

BAZZAAR

Harper's

ESCAPE



YES sign by artists Tim Noble and Sue Webster at the Semiramis hotel, Athens



NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Hotels with world-class art collections that let you skip the gallery

Words by LAURA BROWN

ATHENS, GREECE

Semiramis

With its lollipop bright interior and bold art work, the phrase, 'Like a kid in a candy store' pops instantly to mind when entering the lobby of the Semiramis hotel, part of the Yes! Hotels group. Located in the affluent and leafy suburb of Kifissia, Athens, the 51 room boutique hotel is the colourful brainchild of designer Karim Rashid and owner Dakis Joannou, who wanted a public setting to showcase his love for provocative contemporary art. Competing for attention with the acid pink, lime green and turquoise interior are works by artists such as Jeff Koons, Takashi Murakami and Su-En Wong. Overlooking the swimming pool is the Mediterranean restaurant, the ideal location for sipping cocktails while listening to the in-house DJ.

From Dhs630 per night; Yeshotels.gr



SHUT UP...
Taking pride of place in the Semiramis Hotel foyer Shutup by Michael Bevilacqua is a visual diary of his artistic influences including album covers, fashion house logos and cartoon characters.



BEIJING, CHINA Hotel Éclat

Think Centre Pompidou meets the Pyramids in 21st century Beijing. The stunning glass empire is home to original sculptures and paintings from Western art greats such as Salvador Dalí, Pierre Matter and Andy Warhol alongside Eastern artists such as Chen Wen Ling, Gao Xiao Wu and Zou Liang. The works are thoughtfully positioned throughout the public and guest rooms of the boutique hotel, emphasising the building's unique design. The hotel's slick interior features metal, glass and wooden architectural details, whilst warm reds and darker colours set the tone for relaxing after hours. Ideal for both business and leisure travellers alike, all 100 rooms are equipped with high speed internet, Wi-Fi and a 24 hour butler service, while 20 luxurious suites offer guests their own private outdoor pool. *From Dhs1,060 per night; Eclathotels.com/beijing*



The opulent Miami Suite at the Hotel Éclat, Beijing, China

FACE FORWARD

Black and white portraits of Congolese boy soldiers by Guy Tillim decorate the walls outside the El Fenn restaurant. The photographer started his career as a reporter, but soon traded his pen for a camera to capture powerful images of the troubled region of Africa



Soldiers by Guy Tillim, 2002



Moroccan style courtyard room at El Fenn also featuring a work from the *Soldiers* series by Guy Tillim

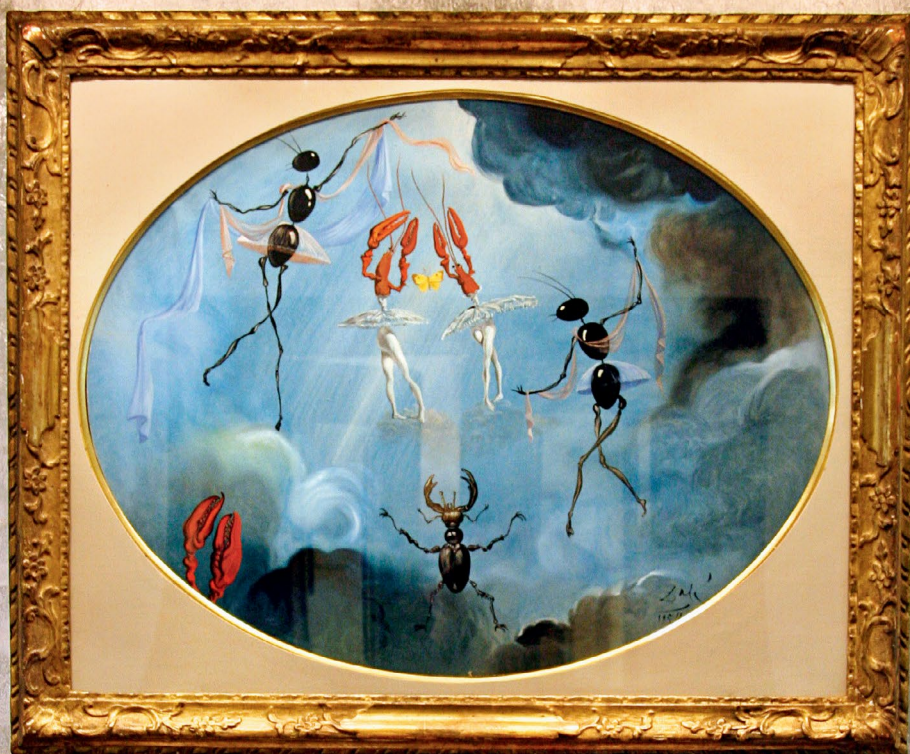
PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVID LOFTUS

