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ESCAPES

ROOM WITH A VIEW

Luxe hotels are giving guests their own galleries, adorning suites with important art

By ANDREW SESSA

Most hotels with any style to speak of display original art of some kind or another in their lobbies, restaurants and other public spaces these days. But those with works by blue-chip or buzzy emerging artists remain rare gems, and those with such valuable pieces in individual guest rooms are rarer still. We've spun the globe to find the spots where the big-ticket in-room art isn't just window dressing, but often entirely immersive or even an accommodation's entire *raison d'être*.

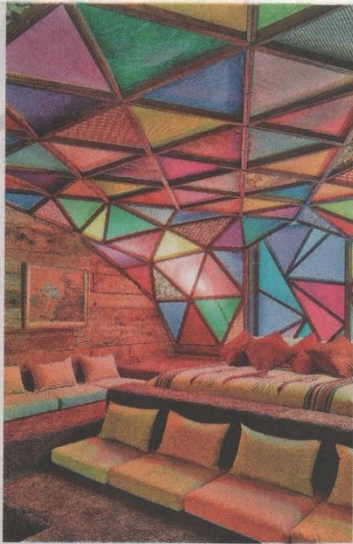


THE SILO; CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

This month's-old waterfront hotel occupies the same building — a former grain-storage facility — as the just-opened Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa. That institution shows highlights from the holdings of collector and former Puma CEO Jochen Zeitz, while several artists represented in his cache are also featured in a few of the hotel's rooms. No. 801 displays work by three artists from southern Africa, including Zanele Muholi, whose pieces have been displayed at Paris' Fondation Louis Vuitton, New York's Brooklyn Museum and the 2013 Venice Biennale. A portrait by self-taught Zambian artist Sibley McAdam hangs in the hotel's Royal Suite (above), along with "Sweat Prints" by South African Pierre Carl Vermeulen. TheRoyalPortfolio.com

**21C MUSEUM HOTEL;
LOUISVILLE, KY.**

The domestic minichain of 21c Museum hotels has carved out a niche for itself by repurposing historic buildings as contemporary-art-filled stays. The company's debut outpost in Louisville features some 9,000 square feet of exhibition space, currently showing off works by Mickalene Thomas, Ryan McGinness, Robert Wilson and Nick Cave, among others, in an exhibition devoted to pop art and popular culture. Those looking for a more 360-degree experience should book the "Asleep in the Cyclone" suite (right). NYC-based artists Jonah Freeman and Justin Lowe have created a cozy custom space that envelops guests in a construction of salvaged barn wood, custom textiles and a backlit, colorful, geodesic-dome-style ceiling. 21cMuseumHotels.com

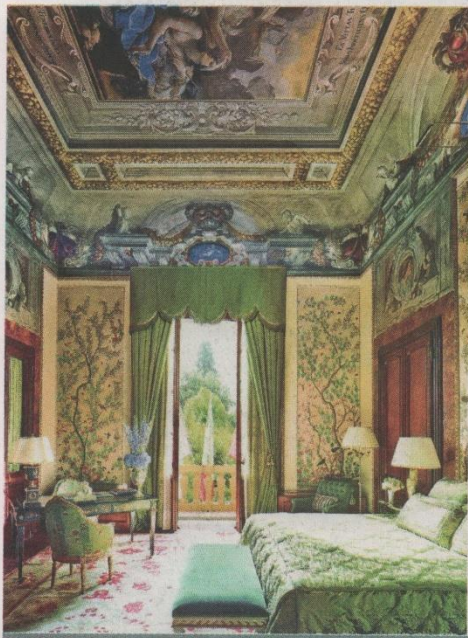


REGENT SEVEN SEAS EXPLORER

When it comes to floating hotels, it's hard to beat the art featured in the year-old Regent Seven Seas Explorer's two-bedroom, 4,400-square-foot Regent Suite. The connoisseur experience begins before you even enter, with a pair of Pablo Picasso's black-and-white "Figure" lithographs flanking the set of double entry doors. Inside, you'll find a dramatic mixed-media canvas called "Red Shadow on Dark Background," by Spaniard Agusti Puig and the cork-on-panel, primary-colored "Yellow Window," by Pakistani-born artist Jamali. RegentCruises.com

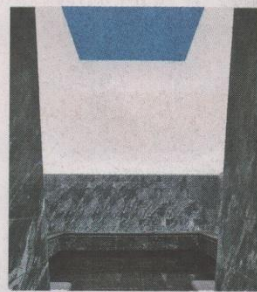
ESTANCIA VIK; JOSÉ IGNACIO, URUGUAY

The public spaces of South America's quartet of Vik Retreats feature art by the likes of Zaha Hadid, Anselm Kiefer and James Turrell. This tin-walled, site-specific work (right), by Uruguayan artist Marcelo Legrand at Estancia Vik, is a colorfully chaotic riff on the country's traditional barbecues. Many of the properties' suites are also individually designed by different South American artists, including one at Estancia (the original Vik Retreat) created by Lacy Duarte, who studied in Henri Matisse's studio in the 1950s. VikRetreats.com



**FOUR SEASONS HOTEL FIRENZE;
FLORENCE, ITALY**

Occupying the aristocratic, five-century-old Palazzo della Gherardesca (which has housed, variously, generations of nobles, a pope, a convent of nuns, and an Egyptian viceroy), this 9-year-old gem contains a priceless collection of antiques, artifacts and art — much of it original to the palace and all of it painstakingly preserved and restored. Most impressive of all is the Volterrano Suite (left). Here, the ceiling features a fresco — commissioned by the della Gherardesca family in the middle of the 17th century — by the Tuscan Mannerist and Baroque artist Volterrano, whose talent earned him years of Medici family patronage. His allegorical work in the bedroom of the suite, which is called "La cecità della mente umana illuminata dalla verità" ("The blindness of the human mind enlightened by truth"), gloriously depicts a woman representing truth, who lifts a blindfold off another woman, who signifies the human mind. FourSeasons.com



**AMANZOE;
PELOPONNESE, GREECE**

Designed by Ed Tuttle in a contemporary style inspired by the architecture of ancient Greece, this hilltop retreat just unveiled a new site-specific installation in its Villa 31: "Skyspace" (above), by art star James Turrell, who was celebrated with solo shows in 2013 at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Guggenheim in New York. The work comprises a 20-foot-by-20-foot building whose broad ceiling aperture functions as a frame for the sky above and lets Villa guests observe the changing light and atmosphere over the course of the day and night. Aman.com

THE BEAUMONT; LONDON, UK

This Mayfair haute spot offers a surprising anachronism amid its art deco splendor: a huge, silver, anthropomorphic robotlike structure atop a corner of its facade. It's known as "ROOM," a monumental sculpture (below) by Antony Gormley, which encloses the bedroom of one of the hotel's most exclusive suites. An examination of darkness and intimacy, the oak-clad sleeping quarters are just 43 square feet, with nearly 34-foot ceilings, shutters that keep out light and no furnishings save for a simply made bed. TheBeaumont.com

