

AUTOMOTIVE

BMW stages Art Car at Frieze Los Angeles

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The design can be changed at-will through the use of electric voltage. Image credit: BMW

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

German automaker BMW is uplifting the work of a previous collaborator.

The work of South African artist Esther Mahlangu, who created the 1991 version of the company's Art Car, is being applied to a one-of-a-kind version of the BMW i5 model. Shown at the Frieze Los Angeles art fair, the vehicle features Ms. Mahlangu's signature geometric patterns via an animated film seen across the body.

"The BMW i5 Flow NOSTOKANA honors the history of the BMW brand and continues the story of our global cultural engagement in a unique way," said Adrian van Hooydonk, head of group design at **BMW**, in a statement.

"It combines art and design through progressive technology," Mr. van Hooydonk said. "Here, technology itself becomes art."

Artistic endeavors

Frieze Los Angeles began yesterday at the Santa Monica Airport with BMW displaying the BMW i5 Flow NOSTOKANA, named after Ms. Mahlangu's first son.

Originally put on a BMW 525i model, the artist's work has a fresh canvas through the use of E Ink, created by the eponymous American technology firm. The technology functions similarly to an e-reader, with several million microcapsules inside each roll of film shifting color and arrangement after an electric voltage is applied.

Two strips of film were applied to the i5's roof, hood, side panels and rear.

BMW presents the i5 Flow NOSTOKANA

All of the strips break down into 1,349 sections, each able to be individually controlled. The ability to adapt the technology to curved surfaces and to program animations was developed by BMW.

Ms. Mahlangu, now 88 years old, is interested in the new medium.

"It is fascinating to me to see how modern technology can expand my art and make it accessible to a completely new audience," said Ms. Mahlangu, in a statement.

The automaker's Art Car debuted in 1975, designed by American artist Alexander Calder for French racing driver Herv Poulain. The 20 editions over the years have included designs by other famed creatives such as Andy Warhol, David Hockney and Jeff

Koons.

BMW will return to South Africa later this year as it presents Ethiopian American artist Julie Mehretu's 2024 version of the Art Car ([see story](#)).

During this tour, an exhibition titled "'Then I Knew I Was Good at Painting': Esther Mahlangu. A Retrospective" will make its way to Cape Town, showing off the 1991 version of the Art Car, among other works.

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