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The New Meaning of Luxury – Art at Home

When we think of the word “luxury”, what first comes to mind? Expensive sports cars, collectible watches or lavish villas? We know that luxury can be a divisive concept as it usually implies something exclusive and reserved to the privileged ones or to those who have reached a certain status. Luxury means something which is out of reach, at least for the majority.

However, this particular definition of luxury is too narrow. It is true that luxury can be interpreted as having prestigious belongings, but I believe it is more about acquiring experiences and contentment rather than material things. Personally, I think we have a need to experience pleasurable and beautiful things, but we also need to understand art in order to get the current meaning of “luxury” itself. Luxury is the ability to enjoy the best in life, to offer ourselves comfort and well-being, as well as intentionally celebrating the beauty in our surroundings and in all aspects of life.

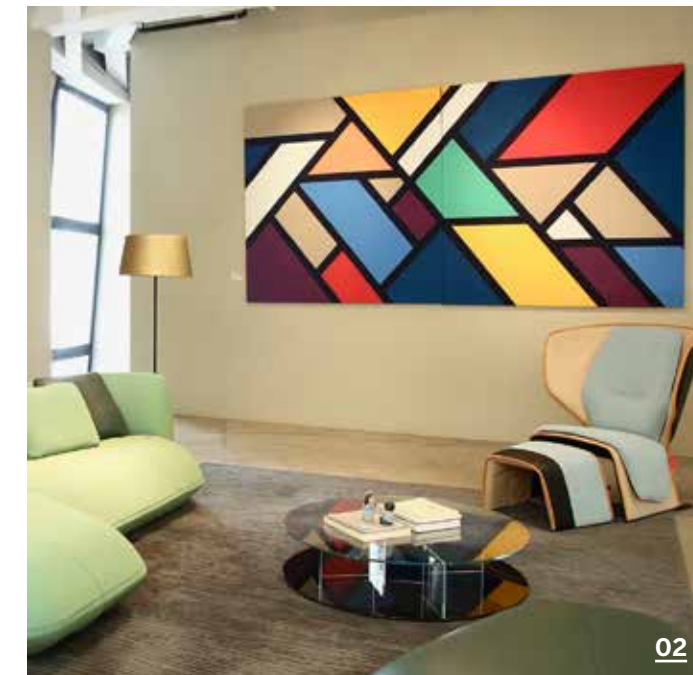
Luxury at home

Art has always been used as a complementary element in interior design. Including art into the home sphere is like adding a luxurious touch, since appreciating and enjoying art is, in my opinion, another definition of luxury. However, to really understand luxury and its meaning, we have to appreciate the true value of art rather than seeing it as just pure decoration.

I believe that a striking work of art as a centrepiece can completely transform the atmosphere of a room. Arranging furniture around an artwork gives character to a space and it is possible to create

a whole new world in each room of the house by changing or simply moving the pieces. As I always say, art for a home is like lipstick for a woman; with a small touch, it can change the whole allure and reflect the owner’s taste. As an art lover, I have over the years converted my home into a sanctuary of creativity, where the subtle natural beauty of my Danish vintage furniture mingles perfectly with the vivid and dramatic artworks covering the walls.

Achieving that sought-after luxurious feeling at home is not simply about buying expensive things, but it always requires an individual touch.



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or traditionally decorated room. Finish by adding a few elements matching the artwork’s colour scheme.

The idea is that your unique taste will make the interior look special and rare, in other words luxurious. I recommend also combining multiple artworks from the same artist for a greater impact.



Deborah Iskandar

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Deborah Iskandar is Principal of ISA Advisory, which advises clients on buying and selling art, and building collections. An expert on Indonesian and international art, she has more than 20 years of experience in Southeast Asia, heading both Sotheby’s and Christie’s Indonesia during her career before establishing ISA Art Advisory in 2013. She is also the Founder of Indonesian Luxury, the definitive online resource for Indonesian’s looking to acquire, build and style their luxury homes.

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However, I cannot stress enough the importance of selecting real art from an actual artist and not those mass-produced prints, which will never have the same wow-factor. Since using contrast is one of the foundational principles in design, it can easily be achieved with furniture too, by mixing modern and contemporary or even antique pieces together.

TETAP TERANG / ALWAYS BRIGHT - exhibition

As an art consultant with many years of experience in the art industry, I always feel the urge to educate people on different ways they can bring some luxury home through art. Sometimes it is helpful to give concrete examples, like at our last exhibition with Indonesian Luxury and ISA Art Advisory, *TETAP TERANG / ALWAYS BRIGHT*. This group show of six female artists opened in April at Ambiente in Jakarta, a curated home interior showroom with a lifestyle concept. Catering high-end design furniture and accessories, we knew it would be the ideal setting for complementing the artworks, but also a great way to show

visitors how to incorporate art in various rooms of the house.

Organised in honour of Kartini's legacy and women's contribution to Indonesia's cultural history, the exhibition presents artworks from six acclaimed female artists from various backgrounds. Based on each artist's unique experiences, the artworks are very different in style, offering something for all tastes.

