

# AM I STILL THAT YOUNG?

*// The whole idea is developed with the pretext of having fun. //*  
MANAV DWIVEDI

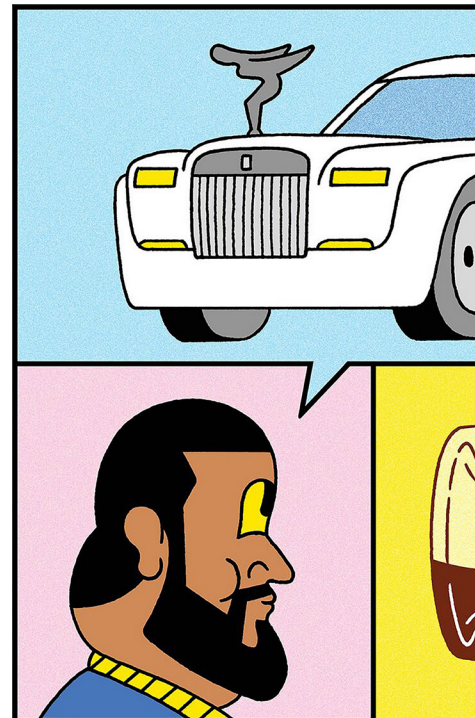
## WORDS BY WHO KNOWS

“Some people think of cars as just a transportation option to take them from point A to point B. On the other hand, some people consider cars as timeless pieces, a part of themselves that symbolises who they are. It’s interesting how the same object can hold so many different meanings for various individuals. If you are reading this, there’s a good chance that you are interested in cars and might belong to the second type of person we just discussed. Or perhaps you are someone from my faculty grading me on this subject. In that case, I hope you also have an interest in cars and enjoy reading this.

Generally, materialistic things lose value with time. Such is also the case with cars but some timeless beauties grow not only in value on paper but also in visual appreciation.

Every time you ask someone “What is your favourite car?” the general answer might not be surprising to you. Because mostly it’s these big companies like Ferrari, Lamborghini Porsche or something on very similar lines. But why is it so? The answer is the legacy that these automotive manufacturers have built over these decades. Enzo Ferrari even said “Ask a child to draw a car and certainly he will draw it red” Such is the impact of these car makers on the world.

Let me take a step back and tell you what cars mean to me. To get a better understanding I started looking for different sources to justify my emotions about the car industry and how it’s a big part of me.



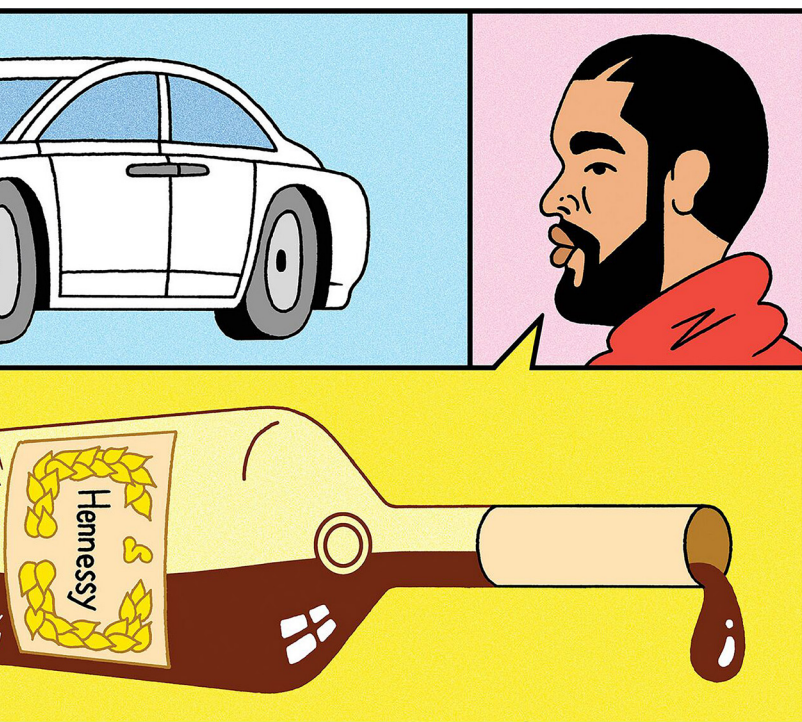


Illustration: Kyle Platts

I thought if I'm talking about cars in the creative sense I better come up with some good examples. After a lot of to and fro, I realised the best way to represent my ideas is through collaborations between car companies and fashion brands. These are the two main pillars I deeply indulge in in terms of my creative interest and they perfectly fit the canvas of my debate here. But before we strike any discussion of different collaborations we have to know what collaborations mean and why are they such a driving part of the industry today.

