

Media Information
June 1, 2015

Gliding cars in the office

Tenth anniversary of the central building of the BMW Group plant in Leipzig by architect Zaha Hadid

Leipzig. In 1973, Karl Schwanzer designed the four-cylinder structure for BMW in Munich, thus creating one of the most beautiful corporate headquarters worldwide. As recently as 2013, the building was voted into the top 10 of the “Best Corporate Buildings in the World”. In the pursuit of this visionary public image ever since, the BMW Group has worked with renowned architects including Sir Nicholas Grimshaw, Coop Himmelb(l)au and Gunter Henn.

In 2015, BMW commends the British-Iraqi architect Zaha Hadid on the tenth anniversary of the central building of the BMW Group plant in Leipzig, which has won numerous awards including the Deutsche Architekturpreis (German award for architecture). And Zaha Hadid congratulates BMW on the occasion: “BMW Group Leipzig’s design mirrors the company’s commitment to a wholly integrated working environment, avoiding the traditional segregation into groups that is no longer conducive in a modern workplace. Integration, communication and collaboration define BMW in Leipzig - and its staff continue to innovate; developing pioneering systems to build the i3 and i8 models that bring significant reductions in carbon emissions, and establishing vital programs for those living in its community. BMW Group Leipzig’s success is a testament to the vision, ambition and commitment of everyone involved. My deepest congratulations on your 10th anniversary.”

As early as 2002 BMW presented the design at the architecture biennial in Venice, and the company was overjoyed when Zaha Hadid was awarded the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 2004.

The interior of the central building follows the guiding principles of complete transparency and optimal efficiency regarding workflow. On their way from body shop to paint shop, the cars in various stages of manufacture glide along 600 metres of open assembly line to their next stage of production, visible to each of the many thousand employees as well as all visitors. Even sitting in the plant’s cafeteria, one can observe car bodies passing by almost silently. In this way, the notions of connectivity and motion have become the building’s leitmotiv – heeding the ideas of its architect, who commented enthusiastically, “Panta Rhei, this is a place in which energy flows from all sides!”

A place where technology and structure interweave with pioneering functionality: Transparent work processes and production stages represent the foundation of one of the world’s most modern and sustainable plants. Since its entry into service in 2005, the BMW Group plant Leipzig has produced over 1.6 million new vehicles in series including the two innovative BMW i models, BMW i3, powered exclusively by electricity, and the plug-in hybrid BMW i8.

For over 40 years, the BMW Group has been promoting hundreds of cultural initiatives worldwide in a wide range of fields including contemporary art, jazz and classical music as well as design and architecture. In the city of Leipzig, BMW supports the Museum der bildenden Künste, the Jazz Days, the Leipzig International Artist Programme, the Kunstareal Baumwollspinnerei as well as the a-capella Festival and Bach Festival.

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BMW's Cultural Commitment

For more than 40 years now, the BMW Group has initiated and engaged in over 100 cultural cooperations worldwide. The company places the main focus of its long-term commitment on modern and contemporary art, jazz and classical music as well as architecture and design. In 1972, three large-scale paintings were created by the artist Gerhard Richter specifically for the foyer of the BMW Group's Munich headquarters. Since then, artists such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Olafur Eliasson, Jeff Koons, Zubin Metha, Daniel Barenboim and Anna Netrebko have co-operated with BMW. The company has also commissioned famous architects such as Karl Schwanzer, Zaha Hadid and Coop Himmelb(l)au to design important corporate buildings and plants. In 2011, the BMW Guggenheim Lab, a global initiative of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, the Guggenheim Museum and the BMW Group celebrated its world premiere in New York. The BMW Group takes absolute creative freedom in all the cultural activities it is involved in for granted – as this is just as essential for groundbreaking artistic work as it is for major innovations in a successful business.

Further information: www.bmwgroup.com/culture and www.bmwgroup.com/culture/overview

The BMW Group

With its three brands BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 30 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2014, the BMW Group sold approximately 2.118 million cars and 123,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for the financial year 2014 was approximately € 8.71 billion on revenues amounting to € 80.40 billion. As of 31 December 2014, the BMW Group had a workforce of 116,324 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

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