The greatest ever Porsche art cars

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23/11/2021 From a psychedelic rock star 356 to a fabulously floral Taycan, we've gathered together some of our favourite Porsche art cars from over the years in order to pay homage to the talented creatives that made them a tangible reality.

Is a Porsche the ultimate canvas? It certainly seems so for the innovative artists featured here. Following the recent release of the stunning 968 L'ART, we chronicle some of the best examples of Porsche art cars – from two Taycans and a 356 to a colourful array of 911 models – and discover that it takes a lot more than just a fresh lick of paint to turn them into head-turning pieces of automotive art.

968 L'ART by L'Art de L'Automobile

Embodying the connection between vehicles and fashion, this outstanding redesigned car – the brainchild of L'Art de L'Automobile's founder Arthur Kar – transports a retro look to the modern era.

Unveiled at Paris Fashion Week in 2021 alongside a matching capsule collection, attendees saw the worlds of fashion, art and cars collide to mark the 30th anniversary of the 968. The 968 L'ART comes alive in stunning Green Pearl, with the added mystique of appearing to be three other hues, depending on which angle you view it from. TAG Heuer created a matching chronograph to accompany this one-off car, while the roof was removed and RECARO seats were added, incorporating graphic leather in the centre panel that matches the exterior colour. A custom-designed audio system by BOSE was also installed and the headlights were elevated with chrome. Inspired by the design team's love of classic cars, this 968 makes a strong contemporary statement.

996 Swan by Chris Labrooy

Porsche has offered Scottish digital artist Chris Labrooy the opportunity to transport one of his digital artworks into the real world for the first time. The result is the 996 Swan, which was designed for the anniversary "20 years of Porsche in China". The Porsche 911 Type 996 was the first vehicle sold in China two decades ago. In the Middle Kingdom, the swan stands for happiness. The artcar made its first public appearance in Shanghai at the beginning of November 2021 and will make further appearances in the coming weeks.

911 Carrera by Nelson Makamo

Famed South African artist Nelson Makamo always knew he would own a Porsche, but what he didn't expect was the manner in how it happened. Having fantasised since childhood about what it would feel like to hold the keys to one, it was a serendipitous meeting with a modern-day example during a residency in Western Cape that reignited his Porsche dream. It cemented his commitment to eventually own a Jet Black Metallic 911 Carrera. The painter ordered his first ever Porsche with the view to putting his mark on his most unusual canvas yet. Makamo's Porsche art car saw him hand-paint a number of elements, from the rear bumper to the seat mouldings, door panel inserts and side mirror covers. Look closely enough and you'll find three letters – 'Mma' – in the left door panel insert, which mean 'mother' in his native tongue, Sepedi. For Makamo, the art car in its entirety is a reflection of his success, the important people he's met along the way and his hope that his work will spark the imagination of children all over the continent of Africa.

Taycan Art Car by Richard Phillips

This is the kind of artwork that makes watching paint dry a legitimately fun pastime, thanks to acclaimed American artist Richard Phillips breathing his vision into this artful second skin for the all-electric Taycan. It bloomed to life in Zurich, created live at the Leuehof pop-up restaurant on the city's Bahnhofstrasse in December 2020. To create the final masterpiece, Phillips applied his 2010 painting, Queen of the Night, onto the body of a Porsche Taycan 4S, with the lush piece spreading its leafy and floral arrangement from the front bonnet to the rear. Inspired by the beauty of the natural environment

and the sweeping silhouette of the car, Phillips succeeded in giving this electric star a brush with nature. Earlier this year it was auctioned off for charity, with all proceeds being donated to a non-profit organisation, Suisseculture Sociale, which supports artists hit hard by the pandemic.

Taycan with Artwork by Dale Chihuly

Another electrifying artwork also sparked to life in 2021. The horticultural oasis of Singapore's Gardens by the Bay not only plays host to a diverse collection of over 1.5 million plants but became the temporary home for this fabulously floral Taycan. With Porsche as the official automotive partner for American glass artist Dale Chihuly's Glass in Bloom exhibition, audiences were exposed to the idea of sports cars beyond the simple need for speed. Wrapped in an unmissable livery from Chihuly's Persians series – comprising of ultra-bright flowers in a diverse palette – the car was more than a match for its foliage-laced surroundings. Sitting pretty on a pedestal, set against the futuristic backdrop of the SG50 Lattice – an award-winning pavilion that shows what highly innovative and sustainable architecture of the future could look like – it provided a harmonious reflection of the future-forward DNA of the sustainable Porsche Taycan, all amid an organic green oasis.

Taycan Artcar by SUMO!

