

lexus life



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TORCHING ART

Before any leather is considered good enough for use in a Lexus, it is burned, ripped, scuffed and scored in a battery of gruelling tests to find just how well it will maintain its quality through years of wear and tear. British artist Claire Lawrence, who is registered as blind, has captured the spirit of these tests in her creation of a series of artworks, using the same Lexus leather as her canvas.

In a further interpretation of Lexus' principles of 'creating amazing', she has been inspired by the multi-sensory qualities of the leather used in cars. Her creative process involves burning holes in the leather, which are then laced with stitching before being coated with a clear varnish, adding extra dimensions of visual interest and tactility. The result is work of a very special nature, and adds an intriguing new dimension to Lexus' concept of quality and craftsmanship.

Her works were on display at the Lexus Leicester showroom in Britain.

Says Lawrence, "I usually work with canvas. At first I found the leather much harder to stitch and burn, and the burning was also more controlled. I was hesitant about varnishing the leather, as it was so beautiful, but I was encouraged by Lexus to do whatever

I usually would to create my artworks. "I am so glad I did, as the varnish on the leather is so crisp and enhances the burn and the colour of the material. They look far more organic, with the leather appearing to gain a flesh-like quality."

Lawrence was diagnosed with a degenerative eye condition when aged eight. She went on to complete an art degree, but a subsequent sharp decline in her vision curtailed her artistic ambitions. It was the chance gift of a blowtorch in 2013 that proved the inspiration for a new creative approach that has produced new work and the Lexus commission.

"As I have tunnel vision, I can never see the piece as a whole, only sections of it, so in a sense, my art is a representation of my eyesight," she said.



ABOVE: Claire Lawrence has tunnel vision and is certified blind, yet she has created amazing artwork from leather used in the production of Lexus luxury cars.

 **WATCH: Creating Amazing**
View more of Lawrence's artworks on her website www.sightlessvisionart.co.uk, then head to <http://bit.ly/1qieqfR> to watch as she transforms a seemingly ordinary piece of leather into a unique work of art.



Unique dishes for Design Week

Multiple Michelin star-winning chef Yoji Tokuyoshi created tasting experiences to complement the Lexus exhibition *An Encounter with Anticipation* at the 2016 Milan Design Week.

Tokuyoshi is recognised as one of Milan's most innovative chefs. During almost a decade at the restaurant Osteria Francescana, under the tutelage of Chef Massimo Bottura, he rapidly rose to the position of sous chef and helped the celebrated restaurant earn its second and third Michelin stars.

Setting out on his own in early 2014, he established his own restaurant in Milan, Ristorante Tokuyoshi, featuring uniquely re-interpreted Italian cuisine that he termed *Cucina Italiana Contaminata*. In just 10 months, the new restaurant was awarded a Michelin star. With technique and creativity, Tokuyoshi offers an entirely new dining experience

that serves very personal food to each individual diner.

For the Design Week, his unique dishes 'Buoyancy' and 'Transparent' were inspired by the pure water by-product of the hydrogen fuel cell technology used by the Lexus LF-FC luxury concept car, and by the Japanese hospitality traditions of *omotenashi*.

A three-part installation commissioned from the design studio Formafantasma, comprising the design duo Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Frrasin, hosted Tokuyoshi's eatery and various other design exhibitions that formed part of Design Week.

Both Tokuyoshi and Formafantasma have been inspired by the styling and performance of the LF-FC concept car, Lexus' vision of a future car powered by a hydrogen fuel cell.

Says Tokuyoshi, "Looking at the concept car and getting to understand how the fuel cell makes use of hydrogen energy, I came to realise how Lexus envisions this as the right technology for the future. So I decided to make water the motif for my tasting experience to create something amazing that can be integrated into Formafantasma's installation."

TOP LEFT AND BELOW: Multiple Michelin star-winning chef, Yoji Tokuyoshi, who used water as a theme to create a series of Lexus-inspired dishes at the Milan Design Week. His original inspiration came from the hydrogen-powered LF-FC concept car.



ABOVE AND BELOW: Heading up the engineering team of the Lexus CT 200h (below) was Chika Kako. Kako is Lexus International's first female Chief Engineer and brought with her extensive experience from within the Toyota and Lexus organisation, including having previously worked on the RX and IS models.



ALGAE-BASED PACKAGING



Environmentally friendly packaging material derived from marine algae has received top honours in this year's Lexus Design Award competition. It was created by the design group AMAM as part of a project exploring how agar sourced from marine algae can be used as an environmentally friendly alternative to plastic for packaging materials.

The Japan-based group's success was announced at the Milan Design Week.

Seaweed-derived agar is traditionally consumed as food in Japan, and is used in scientific and medical applications worldwide. Sold in a dry state, it has a porous, feathery structure and is very light, despite its volume. AMAM have taken notice of these features and have been exploring its potential for use as packaging material.

