

Art as a reflective plane

A consideration of aestheticization in corporate culture

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The Daimler Art Collection was established following the purchase of a painting by Willi Baumeister in 1977 and currently consists of around 2600 works by more than 700 artists. Initially, the collection focused primarily on paintings by artists from southern Germany, but since 2001, it has been continuously acquiring contemporary art from all over the world. The systematic development of the collection and the concentration on content relating to abstract-constructive, conceptual, and minimalist works has given the Daimler Art Collection a clearly defined profile with a firm foundation in aesthetics and art history. The collection also commissions works, some of which have connections with the car as a product, while others relate to themes such as mobility, design, and the brand environment. A ground-breaking move, which helped to define the early international focus of the collection, was the decision in 1986 to commission American pop artist Andy Warhol to create a series of pictures of Mercedes cars on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of then Daimler-Benz AG. Commissions have also been given to Max Bill, Heinz Mack, Robert Longo, and the Stuttgart artist Simone Westerwinter. Vincent Szarek created wall- and floor-mounted objects with gleaming painted surfaces using the example of the Mercedes SLR to investigate the phenomena of personalization and mass production. In her medium, video artist Sylvie Fleury brought fashion face to face with individual transport in an elegant and ironic manner. More recent commissions went to the sculptor Michael Sailstorfer in 2011 and the Stuttgart-based painter Platino in 2016. Using the works of the artists mentioned above, we will analyze the extent to which intelligent and complex artistic considerations of the "myth of the car" and the artistic intentions that form the basis for them go beyond the simple aestheticization of the history of products and design.

1 Introductory considerations

There are without doubt many answers to the question of why Daimler AG collects works of art and why an art collection is an area that (automotive) companies are involved in. One particular response might be that collecting artworks is part of a company's *corporate social responsibility* (CSR)¹ and therefore reflects the organization's responsibilities to society.

¹ Cf. Thomas Loew, Kathrin Ankele, Sabine Braun, Jens Clausen, Bedeutung der internationalen CSR-Diskussion für Nachhaltigkeit und die sich daraus ergebenden Anforderungen an Unternehmen mit Fokus Berichterstattung, Berlin, Münster 2004. Also: Matthias Wühle, Mit CSR zum Unternehmenserfolg. Gesellschaftliche Verantwortung als Wertschöpfungsfaktor, Saarbrücken 2007.

Over and above this, art in general acts as a reflective plane for businesses and for society as a whole and makes an important contribution to the debate within society and the business world, for example on the subject of technology or ethical issues. A corporate collection of the same caliber as a museum also helps to present the company's image to the outside world, which ultimately increases shareholder value and involves a wide range of different stakeholders. The traditional educational role of museums, which is associated with collecting, preserving and putting on show exhibits, is **one of the key aspects of our work.**² One central task and opportunity for corporate collections

involves reaching out with their exhibitions and guided tours to people who would otherwise not visit museums and encouraging them to interact with art. We want to arouse our colleagues' curiosity, persuade them to think outside the box of their everyday work and perhaps to take a tolerant approach to current phenomena which are expressed in critical and provocative terms in works of art.³

Last, but not least, corporate art collections and their equivalents in the field of private patronage⁴ are also a means of sponsoring art and often have much more freedom in this respect than public sector organizations. These and other factors will be considered here using the example of a selection of artists and their works that form part of the Daimler Art Collection.

2 Corporate art as an educational medium. Communication using art

Why is a car company collecting art? How much money does it spend? Who decides which artworks to buy? What is the total market value of the collection? Are artworks from the collection ever sold, almost as a *return on investment*? Is the corporate art collection "profitable?" Or is it simply a means of presenting the company's image and therefore an expression of business success?

These are often the first questions asked at the start of guided tours of Daimler Art Collection exhibitions. It is important to answer the questions in order to explain the central

² For a definition of the tasks of museums and associated institutions cf.: Deutscher Museumsbund e.V., ICOM-Deutschland (Ed.), ICOM. Standards für Museen, Kassel, Berlin 2006, p. 6.

³ Renate Wiehager, Daimler Art Collection, Daimler blog, <http://art.daimler.com/media/Artikel-von-Renate-Wiehager-im-Daimler-Blog.pdf>, p. 5 [Accessed on: 05/30/2017].

