "Key number 4" stamp. The dial features an Arabic numeral dial paired with matching pink gold ring and Feuille hands. Housed within the timepiece is a 11''' Victorin Piguet ébauche movement produced during the downfall of the global economy in 1929, the beginning of the Great Depression, and therefore was never cased. With the game-changing unveiling of the reference 96 as a novelty in 1932, the movement was further upgraded by the manufacturer and fitted into this present modernist platinum case with Bauhaus influences in 1937.

Underscoring the rarity of the timepiece presented by Phillips, only two examples with the exact dial configuration – which includes an enamel Arabic "Roulette" configuration – have ever previously surfaced. Both cased in platinum bearing consecutive movements numbers, one is now part of Patek Philippe Museum collection, and the second was sold in 1996 to a private collector. Exceedingly prestigious, kept in its original untouched condition with consistent patina throughout, this time-capsule piece with incredible historical importance, is the epitome of its kind.

Further cementing its authenticity, the production of the timepiece is confirmed by the Patek Philippe Extract from the Archives mentioning a silvered dial, rose gold zone and enamel hour markers manufactured from 1929, and was later sold on 6th October 1937.



Other Artefacts

Among the items accompanying the watch is the red paper fan (illustrated page 1) that Puyi personally inscribed and gifted to his interpreter in Tokyo. The fan is inscribed with a poem composed and penned in Chinese by Puyi himself, consisting of four lines of five syllables each, the English translation herewith:

小院夜未央，明月透南窗。相伴燈前坐，清意正悠長。

一九四六年八月十九日於東京

贈與別兒面濶夫同志

愛新覺羅溥儀

It is not dawn yet at the courtyard, the moonlight seeps through the south window. Sitting together

by the lamp, the long silent mood endures.

Dedicated to my comrade Bie'ermiankuofu (Permyakov) in Tokyo on 19 August 1946, by Aisin-Gioro Puyi.



A manuscript notebook provides a never-before-seen glimpse into the mind of Puyi. For the five years that Puyi was in the Soviet Union, he penned miscellaneous notes on the books and magazines he read. The content is diverse, focusing mainly on customs and daily life in China.



A Patek Philippe Reference 96 Quantieme Lune formerly from the collection of Aisin-Gioro Puyi and a manuscript notebook

A leather-bound edition of Confucius' *Analects* bears witness to the attachment that Puyi held for the traditional values and teachings of Confucius, the famed Chinese philosopher and politician of the Spring and Autumn period (770 to 481 BCE) who was and still is hailed as the paragon of Chinese sages.

Fifteen watercolour paintings attributed to Puyi's brother-in-law Gobulo Runqi, depicting various aspects of Chinese culture and rural scenes, will also be on view. These watercolours had a didactic purpose; they served as pictorial illustrations with every element in the different scenes carefully labelled in Chinese characters.

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INTERNATIONAL TOUR:

| Dates | Location |
|-------------|---|
| 18-31 March | Hong Kong- G/F, WKDA Tower, West Kowloon Cultural District, No. 8 Austin Road West, Kowloon |
| 6-8 April | New York - 432 Park Avenue, New York |
| 20-22 April | Singapore – The St. Regis Hotel, 29 Tanglin Rd Singapore |
| 26-28 April | London - 30 Berkeley Square, London |
| 6-7 May | Taipei – Bellavita, B1 Art Gallery, Bellavita, No.28, Songren Rd., Xinyi District, Taipei, Taiwan |
| 10-14 May | Geneva - Hôtel La Réserve, 301 Route de Lausanne, Geneva |

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The team of specialists at Phillips Watches is dedicated to an uncompromised approach to quality, transparency, and client service. Phillips in Association with Bacs & Russo holds the world record for the most successful watch auction, with its Geneva Watch Auction: XIV having realised \$74.5 million in 2021. Over the course of 2021 and 2022, the company sold 100% of the watches offered, a first in the industry, resulting in the highest annual total in history across all the auction houses at \$227 million.

Record-breaking prices include:

1. Paul Newman's Rolex "Paul Newman" Daytona reference 6239 (CHF 17,709,894 / US\$17,752,500) – New York Auction: Winning Icons – 26 October 2017 – Highest result ever achieved for any vintage wristwatch at auction.

2. Patek Philippe reference 1518 in stainless steel (CHF 11,020,000 / US\$11,112,020) – Geneva Watch Auction: FOUR – 12 November 2016 – Highest result ever achieved for a vintage Patek Philippe wristwatch at auction.

ABOUT PHILLIPS

Phillips is a leading global platform for buying and selling 20th and 21st century art and design. With dedicated expertise in the areas of 20th Century and Contemporary Art, Design, Photographs, Editions, Watches, and Jewelry, Phillips offers professional services and advice on all aspects of collecting. Auctions and exhibitions are held at salerooms in New York, London, Geneva, and Hong Kong, while clients are further served through representative offices based throughout Europe, the United States and Asia. Phillips also offers an online auction platform accessible anywhere in the world. In addition to providing selling and buying opportunities through auction, Phillips brokers private sales and offers assistance with appraisals, valuations, and other financial services.

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