

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Kering presents Women in Motion award to famed Brazilian artist

March 27, 2023



The company's choice to award a Brazilian photographer is especially timely, as Brazil faces a new era of societal change. Image credit: Kering

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

French luxury conglomerate **Kering** is honoring the work of Brazilian photo artist Rosngela Renn, presenting her with the Women in Motion Award for Photography.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

The prestigious award was created in 2015 at the Cannes Film Festival, allowing Kering to showcase the work of talented women artists around the world. On July 4, Kering and the Rencontres d'Arles will present the award to Ms. Renn at the Thre Antique d'Arles in Paris, whose work truly transcends current ideas of identity and genre.

"This award brought me a lot of pleasure because it encourages me to continue, to move forward with my research work within the universe of photography," Ms. Renn said.

"It has been many years of work up to this point and I know that there is still a lot to be done," she said. "History is a living organism, the narratives are in constant reconstruction, especially in countries that were colonized in Brazil, for example, long episodes of our history are being retold and re-evaluated, even with major gaps in our institutional archives.

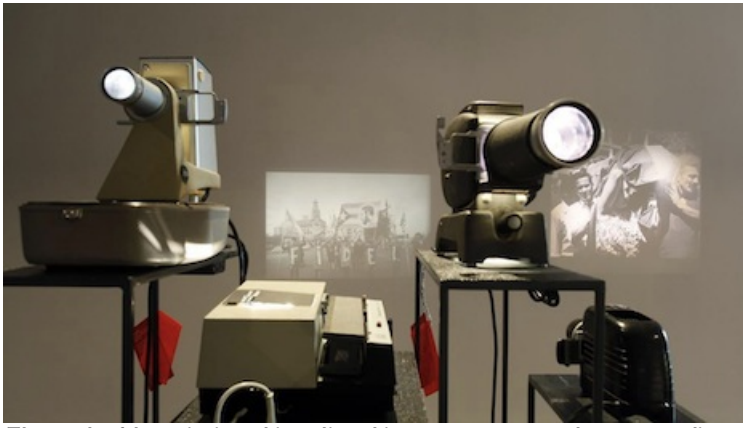
"Episodes of historical amnesia are part of our formation as a country, and this has to be somehow equated, so that society as a whole, not just a part of it, can actually have some future."

Southern exposure

This is the first time that the award has been given to a photographer based in the global south, signaling the importance of this choice on the part of Kering.

Out of the four past awardees, three of them have been European and one was an American. That said, while 2021 recipient Liz Johnson Artur is based in London, her heritage is Ghanaian-Russian, with her work documenting the African Diaspora.

With the lineup largely reflecting the ways in which white artists are often the center of creative discussions and museum exhibits, Kering's decision to grant the award to Ms. Renn is especially noteworthy.



The work of the artist is multi-media, taking a contemporary lens to past lives lived around the global south. Image credit: Instagram

"Although **Renn** is a Brazilian artist whose installations reflect her aesthetic responses as a citizen, the international range of her artistic experience also allows her works to operate cross-culturally, beyond national borders, in a way that lends a universal appeal to her art," said Marguerite Itamar Harrison, professor of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies at Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts.

"The worldwide scope of Rosngela Renn's art exhibitions speaks to her importance as an artist beyond Brazil," Dr. Harrison said. "This award is significant, however, precisely because artists of her caliber from the Global South deserve to be recognized more often in a broader context within the world at large."

The global south is filled with talented artists who are not given as much press or exposure as Euro-caucasian artists, making diversity all the more critical to not only inclusivity but to understanding the full picture of today's artistic heritage. Too often people of color are left out of museums and art curricula, which presents a fractured understanding of the field.

Ms. Renn's work is specifically poignant, as it is heavily grounded in concepts of the social and political past of her country and others across the southern hemisphere. Working with old photographs, she explores the emotional landscape of history, creating otherworldly presentations that offer glimpses into hundreds of other lives.

"Rosngela Renn's photographic and archival installations serve as reconstructions of the remembering process, thus placing power systems Brazil's in particular in check and challenging societal forms of memory based on forgetting," Dr. Harrison said.

"Her works encompass a complex sociopolitical reality that engages the viewer's ethical eye," she said. "In the act of making art, Renn salvages abandoned images and neglected records in order to seek nothing short of a collective rescue of the human soul."



The photographer's exhibits offer intimate looks into the life of women throughout time. Image credit: Instagram

Ms. Renn will speak to this process at the event in Paris, presenting her work and sharing pieces of her path as an artist with the attendees. She plans to especially focus on the feminist nature of her art, as her images tend to be grounded in women's places of belonging throughout society and the arts.

Following the program and her presentation, Kering is dedicating an exhibition space to the artist at La Mcanique Gnrale in Arles, France.

The exhibition will be the first large French space completely dedicated to Ms. Renn, marking a global milestone in

the photographer's impressive career, and bringing her striking work and social critiques in full force to the French. As the population is currently in the midst of labor strikes and conversations about societal change themselves, Kering's showcase of the groundbreaking photographer's work is especially timely, speaking to the present psyche of France.

"As a visual artist, Renn blurs boundaries that define fields of art," Dr. Harrison said.

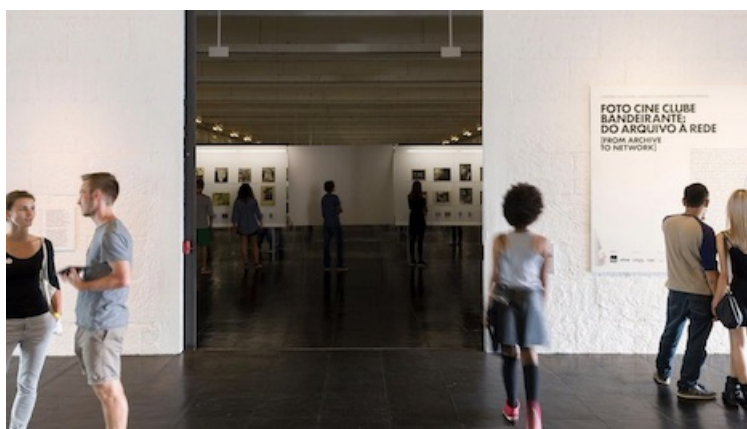
"With training in architecture and an obsession for collecting, Renn is an aesthetic archivist whose photographic installations in their simple evocation of humanity and in their complex portrayal of social behaviors seek to incite ethical responses in the spectator."

Brazilian boosts

Kering is not the only luxury brand to explore Brazilian art and heritage.

French jewelry maison Cartier's humanities foundation recently supported an artistic exhibit highlighting the struggle of the indigenous Yanomami group of the country ([see story](#)). The showcase, set in New York City, also brings attention to the cultural and societal struggles those in Brazil face in a changing world.

LVMH-owned hospitality group Belmond also has platformed Brazilian culture as of late, finding ways to honor the traditions of Rio de Janeiro in a respectful way at one of its resorts on location ([see story](#)).



The artist's work is shaped around the emotional state of living within a culture, offering an exclusive meditation on Brazilian identity. Image credit: Instagram

As Brazilians reel from the past years of a highly conservative presidency, the country is experiencing a period of growth in both diverse representation and liberalism in government. Many citizens are benefiting because of this, and as the economy is boosted as a result, more Brazilians are able to turn to luxury brands, and in turn, luxury brands seem to be turning right back.