

Media Information
November 5, 2020

BMW Art Journey artist Leelee Chan explores traditional craftsmanship and innovative materials in Europe.

Artist completes first leg of her travel and plans to continue to Mexico.

Munich. For nearly two months, the ninth awardee of the BMW Art Journey, **Leelee Chan**, represented by Capsule Shanghai, travelled across Europe to further develop her artistic practice. During this first part of her BMW Art Journey, an initiative of Art Basel and BMW, Leelee Chan visited Italy, Switzerland and Germany from August 28 to October 21, 2020. Now, the Hong Kong-based artist pauses her journey and is currently in the process of planning the coming leg of her trip to Mexico which she would like to take as soon as travel and health conditions permit.

“It was such a privilege to be able to travel and complete the European leg of my journey in this ongoing difficult situation due to Covid-19. Connecting with all the artisans, scientists and other people making this journey possible was a truly incredible and eye-opening experience,” says Leelee Chan.

In her BMW Art Journey **“Tokens from Time”**, Leelee Chan intends to trace material culture from the past, present and future. Chan interprets “tokens” as material objects and their respective historical development which represent the key qualities and feelings of living in societies across different historical and cultural contexts.

In Italy, the artist visited a number of cities including Florence and Pietrasanta, where she attended workshops run by the sculptors Franco Cervietti, Nicola Stagetti, and other local artisans to gain deeper insights into the artistic manipulation of marble. She went on to Ravenna and Sicily to attend a class at the Mosaic Art School and to visit some of the world’s oldest and largest early Christian and Roman mosaics, which are recognised as UNESCO World Heritage. Leelee Chan then continued her journey to Agnone to study the processing of copper with the heirs of ancient family-run workshops, a path that led her to the 1000 years old bell foundry, the Pontificia Fonderia Marinelli.

While travelling across Switzerland and Germany, Chan shifted her focus to the possibilities of future materials and the direct exchange with leading scientists and experts in the field of material science. She met Prof. Karen Scrivener at the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale in Lausanne to learn about the making and impact of low carbon emission cement.

As part of her journey, Leelee Chan also visited BMW’s headquarters and research centres in Munich as first BMW Art Journey awardee. There, she was able to exchange ideas with experts from the fields of textiles, glass, recycling and design. Beyond that she visited the Porzellan Manufaktur Nymphenburg and the architectural glass and mosaic workshop Franz Mayer of Munich, both traditional Munich enterprises.

Chan will round up her research with video conference and a related exchange with the microbiologist Prof. Han Wösten from the field of “Fungal Biology” at the University of Utrecht. Through the artist’s numerous talks and visits to laboratories, the artist gained a deeper understanding of how engineered materials can play a part of a more sustainable future.

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Because of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, Leelee Chan decided to adapt her original travelling plans and to start her BMW Art Journey in Europe. She currently plans to travel further to Mexico to study the symbolic value and meaning of crystals in Maya culture and explore the traditional and artistic manipulation of silver. The further course of her journey strongly depends on the development of the pandemic and will be monitored closely and be adapted to respect the latest rules and regulations.

Art Basel and BMW collaborate with the artist to document the journey and share it with a broader public through print publications, online and social media.

For further information and press material about the BMW Art Journey artists and their projects, please visit the new press section: www.bmw-art-journey.com/press

About Leelee Chan at Capsule Shanghai, Shanghai

Leelee Chan (b. 1984) lives and works in Hong Kong. She received her MFA in painting from the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in 2009 and her BFA from the School of Art Institute of Chicago in 2006. Chan's sculptures reflect her experience with the extreme urbanization in Hong Kong and are almost always comprised of dumpster detritus household ephemera, and mundane objects from her daily life not generally considered memorable or worth preserving. Derived from an impulse to interrogate these objects' status and value, Chan imaginatively explores their transformative potential and reconfigures each item according to its unique qualities. Chan's solo exhibition includes Capsule Shanghai. She has exhibited in recent group shows at Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong, and UCCA Dune, Qinhuangdao and Skulpturenpark Köln, Cologne.

Leelee Chan was selected as ninth BMW Art Journey winner from a shortlist of three artists, represented by galleries originally accepted into this year's Art Basel show in Hong Kong, during an online process. The international jury of experts included **Claire Hsu**, Executive Director, [Asia Art Archive](http://AsiaArtArchive.com), Hong Kong; **Matthias Mühl**, Director, [Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau](http://StaedtischeGalerieImLenbachhausUndKunstbau.com), Munich; **Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo**, President, [Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo](http://FondazioneSandrettoReRebaudengo.com), Turin; **Philip Tinari**, Director, [UCCA Center for Contemporary Art](http://UCCA.CenterforContemporaryArt.com), Beijing; and **Samson Young**, [artist](#) and winner of the first BMW Art Journey.

The next BMW Art Journey shortlist of three artists will presumably be announced in March 2021 during Art Basel Hong Kong.

Launched in 2015, the BMW Art Journey is a collaboration between Art Basel and BMW, created to recognize and support emerging artists worldwide. Now in its sixth year the initiative is evolving. Since 2020, the circle of eligible artists has been broadened. For the first time, eligible participants included not only emerging and mid-career artists from the Discoveries sector, but also artists represented by participating galleries founded no more than ten years ago. As this year's Art Basel show in Hong Kong had to be cancelled due to the outbreak and spread of Covid-19, the jury conducted its selection process online. Artists and their galleries were invited to submit digital applications, including a short video by the artists explaining their work and process.

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About Art Basel

Founded in 1970 by gallerists from Basel, Art Basel today stages the world's premier art shows for Modern and contemporary art, sited in Basel, Miami Beach, and Hong Kong. Defined by its host city and region, each show is unique, which is reflected in its participating galleries, artworks presented, and the content of parallel programming produced in collaboration with local institutions for each edition. Art Basel's engagement has expanded beyond art fairs through new digital platforms such as Art Basel's Online Viewing Rooms and new initiatives such as The Art Basel and UBS Global Art Market Report and The BMW Art Journey. For further information, please visit artbasel.com.

About BMW Group Cultural Engagement

For 50 years, 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 contemporary and modern art, classical music and jazz 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, Jeff Koons, Daniel Barenboim, Jonas Kaufmann and architect Zaha Hadid have cooperated with BMW. In 2016 and 2017, female artist Cao Fei from China and American John Baldessari created the next two vehicles for the BMW Art Car Collection. For years, the BMW Group and its partners have been initiating and establishing their own formats such as BMW Tate Live, BMW Welt Jazz Award, BMW Open Work, the BMW Art Journey and the "Opera for All" concerts in Berlin, Munich, Moscow and London. The company also partners with leading museums, art fairs and orchestras as well as jazz festivals and opera houses around the world. With BMW OPERA NEXT, the new partnership with the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, the opportunities presented by digitalisation are used to open up new ways of accessing the world of opera for young audiences. As part of its art programme "Muse", Rolls-Royce partners for the initiative "The Dream Commission" with two internationally esteemed art institutions. Together with Fondation Beyeler and Serpentine Galleries, emerging and established artists are invited to submit a moving-image work that delivers an immersive sensory experience. The artists are nominated and chosen by renowned personalities of the art world like Daniel Birnbaum, Suhanya Raffel, and Theodora Vischer. The BMW Group takes absolute creative freedom in all its cultural activities for granted – as this initiative is as essential for producing 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

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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 2019, the BMW Group sold over 2.5 million passenger vehicles and more than 175,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2019 was € 7.118 billion on revenues amounting to € 104.210 billion. As of 31 December 2019, the BMW Group had a workforce of 126,016 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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