



Media Information

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About the BMW Art Car Collection

The initial idea of the collection – to have a car designed by an artist – was a product of the imagination of the French auctioneer and passionate racing car driver Hervé Poulain. On his initiative, the American Alexander Calder designed his BMW racing car – the BMW 3.0. CSL – at the beginning of the 1970s. The first vehicle to bring together the worlds of art and motor sports took part in the 24-hour race of Le Mans. The enthusiastic reception to the rolling work of art was the spark of inspiration that led the BMW Group to create the Art Car Collection.

In the first few years, racing cars were turned into objets d'art, all of which participated in the traditional 24-hour race of Le Mans. Later, the spectrum was broadened to include series vehicles.

Since 1975, outstanding artists from all over the world have been designing the BMW automobiles of their era. The 15 exhibits which have thus far been presented in the BMW Art Car Collection include works by well-known artists such as Frank Stella, Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, A.R. Penck, David Hockney and Jenny Holzer. The Art Cars reflect the developments in art history with regard to fine art, design and technology and are displayed worldwide in major museums such as the Paris Louvre, the Royal Academy in London, the New York Whitney Museum of Modern Art, Venice's Palazzo Grassi, Sydney's Powerhouse Museum and the Guggenheim Museums of New York and Bilbao. In the future, too, Art Cars will document the fascinating link between art and technology in international exhibitions.

The up to now final work of the series was created by the American concept artist Jenny Holzer, who inscribed her word art – “truisms” – on a BMW V12 Le Mans racing car, including the slogan “Protect me from what I want”. Olafur Eliasson, one of the most significant representatives of contemporary art, has been assigned to design the 16th BMW Art Car, with which yet another work of art will be added to the BMW Art Car Collection. With this assignment Eliasson has taken on the challenge of transforming a technological milestone, the BMW H₂R, with which the BMW Group is pursuing its vision of sustained mobility based on the regenerative production of hydrogen as a fuel of the future. By doing this, BMW has committed itself to continue with its innovative cooperation with international artists working in the field of technology, mobility and art. The first design for the new BMW Art Car is due to be completed in 2007. The new BMW H₂R Art Car will then be presented to the public as a work of art at museums throughout the world.

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