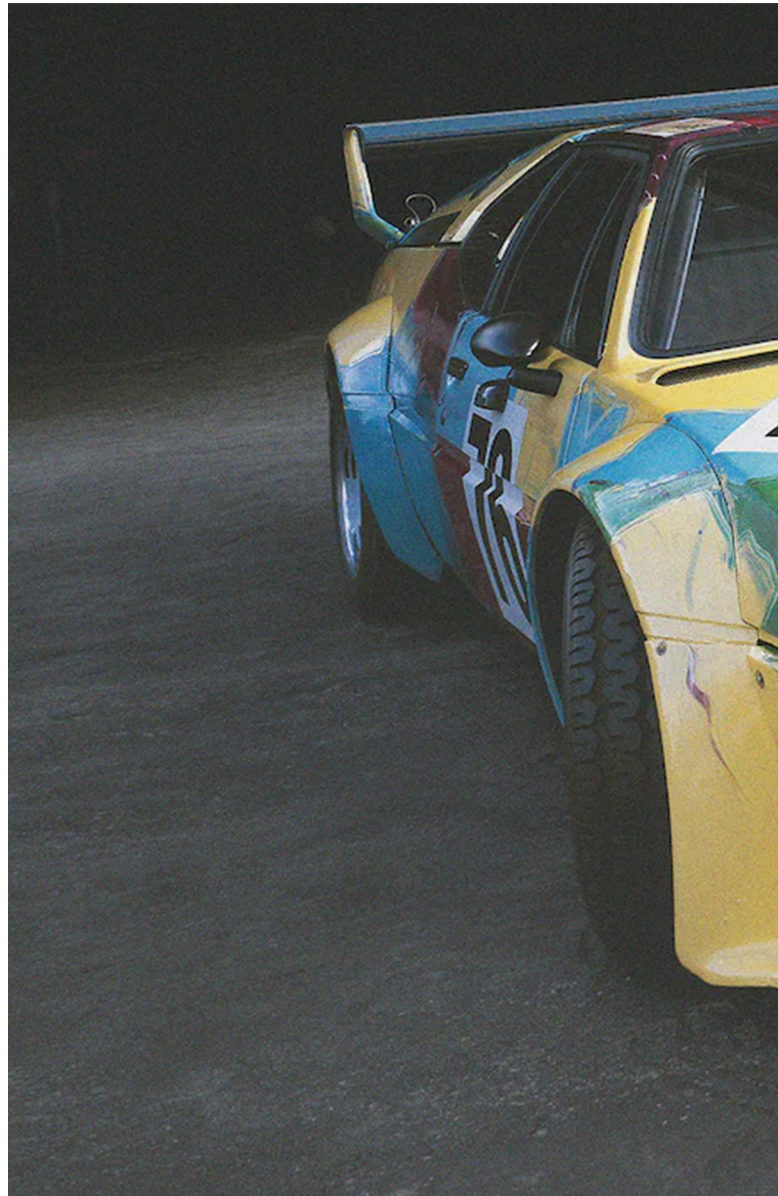
How can Cars be a Creative Canvas?

**WE DONT PRAY FOR LOVE**

**CHAPTER 1**

**WE JUST PRAY FOR CARS**

When it comes to cars people think that's there's only so much you can talk about in terms of art, but if take a deep dive you realise so many factors are left untapped. For example it can be anything from Custom paint jobs, vehicles wraps, Custom graphics, interior Customisation to art cars, performance, car accessories and car sculptures. This is a never ending list can be further deduced by talking about Art cars, Collaborations and the cultural revolution they brought upon the the car industry.



# ~~ART~~ CARS





Picture: Bmw.com

## WHAT ARE ART CARS?

Art cars transform the ubiquitous automobile into vehicles of self-expression. These cars are vehicles that have been altered and have evolved from a long tradition of decorated vehicles, from the gypsy caravan to the hippie van, developing alongside other custom car types such as the low riders, monster trucks, hot rods, and race cars. They still stand out from the other traditional forms as there's no set of rules or guide lines to build an art car.

