

Media information

4 April 2024

**BMW Group South Africa presents Lifetime Achievement Award to Dr. Esther Mahlangu at South African Creative Arts Awards.**

+++ BMW Group South Africa honours Esther Mahlangu at South African Creative Awards +++ Celebration of Esther Mahlangu's remarkable journey and legacy +++ Esther Mahlangu's collaboration with the BMW Group spans over three decades +++

**Midrand.** BMW Group South Africa presented long-term collaborator Dr. Esther Mahlangu with the distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award at the inaugural South African Creative Arts Awards (SACA). As a great honour bestowed upon the recipient, the award recognises Esther Mahlangu's exceptional contributions and accomplishments over her 50-year career as a contemporary artist.

The new awards ceremony was held at Sandton Convention Centre on Saturday, 30 March. Minister Zizi Kodwa of the Department of Sports, Arts, and Culture announced the introduction of the all-encompassing awards celebration last year to recognise individuals who show outstanding artistic and technical achievements in the arts and culture sector.

**A story of art and innovation.**

Alongside the rest of the country, BMW Group South Africa celebrated Esther Mahlangu's remarkable journey and legacy. And, more sentimentally, the award handover exemplified the valued partnership between the global automotive giant and the globally acclaimed visual artist that spans over 30 years.

In 1991, BMW Group selected Esther Mahlangu as the 12<sup>th</sup> Art Car artist, making her the first African and the first woman commissioned to create a BMW Art Car. The distinctive design on the now-iconic BMW 525i Art Car resulted in a standout moment in the art world, with Esther Mahlangu lending her talent to groundbreaking industrial applications of future automotive designs. Her traditional Ndebele elements, synonymous with her style, feature in subsequent work with the BMW brand.

**In retrospect.**

Esther Mahlangu's portfolio reflects bold and contemporary work that is a canvas for her cultural identity. The Iziko Museums of South Africa and BMW Group South Africa proudly announced the commemorative exhibition, titled **"Then I Knew I Was Good at Painting": Esther Mahlangu. A Retrospective.** Curated by Nontobeko Ntombela, the ongoing exhibition highlights Mahlangu's creative evolution across various media and objects. Central to the retrospective is the BMW 525i Art Car, which makes its return to South Africa after over three decades abroad, where it graced other exhibitions.

The retrospective is a comprehensive overview of Esther Mahlangu's contribution to the art world and offers insight into the unique intersection of tradition, culture, and modernity. The artist's impact also extends beyond her collaboration with BMW Group – a recognition that the awards ceremony drives home. The vibrant geometric artwork embodies the richness of South African culture and the unwavering spirit of its people.

BMW Group South Africa Director: Government Affairs and Communications Thilosh Moodally, commented, "We are honoured to present the Lifetime Achievement Award to Mam' Esther Mahlangu. We are especially grateful to be in her presence this evening. To witness a living icon – one who has contributed significantly to the innovation that we so greatly believe in – is truly precious. We thank the Minister for introducing this important awards recognition that inspires a nation and beyond. We also thank the country for continuously championing the pioneering work of Mam' Esther."

**ENDS**

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If you have any questions, please contact:

**Corporate Communications**

Angela Konert

Head of Business Communications

Phone: +27 71 666 2472

Email: [Angela.Konert@bmw.co.za](mailto:Angela.Konert@bmw.co.za)<https://www.press.bmwgroup.com/south-africa>**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 and mobility 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 2023, the BMW Group sold over 2.55 million passenger vehicles and more than 209,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2023 was € 17.1 billion on revenues amounting to € 155.5 billion. As of 31 December 2023, the BMW Group had a workforce of 154,950 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company set the course for the future at an early stage and consistently makes sustainability and efficient resource management central to its strategic direction, from the supply chain through production to the end of the use phase of all products.

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