Van Cleef & Arpels

« de Mains en mains »

November 21 to 28, 2026



PRESS KIT

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Since 2021, “de Mains en mains” has promoted jewelry professions among the general public, young people and adults considering a career change. The initiative includes guidance for middle-school students throughout the school year, as well as an event held annually at the InterContinental Lyon – Hotel Dieu, in the heart of a region known for a strong culture of craftsmanship. In 2026, Van Cleef & Arpels will host an original program from November 21 to 28 that, for the first time ever, focuses on a specific theme.

Since its founding in 1906, Van Cleef & Arpels has attached particular importance to gems. Gemologists’ trained eyes seek out stones featuring a pure essence, vivid colors and well-proportioned cuts, among other aesthetic qualities. Going beyond objective criteria, the Maison has remained attentive to each gemstone’s character. Rigor and precision at the service of emotion perpetuate the Maison’s taste and tradition of excellence.



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"Over the past five years, 'de Mains en mains' has become a major annual event. Since 2021, the program has helped promote jewelry professions among middle-school students throughout the school year, and during a week-long event in Lyon open to the public. Professional callings have been born thanks to this initiative, a gratifying achievement that we owe to the support of the French Ministry of Education and our partners, as well as to the commitment of the Maison's craftsmen and collaborators. We are delighted to dedicate this 2026 edition of 'de Mains en mains' to gemstones, treasures of the natural world that have fascinated Van Cleef & Arpels since its founding in 1906 at Place Vendôme in Paris, and which have helped forge its style. To highlight stones upon their mounts of precious metal—the very definition of jewelry art—our Maison has persistently placed them at the center of its creative tradition. We are thus paying tribute to all the hands that contribute to exalting gemstones, from Novembr 21 to 28, at the InterContinental Lyon – Hotel Dieu.

Van Cleef & Arpels' taste in stones was developed over 120 years of exploration, meticulous observation, training of the eye and steadfast pursuit of perfection. Over the decades, the Maison has ceaselessly reveled in highlighting their beauty and exalting their colors, brilliance, and elegant forms. Diverse crafts have come together to showcase them, from sketching to mock up, and from jewelry-making to gem-setting and polishing. Intensity, vivacity, harmony, balance: the union of gemstones and savoir-faire must be absolute. This constant search, at once aesthetic and technical, is most eloquently illustrated in the Mystery Set technique. Patented by the Maison in 1933, this method makes the metal invisible to better highlight the precious stones. Over the ensuing decades, the technique has been further enhanced and passed down through successive generations of craftsmen.

Today, this sensitivity to stones lives on thanks to the Stone Department and our artisans. As of the early 2000s, their enduring passion led to the creation of specific High Jewelry collections dedicated to gemstones, including Legend of diamonds – 25 Mystery Set Jewels *(2022). We are pleased to present the history of this collection at this event.*

Savoir-Faire Pathway, round tables focused on career guidance and professional reorientation, exhibitions, talks and courses led by L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts: 'de Mains en mains' 2026 is an opportunity to highlight this precious heritage and its current-day manifestations. More broadly, we aim to offer the general public insight into the fundamental role of stones in the jewelry arts and perhaps spark the curiosity of those who will exalt them tomorrow."

Catherine Renier, President and CEO of Van Cleef & Arpels



1. *“de Mains en mains” 2026*

In the 16th century, gemstones were the distinguishing factor between *joaillerie* (jewelry art)—intended to exalt stones—and *bijouterie* (jewelry craft)—focused on metalwork. As a High Jewelry Maison, Van Cleef & Arpels gives gemstones pride of place in its creative tradition. “de Mains en mains” 2026 offers an opportunity to showcase the professions that bring stones to dazzling life.

Transmission

A value dear to the Maison, transmission is at the core of the event. Craftsmen describe their daily work during the Savoir-Faire Pathway. Discoveries abound along an itinerary of six spaces, each devoted to a specific profession—designer, gouache artist, 3D designer, polisher, stone expert, jeweler and gem setter. To round out the experience, an orientation table presents the various stages in the creative process, along with a finished piece.

Student Pathway
Eighth-grade students from partner schools assume the role of apprentices at the workbench. They take guidance from craftsmen to create a solitaire—a ring adorned with a center stone—carrying out every step from stone selection to sketching, and from metalwork to polishing.

General Public Pathway
Van Cleef & Arpels experts take center stage at savoir-faire demonstrations to present the Mystery Set technique. This signature gem-setting, patented by the Maison in 1933, has continued to evolve ever since, regularly incorporating new innovations. "Traditional," "Vitrail" or "Navette," the Mystery Set technique pursues an unvarying goal: make the metal invisible to better highlight the gemstones.



“We saw talents blossom.”

