

# INSIDE&OUT

## Local art finds room at the inn



Above, oil paintings of the West lend warmth to Rachel Znerold's Queen Anne Urban B&B gallery suite. Right, modern furniture and conceptual prints underscoring the power of opposites pop in the suite done by Josh and Tran Wills.

Photos provided by Queen Anne Urban B&B



**"Radical approach."** A hotel and a B&B showcase sophisticated, gallery-worthy works on their walls.

By Elana Ashanti Jefferson  
*The Denver Post*

Inns and hotels have long been a showplace for design risk-taking and trendsetting, thanks in part to an hospitality industry adage that dictates updating the décor about every seven years.

But when you think of "hotel art," the stereotype is inexpensive, mass-produced posters. Edgy, original artwork? Not so much.

That may be changing as at least two Denver hospitality outposts hope to lure customers with gallery-inspired suites and curated local art collections.

And, there's nary a mountain landscape in sight.

"This is a radical approach" to hotel decorating, says Paige Powell. She was contracted to select more than 600 works by such Colorado artists as photographer Mark Sink, mixed-media artist Saben Aell and sculptor Tsehai Johnson for Cherry Creek's JW Marriott.

Powell is an Oregon-based photographer and art curator who took the same approach to outfitting the walls of the JW

Marriott as she did to working on other high-end hotels nationwide: She studied the local art scene, familiarized herself with the galleries, sought out suggestions from artists and art lovers, then commissioned original works on behalf of the hotel.

Installing local artwork in a hotel "is very, very personal," Powell says. "It really creates a relationship with guests coming in from all over. They stay at a Denver hotel and can appreciate" the local culture.

Powell was especially interested in installing abstract, conceptual pieces over Rocky Mountain landscape paintings because, she says, "Denver is a sophisticated city."

Milan Doshi certainly thought so. About three years ago, this organic chef relocated from New York to run downtown Denver's Queen Anne Urban Bed & Breakfast, which is located inside two attached Victorian houses.

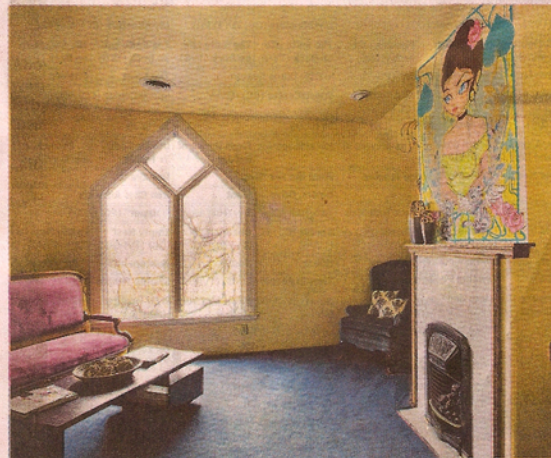
"Art was lost in the world of hospitality," says Doshi, who undertook a green renovation at the bed and breakfast, and started offering customers a selection of local foods, some of which are sourced from his own garden.

Then, in an effort to cultivate "community supported hospitality," he installed works by local artists. That culminated in handing over four suites to artists to completely decorate themselves.

"We gave 100 percent creativity to the artists," he says.

The resulting "gallery suites" are each distinct from what travelers generally find in franchise hotels — from fashion and graphic design duo Josh and Tran Wills' suite dressed up in vivid, contrasting colors and prints, to graffiti artist Markham Maes' and painter Natasha Lillipore's street-smart take on the Victorian aesthetic.

"One of the best parts of this process has been sharing the story with our guests," Doshi says. "We just want to show off these suites."



Left, street art meets Victorian in the suite outfitted by Markham Maes and Natasha Lillipore. Right, Tuyet Nguyen's space is urbane yet rustic.



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