



The 20th BMW Art Car: Julie Mehretu, 2024.

"I love the interplay of the two: motorsports and the actual aesthetic object which a car is. It becomes this space where painting, conceptual art, and aesthetics can participate."

– Julie Mehretu

Julie Mehretu – The BMW M Hybrid V8

- V-shaped Otto four-stroke twin-turbo engine
- Displacement: 3,999 cm³
- Power output: up to 750 bhp (depending on classification)
- Top speed: up to 330 km/h (depending on racetrack)

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Multifaceted, dynamic, and monumental are all words that describe American artist Julie Mehretu's work. She layers all kinds of media and observations on her huge canvases – photos, social media posts, musical motifs, literary quotations – distorting, pixelating, and painting over them while adding her own visual gestures. The spaces which these works map out are always political, global and universal. Mehretu refers to them as psychogeographies. The artist was working on a painting called "Everywhen" when the model of a BMW M Hybrid V8 was delivered to her studio. She immediately began to think: what if the car were racing through the painting, absorbing all its ideas, quotations, and gestures into its bodywork? Her outcome brings the worlds of art and motorsport closer together than almost any other Art Car to date, creating a performative artwork that is a quivering, almost synaesthetic experience.

Julie Mehretu was born in 1970 in Addis Ababa and moved to the USA with her family at the age of seven. She now lives and works in New York City. Combining painting, drawing and graphic printing, Mehretu's abstract works articulate contemporary experiences, which she links to great historical events and upheavals. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the National Academy of Design. In 2025, she was awarded the French Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. Her global representative is Marian Goodman Gallery in New York. She also exhibits with White Cube, London, and Carlier Gebauer, Berlin.

Following its world premiere on 21 May 2024 at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the 20th BMW Art Car embarked on the legendary 24 Hours of Le Mans on 15 June 2024, with a team comprising Robin Frijns from the Netherlands, South African Sheldon van der Linde, and German René Rast. The car was forced to drop out after around five hours following a driver error but was able to leave the pit stop one last time for a lap of honour, crossing the finish line 24 hours after the race began. Overall, the prototype BMW M Hybrid V8 chalked up a number of successes in 2024, covering a total of 82,400 km in tests and in races.

The story of this Art Car will continue in 2025 and 2026, with a social engagement project set to accompany a BMW Art Car for the first time ever. Working with Julie Mehretu and film producer Mehret Mandefro, the BMW Group will establish the African Film and Media Arts Collective for young African filmmakers and artists.