Teacher at Collège George Onslow, Lezoux, 2025.





Discovery

Visitors delve into the Maison's palette of materials and colors with the *Stone Expertise by Van Cleef & Arpels* exhibition. They explore a stone expert's "mental library," the cerebral catalogue of gems developed through years of observation. The exhibition features rough and cut stones, pieces from the Maison's patrimonial Collection and a selection of contemporary creations.

Stone Expertise by Van Cleef & Arpels also looks back on the origin of the *Legend of diamonds* High Jewelry collection (2022). It forms part of a tradition born in the early 2000s, as the Maison set out to imagine ensembles specifically designed to celebrate gemstones.

The pieces making up the *Legend of diamonds* collection are adorned with diamonds cut from an exceptional 910-carat rough stone: the Lesotho Legend. Visitors can contemplate replicas of the original rough diamond and the stones born from it, alongside sketches and models.

For those interested in discovering more about the history of this diamond and collection, L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts offers a two-hour long class during the event titled *The Lesotho Legend: From a Rough Diamond to a High Jewelry Collection*.

Learning

The Maison's Human Resources teams present round tables co-moderated by representatives of training centers and professional organizations (France Travail, Transition Pro, *etc.*). These talks offer insight into orientation programs for young people and adults considering a career change. Meanwhile, Van Cleef & Arpels craftsmen and experts share their vision of the profession through a series of talks.

Additionally, a series of videos and podcasts immerses audiences in the workshops. The videos reveal the particularities of each field of work, while the podcasts feature various Maison professionals. As they share their passions and pathways, they bring to light various career possibilities in the world of jewelry.





L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts

Throughout its history, the Maison has continuously expressed its attachment to the values of creation, transmission and education. Since 2012, L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts aims to introduce jewelry culture to the largest possible audience through various activities, including courses and workshops for adults and children, exhibitions, talks, books and podcasts. Activities at L'ÉCOLE cover three main areas: the history of jewelry, the world of gemstones and savoir-faire.

For the 2026 edition of de "Mains en mains," L'ÉCOLE is hosting, throughout the week, courses, creative workshops for young people, talks and meetings with experts.

L'Escarboucle, the bookshop of L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts, is also present throughout the event.

Finally, the exhibition *The Fabulous Destiny of Tavernier's Diamonds* showcases replicas of 20 extraordinary gems brought from India in 1668 by the merchant Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1605-1689) and sold to Louis XIV (1638-1715). These replicas are the result of collaborative research by the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle de Paris, a master lapidary and L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts. They shed light on historic cuts and imagine the enchantment these brilliant diamonds must have brought to the Sun King.

Exhibition open to visitors with the "de Mains en mains" entrance ticket.



New courses for the 2026 edition

Course cycle, "Art & Science: The Universe of Gemstones"

Five 1.5-hour sessions

Between science, history and symbolism, gemstones present many facets. This series of five classes invites you to discover the composition and creation of gems. Handle unique, authentic specimens to learn how to recognize their properties and distinctive features. Each session is dedicated to one gem: the diamond, the emerald, the sapphire, the ruby and the pearl. The classes weave together science, culture and history, offering an exploration of gemstones in all their dimensions.

Course cycle, "Paris 1925: Following the Trail of Art Deco Jewelry"

Three 1.5-hour sessions

A century ago, at the intersection of social, cultural and artistic movements, Art Deco jewelry was born. Come stroll through the Pavilions of Jewelry, Elegance and Pearls and Precious Stones at the 1925 International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts. Discover the key role of fine jewelers, independent creators and designers in the emergence of this contemporary style. In this series of three classes, you will discover the various facets of the Art Deco aesthetic, all while getting a closer look at pieces from the Cabinet of L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts and extraordinary gouaché illustrations.

Course, "The Gouaché in High Jewelry 3 – Materials"

3 hours

Before taking shape in the hands of artisans, every jewelry creation begins with lines and colors on paper. The gouaché technique consists of representing the three-dimensional volumes of a piece of jewelry on a flat drawing. In this third course devoted to gouaché, take a paintbrush and let yourself be guided as you explore how to translate light, texture and contrasts with gouachés that bring a jewel to life. Use your imagination as you create the jewelry motif of an Art Deco-inspired brooch, incorporating a jade ring and a white pearl, among other elements in onyx and diamonds. Throughout the course, which combines explanations with hands-on exercises, the jewel takes shape under your brush: reflections emerge, textures appear and volumes are revealed. After the class, bring your gouaché painting home with you.

Course, "The Lapidary Arts 2 – Initiation: Cutting a Colored Stone"

4 hours

In this second course devoted to the lapidary arts, learn the main principles of stone cutting and the importance of proportions. Installed at your work bench, follow the guidance of two lecturers step by step as you cut your own stone, create the facets and polish them with a facet cutter. After the class, bring your faceted stone home with you.

