

Press release
July 2019

The creative rationalist.
A portrait of Domagoj Dukec.



Domagoj Dukec has led the BMW Design team since April 2019. This means the Frankfurt-born Croat is responsible for design at the BMW core brand. Over the last nine years, he has worked as chief designer for various wings of the BMW Group – most recently BMW i and BMW M, which remain under his leadership umbrella within BMW Group Design.

“My job is to orchestrate these three areas of the company so they link together to create a strong image,” says Dukec, who has amassed many years of expertise at international design studios. In his role at BMW he leads a team of over 100 designers working to enhance and redevelop the design language of current and future BMW brand models. As an experienced automotive designer, he can call on a highly refined repertoire of approaches. He views the design process as a management

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task and team endeavour in equal measure. “I work with flat hierarchies, giving a lot of responsibility to each designer within the team,” emphasises Dukec, who put down his design roots in the automotive industry at an early stage. “They should all see themselves as a key elements in the solution.”

His focus: design as an engine.

Aged just 13, Domagoj Dukec was clear in his mind that his future lay in automotive design. As a schoolboy, he was regularly driven by his father to Pforzheim, where he presented sketches to the university’s School of Design. His dedication left an enduring impression, and as a young guest student he gained the initial insights he later built upon in full-time studies there. During this period, he spent all his vacation time on internships with various car manufacturers. This taught him how as a designer you are responsible not just for the aesthetic and functional execution of a product, but for its commercial success as well. After spells at renowned studios in Barcelona, São Paulo and Paris and 13 years in automotive design at brands including VW and Citroën, Dukec finally answered BMW’s call to Munich in 2010. In 2013 he took over as Head of the Exterior Design team. He describes BMW as the pinnacle of his profession, the place he has always wanted to be.

His mindset: unlock creative power.

“Automotive design is a special challenge, because you’re bound to the industry, have very clear requirements and need to think into the future.” As chief designer at BMW, Domagoj Dukec heads a team of designers, modellers and other specialists charged with setting up design frameworks and initiating change. “I like solving puzzles,” he says about his work, which he goes about in a deliberately entrepreneurial way. He emphasises how, for him, creativity above all means putting the right conditions in place: “I like to do the best I can for a product, with a positive mentality in the team and the optimum process behind the scenes.” Dukec’s design teams develop model ranges for BMW, BMW i and BMW M. This pooling of responsibility helps to focus the design of the brands squarely on modern products with strong characters.

Perpetual motion: embarking on a new chapter in automotive design.

“BMW as a company is most keenly defined by the three brands BMW, BMW i and BMW M. The models we’re now developing are even more

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clearly differentiated, which will continue to strengthen the unmistakable character of BMW through design,” reiterates Dukec. “After all, design is successful when it has its own identity.” He is firmly convinced that future-focused vehicle design should not only provoke aesthetically, but also demand cultural reappraisal. “So as a designer, you need to be prepared to take a risk,” says the 44-year-old. “Customers should be able to sense this energy in the product.”

Background: The inspiration that drives him.

Domagoj Dukec describes himself as an “emotional rationalist”, pointing to inspiration from the art world – figures such as Michelangelo and Karl Lagerfeld. The extreme, daring facets to these two creative geniuses fascinate him as much as the authenticity and the clarity of thought and deed in their work. As an efficient thinker, the chief designer employs these principles day by day in his designs – always with the aim of making those around him smile. Dukec cites cooking as one of his passions, and he enjoys the immediate reaction to what he produces in the kitchen. The complex process of vehicle development, however, often lasts several years, which means he has to wait rather longer to see how his automotive creations are received. Both in the office and at home, his sense of joy lies at the heart of everything he does.

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The BMW Group

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises 31 production and assembly facilities in 15 countries; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2018, the BMW Group sold over 2,490,000 passenger vehicles and more than 165,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2018 was € 9.815 billion on revenues amounting to € 97.480 billion. As of 31 December 2018, the BMW Group had a workforce of 134,682 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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