Seneca II Pièce Unique: The Philosophy of Good

The Konstantin Chaykin Manufacture presents Seneca II, a unique Wristmon created especially for the Watches for ELA 2026 charity auction held by Christie's.

For Konstantin Chaykin, haute horlogerie has long meant more than creating complicated watch movements. History, literature, philosophy and painting become sources of creative ideas, reinterpreted through the mechanics and design of his watches. One such project consists of two independent creations dedicated to Lucius Annaeus Seneca the Younger. In 2024, Chaykin presented Seneca Pièce Unique; ***on November 9, 2026, Seneca II Pièce Unique will make its debut at Christie's in Geneva.***

Historical Parallels

Lucius Annaeus Seneca the Younger was one of the most significant figures of Ancient Rome – a Stoic philosopher, tutor to Emperor Nero, statesman and dramatist. At the heart of Stoicism lies the belief that virtue is the highest good, independent of external circumstances. Seneca urged people to preserve wisdom and moral fortitude in the face of life's trials, seeing the true value of an action not in its reward, but in the act of doing good itself.

Konstantin Chaykin's encounter with Seneca's legacy revealed unexpected parallels with the art of watchmaking. In the satire *Apocolocyntosis (The Pumpkinification of the Divine Claudius)*, he came across an ironic observation on the accuracy of ancient timepieces: "What time it was I cannot tell you exactly: it is easier to reconcile philosophers than clocks." Equally curious was the title itself, which inevitably calls to mind Pumpkin Head – one of Chaykin's earliest artistic reinterpretations of the Joker, introduced in 2017. The literary parallels do not end there: shortly before the premiere of Seneca Pièce Unique, the caseback of the ultra-complicated Stargazer bore the maxim attributed to the Roman thinker, *Per aspera ad astra* – "Through hardships to the stars."

Another source of inspiration was the history of the Roman calendar, originally based on lunar cycles. Julius Caesar's reform, which came into force in 45 BC, established the transition to the solar Julian calendar used by Seneca's contemporaries. In the watches dedicated to the philosopher, this theme is reflected in the combination of a calendar date display and a moon-phase indication.

Seneca Pièce Unique: The Mask of Time

In 2024, Konstantin Chaykin created Seneca Pièce Unique for the Watches for ELA charity auction, combining Seneca's philosophical legacy with the traditions of ancient Roman theatre. Inspired by stage masks, the watchmaker gave the gold-toned dial expressive human features: the "eyes" indicate the hours and minutes, while the broad smile displays the phases of the Moon. Seneca Pièce Unique became the first Wristmon with a date display, and its calendar ring received an unusual treatment: Latin letters were "woven" into the numerals to form the philosopher's maxim *Recte facti fecisse merces est* – "The reward for a good deed is to have done it."

Seneca II Pièce Unique: A New Interpretation

Konstantin Chaykin has created Seneca II especially for Christie's *Rare Watches Including Watches for ELA* auction, to be held in Geneva on November 9, 2026. A work in its own right, it shares the underlying concept of the 2024 timepiece while offering a distinct artistic interpretation and technical execution. The warm gold tones of the earlier piece give way to a restrained silver-gray palette. The partially skeletonized dial reveals selected components of the mechanism, while the most vivid accents are the synthetic rubies at the tips of the hands in the eye displays. The lower section of the dial is decorated with wave-pattern relief guilloché reminiscent of a stylized sage's beard. Rhodium and dark ruthenium coatings, combined with sandblasting and brushing, create a contrast of textures that emphasizes the complex geometry of the components.

The date display once again plays a key role in both the design and mechanical architecture of the new watch. For its inscription, Chaykin turned to Seneca's treatise *On Benefits*, choosing the words *Non fructum beneficiorum sequi* – "To seek no reward for good deeds." This sentiment echoes the maxim *Recte facti fecisse merces est* – "The reward for a good deed is to have done it" – from Seneca's 81st letter to Lucilius, which appeared on the 2024 watch. Both sayings express the belief that virtue has intrinsic moral value and requires no reward. Latin letters are "woven" into the markings of the date ring, gradually appearing in the aperture between the Wristmon's eyes. A convex 4 mm sapphire magnifying lens with an anti-reflective coating makes the lettering clearly legible. The watch features a 40 mm titanium case paired with a black leather strap.