On the occasion of the opening of the Porsche Centre Roost, Porsche of Losch Luxembourg decided to create a unique artwork on the theme of "Future" in collaboration with the renowned Luxembourg artist SUMO!. In close cooperation with the Porsche Centre team, the vehicle was first completely disassembled. Then the individual parts were transported to an unknown location where SUMO! could begin its work. More than five months were needed to complete the project. The interior, the inside of the doors, the rims and the keys of the car were also painted. The artcar will now be exhibited at various events around the world.

Taycan Artcars by Megan Claire Keho and Rei Misiri

In an unprecedented round of Art Battle Canada 2021, two hotly tipped local talents of modern urban art were invited to create unique designs for the Porsche Taycan. And they did so in front of a live audience - on the car itself. At the end of the "battle", which lasted only two hours, Rei Misiri prevailed with his interpretation of "different cultures and aesthetic elements from nature" on the black Taycan against Megan Claire Keho, who painted on the white model. After the "Art Battle", the vehicles were made available for press trips and events.

Janis Joplin's 356 C by Dave Richards

Rock legend Janis Joplin may have sung "my friends all drive Porsches" but she actually owned a

number herself. She bought this car in 1968 in Dolphin Grey (one of just nine colours available at the time) using it as an everyday driver and a car that fans would soon come to recognise as one of her closest companions. Describing the 1964 356 SC as having a colourful paint job is somewhat of an understatement. Janis paid her roadie, David Richards, $500 to portray The History of the Universe on the car in almost every hue possible.It was a history that included images of her band, Big Brother and the Holding Company, Californian landscapes, the eye of God, Capricorn, skulls, mushrooms and much more. The result is a vehicle that screams to be seen. It became so synonymous with its owner that fans would leave notes to her under the windscreen wipers. When it was stolen in 1969, the thief tried to hide his crime by spray painting over the giveaway mural, only to be caught by police.

Luckily, Richards was able to remove the offending paint with only minor damage to the artwork. Tragically, Joplin died in 1970 at the age of 27, just two years after purchasing the car. Her beloved Porsche eventually found its way into the hands of her siblings, with her brother Michael restoring it to its original Dolphin Grey condition, as it had deteriorated. Then, in the 1990s, it was decided to return it to psychedelic glory, with her family commissioning artists Jana Mitchell and Amber Owen to replicate the original mural. After doing the rounds at museums for decades, it was finally put up for auction to support charities in their sister's name. The price? An astonishing $1.76 million – breaking all records for the sale of any Porsche 356 at public auction. For that you get one of the original – in more ways than one – Porsche art cars.

Crystal-embellished 911 by Daniel Arsham

Contemporary visual artist Daniel Arsham is known for breathing life into inanimate objects and playing with deconstructed futurism. Sketching pictures of Porsche cars since childhood, creating this one-off, crystal-eroded 911 (992) in 2019 interlaced some of his own story with that of the Porsche brand. The dystopian look was achieved by embedding crystals into the car's body, creating a vehicle that wouldn't be out of place if you happened to stumble across it in a post-apocalyptic world. The drivable piece was displayed at Selfridges in London in 2019 before setting off on a tour of Asia. With contemporary objects subject to transience, says Arsham, this unique piece evokes a sense of deterioration juxtaposed with decadence.

911 RSR Le Mans by Richard Phillips

This Porsche 911 RSR is more than just a work of art. It also became the first Porsche art car to win at the 24 Hours of Le Mans, when it took victory in the GTE Am class in 2019. Its existence is the result of a firm friendship between the artist, Richard Phillips, and the Porsche factory driver, Jörg Bergmeister – a relationship that had already resulted in Phillips designing a helmet for Bergmeister in 2013. It proved to be a stepping stone, six years later, to designing this Porsche art car, when the artist used some of his existing work to project an intricate 2D livery onto the car. The oversized details and bold contrasting colours meant there was no need to have a grandstand view to take in the full design – spectators could more than follow it from afar (and it, in a way, could follow them, thanks to the eyes

painted on its flank). This 911 RSR is one for both the art and history books.

1970 911 S by Ornamental Conifer

Cars, clothes, even crockery – British-born, California-based artist Nico Sclater (aka Ornamental Conifer) has wonderful freehand typography for them all. And of all those he has painted on, Porsche cars are up there with the most noteworthy. Ornamental Conifer's artwork can be recognised through his signature combination of Pop Art-esque signwriting, shot through with humour, and combined with a clever use of word play and turns of phrase (phrases referred to as 'Coniferisms' by the man himself). A trio of Porsche cars have been graced with his style to date: a 1977 911 rebuilt to resemble a 1974 Carrera 3.0 RS, a 935 showcased at Las Vegas's SEMA Auto Show, and this, the very first Ornamental Conifer Porsche art car. Designed for a client in Texas, the message on this 911 S is a bold and free one: 'Stay forever far out'.

