

AUTOMOTIVE

## BMW joins forces with LaQuan Smith for NYFW

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New York-based designer LaQuan Smith is partnering with BMW for NYFW. Image credit: BMW

By KATIE TAMOLA

German automaker BMW has enlisted a fashion designer as its ambassador in the brand's return to New York Fashion Week as the event's official automotive partner.

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In a statement, BMW and IMG announced their collaboration in support of NYFW to celebrate fashion, culture, design and economic development. The automaker also introduced a content series with New York-based fashion designer LaQuan Smith.

"Events like New York Fashion Week helps automakers reach new audiences, specifically younger affluent buyers," said Julie Blackley, communications manager at **iSeeCars**, Boston. "There is substantial overlap between consumers who are interested in the latest fashion and those who want to drive the newest, cutting-edge luxury vehicles."

"By partnering with LaQuan Smith, BMW strengthens its identity as an in-demand luxury brand, and also helps BMW reach a younger, fashion-forward audience who will now associate BMW with this famous designer," she said. "People who want the latest, expensive fashions likely want to drive the latest, most expensive cars."

Ms. Blackley is not affiliated with **BMW** or **NYFW**, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

### Driving into NYFW

With the new series, BMW is once again using NYFW as an opportunity to highlight the brand's connection to diversity and inclusivity.

Mr. Smith, a native New Yorker, is being called on by BMW to highlight the sleek marriage of fashion and form. His designs are known for meticulous detail and boldness.

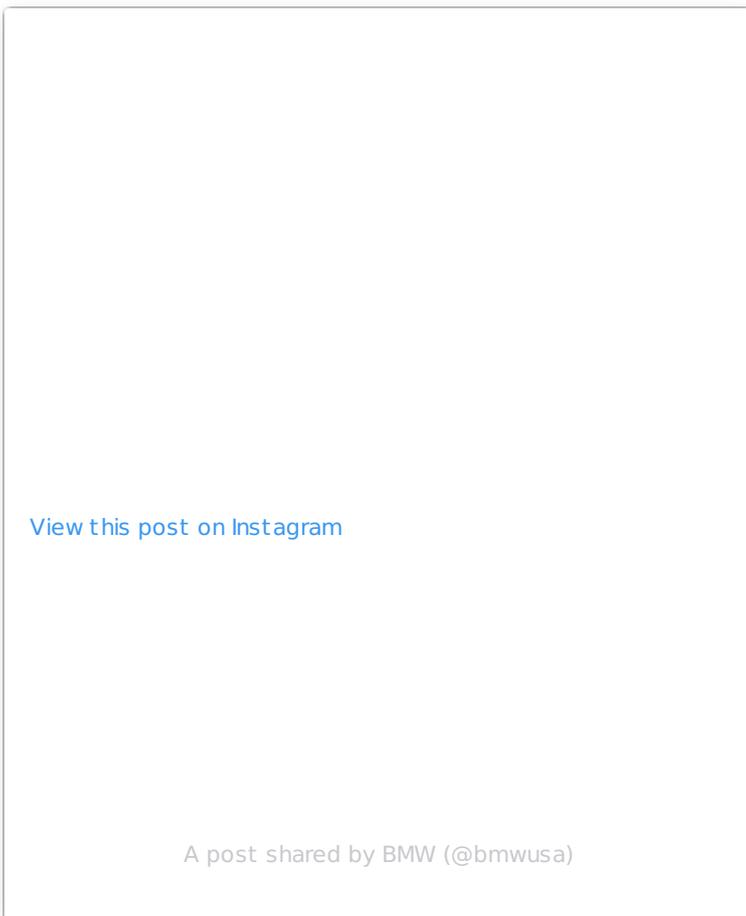


*BMW teams up with LaQuan Smith for new content series. Image credit: BMW*

The partnership includes social media posts with Mr. Smith. As part of the promotion, he has also been profiled in several publications, including *Women's Wear Daily* and *Elle*, discussing how his passion for constant and creative innovation in both fashion design and automotive engineering.

"Over the past two years, New York Fashion Week has become an important platform for BMW, one on which we can not only showcase, but also celebrate the diversity and inclusivity of the fashion community," said Uwe Dreher, vice president of marketing at BMW of North America, said in a statement. "The natural connection between high fashion and a premium automotive company such as BMW extends beyond design and style to include a spirit of innovation and performance, which is what makes this partnership with LaQuan Smith so authentic."

The new content series showcases the intersection of the fashion and automotive industries. It also highlights how Mr. Smith and his team have continued to innovate and rise during a challenging year amid the COVID-19 pandemic.



*Mr. Smith pictured with the BMW X5 M and X7 sports activity vehicles*

"The relationship between the automotive industry and fashion is one that is synergistic," said Kimmie Smith, cofounder and creative director of **Athleisure Mag**, New York. "Having BMW who is known for its heritage and craftsmanship [in a series] with LaQuan Smith with his looks on the red carpets, music videos and countless celebrities is the perfect fit hearing his story in conjunction with the cars, and potentially catching insights into his story that includes celebrities is something of interest to both audiences."

In a statement announcing the partnership between the automaker and designer, Mr. Smith's work is described as glamorous and larger-than-life.

Consumers can follow @NYFW on social media to learn more about Mr. Smith's design process. To view the design of the 2021 X5 M, consumers can also visit [BMWUSA.com](https://www.bmwusa.com).

Why not both

Creative luxury and automotive brands forming partnerships is nothing new.

Italian automaker Maserati and menswear label Ermenegildo Zegna aimed to raise awareness for their Quattroporte collaboration on the cover of Robb Report's September 2014 issue, while setting the stage for the imprint's fall fashion coverage. Maserati and Zegna's collaborative Quattroporte's positioned on the issue's cover yielded significant exposure for the model ([see story](#)).

More recently, Tag Heuer and Porsche are highlighting the similarities in their core values, including respect for their roots, sleek designs and commitment to technological innovation. The new Tag Heuer Carrera Porsche Chronograph watch will be the first release from the partnership ([see story](#)).

The partnership with BMW and Mr. Smith is the latest example of an automaker leveraging its fashionable side.

"The luxury SUV segment is extremely competitive," said iSeeCars's Ms. Blackley. "This fashion collaboration helps give BMW an edge with an affluent demographic of car buyers, who are likely nearing or are new to luxury car ownership."

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