

**By Jennifer Riek September 13, 2016**  
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## **Sleeping In an Art Gallery: 3 Hotels to Check In To**



Art is reframing the boutique hotel business and then some by no longer serving as just an ornamental element of hotel design but part of the property's identity. Out are the quintessential, mass-produced copies of art, and in are one-of-a-kind photographs and artworks that capture the vibe and soul of a hotel. Such is the sensory experience at the Faena Hotel Miami Beach. The new hotel considers itself a large-scale exhibition due to the excessive amount of murals, chandeliers and fine art exhibiting throughout the property. "Art has become a key part of the visitor experience because it can offer a unique story, a sense of locale and inspiration," explains Rachel Berg, partner of Museum Editions, a New York City art consulting company. "The 'art hotel' has become another respected place for artwork to live." The trend might be vital to the future of all businesses. For instance, dentistry office Spodak Dental Group of Delray Beach, Florida, showcases an in-house gallery installation valued at more than a million dollars on its walls. Whether for extra profit or purely aesthetics, art is impacting all industries.

## **The Vendue**



The Vendue in Charleston, South Carolina, represents an immersive art experience. Its walls are adorned with rotating exhibitions of vibrant contemporary pieces. The hotel takes no profit from the sale of the work but instead aims to establish itself within the local art community and inspire guests at every turn. “A lot of people are intimidated to walk into a museum or a gallery,” says Emily Rigsby, the hotel’s art director. “Having it in a hotel makes it more casual, comfortable and more available to the public. People are able to have more of a response to the work.” This year, the hotel was selected to host the New York Academy of Art’s collection, which was crafted by faculty and alumni. Upon hearing about the show, multiple guests elected to extend their stay at the property, according to Rigsby.

## **Old No. 77 Hotel & Chandlery**



Provenance Hotels’ public relations director Kate Buska and her team faced a conundrum when they first approached the idea of building the Old No. 77 Hotel & Chandlery in New Orleans. Provenance, whose portfolio includes art hotels in Seattle and Portland, wanted to capture the spirit of a city already established as a mecca for art and music lovers. “It was hard to pin down something that was going to resonate for a long time,” Buska says to showcase the flavor of The Big Easy, the team collaborated with the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, a tuition-free art high school, and Where Y’Art, an art gallery that curates and sells work from local artists. The

hotel purchases work from second- and third-year students at the center to decorate guest room walls, while pieces from Where Y'Art are on display and for sale in a gallery. Although the Old No. 77 takes no direct profit from the art, which ranges from sculpture to prints and original paintings and photography, Buska explains it's an investment that helps the property compete with big-name hotels. In addition items such as handcrafted notebooks to perfume by NOCCA alumni and local artisans are sold in the Chandlery. "What we do as a hotel is try to create an experience where if you go to a city, you're going to have a better view of it for having stayed with us," Buska says. "If you have time to explore, we can point the way. If you don't, you still feel like you saw more of New Orleans."

### **The Carlton Arms Hotel**

The economic decline of the 1970s hit New York City hard. In 1984, the Carlton Arms Hotel, once a bustling speakeasy, begged for a makeover. The employees—mostly artists—answered the plea with their paintbrushes. All 54 rooms were revamped by aspiring and established artists, and five rooms are redone annually. The artists design sprawling and diverse murals and are paid in supplies and publicity. "It's a different beast for sure," says Canadian artist James Zirco Fisher, who designed the Heart Chamber at the hotel in 2011. His room, 9B, expresses a steampunk-meets-Edgar-Allen-Poe vibe and includes a trapdoor where visitors leave notes and treasures. "The art isn't for sale, so the money factor isn't there. This is more about enhancing peoples' experiences in the city as opposed to enhancing where they already live." According to manager John Ogren, the Carlton Arms has never advertised and relies on word of mouth and editorial coverage. "A few hotels like this exist in San Francisco and LA, but it's mostly unheard of in the U.S.," Ogren says. In an age of constant building and bettering, it's an ode to Old New York.