

Media information  
22 September 2025

## **BMW Art Car World Tour stop in Türkiye: Contemporary Istanbul celebrates 20th anniversary and 50 years of BMW Art Car Collection. Iconic BMW Art Cars by Alexander Calder and Julie Mehretu on display.**

**Istanbul/Munich.** Contemporary Istanbul, Türkiye's leading international art fair, will celebrate its 20th edition from 24–28 September 2025 at Tersane Istanbul. The 2025 edition reflects two decades of growth for the fair, which has become a vital meeting point for collectors, artists, and institutions from across the region and beyond. This year's fair programme includes a curated selection of galleries from around the world and landmark institutional collaborations. As part of the BMW Art Car World Tour, the very first BMW Art Car, designed by Alexander Calder, and the latest addition to the collection by Julie Mehretu #20 will be exhibited on the ground.

Contemporary Istanbul takes its place on the global stage as part of the ever-expanding BMW Art Car World Tour, a journey that will span continents and continue well into 2026. Marking the 50th anniversary of this iconic series, the tour brings together a constellation of exhibitions across five continents, enriched by a vibrant array of events. With Istanbul now joining the ranks of world capitals and premier cultural gatherings, the city cements its status as a vital hub in the international art landscape. The exhibited Art Cars will be shown side by side for the first time in Türkiye at the BMW Lounge in the partner section of Contemporary Istanbul and reflect the breadth and diversity of the BMW Art Car Collection. A dedicated BMW Art Talk as part of the fair's CIF Dialogues featuring Head of BMW Group Cultural Engagement Thomas Girst will dive deep into the history and individual anecdotes of the 20 rolling sculptures.

**Alexander Calder's BMW 3.0 CSL** laid the foundation for the iconic series when French racing driver and art dealer Hervé Poulain, together with then BMW Head of Motorsport Jochen Neerpasch, asked his artist friend Calder to paint a car. The completely reimagined 3.0 CSL patterned in red, yellow, blue, and white went on to compete in the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1975 and became a crowd favorite. Alexander Calder (1898-1976) was an American sculptor and artist and is regarded as one of the most influential exponents of Classical Modernism. He began his career as an engineer before turning to art. His most famous works are his mobiles – light, free-moving sculptures that are set in motion by air currents or electric motors – and his static, often-monumental metal sculptures known as "stables".

The Ethiopian born, New York based abstract painter **Julie Mehretu** created the latest and 20<sup>th</sup> car in the collection from a **BMW M Hybrid V8** in 2024 where it premiered at the Centre Pompidou in Paris and hit the racetrack at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Space, movement, and energy have always been central motifs in Mehretu's work. For her Art Car design she transformed a two-dimensional image

into a three-dimensional representation, with which she succeeded in bringing dynamism into form. Mehretu used the color and form vocabulary of her monumental painting "Everywhen" (2021-2023) as a starting point for her design. Its abstract visual form results from digitally altered photographs, which are superimposed in several layers of dot grids, neon-colored veils, and the black markings characteristic of Mehretu's work.

The BMW Art Car World Tour charts an ambitious course, with stops at prestigious destinations such as Art Basel Hong Kong, Le Mans Classic in France, Belgium's Zoute Grand Prix, the Shanghai Motor Show in China, and Italy's Concorso d'Eleganza, among others. Showcasing the collection of 20 iconic BMW Art Cars, the tour serves as a testament to the company's deep-rooted commitment to global cultural engagement—spanning more than a hundred initiatives across contemporary art, music, film, and design.

### **Contemporary Istanbul 2025 highlights and institutional collaborations**

Contemporary Istanbul's 20th fair edition also deepens its engagement with leading museums and art organisations worldwide. Special presentations will include contributions from the UBS Digital Art Museum (Hamburg), Sigg Art Foundation (Le Castellet), and others, underlining the fair's commitment to international dialogue.

### **CI 20 focus: America**

The fair's curated Focus Section this year will spotlight the contemporary art scene in the United States, with a particular emphasis on New York. Titled Focus America, the programme will explore the country's role in shaping global cultural narratives and foster new connections among artists, curators, and collectors. Institutional leaders from major US museums will take part in a series of panels, exhibitions, and networking events.

### **CIF Dialogues: "Dispersing Coordinates"**

CIF's annual conference, "Dialogues", returns this year under the theme "Dispersing Coordinates: Istanbul and the Shifting Map of Art." The programme will reflect on global cultural shifts and Istanbul's evolving position in the art world. Confirmed speakers include Jennifer Stockman (Honorary President, Guggenheim Museum), and Anne Pasternak (Director, Brooklyn Museum).

For more information and press accreditation:

[www.contemporaryistanbul.com](http://www.contemporaryistanbul.com)

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**Contemporary Istanbul Dates**

24 September: Preview

25 – 28 September: General Admission

BMW Lounge presence at Rixos Tersane Partner Section

BMW Art Talk at CIF Dialogues, 24 September at 3:30pm

The BMW Group's Cultural Engagement, with exclusive updates and deeper insights into its global initiatives can be followed on Instagram at [@BMWGroupCulture](https://www.instagram.com/BMWGroupCulture).

If you have any questions, please contact:

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**BMW Group Cultural Engagement**

State Opera for all Gerhard Richter **CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP** Kochi-Muziris Biennale  
BMW Art Cars Ólafur Elíasson Art Basel Max Hooper Schneider Städel Invites Frank Stella  
BMW Art Club **INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE** Art D'Égypte Cao Fei Esther Mahlangu  
Zaha Hadid Les Rencontres d'Arles Jeff Koons India Art Fair **LONGEVITY** Julie Mehretu  
**PARTNERSHIP** BMW Open Work by Frieze Andy Warhol Lu Yang Preis der Nationalgalerie  
Samson Young Bavarian State Opera **CREATIVE FREEDOM** BMW Young Artist Jazz Award  
Ken Done **INTERACTION** Premio de Pintura Gallery Weekend Berlin Art Market Budapest  
Paris Photo Leelee Chan Art Dubai **SUSTAINABILITY** BMW Photo Award Leipzig  
Teatro alla Scala BMW Classics Jenny Holzer BMW Art Guide by Independent Collectors

Why Culture? Why not! Culture is knowledge, a sanctuary of beauty and depth, of meaning and peace. An inspiring escape. Tranquil at best, even unsettling sometimes. As corporate citizen, the BMW Group takes social responsibility seriously, as part of which it has been involved in hundreds of cultural initiatives worldwide for over half a century, both in the arts, music & sound, architecture as well as in design. As a long-term partner, creative freedom is key – and as essential for groundbreaking works as it is for major innovations within a business enterprise like ours.

Further information: [www.bmwgroup.com/culture](http://www.bmwgroup.com/culture) and [www.bmwgroup.com/overview](http://www.bmwgroup.com/overview)

Instagram: [@BMWGroupCulture](https://www.instagram.com/BMWGroupCulture)

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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 services. The BMW Group production network comprises over 30 production sites worldwide; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2024, the BMW Group sold over 2.45 million passenger vehicles and more than 210,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2024 was € 11.0 billion on revenues amounting to € 142.4 billion. As of 31 December 2024, the BMW Group had a workforce of 159,104 employees.

The economic success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. Sustainability is a key element of the BMW Group's corporate strategy and covers all products from the supply chain and production to the end of their useful life.

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