911 Fat Car NFT by Erwin Wurm

Austrian sculpture and painter Erwin Wurm is known for his larger-than-life artworks – his collection of Fat Sculptures have spanned the subject areas of houses and cars for two decades. On the 20th anniversary of his iconic Fat Car, in 2021, Wurm's quirkiness came to the fore once more to breathe life into – literally his first NFT, entitled 'Breathe in, breathe out'. The video showcases his interpretation of what it would look like if a 911 inhaled in and breathed out. Already well-known for his eccentric depictions of day-to-day life, and with a signature nudge and a wink as he takes a sideways look at consumer society, the disfigured style on show here is an example of Wurm's inimitable style.

911 Carrera type 996 by Biggibilla

This 911 Carrera (996) art car was painstakingly hand-painted in 1998 at the Porsche Centre Melbourne showroom by the Indigenous artist Graham J Rennie (aka Biggibilla). It was created to celebrate 50 years since the first vehicle that bore the Porsche name – the aluminium prototype known as 'No 1' – and is adorned with Australian animals such as the duck-billed platypus.

When it comes to art cars, this list proves you can't have too much of a good thing, with more than enough space for all artists and designers who want to reinvent the norm and subvert even the unusual. Here's to the past, present and future of Porsche art cars that instil inspiration and fuel the passionate fires of the worlds of art and automotive.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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Consumption data

Taycan with Performance Battery (Predecessor model)

Taycan 4S with Performance Battery (Predecessor model)

911 Carrera (Predecessor model)

*Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO_2 emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO_2-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" (Fuel Consumption, CO_2Emissions and Electricity Consumption Guide for New Passenger Cars), which is available free of charge at all sales outlets and from DAT (Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH, Helmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Scharnhausen, www.dat.de).

Image Sublines

Path: The greatest ever Porsche art cars/Images/img_1.jpg
Title: 968 L'ART, 2021, Porsche AG
Subline: The 968 L'ART was unveiled at Paris Fashion Week in 2021

Path: The greatest ever Porsche art cars/Images/img_2.jpg
Title: 996 swan by Chris Labrooy, 2021, Porsche AG
Subline: The swan is considered a symbol of happiness in China

Path: The greatest ever Porsche art cars/Images/img_3.jpg
Title: Nelson Makamo, 911 Carrera, 2021, Porsche AG
Subline: Makamo hand-painted the brightly coloured elements of his 911 canvas

Path: The greatest ever Porsche art cars/Images/img_4.jpg
Title: Taycan Artcar by Richard Phillips, Zurich, Switzerland, 2021, Porsche AG
Subline: From electric-power to flower-power with Richard Phillips' bold art car

Path: The greatest ever Porsche art cars/Images/img_5.jpg
Title: Taycan, Exhibition "Dale Chihuly: Glass in Bloom", Gardens by the Bay, Singapore , 2021, Porsche AG
Subline: The floral Taycan electrified Singapore's famous Gardens by the Bay

Path: The greatest ever Porsche art cars/Images/img_6.jpg
Title: Taycan Artcar by Sumo!, 2021, Porsche AG
Subline: The colour code gives the optical illusion of a rocket returning to the earth's atmosphere

Path: The greatest ever Porsche art cars/Images/img_7.jpg
Title: Taycan 4S, 2021, Porsche AG
Subline: The two Artcars were created in just two hours in front of a live audience

Path: The greatest ever Porsche art cars/Images/img_8.jpg
Title: Janis Joplin's 356 C, 2021, Porsche AG
Subline: Day tripping: Janis Joplin's bespoke 356 SC is one of the earliest examples of a Porsche art car

Path: The greatest ever Porsche art cars/Images/img_9.jpg
Title: 911 (992) by Daniel Arsham, 2020, Porsche AG
Subline: This 911 rocks: Daniel Arsham's crystal-clad showstopper

Path: The greatest ever Porsche art cars/Images/img_10.jpg
Title: 911 RSR, Art Car, Le Mans, 2019, Porsche AG
Subline: Making history at Le Mans as the world's first art car to win the race

Path: The greatest ever Porsche art cars/Images/img_11.jpg
Title: 911 S, 1970, Porsche AG
Subline: Forever far out: the first Ornamental Conifer Porsche

Path: The greatest ever Porsche art cars/Images/img_12.jpg
Title: 911 Fat Car NFT by Erwin Wurm, 2021, Porsche AG
Subline: Designed to take your breath away: a Porsche art car of grand proportions

Path: The greatest ever Porsche art cars/Images/img_13.jpg
Title: 911 Carrera (996), 1998, Porsche AG
Subline: First presented in 1998, the 996 showcases Biggibilla's striking Indigenous Australian design

Link Collection

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