

Artist and artisan:

Isaac Julien

was one of the first artists to be involved with the Rolls-Royce Art Programme. The British artist's poetic video installations often explore the theme of precision craftsmanship.



Mr Julien, how did you first become involved with the Rolls-Royce Art Programme? Ellen Andrea Seehusen, the curator of the Rolls-Royce Art Programme, became aware of my work through two of my films that now belong to the Museum Brandhorst collection in Munich. The partnership began with an artist talk and an exhibition as part of the Frieze Art Fair in London. From the outset, Rolls-Royce was interested in a serious collaboration that would result not in an image film but an autonomous work of art.

What is the idea behind "Stones Against Diamonds"?

My inspiration for the project was an essay by the celebrated Brazilian architect Lina Bo Bardi, whose work I've been dealing with for some time now. She once wrote to her husband that she preferred rough stones to cut diamonds. Bo Bardi always found inspiration in natural forms and derived her architectural statements from these. I have presented this understanding of architecture in the remote environment of Iceland's glacial ice caves.

We often encounter in your video installations the idea of a statement being lifted out of its original context and transplanted to an artificial environment.

I deconstruct reality, if you will, and replace it with poetic constructions which create universal mythological associations and are rooted in specific cultural experiences – whether they be global financial flows, migrants from the coast of North Africa or the lives of Chinese day labourers. **You are known as something of a perfectionist.**

Do you see a link between your creative work and the Rolls-Royce philosophy?

Building a Rolls-Royce requires extreme dedication, skill and craftsmanship. In essence, Rolls-Royce has raised car manufacturing to an art form.

How was your experience of the manufacturing facility in Goodwood?

I was fascinated by the way traditional craftsmanship goes hand-in-hand with cutting-edge technology. I saw in that a parallel to my own work, which evolves in a process of many small steps. Each of these steps calls for absolute focus and commitment, so that the end product is good enough to satisfy the most discerning observer.

*Interview
Heiko Zwirner*

**Artists
in the
Rolls-
Royce
Art
Pro-
gramme
2016**

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**Mohammed
Kazem**

**Yang
Fudong**

**Sudarshan
Shetty**

National Pavilion of the UAE (top), Forest Diary, 2000, C-Print, Yang Fudong, Marian Goodman Gallery Paris / New York & Shanghai ART Gallery Shanghai (middle), Sudarshan Shetty, No Title (from "this too shall pass"), Carved wood, electro-magnetic mechanism, steel, sword, 354 x 278 x 106 cm, 2010 (bottom)

Mohammed Kazem

Born in Dubai in 1969, the concept artist lends visual form to social, political and environmental transformations. His work often focuses on seemingly trivial objects, which he uses to illustrate global relationships.



Sudarshan Shetty

Born in Mangalore in 1961, Shetty is one of the most acclaimed Indian artists of his generation, known in particular for his enigmatic installations. His works are often developed around unlikely juxtapositions of materials and objects from culturally distinct spheres.



Yang Fudong

From the Venice Biennale and Kassel's documenta to commercials for the fashion label Prada, Yang Fudong is one of the most versatile and best-known artists working in China today. Born in Beijing in 1971, Fudong focuses mainly on video and photographic images in

his work, through which he narrates emotional stories of human relationships in highly aesthetic settings that are reminiscent of New Wave films.