⁴ One example is the eponymous museum founded by the oil magnate J. Paul Getty in 1953.

task and the main concerns of corporate art collections. In the case of Daimler AG, the questions are easy to answer. It is, of course, acceptable for a corporate collection to be a capital investment, but for our organization it is most important that the collection is constantly growing and can be linked to the latest developments in the art world. Daimler "invests" in art as intellectual capital, in innovative curating and in imaginative communication about art. These things form the basis of our day-to-day work.⁵ This also means that artworks in the collection are very rarely sold and that the contribution that the Daimler Art Collection makes to the company cannot be measured in terms of economic profitability.

The objective of the Daimler Art Collection is to provide information about art, to encourage us to pay attention to it, to reflect on the opportunities for communication using the medium of art, which is seen as an open intellectual space, and to offer a place and a time for discussing contemporary themes and phenomena without the results of these dialogs and discourses having to be incorporated directly into the company's business processes in the short term.

We see the task of the Daimler Art Collection within the organization as providing education in a fundamental form. We do not aim to offer a traditional educational syllabus. Instead, we want to create links to cultural achievements.

This means devoting our attention to an object that may at first sight seem unfamiliar and inaccessible to us. We need to develop our observational powers, our thoughts and our comments in individual stages and find a language for something that cannot immediately be named or defined in conceptual terms. We should formulate constructive criticism, both positive and negative, and perhaps discuss what it is about art that moves us and try to explain why this is the case. A fundamental understanding of education is not a promise

of comprehensive cultural stability or of certainty about the knowledge and abilities that are common to all citizens [...] it is not even democratic. It can only take place within individuals when they understand a cultural object intellectually and make it their own – for its own sake and for no other reason.⁶

However, the fact that this can be a highly mundane process that has relatively little to do with the intention of reflecting and interacting with art is highlighted by one development, which emerged as a side-effect of the art excursion that formed part of the Stuttgart Days on Automotive and Corporate History in Stuttgart-Möhringen in 2016. The sculpture "5 Kontinente" (5 continents) by famous sculptor

⁵ Cf.: Daniel Lippitsch in the interview with Dr Renate Wiehager, head of the Daimler Art Collection, <http://www.artandsignature.com/blog2014/03/25interview-mit-dr-wiehager-leiterin-daimler-art-collection/> [Accessed on: 05/30/2017].

⁶ Thomas Steinfeld, Die große Illusion, in: Süddeutsche Zeitung, no. 93, April 22/23, 2017, p. 15.

Walter de Maria, which is located in the reception area of the Daimler site Stuttgart-Möhringen, is used by employees as a place to meet before going to lunch.



Figure 1: Walter de Maria, "5 Kontinente," 1989.
Marble, quartz, magnesite, glass, steel,
5 × 5 × 5 meters.

2.1 Art in the work environment at Daimler AG

Providing opportunities for employees to encounter art in the work environment and as part of their daily activities is a very important consideration for Daimler AG. This gives rise to the question of which formats should be used to encourage the company's employees to accept the offerings of the Daimler Art Collection and other cultural offerings, for example in the place where they live. In order to enter into a discourse with employees, every month we send out invitations to guided tours, lectures, and workshops about our exhibitions, which family members, friends, and other external guests are also welcome to attend. The guided tours are for small groups and offer plenty of opportunities for discussion and questions. It is important to us that we do not simply hold one-off events. Instead we want to involve people over a longer period, perhaps several years, and to arouse their interest in questions relating to art. If we succeed in doing this, we will be able to hold informed, in-depth discussions about the role of art and culture in our society.⁷ Our exhibitions, publications, and communications give employees the opportunity to become familiar in passing with a significant cross-section of 20th century and international contemporary art. Our experience shows that for many of them, this is their first close encounter with art. In the best case scenario, a new open-mindedness and curiosity will help them overcome their feeling of

⁷ Cf.: Volker Kirchberg, *Gesellschaftliche Funktionen von Museen. Makro-, meso- und mikro-soziologische Perspektiven*, Wiesbaden 2005.

intimidation when faced with public museums and contemporary galleries. But even when this does not happen, being regularly "confronted" with art in the work environment is the first step for employees toward recognizing and reflecting on the cultural and intellectual diversity of our world and at best to opening themselves up to art in an individual way.