At the heart of the watch is the automatic K.18-18.6 caliber, based on the Swiss-made La Joux-Perret G200 and exclusively modified for the Konstantin Chaykin Manufacture. The Joker indication module was designed and manufactured in-house. The caliber offers a 68-hour power reserve.

For a Good Cause

Charity auctions have long been an important part of Konstantin Chaykin's creative career. This began in 2017, when he became the first Russian independent watchmaker to take part in Only Watch, the international charity auction supporting research into Duchenne muscular dystrophy. Since then, watches created specifically for such initiatives have repeatedly provided an opportunity for new technical experiments and artistic exploration. In 2019, Joker Selfie sold at Only Watch for CHF 70,000. Conceived as the world's first mechanical self-portrait watch, it was even fitted with a miniature watchmaker's loupe. Another major achievement was the Martian Tourbillon, which combined an anthropomorphic display with the world's first tourbillon whose cage completes one revolution in a single Martian minute – approximately 61.65 Earth seconds. At Only Watch 2021, it sold for CHF 290,000.

The Manufacture's charitable activity in this field subsequently expanded beyond Only Watch, encompassing projects both internationally and in Russia. In 2024, Joker Encore Charity Piece Unique, featuring a hand-hammered dial executed personally by Konstantin Chaykin for the Moscow auction of the Encore Charity foundation, was acquired for approximately CHF 400,000. The proceeds were intended to support people with serious illnesses, medical institutions and scientific research. That same year, Joker Sandmann, inspired by the works of E. T. A. Hoffmann, sold at Only Watch for CHF 110,000. In 2025, Venus joined the list of such projects – an artistic reinterpretation of Sandro Botticelli's celebrated painting *The Birth of Venus*.

In November, a prototype of the model became one of the headline lots at a Moscow auction organized by the Friends Foundation, which supports the development of nonprofit organizations. Proceeds from the sale were directed toward the foundation's educational programs, including the training of specialists in breast cancer prevention. In December, the Venus prototype sold at Ineichen in Zurich for CHF 40,000, while Chaykin's original watercolor sketch brought an additional CHF 4,200. The proceeds went to the Italian organization LILT Milano as part of the Nastro Rosa campaign promoting early detection of the disease.

Beyond Measurement

Philosophical themes have repeatedly shaped the conception of Konstantin Chaykin's watches. In Carpe Diem, the fleeting nature of life is evoked by the allegorical figure of Chronos and an "hourglass" minute indicator developed by the watchmaker. In Genius Temporis, the wearer controls the indication, switching the single hand between the hour and minute scales.

The value of the present occupied a special place in Seneca's thinking. In his treatise *On the Shortness of Life*, he warned against the habit of postponing life until the future: while waiting for tomorrow, a person imperceptibly loses the only thing truly at their disposal – the present day. Seneca contrasted this with the ideal of the wise man, capable of living each day as a complete life and finding the fullness of meaning in the present. By turning to the legacy of the great Stoic philosopher, Chaykin explores not so much the nature of time itself as the way humans relate to it.

Seneca II Pièce Unique

Unique Piece

Technical Specifications

Caliber	K.18-18.6, automatic winding, based on Swiss-made La Joux-Perret G200, modified for the Konstantin Chaykin Manufacture, with a proprietary 73-part Joker indication module. Diameter 33.4 mm, thickness 7.9 mm. Swiss lever escapement, balance frequency 28,800 vibrations per hour, 34 jewels, 68-hour power reserve, accuracy −10/+10 seconds per day.
Functions	Proprietary anthropomorphic hours-and-minutes indication, date display, moon-phase display.
Case	Titanium, 44 parts. Diameter 40 mm, thickness 13.5 mm. Sapphire crystal with anti-reflective coating, diameter 33 mm; sapphire caseback crystal with anti-reflective coating, diameter 25.5 mm; water resistance 3 ATM.
Dial	Partially skeletonized. Finishing: sandblasting, brushing, wave-pattern relief guilloché. Coatings: rhodium and dark ruthenium. Synthetic rubies in the eye displays. 4 mm sapphire magnifying lens for the date display with anti-reflective coating. The Latin maxim is inscribed on the date ring.
Strap	Exclusive high-grade leather strap with a titanium buckle made by the Konstantin Chaykin Manufacture.