

Media Information

June 28, 2023

"Dynamism within a form": Internationally renowned artist Julie Mehretu will create the 20th BMW Art Car.

Traditional link between racing and art continues with the start of the BMW M Hybrid V8 at the 24 Hour race of Le Mans in 2024.

Munich/New York. BMW announced a collaboration today at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City with internationally renowned New York-based artist Julie Mehretu to create the 20th BMW Art Car. Mehretu was unanimously chosen by an international jury of museum directors and curators, and will be given total creative freedom to design the next instalment in BMW's legendary collection of "rolling sculptures". BMW will enter Mehretu's BMW M Hybrid V8 Art Car in the 24 Hour race of Le Mans in June 2024. This continues an almost 50-year tradition that has delighted not only motorsport enthusiasts but anyone into design or the arts, technology and mobility. Since 1975, artists such as Alexander Calder, Frank Stella, Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, Jenny Holzer, Jeff Koons, Cao Fei, and John Baldessari have created racing cars for BMW.

"I've loved cars for most of my life, as toys, as objects, as possibilities. It is from that space that I'm really excited to be working on the next BMW Art Car more than anything," stated Julie Mehretu. "The thrill of the speed, the 24 Hour race of Le Mans and what is possible to invent in hybrid and fully electric vehicles as future modes of play and pushing ahead into new terrains of transportation and motorsports."

"The BMW Art Car Collection is a central element of our global cultural commitment, which has been in place for more than 50 years," said Ilka Horstmeier, Member of the Board of Management of BMW AG, Human Resources and Real Estate, at the presentation in New York. "The combination of technology and art, of design and motorsport sparks a timeless fascination. I have admired Julie Mehretu's work for many years. I am particularly pleased that our cooperation will have a lasting cultural impact beyond the vehicle she has designed, especially in Africa."

An artistic concept beyond the car: Translocal Media Workshop Series in 2025

The collaboration between BMW and Julie Mehretu will not only leave its mark on the Le Mans racetrack.

There are far and few spaces on the continent of Africa where artists can convene, exchange, and experiment in ways that foster collaboration across local contexts.

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Julie Mehretu and Mehret Mandefro, Emmy-nominated producer, writer and co-founder of the Realness Institute which aims to strengthen the media ecosystem across Africa, will host a series of gatherings in eight African cities over the course of nine months to open up space for artists to meet, exchange, and collaborate in translocal ways. These workshops have the sole intention of opening up a forum for the artists to consider new pathways to implementing just civic futures in their respective local communities and harness the power of the translocal collective.

The methodology of these workshops is based on the Exodus Media Workshop (EMW) which is an arts education laboratory initiated by Denniston Hill that focuses on the inter-dependent inventions of image making and representation in the media. The workshop begins from the shared intention that we must disentangle self-being from its mediated depiction, and that our identities can be reclaimed and reshaped by our own standards.

The outcome and results of the workshops will be presented together with the 20th BMW Art Car at the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa in Cape Town in 2025.

The artist.

Julie Mehretu was born in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, in 1970. Together with her family she moved to the USA at the age of seven. She received her B.A. from Kalamazoo College, Michigan, graduated from The Rhode Island School of Design with a Masters of Fine Arts degree in 1997, and also spent a year studying at Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar Senegal. In exploring palimpsests of history, from geological time to a modern-day phenomenology of the social, her paintings, prints and drawings engage the viewer in a dynamic visual articulation of contemporary experience, a depiction of social behavior and the psychogeography of space.

Mehretu has been running a studio in New York since 1999. She has received numerous awards for her work, including the MacArthur Award and the US Department of State Medal of Arts Award. A representative survey of her work has been exhibited at LACMA (Los Angeles), the High Museum (Atlanta), the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), and the Walker Museum of Art (Minneapolis) from 2019 to 2023. In 2021, Julie Mehretu became a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Academy of Design.

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Julie Mehretu is represented globally by Marian Goodman Gallery, and also exhibits with White Cube, London, and Carlier Gebauer, Berlin.

Statements of the jury. Unanimous nomination.

Julie Mehretu was unanimously chosen to design the 20th BMW Art Car in 2018 by an international jury from the art world with an outstanding reputation based on their experience and expertise in leading positions at major museums and galleries. It is composed of the following personalities:

- Cecilia Alemani, Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director and Chief Curator, High Line Art, New York
- Richard Armstrong, Director, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation, New York
- Anton Belov, Director, Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow
- Anita Dube, artist and curator Kochi-Muziris-Biennale 2018
- Yilmaz Dziewior, Director, Museum Ludwig, Cologne
- Okwui Enwezor (1963 – 2019), former Director, Haus der Kunst, Munich
- Massimiliano Gioni, Edlis Neeson Artistic Director, New Museum, New York
- Madeleine Grynsztejn, Pritzker Director, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago
- Koyo Kouoh, Executive Director and Chief Curator, Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town
- Matthias Mühling, Director, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau, Munich
- Hans-Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director, Serpentine Galleries, London
- Hervé Poulain, Initiator BMW Art Car Collection and CEO Artcurial
- Stephanie Rosenthal, Director, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi

Madeleine Grynsztejn, Pritzker Director, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago:
"Julie Mehretu is the perfect artist for this early 21st century. To merge her work with the shape and form of a speeding vehicle is really an alignment of perfection. For years, Julie has painted speed and for a long time worked very successfully at scale. This means to me that she will be able to create a form that you can see from a distance because with many of her large commissions, you need to back up to really enjoy them. She has an understanding of space and speed that is a perfect partner to the BMW Art Car."

