

CLASSIC DRIVER

[This post-modern Porsche 911 art car was inspired by the Memphis Group](#)

Lead

The Memphis Milano group revolutionized Italian culture in the 1980s with their ironic, non-conformist and colourful designs. But did you know the artist collective also inspired and created a post-modern Porsche 911 art car?



While many artists seek to express their visions and feelings on a canvas, others use more three-dimensional mediums to connect with the people and world around them, and an all-white car is perhaps the perfect candidate. The choice of car, however, can be a tricky one, but in the case of renowned Italian artist Cleto Munari, the Porsche 996 had curves in all the right places to let him and his closest friends run riot. Cleto Munari first met the architect Carlo Scarpa in 1973, forming a bond that lasted decades, directing all his research and activities towards industrial design, working for major companies worldwide. Over the years, Munari created objects out of just about any material, but it was those expertly made of gold and silver that he is perhaps best known for, occupying permanent collections of many major museums around the world, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

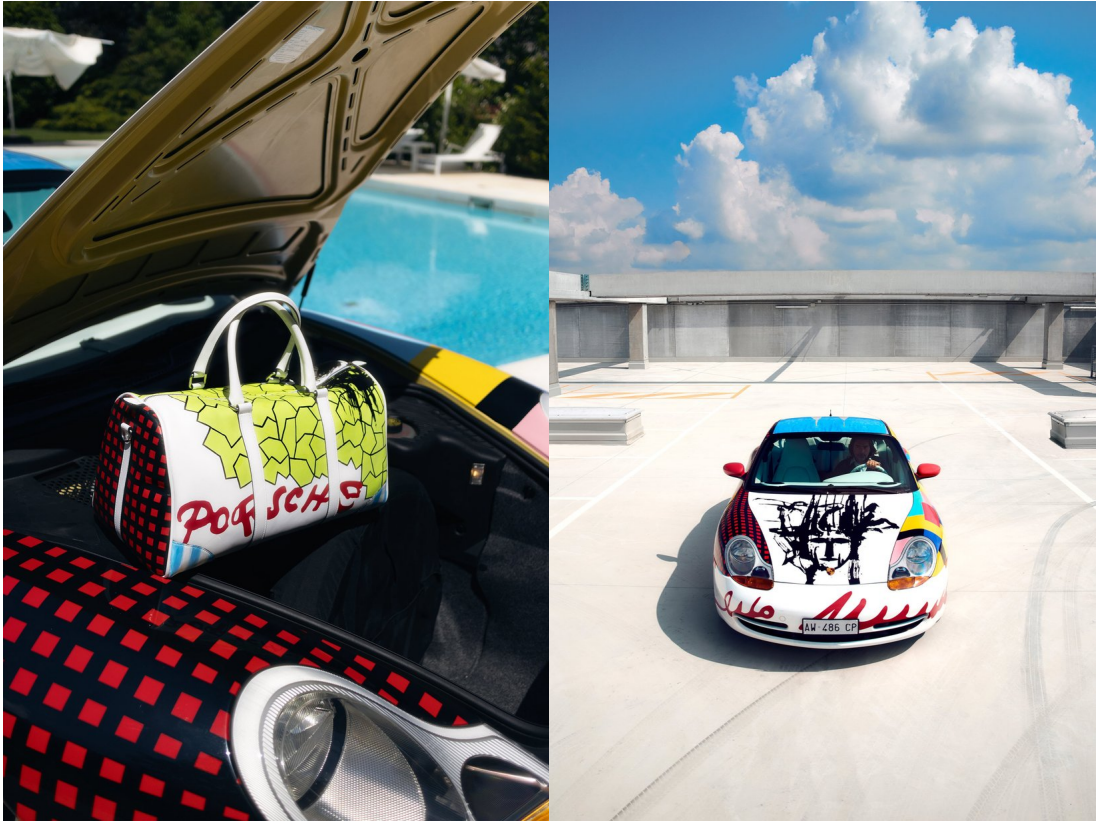


From golden sculptures to the golden-egg yolk headlights of the 996-generation Porsche, the art car's life began much the same as every other example of Stuttgart's sports cars. First registered in 1998 sporting a pastel yellow over classic black leather, the car was snapped up by Aurelio De Laurentis' firm FilmAuro, where it was promptly cast for the big screen in the movie 'Paparazzi'. It was from here that this 996's life was began to take a very different trajectory. After filming, the general manager of Porsche Italia, a Dr. Casadei and the famed Vicenza designer Mr Cleto Munari got together and agreed to use it in a major project that brought together artists and the automotive world.

Work promptly began on setting up the car for its new role as a blank canvas, to be later shown at an exhibition curated by the well-known critic Achille Bonito Oliva, held at the then-upcoming Castel Sant'Angelo: 'The figure of things' in the year 2000. In order for the art to work, the car needed a colour change, and the 996's unique yellow paint was changed to white, with a white deerskin leather interior to match, allowing Cleto Munari's vision to come to life. He called upon four of the leading figures of post-modern art and design: Alessandro Mendini, Ettore Sottsass, Mimmo Paladino and César Pelli to work on different panels on the Porsche, allowing the car to take on an entirely different look from every angle.



Mendini, renowned for his love of late 1970s design, created a multi-coloured cubist structure reminiscent of two of his masterpieces – the Alessi corkscrew and the Proust armchair. In complete contrast, Italian-Austrian Sottsass – known as the founding father of the Memphis Group and for the design of the iconic Olivetti typewriters and calculators – returned to his beginnings with a mosaic of squares on a black base that faded from red to salmon pink. Paladino, a lover of techniques such as graffiti and mosaic, gave the Porsche's bonnet a makeover, featuring a black tribal mask. Finally, the architect César Pelli, designer of the Petronas towers in Kuala Lumpur, redesigned his skyscrapers on the roof of Porsche with the sky blue symbolising a perfect summer's day. To finish off the rolling art, Cleto Munari himself got to work on signing the car all around the bumpers with the words 'Cleto Munari for Porsche', as well as creating the very refined acid yellow-green puzzle graphics along the rear of the car.



The result is a car that invigorates the senses, with each panel contrasting the next. Once complete and exhibited, the AutoOpera 996 was auctioned during the 2016 Porsche Festival in Misano Adriatica, where it was donated by Porsche to raise money for earthquake victims. It has since been exhibited in various festivals around the world and continues to inspire generations of new and established artists to push the limits of creativity.



While the car is very much a one-off, our friends from Studiosokue in Hamburg have taken inspiration from the post-modern Porsche art car and collaborated with K&YFOB to bring us the perfect weekend bag for the art and Porsche connoisseur. Hand-crafted in Italy from the finest high-quality leather, the StudioSokue x K&YFOB Art Bag embodies the ethos of the avant-garde Memphis Milano group. The best part? You can now pick up one for yourself now in the CD Shop!

Photos: Tom Wheatley, private archive of Mr. Christian Stove

[SHOP NOW](#)

Gallery

