



Media Information  
August 2, 2011

## **BMW Guggenheim Lab Opens Aug. 3 in New York, Launching Six-Year Worldwide Tour.**

**Innovative Mobile Laboratory Explores City Life, Offers More Than 100 Free Public Programs in New York.**

**Berlin and Mumbai Are Next Stops in Nine-City Global Initiative.**

**New York, August 2, 2011.** The BMW Guggenheim Lab launches its nine-city worldwide tour tomorrow in Manhattan's East Village. A combination of think tank, public forum, and community center, the BMW Guggenheim Lab will offer free programs that explore the challenges of today's cities within a mobile structure that was designed to house this urban experiment. Over the next six years, the BMW Guggenheim Lab will go through three successive cycles, each with its own theme and specially designed mobile structure. Each structure will travel to three different locations, building on-site and online communities around the BMW Guggenheim Lab that raise awareness of important issues, generate ideas specific to each urban situation, and engage with innovative and sustainable designs, yielding lasting benefits for cities around the world. At the conclusion of the first cycle, in 2013, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York will present a special exhibition of the findings of the BMW Guggenheim Lab's inaugural three-city tour — to New York, Berlin, and Mumbai. The itineraries of the subsequent two-year cycles will be announced at a later date.

The inaugural BMW Guggenheim Lab is located at First Park, [Houston at Second Avenue](#), a New York City Parks property, and is open free of charge, Wednesdays to Sundays, from August 3 through October 16. A diverse range of more than 100 programs will address the theme for the BMW Guggenheim Lab's first cycle, *Confronting Comfort*, exploring how urban environments can be made more responsive to people's needs, how a balance can be found between notions of individual versus collective comfort, and how the urgent need for environmental and social responsibility can be met. Programs include *Urbanology*, a large-scale interactive group game that can be played both on-site and online, as well as workshops, experiments, discussions, screenings, and off-site tours.

The BMW Guggenheim Lab website and blog at [bmwguggenheimlab.org](http://bmwguggenheimlab.org) offer a global audience a variety of ways to participate in this multidisciplinary urban project. Activities at the BMW Guggenheim Lab will be reported on the blog, which will also feature posts by notable guest writers and regular interviews with the BMW Guggenheim Lab's collaborators. Members of the public are invited to join the BMW Guggenheim Lab's dedicated social communities on Twitter (@BMWGuggLab, use hashtag #BGLab), Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, and Foursquare.

"New York City has long been an urban laboratory for new ideas and innovative enterprises, so we are pleased to host the inaugural BMW Guggenheim Lab experiment," said Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. "This creative project provides an important opportunity for New Yorkers to connect and share ideas, and we look forward to the conversations that will take place when the Lab travels around the world."

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“Tomorrow’s launch of the BMW Guggenheim Lab in New York City is just the beginning of what we expect to be an incredible journey,” stated Richard Armstrong, Director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation. “The Guggenheim is taking its commitment to education, scholarship, and design innovation one step further. We’re taking it on the road. From New York to Berlin to Mumbai and beyond, we will address the enormously important issues our major cities are facing today and engage others along the way. We sincerely thank BMW for collaborating with us on this worthy endeavor.”

“As a company, we like to take action,” said Harald Krüger, Member of the Board of Management BMW AG. “We are interested in fostering an open dialogue about the challenges ahead for all of us. The world premiere of the global, six-year BMW Guggenheim Lab initiative is a true milestone for BMW, building upon our experience in both sustainability and cultural engagement. We are thrilled to support a multidisciplinary platform for forward-looking ideas and new solutions for megacities. With a great collaborator like the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation, we are confident the BMW Guggenheim Lab will thrive.”

### **BMW Guggenheim Lab Programming in New York**

The BMW Guggenheim Lab addresses issues of contemporary urban life through free programs designed to spark curiosity and interaction, encouraging visitors to participate in the BMW Guggenheim Lab’s research by generating questions, answers, ideas, and dialogue.