-(Stienecker, 2010, p. 26)

Still the main source to differentiate is that the art car must be mobile to set it apart from a sculpture. Beyond mobility, it is quite possible to have no certain set of rules. Visionary artist, has started, "Calling it art could be the kiss of death. If got too much respect and became too formal, It might become stifled or academic. The fact that it is an under-developed phenomenon makes it interesting"

-(Poole, 1997, p. 56)





## WHAT DO THESE COLLABORATIONS ENTAIL?

I started my quest by researching about one of the most coveted car brand in the world “Rolls Royce” cause why not. “Very often these days we find that its the interior of the vehicle that has a tremendous effect and shaping the exterior as well”. Gliding down the highway in nearly soundless wheels, relaxing on fine leather seats, custom artwork crafted from materials hand picked for your taste. Some say that the experience of riding in a Rolls Royce Phantom makes you feel like a king.

If this doesn't represent Art and royalty to the highest what does ?



Picture: Hypebeast.com

The *Rolls-Royce Art Program*, established in 2018, partnered with London's renowned *Serpentine Galleries* to support innovative artists who push creative limits both technically and conceptually. This initiative by Rolls Royce serves as a platform for passionate artists to channelise a new form of physical art work in this digital age and connect them to reality. In 2017, selected artist Tomás Saraceno crafted an immersive exhibition at Palais de Tokyo in Paris and is presently creating another piece for display at Rolls-Royce's UK headquarters. Noteworthy among Rolls-Royce's cultural engagements is the “Spirit of Ecstasy” Fabergé Egg, a unique creation that joins the ranks of history's most legendary artistic objects. These initiatives collectively underscore Rolls-Royce's commitment to expanding the boundaries of craftsmanship and artisanal skills.

There was a time when it was enough for a vehicle maker to simply sell cars. No longer is this the case. Sales are just one element of a complex web for what are now increasingly lifestyle brands. The makers of premium and luxury cars have been particularly busy exploring far beyond the motor car and partnering with the creative world. There has always been a mutually seductive rapport between art and money. To succeed in the long-term though, it needs to be a question of corporate citizenship – for companies to see what they can return to society which then enables businesses to flourish. -(Banks, 2019)

# ***CULTURE REVOLUTION***

## ***THE DRIVE FOR CULTURAL REVOLUTION***

This new era of artists and cars has stamped a distinct identity, setting it apart from conventional social norms and creating a more cohesive platform for art to manifest as mobile sculptures. This movement has initiated a revolutionary shift in the car industry, steadily gaining momentum.

It transcends mere marketing and brand identity, delving into the realms of individualism—the sense of belonging it offers individuals and its role as a means of self-expression without uttering a word about them.



The perception of cars as pure transportation is evolving rapidly. The canvas of cars extends far beyond conventional boundaries, encompassing a spectrum of artistic expressions. From the intricate details of custom paint jobs to the grandeur of collaborations between automotive giants and artistic innovators like Rolls-Royce and Serpentine Galleries, cars are becoming mobile galleries of self-expression. Art cars stand as vibrant testaments to this change, rescuing automobiles from corporate conformity and injecting a breath of creativity into their existence. As mobile sculptures, they bridge the gap between art and life, engaging admirers through their mass appeal, proportions, and striking visual qualities.

This evolution within the automotive realm not only shapes the future of the industry but also reflects a deeper connection between art, identity, and societal progression. Cars, once mere modes of transport, now navigate the roads as symbols of artistic expression and cultural significance, forging a new path where innovation and creativity thrive.”

*On one level, art cars can be seen as a popular movement engaged in rescuing the automobile from corporate uniformity. In doing so, art cars are reviving the sense of individuality which is in decline in our society. The art car movement is a grassroots movement that blurs the boundary between art and life. Like many contemporary artists, art car artists are creating interactions that involve artists and audiences in new ways. “Appealing to the eye by mass, proportions, colour, or other dramatic qualities”*

-(Stienecker, 2010, p. 243)

**HAVIN LUNCH AND DEBATIN FERRARI PRICES**

**CHAPTER 2**

**23 AND GOIN THROUGH A MIDLIFE CRISIS**



**WE'VE ESTABLISHED THAT CARS CAN SERVE AS A NEW MEDIUM FOR ART FORMS. HOWEVER, THE DEEPER QUESTION ARISES: WHAT DEFINES IT AS A CANVAS? IS IT SOLELY THE PHYSICAL ESSENCE, OR IS THERE MORE TO IT?**

