Media Information
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**BMW 7 Series Individual by Esther Mahlangu now in South Africa**

**Midrand/Mpumalanga**. 26 years ago, Esther Mahlangu, a South African Ndebele artist, was the first woman to create artwork on a BMW 525i Sedan turning it into a unique and colourful BMW Art Car. In 2016, Esther was once again commissioned by the BMW Group to refine a BMW 7 Series. The vehicle was on display at the Frieze Art Fair which took place in London in 2016. Simultaneously, the original BMW 525i Art Car was part of the exhibition “South Africa: the art of a nation” at the British Museum, functioning as a significant piece and highlighting Esher Mahlangu’s key role in South African art.

BWW Group South Africa is now the proud owner of Esther’s specially commissioned BMW panels painted in Ndebele art which have been installed into a new BMW 750Li Individual. The vehicle will form part of BMW Group South Africa’s Heritage Collection and will be utilised as a display vehicle at various Arts & Cultural events with the blessing of Esther Mahlangu in order to preserve her cultural heritage for the people of South Africa.

“I am so glad that BMW brought my art back to South Africa, it is a beautiful car to be shared with the people of South Africa for many years to come,” says Esther Mahlangu.

“The patterns I have used on the BMW panels marry tradition to the essence of BMW. When BMW sent me the panels to paint, I could see the design in my head and I just wanted to get started! I started by painting the small ones first to get the feel of the surface and then it was easy as the design follows the lines of the panels,” she adds.

Mr Tim Abbott, CEO of BMW Group South Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, is proud that Esther’s work will now be preserved in her home country. “We are delighted to share Esther’s legacy with the people of South Africa. Esther embraces her traditional heritage passionately and has dedicated her entire life to the development and promotion of Ndebele art”.

The BMW Individual 7 Series by Esther Mahlangu is a right-hand drive vehicle, boasting an array of equipment from the comprehensive BMW Individual Collection in addition to the unique features incorporated by the BMW Individual Manufaktur. The 20-inch light alloy wheels in w-spoke styling underscore the elegant appearance of the BMW 7 Series while the exterior bodywork is coated in BMW Individual Aventurine Red Metallic.

The interior features BMW Individual full fine-grain Merino leather in Smoke White/Black, the highest quality leather available for a BMW, including seats with weave-look stitching and hand-woven piping. The leather’s natural smoothness and its fine structure offers a unique look and feel. The full leather trim also includes the rear panelling of the front seats, the upper and lower instrument panel as well as the door panels (upper instrument panel and door panels upper-arm trim in black Walknappa leather). A BMW Individual leather steering wheel with applications in Piano finish Black and an Alcantara headliner in Smoke White complete the exclusive ambience of the interior.

The prestigious BMW 750Li is powered by a high-performance BMW TwinPower Turbo V8 petrol engine, 330 kW (combined fuel consumption: 8.0 l/100 km; combined CO2 emissions: 187 g/km) and a powerful maximum torque of 650 Nm. The dynamic sedan sprints from 0 to100 km/h in just 4.7 seconds; top speed is limited to 250 km/h. The BMW 750Li features an 8-speed Steptronic transmission and has the lowest vehicle weight in its segment.

The BMW Group has a long tradition of creating the automotive future. We believe the best way to predict the future is to create it. With the BMW 7 Series Individual we are creating tomorrow’s luxury today.

Thanks to game-changing innovations, benchmarking comfort and contemporary design as well as dynamics that are both impressive and highly efficient.

**For Esther Mahlangu, art is created from tradition.**

Esther Mahlangu was born a member of the Ndebele tribe in 1935 in Middelburg, a small town in the north-eastern province of Mpumalanga. At the early age of 10, she began to paint under the guidance of her mother and grandmother.

Traditionally, Ndebele women decorate the exterior walls of houses with elaborately painted patterns and graphic elements, symbolising important events such as weddings or other celebrations, thus the walls are used as active communicative media within the community. Esther Mahlangu has separated these decorations and patterns from her people‘s traditional art of painting. In the form of pictures, vessels or carpets, she has constantly brought it into new contexts, thereby combining her artwork with items used in everyday life.

**Experience personal style with BMW Individual.**

Products from the BMW Individual Collection offer the customer unique equipment options. They comprise equipment features that are perfectly aligned to each BMW model, including exclusive paint finishes (such as silky matt BMW Individual Frozen paint finishes), high quality leather, special interior trims and other equipment options. If a customer should desire even greater individuality, the BMW Individual Manufaktur will find a solution and implement it with meticulousness, precision and masterful craftsmanship. The results are personalized one-of-a-kind vehicles that uniquely reflect the owner’s unmistakable character. In order to achieve this, the BMW Individual Manufaktur offers a virtually inexhaustible spectrum of possibilities. These include more than 100 special paint finishes, which are available in uni, metallic, high gloss or bicolour finish.

BMW Individual Manufaktur offers countless possibilities to design the interior according to personal preference. Initials or logos on the interior trim, door sill finishers, headrests or sun protection blinds are just a few ways of personalising a vehicle. The BMW Individual Manufaktur is even able to incorporate a customer’s own materials into the design of the vehicle. Experts at the BMW Individual Manufaktur have both the experience and the know-how to implement virtually any desired equipment option. The vehicles created in this way are not simply unique, but also impressively demonstrate the outstanding craftsmanship and the nature of the BMW Individual Manufaktur – customer orientation of the highest degree.

**About BMW Group’s Cultural Commitment**

For almost 50 years now, the BMW Group has initiated and engaged in over 100 cultural cooperation’s 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 artist John Baldessari created the next two vehicles for the BMW Art Car Collection.

 Besides co-initiatives, such as BMW Tate Live, the BMW Art Journey and the “Opera for All” concerts in Berlin, Munich and London, the company also partners with leading museums and art fairs as well as orchestras and opera houses around the world. The BMW Group takes absolute creative freedom in all its cultural activities – as this initiative is as essential for producing ground-breaking artistic work as it is for major innovations in a successful business.

**In the event of media enquiries please contact:**

Lindsay Pieterse

Manager: Planning, Steering & Lifestyle Communications

Group Communications Division

BMW Group South Africa (Pty) Ltd

Telephone No: +27-12-522-2210

Mobile: +27-71-666-2210

E-Mail: lindsay.pieterse@bmw.co.za

Edward Makwana

Manager: Group Product Communications

Group Communications Division

BMW Group South Africa (Pty) Ltd

Tel: +27-12-522-2227

Mobile: +27-71-666-2227

Email: edward.makwana@bmw.co.za

Internet: [www.press.bmwgroup.com/south-africa](http://www.press.bmwgroup.com/south-africa)

**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 31 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2016, the BMW Group sold approximately 2.367 million cars and 145,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax was approximately € 9.67 billion on revenues amounting to € 94.16 billion. As of 31 December 2016, the BMW Group had a workforce of 124,729 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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