

EVENTS/CAUSES

## BMW partners with Frieze to attract discerning listeners, designers

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*BMW i8*

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By FORREST CARDAMENIS

German automaker BMW is underscoring its design prowess with the help of the Frieze New York international art fair.

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In addition to reinstating its Frieze Sounds installation, BMW will host art design talks at the fair. BMW has a history of participating in art fairs, giving its brand lifestyle and design credibility that makes it a more conspicuous player in its field.

"The BMW 7 Series VIP shuttle service will act as an extension of the Frieze New York experience by showcasing the Frieze Sounds program for guests as they ride to and from the fair," said Ludwig Willisch, president/CEO of BMW of North America. "The luxurious interior and relaxing environment inside our all-new 7 Series provides the ideal setting for listening to these wonderful installations."

### Sight and sound

This is the fifth consecutive year that BMW's Frieze Sounds installation program will feature at the fair. This year's will be in the brand's 7 Series VIP shuttle service, a listening station at the Frieze Reading Room and in the new BMW 7 Series Lounge.

The majority of the fair's artwork is oriented on sight, helping BMW's program stand out. Three audio works commissioned by Giogio Andreotta Cal in collaboration with MADRIEMA, GCC and Liz Magic Laser will feature.



*BMW Frieze Sounds*

Those not able to attend the fair can engage the works on [friezeprojectsny.org](http://friezeprojectsny.org), giving the brand a visibility that extends beyond attendees.

BMW's art and design talks will take place in Soho House as part of an ongoing partnership with the venue. On May 3, illustrator Nicholas Bleckman and Rob Giampietro, creative lead for Google Design NY, discussed graphic design in the digital age.

At the second conversation, on May 7, Designworks president Laurenz Schaffer and America's Cup Event Authority CEO Sir Russell Coutts will discuss the explore of design and performance.



*BMW X5 hybrid*

Prior to partnering for Frieze New York in 2012, BMW was a partner of Frieze London, dating back to 2012. In addition, it has partnered with Art Basel in Hong Kong, Miami and Basel, with Berlin Gallery Weekend and with TEFAF Maastricht ([see story](#)).

The conversation surrounding the automotive industry is shifting toward the technology field, with electric and autonomous vehicles and connectivity being "holy grails" for many automakers. However, design remains a significant selling point for a separate group of consumers.



### *BMW Vision Next 100*

BMW's ongoing support of the arts endears it to a sophisticated and desirable clientele that may not immediately jump out as automotive enthusiasts. By highlighting the significance of art and design in its own products, BMW can make an impression on a consumer segment that is not normally targeted effectively by automakers.

#### Tech vs. design

While design will always be important as the first impression consumers have of automobiles, automakers, including BMW, are also fighting to be early tech adapters.

Britain's Bentley Motors is the latest automaker to enable Apple Watch connectivity, but how important are smartwatches to the industry?

Bentley's new mobile application, entitled Bentayga TSR, synchronizes with the vehicle's Touch Screen Remote to allow Bentayga passengers to control or monitor vehicular functions. However, the new technology has still not proliferated, raising questions about what it means to be an early adapter when benefits are minimal ([see story](#)).

Design, meanwhile, rests in the intersection between craftsmanship and artistry, making it a selling point of many luxury brands across all sectors. As a result, art fairs are popular for sponsorships and participation in the luxury world.

From fashion boutique gallery displays to ridesharing yacht applications, Art Basel Miami Beach has become a sanctuary for luxury brands looking to make an impression on discerning affluents and art enthusiasts.

Held on the weekend of Dec. 3-6, Art Basel Miami Beach, a contemporary and modern art fair, gathered artwork from 267 galleries based in North America, Latin America, Asia, Europe and Africa. Alongside gallery exhibitions, performances and film screenings, luxury brands stage events and exclusives to further their interactions with Art Basel's wealthy crowds, who have a penchant for artwork and experiential happenings ([see story](#)).

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