



MODERNITY MEETS MÉTIER D'ART WITH SARTORY BILLARD × REVOLUTION SB05 'UCHU'

Our latest collaboration with Sartory Billard artfully conjures a glittering cosmos while turning the spotlight onto one of the world's most beloved yet underappreciated traditional handcrafts.

If you haven't done it before, we'll tell you right now. Designing a watch with Sartory Billard is one of the most rewarding experiences for any watch enthusiast looking for a truly unique handcrafted timepiece. We've already done it once with the fully mirror-polished SB07 "Ghost" and now we're back for round two—but this time we've gone a completely different route. Where Grail Watch 11: Sartory Billard SB07



"Ghost" was a surrealist ode to contemporary art, the new Sartory Billard Revolution SB05 "Uchū" is a tribute to classical handcrafts that takes us back to the very roots of Sartory Billard, which has always been about elevating watchmaking through bespoke artistry.

Among Sartory Billard's many distinctive models, the SB05 has taken on countless guises since its introduction and, indeed, the sky is the limit in terms of aesthetics for this timepiece. To date, Sartory Billard has offered countless variations with a plethora of materials, such as mother-of-pearl, ornamental stones, meteorite, as well as numerous styles of guilloché and enamel. It is also possible to custom-design the finishes for the hands and the case. You could then choose your favorite typography for the numerals, and finally pick out the perfect strap to complete the watch.

Such infinite variety is amazing and admittedly also daunting, because... where does one begin? That was our very first question during the creation process as well. So in our quest to develop a new limited edition that is not only breathtakingly beautiful, but also emotionally compelling on a horological level, we arrived at a fascinating crossroad where shimmering aventurine meets the magic of traditional Japanese artisanship.



THE BEAUTY OF JAPANESE LACQUER ART

Lacquer painting originated in China more than 3,000 years ago, and its widespread popularity soon traveled across East and Southeast Asian countries including Imperial Japan, where it then evolved into a specific and distinctive Japanese style. Some of the most beautiful lacquered pieces were made in the 17th and 18th century when feudal lords and shoguns frequently commissioned ceremonial artifacts and decorative objects. Gradually, from classical lacquer painting came more elaborate forms of lacquer art including the deeply cherished art of maki-e as well as the dazzling art of raden, each of which are further sub-classified into even more specific varieties.

Maki-e is a traditional Japanese decorative technique where you will find myriads of symbolic emblems and other design motifs either painted or imprinted in a translucent lacquer, and then sprinkled over with metallic powder, usually gold or silver. The word maki means to sprinkle and e, a picture. Dating back to the Heian period (794–1185) in Japanese history, traditional lacquer painting is a laborious endeavor involving multiple layers of

lacquer painted over and over. It is not a process one can rush through, and it requires inordinate amounts of time and patience in between applications, because the next layer of lacquer can only be applied after the previous one has properly dried.

For the Sartory Billard Revolution SB05 "Uchū," we had the distinct pleasure of witnessing firsthand the extraordinary savoir-faire of esteemed master artisan Tatsuya Todo, who goes by his artisan name Kosetsu. A certified traditional craftsman renowned for his mastery of maki-e, Kosetsu has apprenticed with the absolute best in the trade, including top maki-e masters Kiichi Ikeda of Kanazawa and Masonori Omote of Kaga. Kosetsu's works have received major awards across Japan and he is currently a teacher of maki-e at the Yamanaka Urushi Technical Center.

Traditional maki-e crafters like Kosetsu typically use highly specialized tools to create their artworks. Delicate brushes made of sable hair and special bamboo tubes are used to apply the powdered gold or silver and, of course, the prized urushi lacquer. Lacquer painting is an incredibly precise craft where each layer of urushi needs to be dried under specific conditions, typically at a humidity level of 75 to 80 percent and at a temperature of 25 to 30 degrees Celsius.

Maki-e artisans favor a type of lacquer known as urushi, derived from the sap of the urushi tree (*Rhus vernicifera*), which in its natural state is highly toxic both to the touch and when inhaled. Upon harvesting, the sap is stored for three to five years and then treated, filtered, and dehydrated, with all impurities removed. In its final form, urushi lacquer is completely transparent, with a viscosity close to that of pure honey. Raw lacquer can also be tinted by the addition of small amounts of iron oxides, giving it a red or black hue depending on the oxide.