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Koyo Kouoh, Executive Director and Chief Curator, Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town:
"I think that Julie Mehretu's practice combines a sprawling visuality with a political background. She will be the perfect artist to really moderate this tension about race, technology, car, velocity and bring it into a form that is legible for the wider public."

Okwui Enwezor (1963 - 2019), former Director, Haus der Kunst, Munich:
"Julie Mehretu's work incapsulates different questions of movement. She expresses **dynamism within a form**. It is a very clear and sound understanding of how the object acts in space. And I think this really makes it a very exciting proposition to have an artist of her calibre who has the long-standing experience to take on this project."

Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director, Serpentine Galleries, London:
"Julie Mehretu creates paintings which very often go beyond the canvas. Her practice is very interdisciplinary and of course, that's exactly what will happen with the BMW Art Car. The artists do not just develop ideas alone in their studio, but in dialogue with many people in the company and particularly with the engineers, the inventors and the designers."

Cecilia Alemani, Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director and Chief Curator, High Line Art, New York:
"I think Julie is a wonderful artist who has been able to bring the three-dimensionality of our reality into the two-dimensionality of paintings and flat surfaces. She is someone that has been looking at our cities, the speed of our culture, vectors and velocity and these are all themes that resonate with the BMW Art Car. Her project for the BMW Art Car will be compelling and bring together all these aspects into this wonderful platform."

Stephanie Rosenthal, Director, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi:
"Julie Mehretu is mainly known for large-scale two-dimensional works which are based on speed, space, creating and imagining space. And so now working with the BMW Art Car really will extend, I think, her experience of working with a three-dimensional object and kind of implementing her idea of space, and also probably become a form of futurist architecture exploring technology. And, therefore, I think she's a brilliant pick."

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The BMW M Hybrid V8.

The canvas for the 20th BMW Art Car is the BMW M Hybrid V8. BMW M GmbH's new competition car in endurance racing features a hybrid drive system with around 640 hp, whose 4.0-liter V8 engine is supported by an electric motor (max speed: up to 345 kph/215 mph, depending on track layout). This makes the prototype race car, which weighs just 1,030 kilograms, the poster child for typical M performance and the fascination with electrified drives.

The BMW M Hybrid V8 is currently competing successfully in the GTP (Grand Touring Prototype) class of the North American IMSA endurance racing series. BMW M Motorsport will also return to the FIA World Endurance Championship in the 2024 season. In the races for the official FIA World Endurance Championship, the BMW M Hybrid V8 will face top-class competition in the Hypercars category. This means that the BMW M Hybrid V8 will also be competing in the 24 Hours of Le Mans – the first BMW M Motorsport prototype since the BMW V12 LMR won the classic in 1999.

The BMW Art Car Collection.

Since 1975, renowned artists from all over the world have been designing BMW Art Cars. The initiative came from French racing driver and art lover Hervé Poulain, who, in collaboration with then Head of BMW Motorsport Jochen Neerpasch, asked his artist friend Alexander Calder to paint an automobile. The result was a BMW 3.0 CSL that competed in the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1975, where it became a crowd favorite. This was the birth of the BMW Art Car Collection.

In the years that followed, renowned artists such as Frank Stella, Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg, Esther Mahlangu, David Hockney, Jenny Holzer, Ólafur Elíasson and Jeff Koons added further BMW Art Cars to the collection, each in their own individual style. Most recently, Chinese multimedia artist Cao Fei and American John Baldessari each presented a BMW Art Car based on the BMW M6 GT3 in 2016 and 2017. The BMW Art Cars are not only shown at their home, the BMW Museum in Munich, but also travel around the world as part of international exhibitions.

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Why Culture? Why not! Culture is knowledge, a sanctuary of beauty and depth, of meaning and peace. An inspiring escape. Tranquil at best, even unsettling sometimes. As corporate citizen, the BMW Group takes social responsibility seriously, as part of which it has been involved in hundreds of cultural initiatives worldwide for over half a century, both in the arts, music & sound, architecture as well as in design. As a long-term partner, creative freedom is key – and as essential for groundbreaking works as it is for major innovations within a business enterprise like ours.

Further information: www.bmwgroup.com/culture and www.bmwgroup.com/overview

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The BMW Group

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises over 30 production sites worldwide; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2022, the BMW Group sold nearly 2.4 million passenger vehicles and more than 202,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2022 was € 23.5 billion on revenues amounting to € 142.6 billion. As of 31 December 2022, the BMW Group had a workforce of 149,475 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company set the course for the future at an early stage and consistently makes sustainability and efficient resource management central to its strategic direction, from the supply chain through production to the end of the use phase of all products.

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