

Looking for Art in All The New Spaces

New York liberates the art scene to expand its exhibits outside the gates of museums and galleries to just several inches above your pillow. As a haven for art lovers, new boutique hotels charm their guests with their exceptional art collections. It was during a recent trip to New York, to attend the fall contemporary art auctions, that I had the fortune to stay at the trendiest art hotels. Three hotels in three different locations; Midtown, Uptown, and on the Upper East side were selected - each with a focus on public art.

STORY BY Deborah Iskandar



My first stop was Midtown at the Kitano Hotel. Established in 1973, The Kitano Hotel is the only Japanese owned hotel in New York City. The Kitano family ranks as one of the leading art collectors in Japan, having established a private museum in Nagano Prefecture in 1968 (long before the Japanese buying spree of Impressionist paintings in the late 1980s). This unique hotel is located in the historic Midtown Manhattan's Murray Hill, a neighborhood that was once home to the wealthiest families in New York City including former residents such as J.P. Morgan as well as Franklin D. and Eleanor Roosevelt. It is also not far from the city's renowned Theater District and Central Park, which is the center of New York's cultural and art events. The hotel was recently renovated to celebrate its 40th anniversary.

Exhibited right at the entrance of the Kitano is Fernando Botero's guard "Dog". Many collectors worry about the risk of displaying art in public spaces, but the Botero is prominently seated in the lobby. The patina on his nose and ear's are rubbed bare from guest's petting him and taking photos but that only adds to his charm. Past the Botero,



your eyes flow up to an abstract painting by Paul Jenkins. Paul Jenkin's (1925-2012) was an American abstract artist who spent most of his life between New York and Paris, and whose works are collected by the Whitney Museum, among others. Sigrid Freundorfer, the art advisor for the hotel, graciously showed me around the complex, which exhibits artworks by Red Grooms, Ed Baynard, and a series of New York photographs and etchings by Joel Greenberg and Henri Silberman. Habauki Restaurant showcases a collection of works on paper by the Japanese artist Tatsuya Ishiodori. Habauki is one of the most authentic Japanese restaurants in NYC, with the traditional Kaiseki dinner menu. The guest rooms are large, bright and airy which is the benefit of older hotels that have been recently renovated like the Kitano. The highlight of the weekend is the Sunday jazz brunch. Surrounded by art, food and jazz, life doesn't get better at the Kitano.

After the Kitano, it was a move Uptown to the Chambers Hotel. The Chambers is a boutique hotel owned by the dynamic duo Richard Born and Ira Drukier. When you enter the Chambers it's like being invited into a private residence. The warm fireplace, leather and velvet sofas and serious art is not exactly



ART IN NEW SPACES
CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
—
Paul Jenkins' "Phenomena Seen But Not Heard" at the JAZZ at KITANO
—
One of the hallway arts in the Chambers by John Newson
—
One of the authentic Japanese Tatami Suites in the Kitano
—
Fernando Botero's "Dog" at the lobby area of the Kitano, the hotel's guard that always ready to greet the guests



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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ART IN NEW SPACES
CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
— Studio Suite at the Chambers Hotel
— Jenny Holzer’s “You are My Own” photograph in the lobby area of the Surrey
— A view of Chuck Close’s “Kate Moss” from the lobby of the Surrey
— Lobby area at the Chambers Hotel, artwork by Spanish artist Pedro Barbeito: “Darr Maher, A Non-Baryonic Structure”
— A painting by Steven Richter in one of the Chambers’ studio suites



than the elegant, poised model we usually see, Kate is depicted sans make-up like a small town girl. It is an edgy contemporary vibe to an otherwise classically designed hotel. Behind the reception were photographic prints on xenon projection by Jenny Holzer “You are My Own” from 1996. The main focus of Jenny Holzer’s work is the use of text and words in the public space, in the lobby and the innovative embroidery on the cushions in the guest rooms. The guest rooms are spacious and ultra-luxurious, as befitting a property of it’s sophistication. In the suite there is oil on canvas painting by Cecily Brown, who is one of the darlings of the art world. Such luminaries

as Elton John and Michael Ovitz collect her abstract expressionist paintings. Lauren Rottet, the interior designer for the project was successfully able to blend old and new worlds with a world class art collection to bring the Surrey into the 21st Century. Trying to choose a favorite hotel between the three would be the same as trying to choose your favorite child; I appreciated each hotel equally for their own unique qualities. As I met with the art advisors of each property it became clear that art was not just business, it was a passion that the owners wanted to share with their guests. The advisors were able to use the art to create a distinct style and mood for each space. Even in Indonesia, we are see seeing the trend of the art hotel, and bringing art to public spaces. It is the power of art that can move us to curiosity, to examine the meaning, place and setting and to embrace art in our sleep is any an art addict’s dream. **ID**



hotels, the art is secondary but at the Chambers, architect David Rockwell designed the interiors as a compliment to the art collection. The artworks are exhibited all over the hotel, from its guest rooms to the common areas. The most striking feature of the hotel is the site-specific works by such artists as John Newson, Katerina Grosse, Do-Ho Suh, located on the guest room corridors on each floor. I had fun riding the elevator to snapshot each work of art.



My last stop was the Surry Hotel on the Upper East Side. The Surry was built in 1926, and has the grace and elegance of a Gatsby movie set. But, it is the art that brings it into the 21st century. When you enter the lobby, you are greeted by a striking image of Kate Moss. On closer inspection, it is discovered to be an embroidery by the renowned artist Chuck Close. Close’s tapestry series was developed as a continuation of his portraits and signature grid-lines, but it is an incredibly difficult medium to work in. The rich areas of detail pop out of a soft focus, to emphasize the star power and charisma of Kate. Rather

Talking to Ansell Hawkins, the General Manager, you can see how the Chambers casts its spell. Each employee is especially selected; they must have a charming personality to greet the guests like they are welcoming an old friend. The guestrooms are designed to evoke the feeling

what you would expect just a stone throw away from the glitz and glamor of Madison Avenue. The Chambers is home to more than 500 pieces of original art inspired by the cultural heritage of the city. With most

of being an artists’ loft. The location of the Chambers is especially appealing for Asian travelers as there is a string of Japanese Ramen shops, and Chinese restaurants within a close proximity to Madison Avenue.

