

Media Information  
February 5, 2024

## **First design studies for Julie Mehretu's BMW Art Car revealed. World premiere at the Centre Pompidou Paris in May 2024.**

Her BMW M Hybrid V8 to race at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in June. Announcement of the international driver team and starting number. Workshops with artists in various African cities.

**New York/Munich.** Julie Mehretu presents her first design studies for the 20th BMW Art Car. For this project, the internationally renowned artist combines her artistic work with a personal enthusiasm for automotive design and speed. She translates dynamism into form and applies one of her monumental motifs from a two-dimensional picture plane onto a three-dimensional industrially designed object. In the course of this creative process, the BMW M Hybrid V8 racing car prototype becomes the canvas of Mehretu's multi-layered art and the next addition to the legendary BMW Art Car Collection. The 20th BMW Art Car will celebrate its official world premiere at the Centre Pompidou in Paris on May 21, 2024, before competing a few weeks later in the 24 Hours of Le Mans on June 15/16.

### **Fusion of image motif and racing car creates art on wheels.**

For the design of the 20th BMW Art Car, Julie Mehretu uses the colour and form vocabulary of an existing large-format painting from a more recent series of works: obscured photographs, dotted grids, neon-coloured spray paint and Mehretu's iconic gestural markings give her design an abstract visual form. She transfers the resulting image motif as a high-resolution photograph onto the vehicle's contours using a 3D mapping technique. This creates the unique artistic foiling with which the BMW M Hybrid V8 will compete in the Le Mans race. Mehretu on her process: "It wasn't until after going to the 24 Hours race in Daytona last year that the idea of how to approach the BMW Art Car really crystallised. I was thinking about Frank Stella's grid and how this could also be a shout-out to former BMW Art Car artists. And I kept thinking of this painting in my studio that I had just finished and the model of the Art Car was in my studio and I thought maybe we can try to have the car move through this painting."

For the first time, Julie Mehretu, whose work will be presented this year within a major retrospective at the Palazzo Grassi in Venice from March 17, is working with BMW on a three-dimensional format. The interplay of the surfaces and geometry of the vehicle creates a remix of elements of her painting and opens up new perspectives for the artist in her creative process. "The creative play of what you can do in this new three-dimensional space and how many imaginations and inventions are played out to build it is highly instructive. It is not just the car itself but the designers and their deliberations as well as and

Media Information

Date February 5, 2024

Subject First design studies for Julie Mehretu's BMW Art Car revealed.

Page 2

foremost the drivers and their desires and aspirations which make it become this place of dreams where painting, conceptual art, aerodynamics, speed and aesthetics can participate," says Mehretu.

In accordance with the regulations of the FIA, the 3D version of the artwork can only be applied to the BMW M Hybrid V8 with a film wrap. For this, Julie Mehretu is working closely with the German Race Spirit team led by Manuel Eberl and Gertraud Brenninger to design the 20th BMW Art Car. Race Spirit was already involved in realising the design created by Jeff Koons for the 17th BMW Art Car.

**From the museum to the race track - and back again.**

In keeping with the long tradition of the BMW Art Car Collection, the artistically designed vehicle will be presented to the public for the first time in an internationally renowned museum on May 21. As with the world premieres of the BMW Art Cars by Roy Lichtenstein (1977) and Jeff Koons (2010), the unveiling will take place at the Centre Pompidou in Paris. That same week, the artwork will be part of the program of the Concorso d'Eleganza at the Villa d'Este in Cernobbio (May 24-26).

The close connection between art and motorsport is also an integral part of the history of the BMW Art Car Collection. The very first BMW Art Car, designed by Alexander Calder in 1975, made its dynamic debut at the Circuit de la Sarthe in Le Mans. As the 20th BMW Art Car, Julie Mehretu's vehicle will compete at Le Mans with starting number 20 and will be driven by BMW works drivers Sheldon van der Linde (RSA), Robin Frijns (NED) and René Rast (GER) in the 24 Hours of Le Mans from June 15 to 16, 2024. The artist will also design the racing suits in which they will compete at Le Mans.

"The prospect of competing in a BMW Art Car at the 24 Hours of Le Mans is an additional incentive for the entire M Motorsport team to prepare the BMW M Hybrid V8 as perfectly as possible for this big stage," says Franciscus van Meel, Chairman of the Board of Management of BMW M GmbH. "In the 100th year of the race's existence and 25 years after BMW's last victory at Le Mans, winning there with a BMW Art Car would be the greatest possible success for all of us."

Following its race at Le Mans, the 20th BMW Art Car will also become an exhibit that will be presented to the public in museums and on art platforms worldwide. However, Julie Mehretu's approach goes far beyond the vehicle as a stand-alone artistic work.

Media Information

Date February 5, 2024

Subject First design studies for Julie Mehretu's BMW Art Car revealed.

Page 3

**Workshops with young creatives in numerous African cities.**

A central component of the project is the PanAfricanTranslocal Media Workshop Series on the African continent, which will continue the collaboration between Julie Mehretu and BMW in 2025. Together with Mehret Mandefro, Emmy-nominated producer, writer and co-founder of the Realness Institute, which works to strengthen the media ecosystem across Africa, the artist will host workshops in eight African cities over the course of nine months to provide artists with a space for encounters, exchange and collaboration. The results of the workshops will then be presented at the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa in Cape Town – together with the 20th BMW Art Car. An important partner for the conception of the programme is the artist residency Denniston Hill in Upstate New York, founded in 2004 by Julie Mehretu, Lawrence Chua and Paul Pfeiffer.

Julie Mehretu was unanimously chosen to design the 20th BMW Art Car in 2018 by a jury of high-ranking representatives of the international art world. The panel includes renowned curators and museum directors from various countries, including Koyo Kouoh, Executive Director and Chief Curator, Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town; Hans-Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director of the Serpentine Galleries, London; and Cecilia Alemani, Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director and Chief Curator, High Line Art, New York. Like all the artists involved in the creation of the BMW Art Car Collection since 1975 – including Frank Stella, Andy Warhol, César Manrique, Esther Mahlangu, David Hockney, Jenny Holzer, Cao Fei and John Baldessari, in addition to those already mentioned – Julie Mehretu was given unrestricted creative freedom in the realization of her ideas for the latest vehicle of this globally unique collection.

The BMW Group's Cultural Engagement with exclusive updates and deeper insights into its global initiatives can be followed on Instagram at [@BMWGroupCulture](https://www.instagram.com/BMWGroupCulture).

If you have any questions, please contact:

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## Media Information

Date February 5, 2024

Subject First design studies for Julie Mehretu's BMW Art Car revealed.

Page 4

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In 2022, the BMW Group sold nearly 2.4 million passenger vehicles and more than 202,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2022 was € 23.5 billion on revenues amounting to € 142.6 billion. As of 31 December 2022, the BMW Group had a workforce of 149,475 employees.

## Media Information

Date February 5, 2024

Subject First design studies for Julie Mehretu's BMW Art Car revealed.

Page 5

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company set the course for the future at an early stage and consistently makes sustainability and efficient resource management central to its strategic direction, from the supply chain through production to the end of the use phase of all products.

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