Full programming coming soon at:
www.lecolevancleefarpels.com

Since 2021, “de Mains en mains” has seen:

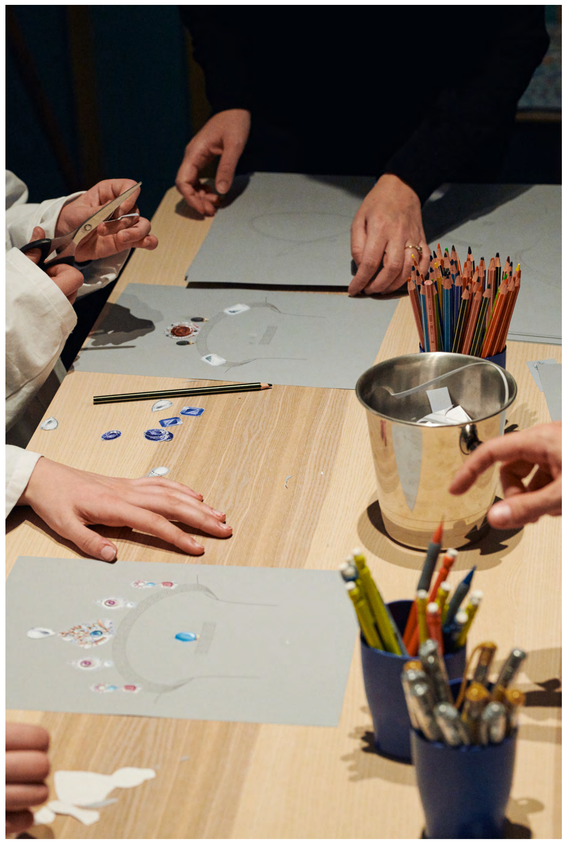
More than 36,000 visitors
More than 1,600 students supported
13 partner schools
310 engaged collaborators





2. *About “de Mains en mains”*

For centuries, France’s jewelry-making tradition has shone throughout the world. Although the industry is known to be an important source of job creation, its various types of expertise remain little-known. Van Cleef & Arpels thus created “de Mains en mains” in 2021, with a view to raising awareness of jewelry professions among the general public, young people and adults considering a career change.



Supporting middle-school students

“de Mains en mains” came into being in a context of uncertainty among young people regarding their career plans and prospects. In partnership with the French Ministry of Education, the Maison seeks to reach out to students, helping them discover the jewelry sector and the many professional opportunities it offers. Through these actions, Van Cleef & Arpels aims to open the doors to the world of jewelry for all.

In-class presentations by experts

As a long-term educational guidance program, “de Mains en mains” extends over the academic year in partner schools selected by the Lyon Board of Education. Activities begin in October with visits by Van Cleef & Arpels experts. Their presentations, co-designed with teachers, resonate with various subjects included in the middle school curriculum. Students thus enjoy a glimpse of the universe they will discover upon exploring the Pathway to Savoir-Faire in November at the InterContinental Lyon – Hotel Dieu.

Public speaking workshops

Starting in March, exercises led by the association L’Atelier de la Langue Française help students practice their oratory skills. These sessions, culminating in an oral presentation by students in the format of their choice, are an opportunity to take stock of the year’s experiences.

Following several participatory exercises and rehearsals, students take the floor at the end of the school year, addressing an audience made up of family members, teachers and representatives of the Lyon Board of Education and Van Cleef & Arpels teams.

“Our students came face to face with extraordinary things that they would never have experienced otherwise.”

Principal, Collège George Onslow, Lezoux, 2025.