ABOVE: This year's winning submission to the Lexus Design Award was an algae-based environmentally friendly packaging solution.

BELOW: The design group AMAM, comprising Kosuke Araki, Noriaki Maetani and Akira Muraoka.

Goods are usually shipped wrapped in plastic materials that, once removed, become waste or are collected for recycling. Considering the raw materials and energy required for processing, this situation is undesirable.

Anticipating effective and sustainable use of natural resources has become more and more indispensable. Believing that biodegradable substitutes to plastics are needed, the group took this opportunity to tackle a problem that is seemingly being ignored.

Agar can be extracted by boiling specific kinds of red algae and then dehydrating the soup it forms. Its resultant state depends on the dehydration methods and the types of red algae used.

Because agar is mouldable, it was proposed both as cushioning material and packaging material. They have also explored the possibility of an agar-derived plastic material. After use, it can be disposed of in an environmentally friendly way, and should it ever find its way into the ocean, it would not harm marine life.

AMAM was formed last year by Kosuke Araki, Noriaki Maetani and Akira Muraoka, who were contemporaries studying at Tama Art University's Product Design Department during the same period. Araki (Design Products) and Maetani (Innovation Design Engineering) also undertook a master's course at the Royal College of Art in London.

LEXUS DESIGN AWARD 2016



FACEBOOK COMMENTS

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I'm the biggest fan of the Lexus brand. It is my dream car. I'm the future owner of a black 2014 Lexus IS 250 or the successful Lexus RX, one of the best cars according to a gentleman's magazine. I love the innovation and success of the brand. It will be my prized possession.

– Thapelo Prayer Floyd



What I appreciate about the LS 460 is that Lexus stays with the naturally aspirated V8 that gives linear performance and a quality exhaust note. Just as the Americans say: there is no replacement for displacement.

– Kudakwashe Chifamba



I joined the Lexus family in 2008 and have never been disappointed – low on maintenance costs, very reliable, durable, luxurious, comfortable and it met all my expectations. I still enjoy the raw power my GS provides and will always own it.

– Burell Howard

ONE MILLION HYBRIDS LATER



Lexus has reached the milestone of one million hybrid-powered vehicles sold since it produced the world's first luxury hybrid vehicle, the RX 400h, in 2005.

The millionth vehicle was a new NX 300h delivered to a Lexus customer in Milan, Italy.

Says Lexus International President Tokuo Fukuichi, "We have set ambitious environmental goals for 2050, and hybrid popularity worldwide is extremely important if we are to achieve those goals."

Today, Lexus has 10 hybrid models on offer in various markets. The South African line-up consists of the CT 200h hatchback, ES 300h mid-size sedan, NX 300h compact SUV and the range-topping RX 450h luxury SUV.

View Lexus Europe's Senior Technical Trainer Stefan Ramaekers detailing how the four-speed gearbox integrates with the new hybrid LC coupé's continuously variable transmission (CVT) to provide new levels of response and engagement. Visit <http://bit.ly/1XeDLSd>.

NUMBER 1

...and number two, four, nine and 10! Lexus has achieved unprecedented success in *Auto Express'* search for Britain's most reliable cars, with results of the 2016 Driver Power survey seeing the third generation RX luxury SUV achieving the highest rating, narrowly ahead of the current IS saloon.

A top-three clean-sweep was only prevented by the achievement of the Toyota Land Cruiser in third place, shading out the current Lexus GS saloon. To complete the emphatic performance, the NX crossover and CT premium hatchback rounded off the survey's top 10 models.

Every Lexus model eligible for the survey is featured. *Auto Express* declared Lexus has "smashed" the survey, which brings together the real-world experiences and opinions of almost 50 000 motorists.

Lexus also performed strongly in other Driver Power categories, notably posting a one-two-three for build quality with the NX and second and third generation RX models. In the "best car to own" results, which take in performance across all survey criteria, Lexus claimed four of the top 10 places with the IS (the top-rated car in 2015) in fourth, GS in fifth, third generation RX in sixth and second generation RX in 10th.

ABOVE: Automotive researcher Ward's has announced that the new Lexus RX has earned a spot on its highly regarded annual "10 Best Interiors" list. To be eligible for the list, vehicles must have interiors that are all-new or significantly redesigned, and are evaluated on materials, ergonomics, safety, comfort, value and fit-and-finish.

A revised version of the Lexus IS sports sedan will be available at dealers soon and comes with new styling and updated safety, luxury and convenience features. Exterior styling changes include new headlamp and wheels designs, larger air intakes and an evolution of the Lexus signature Spindle grille design. The rear LED combination lights feature more dramatic styling. Inside, a new, larger multimedia screen with higher resolution display offers a clearer image of the various functions of Lexus' advanced multimedia system. Engine and drivetrain offerings remain as before.

