

Artistic accommodations



Upon entry to the Mandarin Oriental hotel on Peachtree Road, guests are greeted by "Persefone Kore," a mixed media on canvas piece by Fabio Modica.



Mandarin Oriental Atlanta on Peachtree Road displays many art pieces, including a quarterly rotation of art from Buckhead's Bill Lowe Gallery on Miami Circle.



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Step onto the lustrous black and pearlescent white marble of the Mandarin Oriental Atlanta's lobby and, instead of a flurry of guests waiting to check in, a painting will seize your attention. Its hues of fuchsia and lapis are set in staccato brushstrokes against a background of obsidian volcanic ash culled from Mount Etna.

Peer closely at the painting, and out of the riotous color emerges the form of a solitary face: Persephone, the mythological Greek goddess of the harvest. Sicilian artist Fabio Modica created "Persefone Kore," a mixed-media rendering that commands the lobby.

Welcome to Mandarin Oriental Atlanta, the first Southeastern incarnation of an international hotel group renowned for its resplendent setting. The Mandarin brand boasts such influential fans as Morgan Freeman, Italian mezzo-soprano Cecilia Bartoli and inventive French high-end shoe designer Christian Louboutin, who describes the Bangkok location as feeling "like you are in a novel."

Mandarin Oriental Atlanta, located in Buckhead, strives not only to provide luxurious accommodations, but to create an experience more comparable to an art gallery than a large hotel. "An impressive collection of art- »



Above, behind the Mandarin Oriental check-in desk hangs "Evolving Earth: View RF 04," a 165-inch-wide acrylic on granite piece by South Korean artist Jung Kwang Sik.

"So Far, So Near" by Florida-based Argentinian artist Flavio Galvan, is displayed in the Mandarin Oriental's Taipan Jazz lounge near the hotel's English garden. The oil on board piece is 84 x 96 inches.



work and contemporary paintings, featuring the work of nationally and locally recognized artists, helps to set Mandarin Oriental Atlanta apart and highlights our commitment to a customized and unique hotel experience at each of our 29 hotel locations,” says hotel general manager Robert Lowe.

The hotel group bridged cultural divides when it opened three years ago in the former space of The Mansion on Peachtree, and its approach to art similarly expands the idea of what hotel decor can offer. “The pieces are tastefully chosen to complement the hotel design and elevate the guest experience by providing both an eclectic exhibit and an enhanced social rendezvous location for guests to enjoy during their stay,” Lowe says.

The dark wood check-in and concierge desks are discreetly cul-de-saced to the right side of the foyer, in accordance with feng shui. This orientation allows for guests to be greeted head-on by Modica’s painting, one of several pieces under exhibition as part of a partnership between the hotel and the Bill Lowe Gallery.

“Persefone Kore” provides an example of the hotel’s goal to combine contemporary art, architecture and

The main entry foyer at the Mandarin Oriental hotel displays a matching pair of Suk Ja Kang-Engles’ oil on canvas paintings from her Eye-Con series. The South Korean artist immigrated to the United States 20 years ago.

hospitality. “My primary objective is to shape truths in ways that strike the viewer emotionally through powerful strokes of paint, color and matter,” Modica says. “It feels amazing to know that every hotel guest, while walking in, may be impacted by one of my greatest works. I could not imagine a better location for this painting.”

Strolling beneath tasteful chandeliers toward the pristine waiting area reveals that the works exhibited at Mandarin Oriental Atlanta are not the insipid sort brought to mind by the phrase “hotel art.”

Most pieces are rotated on a quarterly basis, although some remain longer, such as Modica’s “The Young Chances,” which hangs above the lobby fireplace. The painting features a face rendered in candy-pink brushstrokes punctuated by a pair of piercing sapphire eyes that gaze at the onlooker. Multicolored playing cards fill the space between the countenance

and the edges of the canvas, commenting on the idea that appearances are subject to the whims of chance.

Art at Mandarin Oriental Atlanta is meant to actively engage its observers, not fade into the background. No work exemplifies this notion more than “A Chord of Three” by recently deceased Atlanta artist Ellen Deloach, located near the hotel’s entrances to its condominium residences. This mottled depiction of three black women, abstracted by vertical drips of paint in varying shades of brown, exudes deliberate strength.

“So Far So Near,” a 25-foot painting by Flavio Galvan, anchors the hotel’s Taipan Jazz lounge, a crisp space that benefits from a healthy wash of natural light from its ceiling-high windows, which look onto the hotel’s English garden. The abstract painting by the Florida-based Argentinian artist is a striking whirlpool of oil paint applied to a board in heavy swipes.

“We hope our guests will be inspired and savor the beautiful art and design,” Lowe says.

In a prestigious hotel, the chance to admire fine art might be the greatest luxury of all.

Mandarin Oriental Atlanta. 3376 Peachtree Road. 404-995-7500. www.mandarinoriental.com/atlanta ■