



Rolls gets Rolóned

As Art Stage kicked off in Singapore, we caught up with a tony collaboration that showed how art and luxury sculpt beautifully together.

Words by Sam Coleman and Joseph Oon

IN CASE YOU HADN'T NOTICED, a serious art tremor was happening across the Causeway. Art Stage, the largest art festival in Southeast Asia, was in town again at the end of January. One of the most interesting artists to show was American-born Carlos Rolón, who is also known as Dzine. The global name and National Endowment for the Arts winner was invited to make a site-specific installation for Rolls-Royce in Singapore through renowned gallery owner Pearl Lam. We caught up with Dzine as well as curator Dr Ellen Andrea Seehusen to chat about the collaboration named “Untitled (Opulence)” and how such dialogues have always been productive ones.



ESQUIRE: This is not a critique in anyway, but BMW is kinda more active with their art engagement, and yet Rolls-Royce seems to be more strategic. We love the tie-up with British photographer Rankin for the Spirit of Ecstasy's centenary that happened a few years ago.

DR ELLEN ANDREA SEEHUSEN: They are, but it's a different form of collaboration. Our programme is more bespoke, like Rolls-Royce is bespoke. We built it up on this individual network, built on relationships, so all these projects that we've done, like collaborations with artists, have that sincerity.

DZINE: If you look at the history, there's a really great storyline behind how they built it up, and the list of artists is pretty impressive.

ESQ: Just out of curiosity, when you discuss possible commissions with Rolls-Royce, is that with the global company or individuals?

DEAS: No, the direction comes from the global company. In this case, in Asia, we wanted to work with Pearl Lam, so we got together and we spoke about the commission. We don't always collaborate with a gallery, but we wanted to do so in Hong Kong.

D: And it happened that within a short period of time, she [Dr Seehusen] saw my installation at Art Cologne and that's where we met briefly. She had a group of collectors she was walking through, and you know—it's perhaps a little soon to say this—but I think it just came together well. It's very organic working with Pearl. I felt a very personal connection, because craft making has a long tradition in Puerto Rico. I was even more inspired by how Rolls-Royce commissions an artist to make each Spirit of Ecstasy and how, despite everything being



so accessible right now, with 3D printing, etc, they actually still rely on mould making.

DEAS: That's right; each Spirit of Ecstasy is handmade and hand-polished so each one is actually different. They are pieces of art in and of themselves.

D: Yes, no one Spirit of Ecstasy is the same, and that, for me, is the kind of history I was really interpreting. After doing my research, there are four different directions that I integrated. [My piece] is a bit of a hybrid. I took the idea of the bespoke and the handcrafting; I took the idea of the grill, which has changed over the years; I took the idea of the handmade Spirit of Ecstasy icon; and I took the rims (I'm obsessed with rims) because they represent a kind of mandala, and that all led me to this really interesting experience [points to the work].

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The Rolls-Royce Wraith with its key muse for Dzine, The Spirit of Ecstasy hood ornament.

Top, right

Paul Harris, Asia-Pacific Regional Director of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, with a Wraith.

Above, right

Carlos Rolón, or Dzine, and Dr Ellen Andrea Seehusen.