

Press release
January 2012

Driven by Design. **A portrait of Adrian van Hooydonk.**



Since February 2009, Adrian van Hooydonk has been in charge of all the design teams in the BMW Group. This means he is responsible for the design of a large number of cars, motorcycles and other objects every year. Hailing from the Netherlands, he is known as an interdisciplinary and visionary thinker with a highly developed business sense. He has a commanding and stylish presence, but his basic attitude is one of candour. In the industry Adrian van Hooydonk has made a name for himself as a design manager, and his visions are considered groundbreaking.

The apprentice years: a life takes shape.

The chief designer of the BMW Group is a design man through and through; he lives for industrial design in general and automobile design in particular. Even as a child he was fascinated by things that moved under their own power – cars. Adrian van Hooydonk followed his early vocation and studied industrial design at Delft Polytechnic University, where he chiefly got to know the technical side of product design. He went more deeply into the art of draughtsmanship on one of the auto industry's most important seedbeds of talent, the Art Center College of Design in Vevey, Switzerland, where he completed a postgraduate degree. It was there that he first came into contact with BMW, which ultimately led to a job in Munich once he had completed his studies. Adrian van Hooydonk is happily cosmopolitan, but as a Dutchman by birth he feels bound to the design tradition of his homeland. At the same time he is strongly drawn to Italy, the home of design, where in a gap between degree courses he had an opportunity to work in the studio of Rodolfo Bonetto. There followed a short period as a freelance designer in the Netherlands, from which a further facet of Adrian van Hooydonk emerged: the design manager.

His philosophy: progressive thinking with an open mind.

Adrian van Hooydonk sees himself as generalist. He admires his early mentor Rodolfo Bonetto as much as he does Chuck Pelly, the founder of DesignworksUSA. Both have been able to combine two different worlds in their work – those of industrial design and automotive design.

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This integrated approach is reflected not only in his own career path, starting as an exterior designer at BMW. As President of DesignworksUSA Adrian van Hooydonk placed the emphasis on industrial design before returning to BMW Design. It is an approach that remains key to his philosophy today: car design is not a discipline that stands on its own. It is embedded in people's social environment and bound up with other products that surround them. And so Adrian van Hooydonk cultivates contact with other well-known designers or artists and promotes numerous collaborative projects. For example, at the Milan Furniture Fair he exhibits works created jointly with industrial designers – these peer-to-peer exchanges of ideas serving as both a source of inspiration and a yardstick for his own work. At a personal level he is very interested in the work of Olafur Eliasson, Jeff Koons, Gerhard Richter, Rem Koolhaas, Frank Gehry and the architectural practice Herzog & de Meuron.

His working method: creative freedom.

As Senior Vice President BMW Group Design, Adrian van Hooydonk is working with a 500-strong team on the development of a keenly emotional and authentic design language. He considers his work a success if this language is appropriately decoded by the market and consequently accepted. In a unique design process, Adrian van Hooydonk succeeds in motivating his staff to achieve maximum creativity. In this role as “design coach” he formulates the setting of the task as broadly as possible. It is concept cars that grant the design chief the greatest room for creative manoeuvre; they give him the opportunity to spark off thought processes within the company as well as the general public. In this he has had particular success with the BMW Vision EfficientDynamics, where he has created an icon for the future of driving pleasure. This concept car epitomises sustainable mobility while at the same time embodying a perfect blend of groundbreaking efficiency and hallmark BMW dynamics. With the BMW Vision ConnectedDrive, another concept car, van Hooydonk has succeeded in giving a face to the future connectivity of the automobile and in designing the technologies of tomorrow with a strong element of emotional appeal.

On the personal side.

Adrian van Hooydonk recharges his batteries by travelling, he enjoys driving cars and riding motorbikes, speaks five languages, visits museums and draws inspiration from art and architecture. He is fascinated by what makes people tick, approaching them with great sensitivity and close attention, and in this way finding the appropriate solutions. Adrian van Hooydonk is married and lives in Munich.

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The BMW Group

The BMW Group is one of the most successful manufacturers of automobiles and motorcycles in the world with its BMW, MINI, Husqvarna Motorcycles and Rolls-Royce brands. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 25 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2011, the BMW Group sold about 1.67 million cars and more than 113,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for the financial year 2010 was euro 4.8 billion on revenues amounting to euro 60.5 billion. At 31 December 2010, the BMW Group had a workforce of approximately 95,500 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been built 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. As a result of its efforts, the BMW Group has been ranked industry leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes for the last seven years.

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