A central component of the BMW Guggenheim Lab’s programming in New York is Urbanology, a large group game that can be played on-site, in an interactive installation, as well as online at [bmwguggenheimlab.org](http://bmwguggenheimlab.org). Participants role-play scenarios for city transformation and become advocates for education, housing, health care, sustainability, infrastructure, and mobility as they build a city that matches their specific needs and values. The game experience for Urbanology was developed by Local Projects, and the physical design was created by ZUS [Zones Urbaines Sensibles].

Leading architects, academics, innovators, and entrepreneurs who will give public talks at the BMW Guggenheim Lab in New York include BMW Guggenheim Lab design architect **Yoshiharu Tsukamoto** (co-principal of Atelier Bow-Wow); BMW Guggenheim Lab Advisory Committee members **Elizabeth Diller** (founding principal of Diller Scofidio + Renfro), **Nicholas Humphrey** (emeritus professor of psychology at the London School of Economics), and **Juliet Schor** (professor of sociology at Boston College); Saskia Sassen (Robert S. Lynd Professor of Sociology at Columbia University); and **Gabrielle Hamilton** (chef and owner of the restaurant Prune).

An ongoing series of off-site experiments will allow participants to use special equipment to measure the effect that different areas of the city have on the brain and body. Another series, organized by spurse, a creative consulting and design collaborative, will explore the complexities of comfort through a multiweek series of on- and off-site programs with public participation.



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Screenings will take place at the BMW Guggenheim Lab on Wednesdays and Sundays. The first two screenings will feature *Blank City* by Celine Danhier (2011, USA/France, 94 min.) on August 3; and *Last Address* by Ira Sachs (2010, USA, 9 min.) and *Wild Combination: A Portrait of Arthur Russell* by Matt Wolf (2008, USA, 71 min.) on August 7.

For the full programming schedule, which will be updated regularly, please go to [bmwguggenheimlab.org](http://bmwguggenheimlab.org).

### Architecture and Graphic Design

The mobile structure for the first cycle of the BMW Guggenheim Lab has been designed by the Tokyo-based Atelier Bow-Wow as a lightweight and compact “traveling toolbox.” The 2,200-square-foot structure can easily fit into dense neighborhoods and be transported from city to city. In New York, the two-story structure is nestled between two buildings on a three-quarter-acre T-shaped site; at its southern end, it opens out onto an inviting landscaped public space and cafe.

The lower half of the BMW Guggenheim Lab structure is an open space that can be configured to meet the particular needs of the various programs, shifting from a formal lecture setting with a stage to the scene for a celebratory gathering or a workshop. The upper, “toolbox” portion of the structure is loosely wrapped in two layers of semitransparent mesh, which creates a shimmering moiré effect and allows visitors to catch glimpses of the extensive apparatus of “tools” that can be raised or lowered on a rigging system to configure the lower space for the different programs. Remarkably, the BMW Guggenheim Lab is the first building designed with a structural framework composed of carbon fiber. Videos and images of the structure and the construction process can be viewed at [youtube.com/bmwguggenheimlab](http://youtube.com/bmwguggenheimlab) and [flickr.com/bmwguggenheimlab](http://flickr.com/bmwguggenheimlab).

“Rather than architects educating the public on how to behave within spaces, it is the public who should have the autonomy of spatial practice in their cities,” stated Yoshiharu Tsukamoto and Momoyo Kaijima of Atelier Bow-Wow. “We have always been advocates of people regaining ownership in order to shape the city around them, and are very pleased to participate in the launch of the BMW Guggenheim Lab. We always conceived the Lab as a public space without enclosure.”

The inaugural BMW Guggenheim Lab will leave behind permanent improvements to the once-vacant East Village lot on which it sits, including the stabilization and paving of the site, replacement of sidewalks, and new wrought-iron fencing and gates.

The graphic identity of the BMW Guggenheim Lab has been developed by Seoul-based graphic designers Sulki & Min.

