

AUTOMOTIVE

Lexus recruits artists to create community-inspired driveway moments

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Nina Palomba is one of the artists who participated in The Art of the Driveway mural project. Image credit: Lexus

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Toyota Corp.'s Lexus has enlisted emerging artists to brighten up dealerships in a colorful and charitable extension of this year's "December to Remember" campaign.

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At six select Lexus dealerships, artists created large-scale murals that reflect the local community. It is the latest effort from the marque that celebrates craftsmanship and creativity.

"The Art of the Driveway is an iteration of programs that Lexus has embraced for 30 years that supports the principal fundamentals of expression and connectivity," said Rebecca Miller, founder/CEO at **ARTful Communication**, New York. "Lexus is expressing something more than getting from point A to point B on a physical journey, they are intentionally trying to appeal to, and better understand, future customers by providing an intellectual, cultural and emotional journey a fresh experience for all ages."

Ms. Miller is not affiliated with Lexus and commented as an industry expert.

Driveway moments

For this year's "December to Remember" ads, Lexus explored how driveways have become an extension of people's homes and communities during a year of lockdowns and social distancing.

"Driveway Moments" recalled the drive-by parades which gained popularity at the outbreak of the pandemic as ways for people to safely celebrate special occasions, such as birthdays or graduations, with their loved ones. Colorful chalk messages appear throughout the commercials to set the scene ([see story](#)).

That theme inspired the art initiative, reinforcing how driveways can be meaningful settings. "The Art of the Driveway" was created and executed by one of Lexus' multicultural agencies, IW Group.

"This art project is one way for Lexus to continue to demonstrate, we are part of your community, your lives, your well-being and we will continue to invest in bringing you experiences that are meaningful in the communities we serve," Ms. Miller said.

Dealerships in U.S. markets including Chicago, Philadelphia, Dallas and Miami participated in the Art of the Driveway.

Each artist is seen in a brief featurette, discussing their influences while they create their dealership murals. Each mural is about 250 square feet.

"Recently, I've felt driven to paint things that are a little bit more filled with love and kindness, because I feel like there's a lack of that in the world" says Chicago-based painter and muralist Langston Allston. "Positive ways to depict people and beautiful ways to depict them makes the artwork I'm doing feel valuable."

Langston Allston for Lexus's The Art of the Driveway

Mr. Allston's completed mural shows two abstract figures embracing in a bright color palette.

Fellow Chicago-based artist Pugs Atomz discusses how AfriCOBRA, an African-American artists' collective formed in the city in 1968, inspires his own murals.

In another short, Philadelphia-based artist Miriam Singer shares how she draws her inspiration from urban architecture. She often engages with local community members when creating her pieces.

Artists Nina Palomba, Cinthia Santos and Catie Lewis round out the muralist lineup.

Lexus also introduced a charitable component to the campaign.

Lexus is raising funds for Toys for Tots

For each positive and eligible social media post using the hashtag #GiveAmazing through Jan. 4, the automaker will donate \$200 to Toys for Tots, up to a maximum total donation of \$100,000. Lexus is encouraging consumers to use the hashtag to share their own driveway art or celebrations.

"This initiative reflects well on Lexus," Ms. Miller said. "The Art of the Driveway invites everyone to participate on a private and social platform where participation is acknowledged and rewarded with monies raised going to help those in need for the holidays."

Automakers and art

Lexus often spotlights creatives and artisans as a way to emphasize its own design and engineering processes.

The series "In Search of Takumi" draws parallels between the automaker's renowned Takumi team and skilled artisans in the U.K., tasking craftspeople with create bespoke pieces inspired by Lexus vehicles. Design, tradition and craftsmanship are centerpieces of Lexus campaigns, as a way for the automaker to differentiate itself from competitors with longer histories ([see story](#)).

"The marriage of form and function is at the heart of the Lexus ethos and covenant which evokes the company's dedication to craftsmanship and doing it right from the start," Ms. Miller said. "Built by craftsmen and technicians with extraordinary sensitivity for contour, color, intricate details and eye-grabbing verve, Lexus creates aesthetic masterworks in their own right."

Other automakers also actively support emerging artists.

Last month, British automaker Bentley launched a digital art series with works inspired by its new Bentayga.

In collaboration with Los Angeles' Secret Walls Studio, Bentley Motors presented "Art in Motion," a virtual event and film series. Three young artists were tapped to create original pieces drawing inspiration from key attributes of Bentley's new SUV ([see story](#)).

"Auto manufacturers have recognized the need to align themselves with things that create positive associations in the minds of existing and potential customers," ARTful Communication's Ms. Miller said. "Those that are at the forefront of supporting the arts, have a long-term vision of the brand and understand the importance that the arts and cultural activities provide."