# FIAT X GUCCI



Picture: Vmagazine.com

The stories that be depicted by cars is what makes these tie ups so beautiful. Like the Fiat 500 (spotted on many top 10 collaborations lists such as NSS mag, VMan, Complex). This car strike me the most as this was a small chassis, a mini hatchback. "Not Exactly an exotic sport/super car. But the creative director of Gucci (Frida Giannini) in 2011 decide to partner up with Fiat on a Fiat 500. This was a perfect time for them as they were closing on big anniversary dates where in Gucci was celebrating 90th years and Fiat was on their 150th.

And also both being Italian heritages. What also caught my eyes were the interiors with Gucci branding all over and also came with some Gucci branded accessories to support the cars design language. The interesting part is even they didn't anticipate the foreseeable impact this was gonna create. So in 2013 the partnership was revived to make mo Fiat 500 and 500c .

*“This example illustrates that it’s not only the car’s body used as a canvas for storytelling but also the legacy attached to it, which made the partnership so significant. Visual representation plays a key role, but it’s not the sole factor driving this project. It’s also about brands coming together to embrace their Italian heritage and celebrate the significant milestones they’ve achieved in this journey.*

*The world of visual art has extended well beyond the visual, particularly within the past forty years, to embrace artwork and expressions that engage a wide range of human senses. Art today is not constricted primarily to visual representation. Sounds, smells, and tactile participation have become essential features of many contemporary artworks”*

*-( Bolin, Blandy, 2003, p.257 )*

## HERMES X BUGATTI

“Let’s talk about this guy who totally blew everyone’s mind with his love for cars and art. Meet Manny Khoshbin, a big-shot real estate mogul and a car enthusiast from sunny California. He’s crazy about both Bugatti and Hermès brands and did something totally wild—he made them team up to create something super special. Manny said, ‘Back in 2015 when I first saw the Chiron<sup>1</sup>, I was quick to sign up for a build slot, but I kinda dragged my feet when it came to actually getting it.’ He was so into Bugatti that he even thought about naming his kid ‘Ettore’ after the guy who started it all. But, you know, his wife had other ideas!



**ARE CARS MERELY AN ART FORM FOR AN INDIVIDUAL, OR DO THEY HO**



He's got this super cool customized Pagani Huayra Hermès, and even his McLaren Speedtail got the deluxe treatment from the fancy brand. Sure, it might seem like it's all about Manny, Bugatti, and Hermès, but it's more than that. It's like these guys coming together sends a big message that goes beyond cars and luxury—like, it's about ideas that matter to a whole bunch of people.”

“The totality of artifacts in a culture; the vast universe of objects used by humankind to cope with the physical world, to facilitate social intercourse, to delight our fancy, and to create symbols of meaning.” And, elaborating on the meaning of material culture Jules Prown, an art historian at Yale University, wrote in 1982: “Objects made or modified by [hu]man[s] reflect, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, the beliefs of individuals who made, commissioned, purchased, or used them, and by extension the beliefs of the larger society to which they belonged”

-( Bolin, Blandy, 2003, p.249 )



Picture: Newroomcdn.bugatti.com

**LD MORE PROFOUND SIGNIFICANCE FOR SOCIETY AS A WHOLE?**



Talking of personal art forms we can't go wrong with the one and only "Virgil Abloh". PROJECT GELÄNDEWAGEN BY VIRGIL ABLOH AND MERCEDES BENZ . The car was never mass-produced for sale and resembled a work of contemporary art rather than a functioning automobile. Virgil said "To have this car that is luxurious in a deconstructed way." Although the actual car was never sold or widely produced, Sotheby's auctioned off a 1:3 scale model of the vehicle that sold for \$201,600. All proceeds from the sale went to Virgil Abloh's Post-Modern Scholarship Fund.



**"YOU RELATE MORE TO WHAT YOU SEE  
ON A DAILY BASIS"**



Another individual art commission done by Daniel Arsham. Daniel Arsham immortalises his life story in a 911 Turbo. Arsham's multidisciplinary art involves projects that combine art, architecture and performance. His work is characterised by a dystopian style, portraying decay and deconstruction. But this is not the first Porsche collaboration the Ohio based artist has done, back in 2019 Arsham works closely with Porsche by embedding crystals into the entire body of the 992, it created an effect which catapults the Porsche into the next millennium. The piece of work toured Asia - taking a stop along the way at the Porsche Studio in Seoul. The car was also on exhibition at the Chengdu Motor Show, one of China's most influential annual car shows, where it also proved a crowd-puller. With further stops in Tokyo and Singapore.



