

AUTOMOTIVE

BMW announces latest 'Art Car' collaborator

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The manufacturer's 20th Art Car will be designed by internationally renowned Ethiopian American artist Julie Mehretu. Image credit: BMW

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

German automaker BMW has unveiled the newest entry in its long-running series of artistic outings.

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Announced at The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York on June 28, the manufacturer's 20th "Art Car" will be designed by internationally renowned Ethiopian American artist Julie Mehretu. Joining the ranks of former famed designers such as Jeff Koons and Andy Warhol, the abstract illustrator will use the brand's M Hybrid V8 model as her canvas, continuing a tradition that dates back nearly 50 years.

"The BMW Art Car Collection is a central element of our global cultural commitment, which has been in place for more than 50 years," said Ilka Horstmeier, a member of the board of management for human resources and real estate at **BMW AG**, in a statement.

"The combination of technology and art, of design and motorsport sparks a timeless fascination," she said. "I have admired Julie Mehretu's work for many years."

"I am particularly pleased that our cooperation will have a lasting cultural impact beyond the vehicle she has designed, especially in Africa."

Aerodynamic artistry

While the appointment was recently announced, the design will not be seen until just under a year from now in mid-June 2024 at the next 24 Hours of Le Mans race in France.

While an art piece, the Art Car will take to the track come time for the annual race. Referred to as "rolling sculpture" by the brand, BMW hopes Ms. Mehretu will deliver a stunning form to the souped-up function of its machine.

"I've loved cars for most of my life, as toys, as objects, as possibilities," said Ms. Mehretu, in a statement.



The German automaker has faith in the contemporary artist, nominating her to the position unanimously. Image credit: BMW

It is from that space that I'm really excited to be working on the next BMW Art Car more than anything," she said. "The thrill of the speed, the 24-Hour race of Le Mans and what is possible to invent in hybrid and fully electric vehicles as future modes of play and pushing ahead into new terrains of transportation and motorsports."

As part of the partnership between the carmaker and artist, Ms. Mehretu will hold eight workshops across the continent of Africa in the next nine months, pushing the creative endeavor in the massive region with few public outlets dedicated to the craft.

Following the 24 Hours of Le Mans next year, in 2025, the Art Car and the pieces produced during the eight showcases will be put on display at the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa in Cape Town, South Africa.

All of the vehicles made as part of the initiative have raced at the legendary French event going back to the first version that debuted at the 1975 competition.

The most recent iterations of BMW's longstanding endeavor were released back to back in 2016 and 2017; artists Cao Fei and John Baldessari were tasked with making designs of their own ([see story](#)).

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