



Media Information

IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship

29<sup>th</sup> January 2017

## **Eighth place in Daytona for the 19<sup>th</sup> BMW Art Car.**

- **The BMW M6 GTLM Art Car, by John Baldessari, races into the history books.**
- **Mixed feelings for BMW Team RLL at IMSA season-opener.**
- **Turner Motorsport clinches eighth in GTD class.**

**Daytona. The 19<sup>th</sup> BMW Art Car experienced an eventful race appearance at the Daytona 24 Hours, finishing eighth in the GTLM class. The opening round of the 2017 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship (IWSC) once again offered fans excitement right down to the final lap.**

One of the highlights of the 24-hour race at the Daytona International Speedway was the BMW M6 GTLM Art Car, designed by American artist John Baldessari and driven by Bill Auberlen (USA), Alexander Sims (GBR), Augusto Farfus (BRA) and Bruno Spengler (CAN). After 652 laps of racing, Farfus took the chequered flag at the wheel of the 19<sup>th</sup> member of the BMW Art Car Collection. The quartet of drivers, as well as team principal Bobby Rahal's crew, delivered a focussed performance, despite difficult conditions with heavy rain and a total of 21 full-course yellows. GTLM victory went to the number 66 Ford.

The Baldessari car is only the third BMW Art Car in history to finish the 24-hour race it appeared in. The same feat was only achieved by Roy Lichtenstein's BMW 320i in the 1977 Le Mans 24 Hours and the BMW M1 Art Car created by Andy Warhol at the same event in 1979. Prior to this year's Rolex 24, the latest BMW Art Car appearance dated back to 2010, when the BMW M3 GT2 Art Car created by Jeff Koons was sent into action at Le Mans.





In contrast, the 55<sup>th</sup> Rolex 24 At Daytona came to an early end for the number 24 BMW M6 GTLM. Only 14 laps into the race, first-stint driver John Edwards (USA) came to a stop at the pit lane entrance after suffering vibration at the rear of the car. BMW Team RLL tried to get the BMW M6 GTLM back out onto the track, and Edwards did actually rejoin briefly after a long break for repairs. However, he was then forced to retire permanently just one lap later due to persisting powertrain issues. Martin Tomczyk (GER), Kuno Wittmer (CAN) and Nick Catsburg (NLD) did not play a part in the race.

The Turner Motorsport team delivered a fighting performance in the GTD class: Jens Klingmann (GER), Jesse Krohn (FIN), Maxime Martin (BEL) and Justin Marks (USA) lost ground – and several laps – due to repair work on their yellow number 96 BMW M6 GT3 following a collision they got involved in on Saturday night. Afterwards, however, the team moved up the ranks again, eventually finishing eighth out of 27 GTD competitors. Victory in this category was secured by the number 28 Porsche.

**Jens Marquardt (BMW Motorsport Director):** “Eighth place for the BMW M6 GTLM Art Car was a relatively conciliatory ending to a tough race for us. After the number 24 car had been forced to retire early with a technical issue, BMW Team RLL never gave up. In the end, however, a better result today was out of reach in difficult conditions. We had to fight with our hands tied for much of the race. The Turner Motorsport team also proved some good fighting spirit, finishing eighth in the GTD class to claim a respectable result with the BMW M6 GT3, despite losing a lot of time following an accident that was not their fault. On the whole, we would obviously have preferred a more successful start to the new IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season. However, it did not really come as a huge surprise to us that it was not easy – particularly on this track, which poses its own unique challenges for the cars. Everyone could see that the balance of performance is not yet perfect for this year’s field. Congratulations to Ford on this victory achieved in an exciting finale. Regardless of the sporting outcome of the Rolex 24, the outing of the 19<sup>th</sup> BMW Art Car, designed by John Baldessari, was a real highlight. The drivers and BMW Team RLL enjoyed racing this work of art at Daytona. We are already looking forward to this year’s second Art Car, designed by Cao Fei, which will be in action in Macau at the end of the year. As far as the IMSA season is concerned, we want to put on a stronger





display at the 12-hour race in Sebring in mid-March than we did here in Daytona.”

**John Baldessari (Artist, BMW Art Car #19):** “Everybody gave this their all, which makes me a happy man. In Daytona competition is fierce. I wholeheartedly thank BMW Motorsport, the drivers, the engineers as well as the mechanics. My car has now earned its spurs on the racetrack and has proven itself as the fastest work of art I ever created.”

**Bobby Rahal (Team Principal, BMW Team RLL):** “Everyone did a great job on the number 19 car. It’s a shame we went a lap down, because the opportunity to get the lap back didn’t ever present itself. The car ran reliably, the pitstops were good and the drivers did a great job. We’re very proud to have had the chance to compete with a BMW Art Car. We’ll forever be a part of its history. It’s obviously a disappointment for the number 24. The number of mechanical failures we’ve had during our 10-year relationship could probably be counted on one hand, so it’s a big surprise when we have an issue. I’m anxious to look into it further.”

**Bill Auberlen (No. 19 BMW M6 GTLM, eighth place):** “This is one of the highlights of my career, without any doubt. It’s going to go down in history, the 19<sup>th</sup> BMW Art Car will outlive us. To be part of the artwork, this vision from a master like John Baldessari, is a great privilege. I just wish we could’ve done better in the race. The BMW M6 GTLM ran perfectly, the team did a great job, and the drivers too. Hopefully we’ll come back fighting for the Sebring 12 Hours, and then for the rest of the IMSA season.”

**Alexander Sims (No. 19 BMW M6 GTLM, eighth place):** “It’s thoroughly special to race a BMW Art Car at the Daytona 24-hour race – to be in an Art Car, as historic as it is, is a massive privilege. To have my name on the side of this car is fantastic. We obviously came here to win, so in that regard this weekend proved to be honestly quite disappointing. Everyone in the team and at BMW did a good job this weekend, but we just lacked some pace – that’s that. I’m looking forward to the rest of the IMSA season. Everything is new to me, it’s a massive learning curve but I can’t wait to get stuck in.”





**Augusto Farfus (No. 19 BMW M6 GTLM, eighth place):** “It was a unique opportunity to write my name in BMW Art Car history. People might see my name on the BMW M6 GTLM Art Car in 50 or even 100 years’ time. This is something that will live with me forever. From a sporting point of view, it clearly wasn’t our race. The team did a fantastic job, the set up was perfect, the pitstops were great, all my team-mates drove superbly. Unfortunately, when you’re unlucky, you’re unlucky – even the full course yellows didn’t go in our favour.”

**Bruno Spengler (No. 19 BMW M6 GTLM, eighth place):** “Well, this wasn’t exactly what we had planned for this race. For the first time I was driving the car in the wet during the night of a 24h race. This was an exciting experience. However, compared to the opposition we were lacking speed. And in the decisive situations we weren’t lucky either. But we didn’t give up, the drivers didn’t make any mistakes. This fact will stay in my memory as well as the huge honour of driving the BMW Art Car. I’m very proud of having been a part of this.”

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