

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Rolls-Royce exhibits cerebral curiosity with innovative art initiative

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Artist Sonda Perry, winner of Rolls-Royce's *The Dream Commission* prize, exhibits at the Venice Biennale. Image credit: Rolls-Royce

By AMIRAH KEATON

British automaker Rolls-Royce is rewarding those who think big with its latest artful initiative.

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Born of a shared reverence for pushing the bounds of possibility, "Muse: The Rolls-Royce Art Programme" bonds brand and artist over displays of innovation. The luxury motor company has put its resources towards cultivating an immersive moving-image exhibition with one artist in particular, as evidenced in campaign films dropped back-to-back.

"Muse as a vehicle inside Rolls-Royce Motor Cars creates the connection between the artistic creations in the world of motion arts and the artisans' creations we deliver every day with each Rolls-Royce commission," said Gerry Spahn, head of communications, Americas, at [Rolls-Royce Motor Cars](#), New York.

"It's important as so many of our patrons share a passion for Rolls-Royce and a passion for the arts."

Rolls-Royce's latest muse

Rolls-Royce's flagship initiative, The Dream Commission, extends a biennial invitation for moving-image artists, in the interest of "envisioning places of wonder", according to the brand.

"In Rolls-Royce's case, the brand's expressed mission to 'inspire greatness' naturally fits with many potential collaborative partners, but the world of art also lends creative credibility to the fantasy of a luxury lifestyle that embodies 'art without compromise'," said Daymon Bruck, chief creative officer at [The O Group](#), New York.

Identified by way of a global expert nomination committee and selected by a jury of top curators and artists, recipients of The Dream Commission award are chosen in a dual-phased, two-year process.

In newly-published project films, winner and interdisciplinary artist Sonda Perry, is shown being supported through the planning and execution of her Swiss debut, before taking the show on the road for a stint at the Venice Biennale.

Expanding upon the former, where Ms. Perry herself speaks to the nature of her art, viewers gain an understanding of this boundary-breaking approach in "Dream Exhibition in Switzerland | Sonda Perry at Fondation Beyeler | Dream

Commission."

The artist is first seen orchestrating the pitchy, synth-heavy soundtrack for her moving-image piece. Her fingers bounce spiritedly, animated above an unnamed apparatus.

Ms. Perry offers revelatory insights into the cerebral nature of her work.

"I'm making a work that is preoccupied with memory, moving image, archival footage and dreams thinking about how your dreams can posit new futures for you," Ms. Perry explains with measured cadence.

She acknowledges the privilege that comes with having the time and space to ruminate over abstract concepts of the sort, an opportunity that has been afforded to the artist, in part, by the British heritage brand.

"To be commissioned means that I get to do that more, and I feel incredibly blessed to be able to make art."

Ms. Perry switches gears, naming her family members as primary influences for her work.

"My folks worked with what they had," she shares. "There's something about the medium and its dissemination that allows the general public to have a really sophisticated understanding of what moving images do, for better or for worse."

A realist, Ms. Perry points to the fact that art, whether widespread or limited in scope and scale, can be used to spread stereotypes and degrade people, just as easily as it can open minds towards matters of brightness.

Her ethos as an artist lies in the exposure of these overlooked and under-analyzed realities, so to speak.

By constructing her alternative arrangements and remixing the moving image's medium, she gifts gallery visitors with heightened levels of conscious awareness regarding what appears before them.

Viewers get curious with the Dream Commission artist's exhibit, on display in a second video set in Venice

Pre-context, the Columbia graduate stands out as an anomaly of the art world in both identity and vision. Her detailed explanation lifts an initial haze, pushing her work forward as an even stronger testament to the caliber of talent and execution that Rolls-Royce is sponsoring.

"[Within] all of these new technological spaces of representation... old stories are becoming new again [and] the old is being seen through a different literal lens," she muses.

"We're getting to discover who we are once more."

The initial media piece culminates with a look at Ms. Perry's "Lineage for a Phantom Zone" on view at the Swiss gallery, Fondation Beyeler.

In the second video of Rolls-Royce's set, the audience gains the added pleasure of viewing her work in action at the art world's pinnacle event, this year's 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia.

"The final selected moving-image work from artist Sondra Perry creates a dream-like and immersive sensory environment, inspired by her own personal mythology," The O Group's Mr. Bruck said.

"Art installations like this are best experienced in person and it was another smart strategic choice for Rolls-Royce to choose La Biennale di Venezia to exhibit their Dream Commission at the so-called 'Olympics of the art world.'"

Patterned patronage

Present throughout each video in Rolls-Royce's "Muse" series is a shockingly low level of branding. An analysis of adjacent artistic executions from peers return varying degrees of logo and product inclusion, providing a spectrum of approaches to luxury art patronage.

Much of luxury players' arts involvement arrives in the form of traditional sponsorships, whether by donation of monetary funds or goods.

French jeweler Cartier opted for the latter in supporting the Triennale Milano's 23rd International Exhibition. Mondo Reale, Cartier's offering, has been curated by Herv Chands, artistic managing director of The Foundation Cartier ([see story](#)).

Meanwhile, Italian fashion house Gucci quietly – more in on-site branding and less in press promotion, as the patronage was widely covered – sponsored Los Angeles County Museum of Art's 2022 Art+Film Gala, for which it has

done so since its inception.

Conversely, luxury brands that regard an aptitude for art as endemic to the history of the house take a heavier hand when it comes to branding.

Labels like French fashion house Chanel don its film's subjects in head-to-toe brand looks for digital content surrounding the arts, as seen in "Chanel and Cinema" ([see story](#)) which delved into the stories from the 2022 Venice International Film Festival.

Rolls-Royce seems to play a healthy middle, granting Ms. Perry's words and work the right to full attention, between two intro and exit frames of graphic design with brand name and initiative title displayed, lest one require a reminder.

The tasteful treatment conjures the age-old saying "money talks and wealth whispers," revealing an inherent value to be discovered within.

The intersection between auto and art two luxury realms of very different associative properties is perhaps where the British automaker's strategy lies.

Parallel the priceless level of socioeconomic cach, upon which the existence of the globe's best galleries rest, an invaluable deal of credentialing is up for grabs.

"The Rolls-Royce art series Muse is a great example of how a heritage luxury brand across all industries can extend their core values and mission to include collaborations with like-minded and prestigious brand partners through an ongoing series or one-time programs," The O Group's Mr. Bruck said.

"By creating this Dream Commission program, the Rolls-Royce brand is benefiting from a highly visible and sophisticated collaboration that lives up to their stated mission of 'inspiring greatness.'"

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