The Frick Collection: Detail Report

Pocket Watch with Tourbillon

Abraham-Louis Breguet (Swiss, 1747–1823)

Date ca. 1820

Medium Gold, gilt brass, and steel

Dimensions 3 1/8 x 2 5/16 x 2 5/8 in. (8 x 5.9 x 6.7 cm)

Credit Line Bequest of Winthrop Kellogg Edey, 1999

Accession Number 1999.6.28

Currently On View
Second Floor, Room 23, Clocks and Watches Room

Commentary Mechanical watches did not generally keep time as well as clocks because they were subject to constant movement, and unless their balance was perfectly poised, their performance varied when they were held in different positions. To eliminate this problem, Abraham-Louis Breguet invented the tourbillon (literally, whirlwind), a device that mounted the escapement and balance on a small carriage that averaged out the errors by rotating at regular intervals. Source: Vignon, Charlotte. The Frick Collection Decorative Arts Handbook. New York: The Frick Collection/Scala, 2015.