

Media Information  
26 November 2025

## **African Film and Media Arts Collective (AFMAC) on display at the Marrakech International Film Festival.**

BMW Art Car #20 by Julie Mehretu presented alongside selected works by AFMAC lead artists.

**Marrakech/Munich.** The **African Film and Media Arts Collective (AFMAC)** is set to arrive in Marrakech following the successful completion of its first workshops with African filmmakers and visual artists in Lagos, Tangier, and Nairobi. Continuing her BMW Art Car project, the AFMAC initiative was launched in April this year by internationally renowned artist Julie Mehretu, in collaboration with Emmy-nominated film producer Mehret Mandefro and BMW. As the long-term mobility partner of the Marrakech International Film Festival (28 November – 6 December), Smeia, the exclusive importer of BMW in Morocco, together with BMW AG, will offer insights into works from AFMAC lead artists Zeresenay Berhane Mehari, Wanuri Kahiu, Jim Chuchu and The Otolith Group, as well as impressions from the workshops next to Mehretu's **BMW Art Car** on the festival grounds during the opening weekend.

## **10 years of partnership between Smeia, the official BMW importer in Morocco, and Marrakech International Film Festival**

Established in 2001, the **Marrakech International Film Festival** aims to support and promote both the art of cinema and the film industry in Morocco. Smeia, the official BMW importer in Morocco, has been the mobility partner of the Marrakech International Film Festival for the past ten years enhancing each guest's journey with elegance and distinction. Over the last two decades, the festival has evolved into a vibrant platform for creativity and exploration, celebrating the values of diversity, cultural exchange, and mutual enrichment.

For its 22<sup>nd</sup> edition the Marrakech International Film Festival celebrates world cinema with a selection of 82 films from 31 countries, presented in several sections: the Official Competition, Gala Screenings, Horizons section, the 11<sup>th</sup> Continent, Moroccan Panorama, Young Audiences and Families, and films screened in parallel with Tributes given to film personalities. The Official Competition showcases new talent in world cinema with 14 first and second feature films that compete for the Étoile d'or, awarded by a jury headed this year by South Korean director and multiple award winner Bong Joon-ho. Additionally, the festival will honour Jodie Foster, Guillermo del Toro, Raouya, and Hussein Fahmi – four exceptional figures whose careers showcase the diversity and richness of cinema. Highlights of this year's festival programme include screenings of film productions such as *Dead Man's Wire* (opening film/ Gala) by

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Gus Van Sant and Akinola Davies Jr.'s *My Father's Shadow* (Official Competition). All details on this year's official selection can be found [here](#).

Smeia, BMW and AFMAC are also collaborating with the festival's **Atlas Workshops**, an industry and talent development programme. As part of this partnership, Mehret Mandefro and Zeresenay Berhane Mehari will share insights into their work with the Atlas Station participants on 30 November at 12noon. The panel "Beyond the Gaze: Authentic African Stories and the Creative Journey" explores the promise and perils of authentic storytelling as part of the creative process building AFMAC. Zeresenay Berhane Mehari will talk about his creative process and explore how to protect voice and vision in a global marketplace that often requires compromise.

### **AFMAC at Marrakech International Film Festival**

At this year's festival edition, Julie Mehretu's BMW Art Car #20 will be showcased on the festival grounds, surrounded by an **AFMAC Hub**. Julie Mehretu [unveiled her BMW M Hybrid V8 Art Car at the Centre Pompidou](#) in 2024, marking the first time in the collection's history that an artist developed an Art Car that goes far beyond the car as a pure art object. In collaboration with BMW and Mehret Mandefro, Mehretu launched the African Film and Media Arts Collective (AFMAC), which has been hosting workshops in 2025 and 2026 across African cities such as Dakar, Lagos, and Cape Town. The initiative aims to nurture creativity and foster collaboration with emerging African artists and filmmakers.

"The magic of bringing people together starts with us. AFMAC creates forums for conversations in small, critical masses and surfaces resources to take the next steps. We build on the work of our local cultural partners: They already created a grounded cultural infrastructure, showing that art is not just a nice-to-have but a must-have. The talent and cultural energy emerging from these cities is electric – culture cannot be gated, it will always find a way to be heard," says **Mehret Mandefro**, co-founder of AFMAC.

The outcomes of the AFMAC workshops will be exhibited alongside the 20<sup>th</sup> BMW Art Car at the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA) in Cape Town at the end of 2026. The presentation at the Marrakech International Film Festival offers a unique opportunity to gain first insights into the ongoing project ahead of the final exhibition. The display of Mehretu's BMW M Hybrid V8 in Marrakech is part of the BMW Art Car World Tour, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the legendary BMW Art Car Collection this year. To mark this

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jubilee, the tour features an exhibition programme spanning all five continents and including numerous accompanying events.

The AFMAC hub on the festival grounds in Marrakech is open to all visitors and located some meters away from the epicentre of the Film Festival Masterclasses, the Meydene theatre at **M Avenue Marrakech**. It offers an exclusive opportunity to explore selected works by leading artists, **Wanuri Kahiu, The Otolith Group, and Zeresenay Berhane Mehari**:

### **Jim Chuchu**

**"Invocations: Release"** (2015), a single-channel video work, portrays an African body navigating tradition, expectation, and self-determination, using ritualistic movement and visual metaphors to transform constraint into liberation.

**"Carrying Capacities"** (2025) is a rhythmic visual meditation using aerial perspectives and editing to explore Earth's landscapes, cities, human activity, and environmental alteration, reflecting on the planet's ability to sustain human impact.