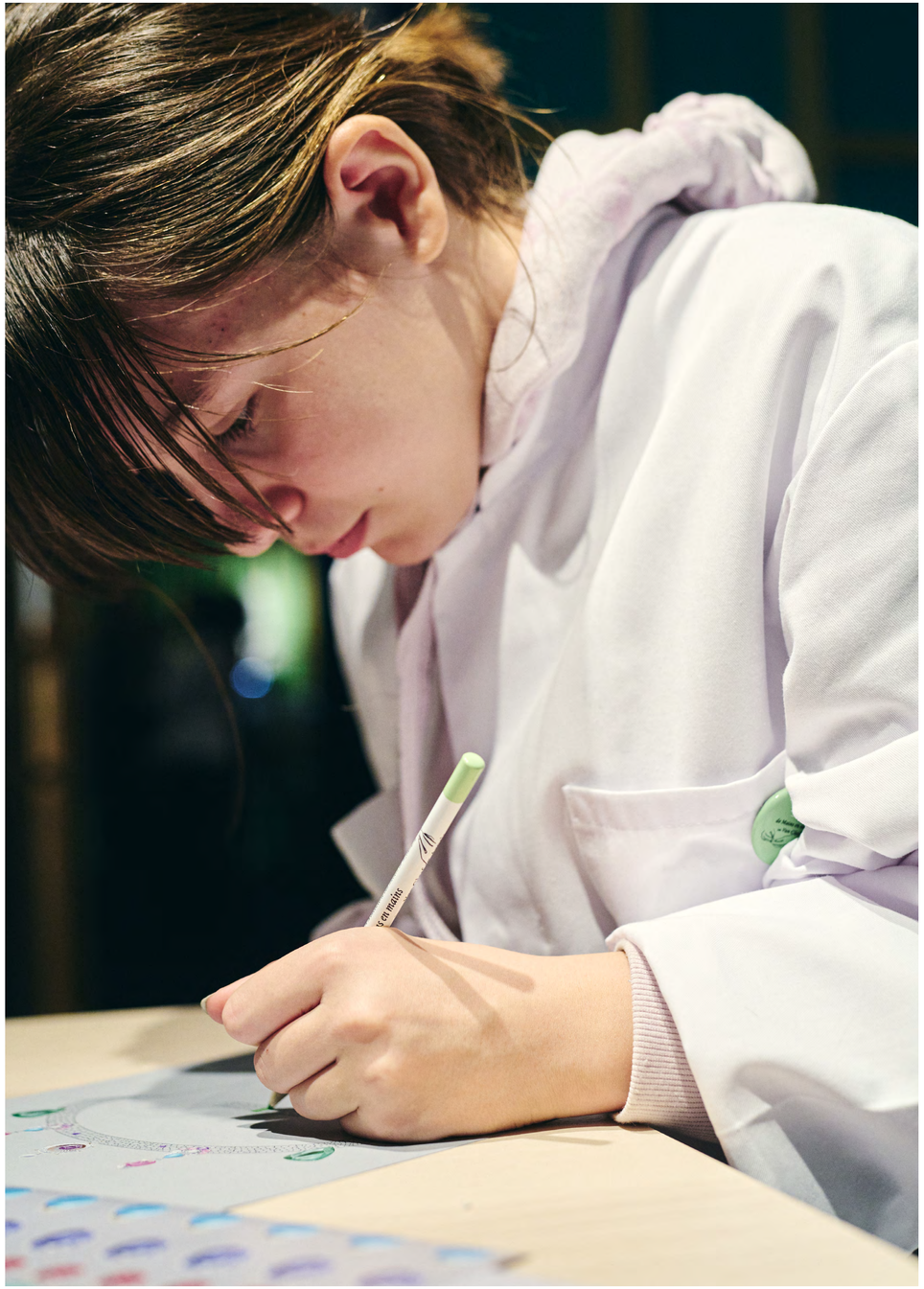
A yearly event

Every year, “de Mains en mains” welcomes the public to the InterContinental Lyon – Hotel Dieu. A former hospital built in the 18th century and located near the Lyon workshops, the venue combines historical authenticity and easy access by public transportation. This long-term partnership is an affirmation of shared values.

A dedicated website

A brand-new version of the “de Mains en mains” website is available as of this year. Resources include 12 detailed job profiles explaining the contribution of each craft to the creative process, in-depth information on vocational training and reskilling opportunities, downloadable teaching aids to ensure optimal guidance for students and adults embarking on a career change and more. Finally, visitors can delve deeper by visiting a page dedicated to past and future “de Mains en mains” events and listening to program-specific podcasts.

www.demainsenmains.vancleefarpels.com



3. *Practical information*

From November 21 to 28, 2026, at the InterContinental Lyon – Hotel Dieu. Free entry upon registration. Ticket office opens October 12, 2026.

Practical information is available at
www.demainsenmains.vancleefarpels.com

L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts' classes and talks are offered at the full rate for the general public, exclusively on weekends. Students, high schoolers and job seekers have a reduced rate for access, upon presentation of a document proving their status.

Find the complete program at
www.lecolevancleefarpels.com

4. *Committed partners*

Since the launch of “de Mains en mains” in 2021, Van Cleef & Arpels has partnered with local institutions and associations to reach an ever-wider audience.

Over the years, enthusiasm around the event has made it possible to bring together a committed group of partners eager to promote access to jewelry professions for all.

Van Cleef & Arpels

Detailed information on the "de Mains en mains" event can be found at the following address:
www.demainsenmains.vancleefarpels.com

#VCAdeMainsenmains #VCAsavoirfaire #vancleefarpels
@vancleefarpels

Contact: demainsenmains@vancleefarpels.com

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