

An independent watchmaker that is simultaneously traditional and contemporary, AKRIVIA is inspired - in style, craft and technique - by the splendid history of watchmaking in Geneva. The workshop's origins, on the other hand, are distinctly modern: AKRIVIA was established by an exile who fled his hometown to escape war, finding sanctuary in Switzerland - and his calling as a watchmaker.

The Atelier AKRIVIA was founded in 2012 by Rexhep Rexhepi, who started as an apprentice at Patek Philippe aged 15, just three years after arriving from Kosovo, having fled the war there. Rexhep's time at Geneva's grandest watch brand has shaped his vision for AKRIVIA, which is essentially a disciplined reliance on the artisanal methods widely practised by watchmakers before the Quartz Crisis of the 1970s.

A particular specialty of AKRIVIA is *finissage*, or movement finishing - perhaps the singular element that elevates watchmaking from mechanical engineering to art. At the Atelier AKRIVIA, this is done almost entirely by hand, resulting in movements with an ethereal, metallic glow widely acclaimed as amongst the best in the industry. A detail especially revered by collectors are the edges of movement bridges that have been filed, chamfered, and polished by hand to create a lustrous, mirrored bevel known as *anglage*.



image by @swisswatches

Another example of AKRIVIA's artisanal techniques can instead be found on the front of its watches, in the hammered dials that sparkle in the light. Resembling a granular surface at a distance, the finish is actually composed of hundreds of tiny divots created by striking the dial with a miniature hammer, repeatedly and carefully until a consistent texture is achieved.



*Hand hammered AK06 base plate - image by @swisswatches*

AKRIVIA's old-fashioned approach to horology is unquestionably a reason behind its swift ascent, illustrated by the Chronomètre Contemporain taking the Men's Watch Prize at the 2018 Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève (GPHG), an annual award judged by luminaries of the

watch industry. The critical acclaim of AKRIVIA's work transformed into a more tangible distinction a year later when the one-off Chronomètre Contemporain made for charity auction Only Watch sold for 360,000 Swiss francs, setting a record for a young watchmaker.



*Chronomètre Contemporain RRCC01 ONLY WATCH image by @swisswatches*

But success has had no impact on Rexhep's vision. His ambition, put simply, is to steadily expand AKRIVIA's repertoire of craftsmanship such that it encompasses every step of creating a timepiece, ensuring his lofty standards for quality are exceeded in every single component of a watch, no matter how miniscule.

And so in 2019 Rexhep recruited the octogenarian Jean-Pierre Hagmann, who came out of retirement to join AKRIVIA, recognising a kindred spirit in Rexhep. A case maker whose minute-repeating watch cases have acquired a near-mythical status amongst collectors, Jean-Pierre is a perfect complement to AKRIVIA's relentless pursuit of classical watchmaking.