

Media Information

March 1, 2021

**Singing, dancing, and spreading the love.**

Messages of hope and joy from around the world celebrate 50 years of BMW Group's cultural engagement.

**Munich.** From Ólafur Elíasson, Cao Fei and Stefan Sagmeister to Jonas Kaufmann, Sir Simon Rattle, the Munich Philharmonic and the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma to Esther Mahlangu and Victoria Siddall. The BMW Group is receiving manifold congratulatory messages from the international cultural world these days, all of them reflecting its long-term and diverse cultural commitment. For 50 years and with over 100 initiatives in the fields of **modern** and **contemporary art**, **classical music**, **jazz** and **sound** as well as **architecture** and **design**, the BMW Group has been an integral part of culture on a global scale.

It all started with three large-scale paintings by German artist Gerhard Richter commissioned by Eberhard von Kuenheim, then chairman of the board at BMW AG, in 1971. Ever since the opening of the iconic four-cylinder headquarters building by Karl Schwanzer in 1973, the three works titled "Rot", "Gelb" and "Blau" have been on display within the entrance hall of the company's headquarters and became the nucleus for the social responsibility of a business enterprise which also engages in intercultural dialogue way beyond its core business.

"Culture is a vehicle for change, the artistic venture takes place at the intersection to the future. This is where BMW risks innovation as well. And while different in content, the underlying attitude is the same. Visualizing ways towards innovation is an integral part of BMW as much as it is of cultural creativity," said Eberhard von Kuenheim, then chairman of the board at BMW AG, in 1984.

Maximilian Schöberl, Head of BMW Group Corporate and Intergovernmental Affairs and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Spielmotor München e.V. notes, "Especially in times of great societal change, the values of each individual continue to serve as a guideline for their actions. Corporate citizenship is precisely that: it acts as the guiding principle of a company's value system. What can we return to the society which enables our business success? I am proud to say that the BMW Group, besides maintaining creative freedom at any time, has always continued to pursue an open exchange and intercultural dialogue and is therefore able to enable many long-term and sustainable partnerships."

It is unique experiences and encounters that promote intercultural dialogue and reflect the principles and attitude of a company within the cultural world. With its broad and diverse network of partners, the cultural commitment of the BMW Group facilitates the creation of current narratives and helps to connect people all across the world – both physically and virtually. As a corporate citizen, the BMW Group believes in the importance of contributing to society in a sustainable way – in the past, present and in the future.

**50 years of BMW Group Cultural Engagement – 50 years of encounters**

Over five decades, the BMW Group has been engaged in partnerships with some of the most renowned cultural institutions worldwide based on mutual respect and curiosity which makes its cultural commitment a reliable actor in the cultural field. The BMW Group is grateful for a video campaign that shows the congratulatory messages arriving from around the world and will present them via social media throughout the year.

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**Marc Spiegler**, Global Director of Art Basel, which should have celebrated its 50 years of existence last year, sent his congratulations and is looking forward to a double anniversary in 2021, “Now, since we are not going to count 2020, we can celebrate our 50 years together.” Artist **Jeff Koons** sent his video message including the words, “Animate – inanimate, inside – outside, body – vehicle, DNA – BMW.” **Kate Bryan**, Head of Collections Soho House, builds miniatures of the BMW Art Car Collection and races them, **Hans Ulrich Obrist’s** congratulatory message is ended by a seagull, whereas the one by **Cao Fei** closes with a paradisiac bird-like creature. Jazz musician **Hannah Weiss** sings “Congratulations” and artist **Okuyama Hoseki** stops his craftsmanship to send his best wishes from Japan.

The broad range of those participating includes important personalities from every cultural sector – from artists, musicians and designers to curators, gallery owners and museum directors as well as to collectors and race drivers.

BMW Group Cultural Engagement received congratulations from i.a.: **Antoniou-Theodor Andreescu** (musician), **Richard Armstrong** (Director, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum), **Margarita Balanas** (cellist), **Anton Belov** (Director, Garage Museum of Contemporary Art), **Berlin Biennale**, **Geoff Blackwell** (CEO and publisher, Blackwell & Ruth), **Cassy Britton** (DJ), **Kate Bryan** (Head of Collections, Soho House & Co), **Astha Butail** (artist), **Alexandra Catiere** (artist), **Leelee Chan** (artist), **Maike Cruse** (Director, Gallery Weekend Berlin), **Simon Denny** (artist), **Chris Dercon** (President, Réunion des musées nationaux et du Grand Palais des Champs-Élysées), **Ken Done** (artist), **Ólafur Elíasson** (artist), **Augusto Farfus** (race driver), **Cao Fei** (Artist), **Simon Fox** (CEO, Frieze), **Alex Galmeanu** (photographer), **Francesca Gavin** (writer and curator), **Nadine Ghaffar** (Founder and General Manager, Art D’Egypte), **Venke and Rolf A. Hoff** (Founders, KaviarFactory), **India Art Fair**, **Jonas Kaufmann** (opera singer), **Jeff Koons** (artist), **Bose Krishnamachari** (President, Kochi Biennale Foundation), **Marcel Lazăr** (musician), **William Lim** (architect and collector), **Esther Mahlangu** (artist), **Mazaccio & Drowilal** (collaborative artist duo), **Trevyn and Julian McGowan** (Founders, Southern Guild), **Zubin Mehta** (conductor), **Dominique Meyer** (CEO, Teatro alla Scala), **Andra Mihai** (artist), **Paul Müller** (Executive Director, Munich Philharmonic), **Hans Ulrich Obrist** (Artistic Director, Serpentine Galleries), **Hoseki Okuyama** (artist), **Shwetal A. Patel** (Founding Member, Kochi-Muziris Biennale), **Sabin Penea** (musician), **Madalina Ioana Petre** (musician), **Georgie Pope** (Curator, Independent Collectors), **Hervé Poulain** (initiator and pilot of the BMW Art Car Collection), **Prateek and Priyanka Raja** (Founders, Experimenter), **Carlo Ratti** (Founding Partner, CRA – Carlo Ratti Associati), **Sir Simon Rattle** (Music Director, London Symphony Orchestra), **Magnus Resch** (art market entrepreneur), **Robin Rhode** (artist), **Stefan Sagmeister** (designer), **Philipp Schiepeck** (musician), **Matthias Schulz** (Director, Staatsoper Unter den Linden), **Victoria Siddall** (Global Director, Frieze Fairs), **Roman Sladek** (musician), **Marc Spiegler** (Global Director, Art Basel), **Julia Stoschek** (Director, Julia Stoschek Foundation), **András Szántó** (Cultural Strategist), **Teatro dell’Opera di Roma**, **Christoph Wiesner** (Director, Le Recontres d’Arles), **Lu Yang** (artist), **Gary Yeh** (Founder, ArtDrunk), **Samson Young** (artist) and **Vanessa Zerahn** (Independent Collectors).

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All video messages can be found [here](#).

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**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 co-operated 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](http://www.bmwgroup.com/culture) and [www.bmwgroup.com/culture/overview](http://www.bmwgroup.com/culture/overview)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BMW-Group-Culture>

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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.



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In 2020, the BMW Group sold over 2.3 million passenger vehicles and more than 169,000 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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