

The Art of Hospitality

Art has always been a complement to interior design in the hospitality industry. In the past however, most art was merely used for decoration rather than value. More hotels are incorporating art into their agenda as it proves to draw in guests as well as having investment value. This has been the trend overseas for a while with hotels such as the Waldorf Astoria in Rome that has been collecting art since the 1960s or the Kitano in New York City, which started building a collection in the early 1990s. It is still a relatively new concept for Indonesia, or so we think.



Deborah Iskandar

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In this Art in Design section of Indonesia Design, **Deborah Iskandar** shares her knowledge and love for art. Regarded as a pioneer in the auction world in South East Asia, she knows how to navigate the current evolving market trends of the Art World.

After more than 20 years' experience collectively within the art world, she founded her own advisory firm, ISA Art Advisory® in 2013. Being widely respected in Indonesia and Singapore ISA Art Advisory®, aims to aid buyers, sellers and collectors to approach the art world with ease and to build collections that will retain value over time.

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1. Façade of Artotel in Jakarta with its monumental covered mural by street artist Darbotz

2. The famous "Flora and Fauna of Indonesia" mural by Lee Man Fong in the Bali Room lobby of Hotel Indonesia Kempinski Jakarta



It can be said that Hotel Indonesia, now called Hotel Indonesia Kempinski Jakarta, was the first art hotel in Indonesia. This historic hotel was built in 1962 to prepare Jakarta for hosting the 4th Asian Games. Built directly under the supervision of President Soekarno who was also an avid collector, the construction of the hotel incorporates modern Indonesian artists such as G. Sidharta, Lee Man Fong and Trubus Soedarsono. All of the artworks were personally selected by the President and are still visible today.

One of the most famous works is a 4 x 8 metre mural by Lee Man Fong. Lee Man Fong was one of the President's favourite artists and curator for the Soekarno Collection. Entitled Flora and Fauna of Indonesia, it is still displayed in the lobby of the Bali Room. Another notable work is the Dewi Sri sculpture by Trubus Soedarsono which is located at the hotel entrance. The hotel has maintained historical objects from its inauguration in 1962 besides the extraordinary art collection.

There was a void in the development of contemporary art under the New Order regime between 1970 - 2000 but there has been rapid development since the beginning of the 21st century. Indonesia's contemporary art scene is now one of the most vibrant in South East Asia with its diverse cultures and talented artists.

There are many new initiatives to promote Indonesian contemporary art outside the galleries, including within the hospitality industry. Artotel Indonesia, established in



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Surabaya in 2012, was one of the first urban boutique hotel chains.

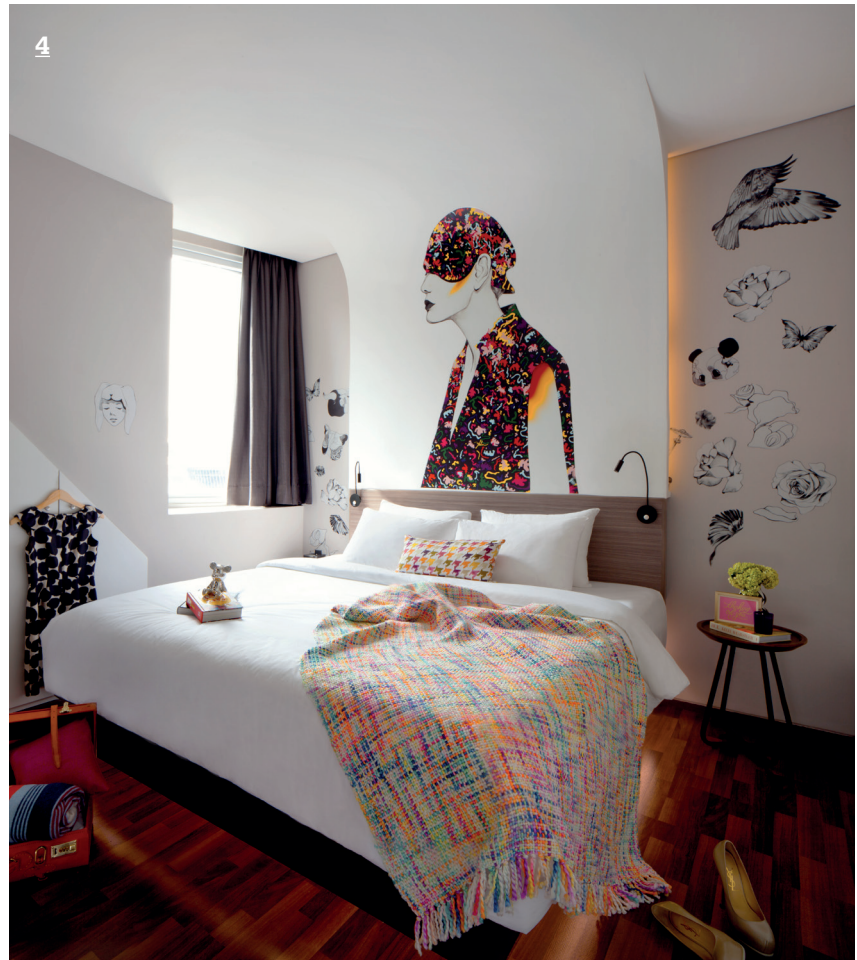
The façade of the Artotel in Jakarta features the mural by street artist Darbotz. His monumental “Monster” mural seems to hover over the neighbourhood, beckoning guests to enter. Adorning the ceiling of RoCA (Restaurant of Contemporary Art) is a mural by Eddie Hara. Contrasting with Darbotz’s, Eddy Hara’s images possess a naïve, childlike quality. The mezzanine area also serves as a Rotation Gallery where the monthly exhibition of contemporary art is held. Artotel commissioned six different artists to create a different atmosphere for each floor. There is barely an empty wall from the building’s façade until the bedrooms.

Other Indonesian hotels may incorporate art into their interiors but it is not the primary focus. However, with the advent of international art events like ARTJOG in Yogyakarta, the Harper’s Bazaar art fair and Indonesia’s surge in contemporary art, it is expected that Indonesia will see an increase in the use of art in hotels and public spaces. ^{id}

3. A closer look at RoCA in Artotel Jakarta. Eddie Hara’s mural adorns the ceiling of the restaurant.

4. One of the rooms in Artotel Jakarta with drawings by Ykha Amelz filling its wall.

5. The 4-metre Dewi Sri sculpture by Trubus sculpted at the hotel entrance of Hotel Indonesia Kempinski Jakarta



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Clockwise from left: courtesy of Artotel Indonesia(2), Bagus Tri Laksono