2.2 Corporate values in the interaction with art

It goes almost without saying that our central corporate values are expressed in our exhibitions and events. Our corporate values include quality, authenticity, cultural diversity, respect for people and things that at first sight seem unfamiliar and incomprehensible, openness to new ideas, discipline, and a willingness to experiment. The success of committing to a careful consideration of the corporate values using the medium and the example of art lies in continuity and a consistently high level of art and communication.

Enthusiasm, respect, integrity, discipline, and a culture of excellence are all central corporate values for Daimler that can be reflected from the perspective of art. There are also other values with a direct or indirect link to art, including a high level of intrinsic value, excellent design, and uncompromisingly high standards of quality and innovation. This reflects the company's cultural aspirations through the medium of art.

In other words, a corporate collection that is actively and imaginatively managed can form a bridge between the company, public cultural institutions, and contemporary cultural and aesthetic phenomena. The 120 exhibitions held by the Daimler Art Collection in Germany, at corporate sites worldwide, and in public museums since 2000, are primarily a multi-faceted medium of communication. This is demonstrated by the fact that around 1.5 million people in cities such as Singapore, Buenos Aires, Cape Town, and Berlin have visited our exhibitions and experienced what we have to offer.

3 The concept and objectives of the Daimler Art Collection

From the very beginning, the concept of the Daimler Art Collection, which was founded in 1977, went far beyond the idea of simply providing decoration for the organization's sites. Initially, the content of the Daimler Art Collection followed developments in the world of art in the first half of the 20th century in the Stuttgart area and in southern Germany. However, it soon expanded to include related works of non-expressive art from Germany, Switzerland, other European countries, and ultimately the rest of the world. It has continued to move in this direction and has gradually acquired works that represent high quality new media works. The internationalization and globalization of the company have increased the mobility of the collection and had an impact on its long-term concept. It now includes a growing number of international works. Over the years, the collection has become a living part of the organization. The commitment to art and culture that has developed over the course of around four decades and the interaction with different departments in the company are both a

benchmark and an obligation for us. The gradual expansion of the collection allows the latest developments in the world of art to be incorporated and publicized and, at the same time, represents an important tool for promoting culture at the company's sites. The integration of new artworks introduces the latest trends in aesthetics, design, value development, and lifestyles into the company as subjects for discussion.

The development and presence of the Daimler Art Collection are solely the result of the strategic positioning of the company. Daimler is the only automotive company worldwide that has created an art collection with clearly defined themes and objectives over a period of more than four decades, which has allowed it to communicate with people internally and on a regional and international level. This is a unique feature of the organization. The objective of the collection from the perspective of its content and curation is to create a clear and identifiable focus relating to art history without imposing excessive stylistic restrictions on the more than 2600 works of art. The collection focuses on abstract avant-garde art from the 20th century, but also includes pieces of current contemporary art. To give at least some impression of its scope, it ranges from the early students of Adolf Hölzel in Stuttgart around 1910, including Willi Baumeister and Oskar Schlemmer, the Bauhaus, constructive and concrete tendencies, the abstract movement in post-war Europe and Zero Avantgarde through to developments in the world of art from the 1960s to the 1980s, such as minimalist and concept art, plus Neo Geo and its successors. It is clear that over the course of time the Daimler Art Collection has moved from being a European collection with a regional focus on southern German avant-garde and concrete art to a collection of international contemporary art. Since the 1990s it has acquired works by American, South American, Asian, Australian, and South African artists to accompany its European pieces. One particular highlight is the new complex of Chinese contemporary art, which has been presented to the public in a number of exhibitions. The expansion of the Daimler Art Collection has also involved a shift from an almost exclusive focus on painting, which was the case until 2001, to the increased inclusion of photography, mixed media, and video art. The intention here was to introduce political and socially critical aspects of contemporary art and to open up the opportunity of playing a more direct role in current social discourse.

The expansion of the collection has made it possible to develop exhibition concepts that have been presented to the public in the exhibition area of the "Daimler Contemporary" at Potsdamer Platz in Berlin.

The consolidation of the collection with different themes and media has created the ideal foundation for presenting the Daimler Art Collection throughout the world. Since 2003, this has taken the form of the collection's world tour, which has concentrated on figurative or abstract art or on new media, depending on the cultural situation in the host countries. Alongside the international exhibitions, an *education program* has been developed involving both local educational institutions, such as schools and universities, and also state education authorities. This has been accompanied by publications relating to the subject of the exhibition and the *education program*, together with biographical information about the artists and details of the content of the work being exhibited. All publications can be ordered online via art.daimler.com.