STARS AND SUCH

Crafting each dial by hand in this 10-watch series, Kosetsu worked using fragments of natural mother-of-pearl, hand-cut or crushed, sorted out, and then individually applied onto a layer of urushi. Here, we've come to the technique called raden, where *ra* refers to shell and *den*, inlaid. Raden is often combined with maki-e in traditional Japanese lacquer painting to create a richer, more nuanced artwork, which Kosetsu has rendered unique for each dial. After preparing the shell fragments, shaping them to the preferred thickness, he begins to work on the dial plate, setting it with a charcoal mixture so that the first layer of urushi will adhere properly. Next, he picks up one tiny piece of shell and places it onto the lacquer, one after another, until he has formed a complete picture — one made up of thousands of shimmering shell fragments, each dancing with the light while reflecting a dazzling purplish-blue brilliance.

Indeed, Kosetsu's artistry had already appeared in an earlier Sartory Billard timepiece, the SB07 "Maki-e," produced in collaboration with the American watch retailer Martin Pulli. Kosetsu's beautiful artworks have also found their way to a number of luxury fountain pens. But in the Sartory Billard Revolution SB05 "Uchū," Kosetsu's art is only one part of the entire picture. Combined with a circlet of sparkling blue aventurine, the incandescent blend of maki-e and raden gains a fabulous cosmic beauty, as if it were a mystical time portal suspended in the midst of an infinite universe. Framing Kosetsu's artwork with blue aventurine glass also creates a lovely depth of field, enriching the dial with an almost three-dimensional quality.



It also helps that the SB05 utilizes a multipart dial construction, where the maki-e disk is slightly recessed against the aventurine chapter ring. Both components are further distinguished with the help of metal rings. Sitting just microns above is a transparent sapphire crystal plate on which the hour markers and minuterie are pad printed in an elegantly contrasting warm copper tone for the sake of legibility as much as aesthetics, given how wonderfully it complements the rose-gold-coated hands which, incidentally, are two-part hands. Look at it up close and you will immediately discern the striking juxtaposition between the high-polished red gold and the frosted steel base. Notice as well the incredible volumes of those hands, which have been expertly faceted and are an absolute sensation to behold.

MODERNITY MEETS MÉTIERS D'ART

Sartory Billard × Revolution SB05 "Uchu" reflects our vision of what a modern timepiece infused with métiers d'art should look like. While the craft is ancient and completely done by hand, the vibe and product design cannot be more contemporary. Full of intricate details to admire, from the incandescence of the raden and maki-e to the stealthy layering of aventurine, metal rings and sapphire crystal, this timepiece was conceived to bring delight to watch connoisseurs of all levels.

And we haven't even gotten around to describing how incredibly wearable this watch is, at 38.5mm diameter and a sleek 8.5mm in thickness, sitting elegantly on the wrist at 45.5mm lug-to-lug — all crafted in extra-light titanium. Titanium! Why? Because we can and because Sartory Billard enables us to, with its unparalleled commitment to full bespoke artistry.

Offering a fully polished concave bezel, the watch continues with satin-brushed lugs and case middle, converging into polished bevels. Likewise the crown is satin brushed with polished accents highlighting the Sartory Billard emblem. Through the sapphire crystal caseback, you will enjoy a full view of the manually wound La Joux-Perret caliber 7380 movement packed with a staggering 90 hours of power reserve, making it one of the best-performing industrial movements on the market.

Delivered on a finely crafted electric blue leather strap with copper tone stitching, the Sartory Billard × Revolution SB05 "Uchu" sees the beauty of traditional métiers d'art through a modern lens. And its mesmerizing dial, immortalized by one of the world's greatest living artisans, shall undoubtedly remain cherished for generations to come.



SARTORY BILLARD × REVOLUTION SB05 « UCHU »

Movement Manual winding La Joux-Perret caliber 7380; 90-hour power reserve

Functions Hours, minutes and small seconds

Case 38.5mm × 8.5mm (45.5mm lug-to-lug); titanium

Dial Maki-e and raden central section and subdial, with aventurine chapter ring; pad-printed copper-toned hour markers

Strap Electric blue leather; titanium pin buckle

Water resistance 5 ATM

Price EUR 15,800 (excluding tax)

Availability Limited edition of 10 pieces

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