

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## [From iconic to forgotten, here's your ultimate guide to all 20 BMW Art Cars](#)

### Lead

The Art of Speed: Since Alexander Calder first transformed a BMW 3.0 CSL Le Mans racer into a fast-paced canvas in 1975, BMW's Art Cars have embodied the perfect intersection of automotive engineering and artistic expression. For the 50th anniversary we look back at all 20 BMW Art Cars.



### 1. Alexander Calder - BMW 3.0 CSL (1975)

The first-ever BMW Art Car, Calder's 3.0 CSL turned the Bavarian racer into a sculpture in motion with bold primary colors and dynamic curves that mirror speed itself. His vibrant color blocks and flowing lines accentuate the car's aerodynamic form, making it seem like a streak of motion even when standing still.



### 2. Frank Stella - BMW 3.0 CSL (1976)

Stella's meticulous grid pattern transformed the 3.0 CSL into an intricate technical drawing, reflecting both precision engineering and the art of racing strategy. The black-and-white geometric design evokes a blueprint, emphasizing the structured yet dynamic nature of high-performance racing.



### 3. Roy Lichtenstein - BMW 320i Group 5 (1977)

With bold, comic-style dots and sweeping lines, Lichtenstein's Art Car captures the speed of the track as a visual storyline racing across the BMW 320i. His signature pop-art aesthetic turns the car into a moving illustration, where the colorful, flowing lines suggest motion and energy.



### 4. Andy Warhol - BMW M1 (1979)

Warhol's expressive brushstrokes make the M1 a true pop-art masterpiece, the car appearing as though it's been painted by the wind itself at high speed. Unlike his meticulous screen prints, Warhol painted this car entirely by hand, letting spontaneity and movement dictate the form.





### 5. Ernst Fuchs - BMW 635 CSi (1982)

The Austrian surrealist's fiery, mystical rabbit glides across the 635 CSi, blending myth and modernity into an otherworldly dream of automotive fantasy. The car's surface becomes a canvas for Fuchs' spiritual imagery, where fire and mythological creatures enhance the car's dynamic presence.



### 6. Robert Rauschenberg - BMW 635 CSi (1986)

Rauschenberg combined classical artwork with photographic transfers to create a sophisticated fusion of history and contemporary design on the E24's elegant bodywork. He layered images of Renaissance paintings with modern industrial motifs, making a statement on the intersection of art, technology, and history.





### 7. Michael Jagamara Nelson - BMW M3 Group A (1989)

Indigenous Australian artist Nelson covered the M3 with a traditional Papunya painting, turning the racing car into a canvas of Dreamtime stories. His intricate, earthy patterns bring a deep cultural significance to this icon from BMW's motorsport legacy.



### 8. Ken Done - BMW M3 Group A (1989)

Done's vibrant artwork explodes across the M3, capturing the raw energy and joy of motorsport. The bright, tropical colors and lively brushwork make this Art Car feel like a celebration of motion and Australian identity.





### 9. Matazo Kayama - BMW 535i (1990)

The Japanese master of Nihonga techniques gave the 535i a shimmering finish, evoking the motion of wind, water, and natural harmony. Inspired by traditional Japanese painting methods, the intricate layers of silver and blue create a surface that appears almost fluid.



### 10. César Manrique - BMW 730i (1990)

Manrique's overlapping organic forms transform the stately 7 Series into a vivid statement of movement, nature, and fluid design. His use of bold colors and curvilinear shapes brings a sense of dynamic elegance to the luxury sedan.



### 11. A. R. Penck - BMW Z1 (1991)

Bold symbols and primitive forms give the Z1 an almost prehistoric edge, as if speed and storytelling were encoded into its bodywork. The striking visual language recalls ancient cave paintings, making the car appear as a moving artifact of human expression.



### 12. Esther Mahlangu - BMW 525i (1991)

Mahlangu's Ndebele patterns bring vibrant African heritage onto the 5 Series, blending tribal tradition with modern engineering. The symmetrical, brightly colored motifs add a unique cultural richness to the executive sedan, making it a symbol of artistic and technological fusion.





### 13. Sandro Chia - BMW 3 Series Touring (1992)

The Italian artist covered the estate car in countless human faces, a reflection of the interaction between people, cars, and the road. The expressive, painterly approach creates a sense of movement and emotion, making the vehicle feel almost alive.



### 14. David Hockney - BMW 850CSi (1995)

Hockney's playful transparency lets us 'see' inside the 850CSi, rendering mechanical components and even a dog in a Cubist reinterpretation of automotive form. The whimsical yet sophisticated execution turns the grand tourer into a deconstructed work of contemporary art.



### 15. Jenny Holzer - BMW V12 LMR (1999)

With provocative text and minimalist design, Holzer's Le Mans racer turns speed into a philosophical statement, blurring the line between art and performance. Her signature conceptual approach transforms the car into a vehicle for thought-provoking messages on power, control, and movement.



### 16. Olafur Eliasson - BMW H2R (2007)

Encased in a frozen, crystalline skin, Eliasson's hydrogen-powered concept explores the essence of transparency, mobility, and environmental consciousness. The reflective, ice-like exterior challenges conventional perceptions of automotive form and materiality.





### 17. Jeff Koons - BMW M3 GT2 (2010)

Koons' explosion of color and energy makes the M3 GT2 look as if it's bursting with kinetic force, a celebration of pure racing excitement. His dynamic, comic book-inspired streaks give the car a sense of explosive acceleration.



### 18. Cao Fei - BMW M6 GT3 (2017)

BMW's first digital Art Car, Cao Fei's M6 GT3 integrates augmented reality and invisible energy fields, pushing the concept of automotive art into the virtual realm. The project challenges the very definition of what an Art Car can be in the digital age.





### 19. John Baldessari - BMW M6 GTLM (2016)

Minimalist yet playful, Baldessari's M6 GTLM juxtaposes simple colors with bold typography, creating an ironic and conceptual approach to speed. His use of dots and primary colors recalls his signature pop-conceptual style, making the car a moving paradox of simplicity and complexity.



### 20. Julie Mehretu - BMW M Hybrid V8 (2023)

Mehretu's layered abstraction transforms the M Hybrid V8 into a racing canvas of velocity and fragmentation, reflecting the hyper-modern world of endurance racing. Her sweeping, overlapping forms mirror the chaos and dynamism of motorsport itself.

From sculptural brushstrokes to digital landscapes, the BMW Art Cars continue to redefine the relationship between speed, technology, and creativity — they keep fascinating us as rolling works of art that merge the borders between gallery and racetrack. This year, the 50th anniversary of the BMW Art Car Collection will be celebrated during a spectacular world tour across all five continents. Will they stop by in your city, too? [Head over to the preliminary tour guide to find out.](#)

Gallery



























































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