Both of these artists have utilised the platform to create something that reflects their identity by implementing visual changes to the car. This illustrates how something as commonplace as a car can hold deeply personal significance for certain individuals. They share a similar concept in their design language, aiming to incorporate elements from daily life and infuse them with meaning. Their goal is to create timeless pieces that aren't bound to a particular era.

Common everyday objects and expressions that make up our world offer the rich potential of enabling us to forge valuable insight into the actions of those who make, use, respond to and preserve these phenomena. Exploring the seemingly “small things” in life presents us with potent opportunities to investigate the people who have engaged these frequently ignored forms and expressions in the past, and to consider thoughtfully those who join in such activities on a regular basis today.

-( Bolin, Blandy, 2003, p.253,254 )

**COULDN'T AFFORD A CAR**

**CHAPTER 3**

**SO SHE NAMED HER DAUGHTER ALEXIS**





“By now, I believe we’ve discussed and demonstrated how and why cars can serve as a creative canvas. However, before we conclude, I’d like to shed some light on a thought that crossed my mind while researching the first two chapters. Considering all the resources and guidelines we’ve gathered, I’ve come to realise that cars can also function as an indirect canvas. I would love to conclude with some examples that illustrate this idea.”

First on the list is Lego. You must be wondering what lego gotta do with this? The LEGO Technic line just keeps getting better. In late 2019, LEGO teamed up with Land Rover for their first ever set featuring a car from the luxury automaker. The LEGO Technic Land Rover Defender Set 42110 released on October 1st, 2019, for a retail price of \$200.



Next up we have some interesting art pieces from the world of the most ruthless motorsport Formula 1

*Lando Norris x MSCHF*

Designed in collaboration with the art collective, MSCHF, Lando's Medusa helmet for Vegas nods towards the allure of Medusa's gaze - which according to mythology could freeze onlookers - with the lid seemingly being wrapped with the bodies of snakes. The snakes also inspire fear and warn of the dangers of the desert that the Grand Prix and city inhabit.



The British Emperor of the Steering Wheel gets ahead in the fashion race by entrusting the task of customising his helmet to Japanese artist Hajime Sorayama. While this version is, of course, not authorised for official competition, it remains the coolest of the line-up.

LEWIS HAMILTON X HAJIME SORAYAMA



Picture: Hypebeast.com

These examples aim to illustrate that the principles we've employed to establish cars as a canvas equally apply to these instances, showcasing their function as indirect canvases. It's surprising how certain art forms possess such power that their essence lingers even without a physical attachment to the art. It's the absence that contributes to their beauty. This aspect had to be discussed to comprehend the weight these cars hold in today's art culture. I believe this serves as the final confirmation to validate our initial standpoint.



“My passion for cars drove me to choose this topic. I aimed to enjoy the journey while gaining a deeper insight into the subject. Along the way, I realised that moments can change, art forms can shift from one trend to another, but the relationship between art and cars remains constant. At this stage, it feels like cars are also simply a form of art. Yet, one thing that concerns me is how, over time, car manufacturers increasingly integrated art into cars, mainly to enhance commercial aspects. This integration does aid in strengthening the relationship, but it has also, to some extent, blurred the line between the two.

However, I strongly believe that the strides some modern-day artists have taken to infuse their personal art forms with cars reignite the beauty of this relationship and propel the revolution with a fresh start. I sense that the momentum the industry has gained over the past two decades will blossom into more remarkable advancements in the years to come. Enzo’s words, ‘Ask a child to draw a car and certainly, he will draw it red,’ still hold true even today.”

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**Margess Bank** - What Makes For A Successful Car/Art Collaboration? Here Are The Best Of 2018 <https://shorturl.at/crzJV>  
(8 November 2023)

**Karolina Mahrta** -Daniel Arsham immortalises his life story in a 911 Turbo <https://shorturl.at/suKTW>  
(2 December 2023)

**Ilyse Liffreing** - 7 Coolest Auto Cross-Brand Collabs of 2022 <https://shorturl.at/fiGIN>  
(26 November 2023)