



01

# Creating Experience with Artworks

As competition in the hospitality industry gets stiffer, new hotels, especially the ones that do not belong to a well-known established chain, need to strengthen their brand and enhance their image in order to stand out and attract guests. Architects and interior designers are usually hired to meet these requirements. An immaculate appearance and professional design will guarantee a new hotel gets noticed and picked by potential guests. Aside from beautiful architecture and interior design, art has become increasingly significant, as it helps distinguish a hotel and its brand from other establishments.

The aesthetics of a hotel is crucial for guests' overall experience during their stay. If the hotel has spent time and money to look good, they are also very likely to truly care for the comfort of their guests. In addition, customers are increasingly craving personalised travel experiences. Therefore, integrating visual art into a hotel's interior design adds that special note and represents a strong marketing point. Nowadays hotels are willing to take more creative risks when choosing artworks. Coupled with their own style, the presence of artworks indeed makes hotel visits more exiting. You never know what you might come across in your room!

Speaking of art, it is unfortunately true that many notable hotels still showcase mediocre artworks in their common areas and sometimes guest rooms. These displays are often meant to add a final decorative touch to the space, but alas, they are often randomly chosen mass-produced prints, which would certainly not please those with a keen eye for art. A curated selection of real artworks from actual artists is sure to make a difference! When possible, artworks should be part of the interior design plans from the beginning. To achieve such integration and level of cooperation, architects, designers, lighting consultants and art curators need to connect from the first moments of the planning process.

Some hotels are creating or reinforcing a sense of place through art. For instance in Norway, The Thief, a luxury establishment based in Oslo, has three original collages inspired by Norwegian cultural symbols. They were created by British pop artist Sir Peter Blake, who is best known for his iconic sleeve design for The Beatles album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. The collages, which depict Bergen and folk dancing, decorate the hotel's penthouse suite. The Thief is also the proud owner of *The Horse Thief*, painted by Richard Prince and located in the reception area. The hotel takes its name from its situation in an area, which was once home to criminals and their shady activities. It has now become a centre for contemporary art and The Thief is holding exhibitions curated by Sune Nordgren, former director of Norway's National Museum of Modern Art. Under his supervision, the hotel has borrowed artworks for various shows from the nearby Astrup Fearnly Museum of Modern Art and from Petter Stordalen, a Norwegian collector who also happens to be the owner of The Thief. The ever-changing displays include modern and contemporary artists, from Andy Warhol to Antony Gormley.

Located in Saint-Paul-de-Vence in France, La Colombe d'Or is another world-class hotel with a fascinating art collection. They boast artworks from the 20<sup>th</sup> century's greatest names in modern art who had stayed at the hotel, often exchanging



Deborah Iskandar

Art Consultant

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.

**ISA Art Advisory®**  
Jl. Wijaya Timur Raya  
No. 12  
Jakarta 12170,  
Indonesia  
t. +6221 723 3905  
e. vip.enquiries@  
isaartadvisory.com



their work for a few nights. Many of the artworks are nonchalantly arranged, to look like they not only belong to the space, but also to give the impression that they were created on the premises. Indeed, some of them were! The staff consider the artworks as an integral part of the house, which can never be removed, therefore many pieces do not even have proper titles. Matisse's portrait of a woman was given by the artist himself to Paul Roux, the original owner of La Colombe d'Or in the 1920s. World War I drove many French artists to move south, where they settled around the Côte d'Azur. Around this period, Paul Roux befriended the aging Henri Matisse. The artist eventually became a regular at the hotel and donated the painting as a sign of gratitude. Pablo Picasso was another artist to leave his mark at La Colombe d'Or. Being a regular visitor at the hotel, he also became friends with Roux, however, the Spanish master only left an impression shortly before Roux's death in 1953. The artist offered three paintings and Roux chose one, *Flower Vase*.



The Asian region is catching up, as a growing number of hotels are investing in art. The Park Hyatt hotel in Bangkok is a great example of an excellent combination between a well-designed hotel and art gallery. The hotel was designed by London-based architecture studio, AL\_A, while Yabu Pushelberg from New York took charge of the interior. The result is a building featuring contemporary architecture paired with luxurious residential interiors. To complete this entity, art plays an intrinsic part in the

overall experience. Inside the hotel, the artworks exude a dignified presence as one would expect to find in a museum or fine art gallery. Park Hyatt's art collection is so meticulously curated, that extensive art tours are offered to guests, who get a chance to learn about the origin, conceptual development and meaning of the various pieces.

Countless paintings, photographs, sculptures and mixed media pieces fill every corner of The Park Hyatt Bangkok. The selection includes works by contemporary Thai artists like Chatchai Puipia and Nonthivathn Chandhanaphalin, but also big international names such as Andreas Gursky, to name a few. Two of the most prominent installations in the hotel are made by Hirotoishi Sawada, a renowned Japanese artist whose merits include commission pieces for global luxury brands. The first one, *Pagoda Mirage* (2016), is an abstract installation built from hundreds of small, cone-shaped copper swirls suspended over the hotel's ballroom. The second, *Naga* (2016), is a swirling cascade of black rods hanging over The Living Room, one of the property's restaurants. Right underneath *Naga*, the guests can admire *Bangkok VII* (2011), a large photograph by German photographer Andreas Gursky. His photograph is one of the most expensive pieces in Park Hyatt Bangkok's collection. The piece shows the Chao Phraya River, digitally manipulated to emphasise water pollution and attract attention to some of Thailand's environmental issues.

All in all, art has become a strong selling point for hotels. Clean sheets and a turndown service are no longer enough when the establishments compete for clients. In order to succeed, they have to offer something more, a unique experience, which will still be remembered when the guest has returned home. With a curated art collection, hotels can build their brand or completely change an old musky image. Art also connects people because it speaks a universal language and can break barriers. Curiosity is a human characteristic shared by all of us and what better way to spark it than a stunning image or surprising sculpture. <sup>10</sup>

- 01 *Naga* by Hirotoishi Sawada. An installation by Hirotoishi Sawada, consists of swirling cascade of black batons hanging over the dining area
- 02 *Flower Vase* by Pablo Picasso presented the painting to Paul Roux shortly before the original proprietor's death in 1953. The Spanish painter, a great friend of the owner of La Colombe d'Or, was the first to pay his respects at the funeral
- 03 *Pagoda Mirage* by Hirotoishi Sawada. An abstract installation, consists of hundreds of small, cone-shaped copper swirls suspended over the hotel's ballroom
- 04 *The Horse Thief* by Richard Prince 1997-1998. The *Horse Thief* by Richard Prince hanging in the lobby of The Thief, Oslo
- 05 *Untitled* by Alexander Calder, next to the swimming pool, a mobile by Alexander Calder