### BMW Guggenheim Lab Team

The BMW Guggenheim Lab is organized by David van der Leer, Assistant Curator, Architecture and Urban Studies, and Maria Nicanor, Assistant Curator, Architecture, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Selected by an international Advisory Committee composed of experts from various disciplines, the members of the New York Lab



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Team are: **Omar Freilla**, a Bronx, New York–based environmental justice activist, cooperative developer, and founder and coordinator of Green Worker Cooperatives; **Charles Montgomery**, Canadian journalist and urban experimentalist, who investigates the link between urban design and well-being; **Olatunbosun Obayomi**, Nigerian microbiologist and inventor and 2010 TEDGlobal Fellow; and architects and urbanists **Elma van Boxel** and **Kristian Koreman** of the Rotterdam-based architecture studio ZUS [Zones Urbaines Sensibles]. For more information on the BMW Guggenheim Lab Team and Advisory Committee, please visit [bmwguggenheimlab.org/what-is-the-lab/people](http://bmwguggenheimlab.org/what-is-the-lab/people). Video interviews with the BMW Guggenheim Lab Team can be viewed at [youtube.com/bmwguggenheimlab](http://youtube.com/bmwguggenheimlab).

### Public Information and Amenities

The BMW Guggenheim Lab and all programs are free and open to the public on a first-come, first-served basis during operating hours. Advance registration for selected programs will be available online. Hours of operation are 1 pm to 9 pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays, 1 pm to 10 pm on Fridays, and 10 am to 10 pm on Saturdays and Sundays. The 42-seat BMW Guggenheim Lab cafe, operated by the Brooklyn-based restaurant Roberta's, is open 1 pm to 9 pm on Wednesdays to Fridays, and 10 am to 9 pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

### Future Venues

Following the New York presentation, the BMW Guggenheim Lab will move on to Berlin in the spring of 2012, where it will be presented in collaboration with the ANCB Metropolitan Laboratory in Pfefferberg, a former industrial complex. In winter 2012–13, the first three-city cycle will be completed when the BMW Guggenheim Lab travels to Mumbai. The Mumbai presentation will be organized in collaboration with the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum.

### About the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation

Founded in 1937, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation is dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of art, primarily of the modern and contemporary periods, through exhibitions, education programs, research initiatives, and publications. Currently the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation owns and operates the Guggenheim Museum on Fifth Avenue in New York and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection on the Grand Canal in Venice, and provides programming and management for the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. The Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin is the result of a collaboration, begun in 1997, between the Guggenheim Foundation and Deutsche Bank. The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, a museum of modern and contemporary art designed by Frank Gehry on Saadiyat Island and adjacent to the main island of Abu Dhabi city, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, is currently in progress. More information about the Foundation can be found at [guggenheim.org](http://guggenheim.org).

### About BMW's Cultural Commitment

In 2011 the BMW Group is celebrating 40 years of international cultural commitment. During this time the BMW Group has initiated and engaged in more than 100 cultural cooperations worldwide. The company places the main focus of its long-term commitment on modern and contemporary art, jazz and classical music, as well as architecture and design. The BMW Group has also been ranked industry leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes for the last six years. In 1972 three large-scale paintings were created by the artist Gerhard Richter specifically for the foyer of the BMW Group's Munich headquarters. Since then artists such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Olafur Eliasson, Thomas Demand, and Jeff Koons have cooperated with BMW. The company has also commissioned famous architects such as Karl Schwanzer, Zaha Hadid, and Coop Himmelb(l)au to design important corporate buildings and



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plants. The BMW Group guarantees absolute creative freedom in all the cultural activities it is involved in — as this is just as essential for groundbreaking artistic work as it is for major innovations in a successful business.

More information about BMW's cultural commitment can be found at [bmwgroup.com/culture](http://bmwgroup.com/culture) and [bmw.com/bmwguggenheimlab](http://bmw.com/bmwguggenheimlab).

Join the conversation on Twitter with @BMWGuggLab and use hashtag #BGLab.

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### The BMW Group

The BMW Group is one of the most successful manufacturers of automobiles and motorcycles in the world with its BMW, MINI, and Rolls-Royce brands. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 25 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

During the financial year 2010, the BMW Group sold 1.46 million cars and more than 110,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for 2010 was euro 4.8 billion on revenues amounting to euro 60.5 billion. At 31 December 2010, the BMW Group had a workforce of approximately 95,500 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been built on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy. As a result of its efforts, the BMW Group has been ranked industry leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes for the last six years.