MARRAKESH, MOROCCO

El Fenn

Behind an unassuming doorway in the heart of the bustling Marrakesh medina, El Fenn is an art-filled boutique hotel centred round a lush sun-bathed courtyard. Gracing the jewel-coloured walls is an impressive collection of works by the likes of Bridget Riley, Fred Pollock and Hassan Hajjaj, all part of former gallerist and co-owner Vanessa Branson's extensive private art collection. The 28-room property underwent a full refurbishment last year and the results are spectacular; a unique blend of Moorish architecture and modern design, the richly decorated rooms feature kilim covered beds, vivid tadelakt bathrooms and hand carved ceilings. In the courtyard, two Carrara marble-lined pools are surrounded by day-beds and a fire-pit, while the rooftop boasts a third pool, Berber-tented lounging area and some of the best views in town, including of the Atlas mountains. *From Dhs735 per night; El-fenn.com*

*Femmes
métamorphosées*
by Salvador Dalí,
1957



SURREALIST GUEST

Salvador Dalí himself loved spending time in hotels; each year he rented a suite at Le Meurice, Paris, for a month. His behaviour there could often be surrealistic; he once demanded a herd of sheep be brought to his room, which he shot with a gun filled with blank bullets. Another time, he requested a horse

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND

Dolder Grand

As art aficionados breathe in the fresh mountain air on arrival at The Dolder Grand, the luxury five star Zurich retreat welcomes with open arms. Making a bold first impression in the lobby is one of Andy Warhol's largest works, *Big Retrospective Painting*, 1979/1980 which hangs over the front desk. It's just one of more than 100 (and counting) museum-worthy artworks, mainly from the private collection of Urs Schwarzenbach, which represent an eclectic array of styles, genres and periods. Guests can borrow an iPad from reception for a self-guided tour of painted works by Marc Quinn and sculpture by Keith Haring, while those dining in two-Michelin-starred, The Restaurant, will be treated to a Salvador Dalí, a Gerhard Richter and four Camille Pissarro paintings.

From Dhs2,140 per night; TheDolderGrand.com



Lexington Premier King room at the Gramercy Park Hotel

NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

Gramercy Park Hotel

Set in one of the most coveted areas of Manhattan and providing exclusive access to New York City's only private park, the Gramercy's bohemian charm has attracted the world's artists, literati and intellectuals since it first opened its doors back in 1925. Redesigned in 2006 by Ian Schrager, with the support of legendary artist and film director Julian Schnabel, the hotel was transformed into an eclectic art-filled haven. The ever-changing collection favours contemporary American masters – think Andy Warhol, Jean-Michel Basquiat and Tom Wesselmann - whose hallmarks include bold palettes, oversized imagery and the use of unconventional materials. The décor of the hotel's 185 rooms is unashamedly opulent with velvet-upholstered headboards, tapestry-covered chairs and leather-topped tables. The hotel is also home to a fantastic rooftop restaurant along with two lavish bars. *From Dhs1,570 per night; Gramercyparkhotel.com*

FLORENCE, ITALY

Four Seasons Hotel Firenze

Harking back to Florence's former glory, this luxury hotel on the edge of the city offers guests the rare opportunity to view historical artworks in their original context. Frescoes, bas-reliefs, stuccoes and silk wallpapers have been carefully restored to their original beauty after years of painstaking restoration. Occupying two restored Renaissance buildings - a 15th century palazzo and a 16th century convent - set within one of the largest Florentine gardens, the hotel's 116 bedrooms are highly decorated in warm Tuscan yellows and greens. One of the most impressive rooms is the Volterrano suite; the 19th century Chinese wallpaper depicting a scenic panorama of trailing flowers and exotic birds is a rare example of the nobility's historical fascination with all things Oriental. The Four Seasons is also home to Florence's only in-hotel spa, which uses the evocative Santa Maria Novella products, with formulas dating to the 13th century. *From Dhs2,280 per night; Fourseasons.com/Florence*



Royal Suite with a frescoed ceiling and original 18th century Capodimonte ceramic floor by Ignazio Chiavese



Volterrano Suite with restored 19th century Chinese wallpaper and 17th century frescoes painted by Baldassare Franceschini

GOLD PLATED

For a unique view of Florence's modern day artisans, dine on the city's signature arch bridge, Ponte Vecchio. The hotel has exclusive access to the terrace overlooking jewellery boutique Dante Cardini, where guests can indulge in a meal featuring an unusual ingredient: gold