However, publications are not only produced as part of the *education program*. A key aspect of the Daimler Art Collection is to develop academic publications for all its exhibitions, covering the parts of the collection and the themes that are on display, and also including monographs on contemporary artists. This is another unique feature of the Daimler Art Collection, which distinguishes it from other corporate collections.⁸



Figure 2: Ben Willikens, "Der Raum des Erfinders" (The inventor's room), 1990. Acrylic on canvas on plaster, 5.8 × 21.4 meters.

1 Works commissioned for the collection

Since the Daimler Art Collection was established, it has commissioned a wide range of works from artists such as Bernhard Heiliger, Heinz Mack, Max Bill, and Ansgar Nierhoff in Stuttgart, and Nam June Paik, François Morellet, and Robert Rauschenberg in Berlin. In Stuttgart-Möhringen a ten-meter-high sculpture installation known as "Dem Lichte entgegen" (Towards the light) was developed by Klaus Staudt in 1990. Ben Willikens, a sculptor who lives in Stuttgart and until 2006 was an academic professor in Munich, has created three murals for the auditorium (cf. Figure 2) in the immediate vicinity of the sculpture. We will now investigate some of the significant works commissioned by the Daimler Art Collection.

⁸ Cf.: Renate Wiehager, Warum sammelt Daimler Kunst?, Daimler blog, <https://blog.daimler.com/2014/09/01/warum-sammelt-daimler-kunst/> [Accessed on: 05/30/2017].

1.1 Art for urban public spaces: Heinz Mack and Max Bill

1.1.1 Heinz Mack, "Große Stele"



Figures 3 and 4: Heinz Mack, "Große Stele," 1990. Steel, 42 meters high.

Heinz Mack is one of the most significant post-war German sculptors. His "Große Stele" (Large stele) from 1990, which was commissioned by the Daimler Art Collection, is among the most important sculptures in a public space in southern Germany and is one of the artist's key works. The ground plan of the stele relates to the Mercedes star and the work is above all a medium for giving the changing light conditions sculptural form. When designing the sculpture, Heinz Mack was aiming at formal simplicity. The fundamental shape of the stele is a narrow vertical line and it divides the urban landscape outside the gate of the Daimler Untertürkheim plant. The transformation from triangle to star, which takes place from bottom to top, causing the silhouette of the sculpture to taper, consists of six phases. The isosceles triangle at plinth level is modified by having its sides bent inwards in five places. The surface of the stele is made of polished stainless steel, which reflects the daylight and transforms the stele into an arrow of light when the sun is shining brightly. The nearby buildings can be seen at eye-level and, if you look up, the blue of the sky is refracted in the sides of the triple cross. On dull days the stele seems to immerse itself in the gray of the clouds. Its character changes according to the position of the sun and the weather conditions. Even though the surface has no color of its own, observers can see that it has the potential to be all the colors of the spectrum.

1.1.2 Max Bill, "bildsäulen-dreiergruppe"



Figure 5: Max Bill, "bildsäulen-dreiergruppe," 1989.
Enamel on steel, 32 meters high.

Max Bill was one of the leading European artists of the 20th century. He worked as a product and graphic designer and as an architect. He was also director of the Ulm School of Design and influenced the culture of his era. In 1989 Max Bill was commissioned by what was then Daimler-Benz AG to create the 32-meter-high "bildsäulen-dreiergruppe" (Group of three ornamented columns), which was erected near the Mercedes-Benz museum. Its color sequence follows structural and mathematical rules. A bird's eye view of the sculpture shows that its ground plan is based on the shape of the Mercedes star. Each column consists of 27 individual elements in groups of three colors which are arranged in nine modules. As each column begins with a different color, the spectra are staggered rather than being synchronized with one another. To prevent the colors from overlapping visually, Bill separates the individual modules with narrow, shiny, silver-colored steel bands. The number three defines the mathematical concept of the sculpture: three columns, the columns structured in three sections (band, color sequence, band), modules in three colors, each module repeated three times per column, which gives nine modules over the height of each column.

