



Formula One Art

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by Louisa Buck

The traffic between sport and art tends to be largely one-way: while artists frequently make work around and about issues of sport, those from the sporting world - notwithstanding such rare departures as the Beckhams' purchase of a Hirst butterfly painting - are not known for their artistic affinities.

Now, however, this trend might be reversed as contemporary art enters the world of Formula One racing with the inauguration of an annual commission for the McLaren group's corporate HQ, a handsome Norman Foster designed building which opened last May in the rather surprising location of Woking in the commuterbelt county of Surrey. The first piece to be commissioned is a walk-in spherical sculpture with a multicoloured perspex window entitled 'Modulo Penetrable No 1' by Peruvian born, Netherlands based artist Armando Andrade Tudela, which got its first showing in Regent's Park during the last Frieze Fair.

“Many may think that McLaren have nothing in common with art. However in many ways our products, the Mercedes Benz SLR McLaren high-performance sports car and the West McLaren Mercedes Formula One Car, are beautiful pieces of art_ declares McLaren boss Ron Dennis. They epitomise engineering elegance and there is a form following function, elegance to both...we want to stimulate discussion and creativity amongst the McLaren Group workforce with some truly unique and inspiring contemporary art and at the same time provide up-and-coming artists with a new opportunity. This enthusiasm has been greatly assisted by the Outset Contemporary art fund, headed by Candida Gertler and Yana Peel who, in between whipping up a £150,000 Frieze Art Fair Special Acquisitions Fund for donations to the Tate, have played a key part in encouraging this new initiative to marry-up high-speed technology with the most radical of new art.