Sinta Tantra, for instance, creates abstract geometric forms, often in striking bright colours. During her stay in Rome, she spent time in the garden of the Japanese Institute, which led her to combine drawing and the more minimalistic aspects of her work. The delicate mobiles of Alexander Calder are also a source of inspiration for some of her paintings. This is clearly apparent for example in the lightness of the movement in *Tabuh Tabuhan Screen II in Sapphire, Violet & Prussian* (2018), a quadriptych on display in a bedroom at Ambiente, next to Poltrona Frau's modern Italian furniture. On the other hand, *Tantra's A House in Bali* (2018) diptych



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is an explosion of primal and jewel colours in geometric triangles and diamond shapes. Hung in the living room space of the showroom amongst Cassina's furniture, it is invigorating as opposed to the soothing quadriptych.

If you already have a strong colour palette at home, it is advisable to stick to it for maximum impact. Sally Smart's *Red-Flag-Silver* (2007) from the Exquisite Pirate series is shown above a chaise longue from Cassina, accompanied by red candles and a carpet. Smart, who is represented by Jakarta-based CAN'S Gallery, painted her mixed media work with different red hues, which seem to pop out of the wall, as they connect intensely with the red found in the décor. The whole space comes alive when each element complements each other, creating a luxurious ensemble.

However, luxury doesn't always have to be about extravagance or shocking colours. Sometimes an understated elegance has more momentum; for instance, *Arahmaiani's Meditative Jawi I* (2018) only contains a few

brush strokes in different shades of grey, but it has a calming effect, bringing an inimitable coolness to the space. You can also play with the background wall by matching it to a certain shade on your painting, like we did with Natisa Jones' *Able* (2018). It is an impressive painting in size, but the muted blue and green blend harmoniously to the wall creating an illusion that the two belong together.

Luxury and art in particular have the power to break the daily routine and transport us to another life, another dimension, where we live our dream and where the ordinary becomes extraordinary. Life should not only be about the quotidian and fulfilling basic needs, but when possible it should be truly enjoyed. That is what luxury is all about, joy! Surely it takes more effort and intention to achieve such state, but it also means we appreciate the results more.

I hope that people can find inspiration in timeless art and design just like I do, to create their own experience of luxury at home. 



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- 01 "Able" by Natisa Jones is paired with furniture by Cassina
- 02 "A House in Bali (Dyptich)" by Sinta Tantra as an accent to Cassina furniture setting
- 03 Sinta Tantra's "Tabuh Tabuhan Screen II inSapphire, Violet & Prussian" with Poltrona Frau furniture
- 04 Sally Smart's "Red-Flag-Silver" is matched with the furniture by Cassina
- 05 "Meditative Jawi 1" by Arahmaiani with Cassina furniture



The Pinnacle of Personal Progress

Johnnie Walker is the world's biggest whisky brand and its "Keep Walking" slogan has been adopted and embraced everywhere as a rallying cry for progress, as encouragement in adversity, and as a joyful expression of optimism. True to this calling, its iconic square-shaped bottle has been a canvas for expression and celebration of personal progress.

STORY BY Erza S.T. PHOTOS BY Bagus Tri Laksono

Case in point is the Indonesian Opera Society, which marked its 10th anniversary in 2016 by commissioning the creation of the "Indonesia Opera Society Johnnie Walker Blue Label" limited edition" bottle. "The Indonesian Opera Society has been progressing throughout the years, and it was only fitting that our journey was to be immortalized on a Johnnie Walker Blue Label," says Erza S.T., founder of the Indonesia Opera Society. "Our members enjoy drinking the Johnnie Walker Blue Label before and after our opera, and this time, they will get ahold of a physical embodiment of our opera spirit."

Entrusted to create the design was Sinta Tantra, a British artist of Balinese descent. The 39-year-old artist is most known for her site-specific murals and installations in the public realm, most notable is the permanent landmark commission for Canary Wharf on a 300-metre long painted bridge stretching over the water in the heart of London's business district. Her other notable works can be found in the Newnham College in Cambridge University and the newly built 'tech city' of Songdo, South Korea. Sinta is a recipient of many awards including the prestigious Deutsche Bank Award, British Council's International Development Award and shortlisted for the Jerwood Painting Prize.

"For the Johnnie Walker Blue Label Indonesian Opera Society bottle, I wanted the design to look and feel like musical notes across a score," says Sinta. "Not many people know this but when I was a child, my dream was to become either a pianist or composer — there's almost

a musical approach to how I work with colour and geometry."

The following year Sinta held her inaugural solo exhibition in Jakarta, entitled "A House in Bali". Organizers of her exhibition, ISA Art Advisory, was impressed by the Johnnie Walker limited edition print she created with the Indonesian Opera Society, and went on to continue the tradition. Thus, the *A House in Bali Johnnie Walker Gold Label* limited edition bottle was created.



"For my solo show, I based my bottle design on a series of 'screen paintings' I made," says Sinta. "Whilst some sides of the bottle are filled with shades of blues, other sides are see through - the colour of the whisky actually becomes part of the work itself which I found interesting." She went on to explain: "Similar to my public art works, I wanted to 'wrap' my design around a three dimensional structure — but in this case, it wasn't four sides of a building, it was four sides of a bottle," Sinta said. "Although the bottle and building are vastly different in scale, I approached the process of designing the bottle, as I would an architectural space."

As Johnnie Walker keeps walking to the future with their innovations, soon we'll see what new collaborations and craftsmanship the brand will bring. 