1.2 Commissioned works: Car-related art

Alongside these structural, local, and architectural works, artists have been repeatedly invited to focus more specifically on the company's products and history since the 1980s. In picture series, sculptures, videos, and murals, Andy Warhol, Robert Longo, Simone Westerwinter, Sylvie Fleury, Patricia London, Michael Sailstorfer, and Platino have interacted with the car as a product and with the related symbols and forms of presentation. They have also been responsible for the dialectical mediation of Daimler's brand philosophy by asking specific artistic questions.⁹

1.2.1 Andy Warhol, "Cars"



Figure 6: Andy Warhol, works from the "Cars" series, 1986/1987 (back); Vincent Szarek, "Moving in Stereo," 2005 (front).

Andy Warhol¹⁰ is prominently represented in the Daimler Art Collection with his picture series "Cars" from 1986/1987. This work was his last picture series, commissioned by the company on the occasion of the 100th birthday of the car, and it remained uncompleted.

⁹ On the works commissioned by the Daimler Art Collection, plus the 30 large sculptures and the latest media art in the collection cf.: Renate Wiehager, *blitzen benz bang. Mixed Media, Skulpturen, Auftragswerke*, Ostfildern 2009.

¹⁰ On Andy Warhol (1928–1987) cf. among others: Nina Tessa Zahner, *Die neuen Regeln der Kunst. Andy Warhol und der Umbau des Kunstbetriebs im 20. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt am Main 2006, and Renate Wiehager (Ed.), *cars*. Andy Warhol, Robert Longo, Sylvie Fleury, Vincent Szarek, Ostfildern 2010.

Of the 80 planned pictures, which were intended to document the history of the automobile using 20 selected Mercedes models from the Daimler motor carriage and the Benz patent motorized vehicle, which date back to 1886, through to present-day cars, only 35 pictures and 12 large-format paintings showing eight different models were completed. By the start of January 1987, two versions of each of the first eight models had been finished, showing either individual or multiple images. Warhol finished the three additional large-format paintings in the last two weeks before his death on February 22.

1.2.2 Robert Longo, "Cars From Above"



Figure 7: Robert Longo, "Cars from above," 1995 – 1998. Charcoal, graphite (left); Sylvie Fleury, "Formula One Dress", 1998 (right).

In 1995, Robert Longo¹¹ was commissioned to represent several Mercedes models, following on from Andy Warhol's uncompleted "Cars" series. He produced four large-format drawings entitled "Cars From Above," showing a bird's eye view of models from the 1980s and 1990s, and "Big Red Car," an airbrush painting of the Mercedes SLK Kompressor from the side. In this oversized representation, the sports car, which was presented to the public in 1997, seems to hover above the ground. The three-dimensional illusion is interrupted by the break-up of the aluminum picture into 100 pieces. Longo's characteristically hyper-realistic approach – choosing familiar subjects from the media picture machine and isolating them from their original context in larger-than-life black-and-white drawings – is the opposite of a quick

¹¹ For literature by and about Robert Longo cf.: <https://portal.dnb.de/opac.htm?method=simpleSearch&query=118816047> in the catalog of the German National Library [Accessed on: 06/06/2017].

glance at the shining surfaces. Instead, Longo's work problematizes the standard, simplified "black-and-white" thought patterns people use to persuade themselves that they can understand and consume the world.

1.2.3 Simone Westerwinter, "Namensquarelle"



Figure 8: Simone Westerwinter, "Namensquarelle," 2001. Watercolor on handmade paper, 60 parts, each 0.7x1 m.

As a follow-on project to Warhol's and Longo's works, in 2001 the artist Simone Westerwinter was commissioned to create a series of 60 name watercolors. When hung as a group, they create a portrait of the company in the summer of 2001, with selected car models and people's names. The artist has been working on the group of name watercolors since 1995. She only produces these modern portraits on commission. The person portrayed chooses his or her favorite color from 110 pure color shades. Name watercolors have a standardized aspect: the font, format, and design are predefined, in the same way that a family name is "preassigned." Throughout our lives, we give our names a "personal" color, as represented by the choice of colors offered by the artist. Companies, institutions, and also cars, cannot choose their own names. These are decided by others. For this reason, the majority of customers made the decision on the name watercolors of the Mercedes-Benz cars. Their favorite color in 2001 was silver.

1.2.4 Vincent Szarek, "Moving in Stereo," "Silver Slide," "Red Hood"

Vincent Szarek's sculptural objects are formal superlatives: with their luxurious gleaming surfaces, seamless and smooth, they seem to have dropped from the sky and been shaped aerodynamically by the resistance of the air. In fact, "Silver Slide" and "Red Hoods" are artistic treatments of design elements taken from the Mercedes-Benz SLR. Szarek's painted fiber-glass objects are based on computer-generated designs that are then constructed, down to the last detail, on a production line developed by Szarek himself.