### **Wanuri Kahiu**

Through the trailer to the Sci-Fi short film **"Pumzi"** (2009) visitors encounter a futuristic Africa, 35 years after World War III 'The Water War'. In a world where nature is extinct and the outside is dead, museum curator Asha defies the Maitu Council's restrictions to plant a germinating seedling outside, hoping to uncover signs of life.

### **The Otolith Group**

Inspired by the poet Rabindranath Tagore's 1921 lecture **"The Message of the Forest"** at Berlin's Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität—recorded on shellac at the Hotel Esplanade—the Otolith Group's eponymous work bridges nearly a century of time. The digitized recording of Tagore's voice, which envisioned the world campus he would establish that same year at Visva Bharati University in West Bengal, now speaks to ancient Banyan trees and today's students. Through separate paths of image and sound, the work connects the ancient past to the distant future of a changing planet.

### **Zeresenay Berhane Mehari**

Through the trailer to the feature film **"Difret"** visitors encounter the story of a young Ethiopian girl and a lawyer who challenge deeply-rooted cultural traditions

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to fight for equal rights. When 14-year-old Hirut is abducted for marriage and kills her captor in self-defense, lawyer Meaza steps in to save her from a death sentence, risking everything to confront one of Ethiopia's oldest traditions.

**African Film and Media Arts Collective – Past and future stations**

April 2025: Lagos, Nigeria, in partnership with Angels & Muse  
Lead artist: Coco Fusco

July 2025: Tangier, Morocco, in partnership with Cinematheque de Tanger  
Lead artist: Zeresenay Berhane Mehari

October 2025: Nairobi, Kenya, in partnership with Docubox  
Lead artists: Jim Chuchu and Wanuri Kahiu

December 2025: Dakar, Senegal, in partnership with Fanta Sy and Raw Material Company  
Lead artist: Mati Diop

January 2026: Cape Town, South Africa, in partnership with Chimurenga  
Lead artist: The Otolith Group

10 December 2026 – 15 August 2027: Final exhibition at Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art (Zeitz MOCAA), Cape Town, South Africa

**Biographies of the founders and lead artists**

**Julie Mehretu** is a world-renowned American artist, born in Addis Ababa in 1970. Mehretu's practice in painting, drawing and printmaking engages the viewer in a dynamic visual articulation of contemporary experience. Notable accolades include the MacArthur Award, the US Department of State Medal of Arts Award, and, in 2025, she was awarded the rank of Officer of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture. Her work has been exhibited widely at museums, biennials and galleries around the globe. Mehretu is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the National Academy of Design and the National Academy of Sciences in Ethiopia. She sits on the board of the Whitney Museum of American Art, is a trustee and alumna of the American Academy in Berlin, a Global Council Member

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at Zeitz MOCAA, and is co-founder and board member of Denniston Hill. Mehretu lives and works in New York City.

**Mehret Mandefro** is an Emmy-nominated producer, writer, and serial entrepreneur born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Her body of work explores hidden truths and spans documentary and fiction, film and television, art and science. She co-founded the multi-media production company Truth Aid Media and founded the research enterprise Truth Aid Impact, A51 Pictures in Ethiopia, as well as the Realness Institute in South Africa. She was formerly the Executive Producer of Kana Television in Ethiopia and is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science.

**Robin Coste Lewis**, born in 1964 in Compton, California, is the author of "Voyage of the Sable Venus" (2015), which won the National Book Award for Poetry. The former poet laureate of Los Angeles, Lewis holds a PhD in Poetry and Visual Studies from the University of Southern California, an MFA in poetry from New York University, an MTS in Sanskrit and comparative religious literature from the Divinity School at Harvard University, and a BA from Hampshire College in post-colonial literature and creative writing. Her work has appeared in various journals and anthologies, including The New Yorker, The New York Times, The Paris Review, Transition, and The Massachusetts Review. Lewis has taught at Hampshire College, Hunter College, Wheaton College, and the NYU Low-Residency MFA in Paris. She is currently writer in residence at the University of Southern California.

**Mati Diop** is a French-Senegalese filmmaker born in Paris in 1982. With her first feature film, "Atlantics" (2019), which won the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival followed by "Dahomey" (2024) awarded by The Golden Bear of Berlinale, (both shortlisted at the Oscars), she has established herself as one of the leading figures of international auteur cinema and a new wave in African and diasporic cinema.

**Coco Fusco** born in 1960 in New York City is a video and performance artist. With her multidisciplinary practice, Fusco explores the ways that intercultural dynamics affect the construction of the self and ideas about cultural otherness. Her work is in the collections of major museums worldwide and she received numerous awards.

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**Wanuri Kahiu** is an award-winning filmmaker, speaker, and science fiction writer. Her film, "Rafiki," was the first Kenyan film to screen at Cannes, earning global recognition. Named one of TIME's 100 Next in 2019, she is a cultural leader for the World Economic Forum and an advocate for freedom of expression. Through AFROBUBBLEGUM, Kahiu champions fun, fierce and frivolous African art. She directed "Washington Black" for Hulu/20th Century Fox, Netflix's "Look Both Ways," and is set to direct Disney's "Once on This Island".

**Zeresenay Berhane Mehari**, born in 1974, is an Ethiopian filmmaker and co-founder of A51 Pictures. He is notable as the director of the critically acclaimed films "Difret" (winner of Sundance and Berlinale Panorama Audience Awards) and "Sweetness in the Belly". Apart from cinema, he co-founded and served as the Head of Original Content for Kana Television, the largest free-to-air, private satellite entertainment TV channel in Ethiopia.

**The Otolith Group** was founded in London in 2002 by curators and artists Anjalika Sagar, born 1968, and Kodwo Eshun, born 1967 both in London. Their research-based work spans across moving images, audio, performance, and installations and engages with post-human discourses, building intergenerational and cross-cultural platforms.

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  
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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

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