



Press release
March 2016

Change as a constant. A portrait of Karim Habib.



Karim Habib has been head of the BMW Design Team since 2012. The Lebanese-born Canadian leads a team of designers and developers working to constantly enhance and redevelop the designs of current and future BMW models. A sophisticated designer who grew up in five countries with vastly different cultures, he is committed to the idea of evolving design and is always striving to expand his range of skills. To this end, he doesn't merely apply himself to his immediate field; he also appreciates the more technical aspects of his work. The art of continuous self-improvement is one he developed early on as a member of the Canadian U-20 national fencing team and has put to use in various roles throughout his career. Apart from a short absence of two years, he has been part of the BMW Design team since 1998.

A passion for design.

The desire to give expression to his own aesthetic ideas came early to Karim Habib. Even as a child, he revealed his fondness for automobiles, enjoying

Company
Bayerische
Motoren Werke
Aktiengesellschaft

Postal Address
BMW AG
80788 München

Telephone
+49-89-382-0

Internet
www.bmwgroup.com



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nothing more than sketching cars and even creating his own marque, complete with a range of different models.

Karim Habib studied mechanical engineering at McGill University in Montreal and then focused on what would become his true passion – automotive design. He did postgraduate study at one of the most prestigious talent hotbeds for the automobile industry, the Art Center College of Design in Switzerland, also spending time at its USA branch. While working on a project there supervised by a tutor from the BMW Group, the budding designer had the opportunity to see at first hand the independent mentality of BMW Design. He was encouraged to question the design process itself and impressed with his daring and innovative work. Habib was won over by the fact that such a major car manufacturer was prepared to challenge and redefine accepted ways of thinking. Consequently, after finishing his studies, he started working for BMW's Interior Design team, followed by spells in the Exterior Design and Advanced Design departments.

Design as a way of shaping your world.

For Karim Habib, consciously designing things is a means of expressing the desire to change the world according to his own values. This involves a close examination of his environment and every aspect of a product. This way of thinking is also reflected in the design of the BMW Vision Future Luxury concept car, which embodies the BMW brand's understanding of modern luxury. Flawless proportions, coupled with precision, quality and elegance in every detail, blend with technological and functional innovations – tailored to optimum effect to the needs of all those on board; the car becomes a “personal space”. In order to combine emotional appeal with authenticity, the car has to be designed all the way from the drawing board with extensive customer connectivity in mind.

Habib also highlighted the potential importance of a brand's past in future design with the BMW 3.0 CSL Hommage. This concept car uses intelligent lightweight construction and modern materials to bring the character of the BMW 3.0 CSL – a timelessly classic and iconic BMW coupe from the 1970s – into the 21st century. Design cues you feel more than see lend this visionary car impressive emotional richness.



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Questioning fundamental factors continues to play an important role in successful development for the Canadian. He believes the evolution of design styles to be indispensable for long-term success, since only those who constantly challenge and reinvent themselves can survive and keep on improving. Habib finds particular excitement in technical innovations – such as connected and autonomous driving – which also open up all-new design opportunities.

Driven by a determination to ensure the constant forward momentum of design, in his capacity as Head of Design BMW Automobiles he aims to implement a system that actively supports creative freedom. He places great value on the integration of all parties involved in the design process – from the designer to the engineer. Only then can pioneering design be achieved. He sees his role appropriately summed up in the BMW Design leitmotif “Precision and Poetry” – as a moderator in the field of tension between defined quality and creative ambition.

On the personal side.

Karim Habib favours a pared-down design style. He is an admirer of the work of Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec and Patricia Urquiola, as well as the architectural designs of Rem Koolhaas, Herzog & DeMeuron and Zaha Hadid. He is particularly fascinated by their intellectual involvement with their own work. The minimalism of Mark Rothko’s works is also a source of inspiration for him.

Karim Habib is married and lives with his family in Munich.



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In the event of enquiries please contact:

BMW Corporate Communications

Matthias Bode, Spokesperson BMW Group Design
Phone: +49-89-382-61742, Fax: +49-89-382-20626

Cypselus von Frankenberg, Head of Innovation and Design Communication
Phone: +49-89-382-30641, Fax: +49-89-382-20626

Email: presse@bmw.de
Internet: www.press.bmwgroup.de

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 2015, the BMW Group sold approximately 2.247 million cars and nearly 137,000 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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