Figure 9: Vincent Szarek,
"Moving in Stereo," "Silver Slide,"
"Red Hood", 2003 - 2005.
Fiber-glass, painted.

I work on sculptures on the basis of special products and individual presentations. These sculptures relate to cars and other special products that take the form of objects. The manufacturing process includes digital technologies (CAD/CAM) that allow rapid and infinitely variable changes in form. I am interested in individualizing objects, liberating them from modern industrial production. These are objects of the kind that are increasingly (and more cheaply) available and accessible to individuals.
(Vincent Szarek) 12

1.2.5 The video works of Sylvie Fleury



Figure 10: Sylvie Fleury,
"Swiss Polish Meditation," 2005.
Three-channel projection, 23:41 min

In 2005, Sylvie Fleury was commissioned by Mercedes-Benz France to produce a series of six video works for the new Mercedes-Benz brand center in Paris. The films merge the myth of legendary Mercedes-Benz motor cars, from the Blitzen-Benz and the gull-wing door model to the C 111, with contemporary ideas about art and fashion. Fleury has female

12 Vincent Szarek, in: Renate Wiehager, *Minimalism and After. Tradition and tendencies of Minimalism. Works by the Daimler Art Collection*, revised new edition, Ostfildern 2010, p. 566.

models wearing fashionable outfits directing and demonstrating traditionally "male" actions in authentic locations in Stuttgart where historic Mercedes-Benz vehicles are displayed, including showrooms and workshops and the test track at the Classic Center in Fellbach near Stuttgart. Gull-wing doors rise and fall like the wings of futuristic angels, the models polish the shiny paintwork of the vintage cars by hand, cosmetic products are crushed by the wide racing tires, engines are revved up, and silver balls are swept through the factory buildings. The models are both actors and emotionless observers. The striking feature of all of the video works is the lack of an exciting plot and the use of the simplest actions and gestures, which are stoically repeated. This is what gives the videos their avant-garde, surreal, and occult character. "Pullman Moment" shows a 1964 Pullman Mercedes. One of the models is acting as the chauffeur and two others sit in the back. The car drives in a loop and then stops. The women climb out, open the trunk, take out a dozen pairs of high-heeled shoes, and put them on the asphalt. Then the woman wearing the dress gets into the trunk, the second woman sits in the back of the car, and the car starts.

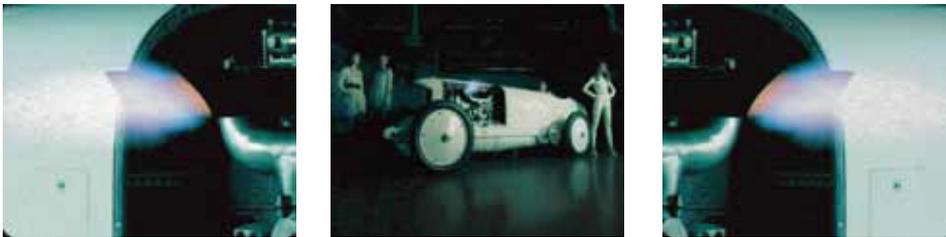


Figure 11: Sylvie Fleury, "Blitzen-Benz BANG," 2005. Three-channel projection, 07:02 minutes.

In "Blitzen-Benz BANG", Fleury shows a white 1909 Blitzen-Benz in the shadowy gloom of a workshop in the Classic Center in Fellbach. Three highly elegant models stand motionless beside the car. Two mechanics start the Blitzen-Benz, which is very tough job. The engine begins to roar and dark gray smoke and blue flames emerge from the tail pipe.

1.2.6 Nic Hess "Nase XL"

New works were commissioned by Daimler in 2011 for the "125 years of the automobile" event. The Swiss artist Nic Hess worked together with the Mercedes-Benz design department to create a temporary large-scale installation for the banked race track display of the Mercedes-Benz museum in Stuttgart. This took the form of a patchwork nomad's tent for a DTM car, a large "adhesive tape drawing," a blow-up sculpture of the artist's nose, and other sculptural installations.

Figure 12: Nic Hess,
"Silberpfeile – Reversed and
Extended," 2011. Carpets, tires,
adhesive tape, various materials,
approx. 15 × 80 meters.



Figure 13: Nic Hess,
"Nase XL," 2011. Polyurethane
foam, vehicle paint,
2 × 2 × 4.4 meters.



1.2.7 Michael Sailstorfer, "C 111"

In his commissioned work, the Munich artist Michael Sailstorfer reflects the design practice of morphing by transforming a Mercedes-Benz 190 into a roadworthy C 111 using collage techniques. The concept of his "C 111" sculpture was to disassemble, cut up, and reassemble a 1980s Mercedes-Benz 190, which was easily available on the used car market, and to morph it into an artistic version of the rare and therefore highly coveted C 111. This had been the artist's dream car since he was young. The focus of the work is on the many contextual shifts involved in the collage, which uses large quantities of material. After the test drive, the sculpture was placed on a plinth in the atrium of the Mercedes-Benz museum. It is like a concept car that blends past, present, and future to create a highly personalized vehicle design.



Figure 14: Michael Sailstorfer, "C 111," 2011. Mercedes 190 E (W201), 1.12 × 1.83 × 4.44 meters.

1.2.8 Patricia London, "On the Road"

"On the Road", a work commissioned from the Munich artist Patricia London, is a mural that is 44 meters high and eight meters wide. It reaches from the second to the 12th floor in the Mercedes-Benz Sales Germany building and is only interrupted by the ceilings on each story. At first sight, it could be a huge, organic, science-fiction-style bio-motor or the channels of a sales system. However, the outlines are in fact those of race tracks. The blue shape that appears on all of the floors is the Avus in Berlin, which was the first road in Europe to be used exclusively by cars. The Mercedes salesman Rudolf Caracciola won at the Avus driving a Mercedes in 1926 and 1931. He was followed by Manfred von Brauchitsch in 1932 and in 1935 by Luigi Fagioli with the legendary Silver Arrow. The victor in 1955 was the famous multiple world champion Juan Manuel Fangio.



Figure 15: Patricia London, "On The Road," 2013. Seven-part mural, 8 × 44 meters.

The other race circuits represented in abstract graphical form are Daytona (orange), Catalunya (purple), Monza (dark green), Ahvenisto (yellow), Sachsenring (light green), and Circuit India (magenta). The theme of the work is driving, which is reflected in the title "On The Road", a reference to the legendary book by Jack Kerouac, who traveled across the USA in the 1940s.

1.2.9 Platino, "Circling Motifs"



Figure 17: Platino, "Circling Motifs," 2016. Mural, acrylate paint, acrylic, pigments on glazed facing concrete, 2.8 × 12.8 m

The mural by the Stuttgart painter, photographer, and installation artist Platino, which was commissioned by the Daimler Art Collection and MB Powertrain, refers in abstract form to the history of Daimler engine development and translates it into a symbolic, site-specific artwork. The stripes relate to the design principles of the nearby Mercedes-Benz museum and interact with the colors of the (urban) landscape that can be seen through the glass facade opposite. The blue, yellow, and orange stripes are given additional highlights using pigment glazes with a metallic appearance. The colors symbolize current and historic propulsive energies in the field of engine development. In the rotating forms, the original wheel and the Mercedes star, engine development and corporate identity are represented in alternating arrangements, reciprocally influencing one other.

5 A concluding statement

1. Corporate art collections and the Daimler Art Collection in particular have considerable social importance.
2. In the overall context of society, art represents a company's contribution to its corporate social responsibility (CSR).
3. The Daimler Art Collection as a corporate art collection aims to take part in current social discourse on a wide variety of subjects on a national and international level via the medium of art.
4. The function of the collection, in accordance with the tasks specified for museums by the *International Council of Museums*, is to acquire present-day artworks, preserve, research, publicize, communicate, and exhibit them.
5. The Daimler Art Collection also performs a specific educational role and provides special support for contemporary art. And last but not least,
6. via the medium of "art" it creates an extended area of identification that brings together the company and its employees and shapes the corporate culture.

Figure references

All	Art department, Daimler AG
3-5, 9	Photo: Uwe Seyl, Stuttgart. © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn
2017 6, 7	Photo: Lisa Rastl, Vienna. © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2017
8, 12, 13	Photo: Brigida Gonzalez, Stuttgart. © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2017
10, 14, 16	Photo: Jürgen Altmann, Stuttgart. © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2017

