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Indoor

Ex Animo: Samantha Drummond part 2, design

3 minute read



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Above: Samantha Drummond. Image – Supplied.

- Art should portray the locality
- Strategic use of design achieves a contrast of familiarity and the exotic
- Local talent can lend a special story telling element to resorts and hotels

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An eye for detail, the craft of storytelling

The thought never came to me until Ms Drummond said: "I find with a lot of hotels, particularly in Asia, you can sometimes be anywhere in the world, there's no sense of identity in some of these resorts".

It is a curated experience that requires well-appointed spaces, she said, "there's nothing better than being in a hotel room that somebody has curated, when you actually have nice art which isn't just a print."



Solaire Resort & Casino Manila, Villa, Bedroom. Image – Supplied.

The journey a guest is taken on, even within their own room, can be accentuated by objects that serve as subtle cues to the locale they are in.

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just something that tells a story about where you are."

Samantha Drummond

Ms Drummond said she integrates art into everything she does, working with local artists, established and emerging.

"When at Marina Bay Sands, there were some great artists there. Since then – and I've really made it a key thing – is to work with the indigenous artists, local artists, emerging talent that just never had a platform to showcase their works. I think there is something special in doing that."

Discovering place

It seems simple enough to say, 'use local art and artists to portray the locality', but it is not necessarily simple nor easy to execute that vision in a way that will generate revenue.

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Restaurant, VIP Club, Solaire Resort & Casino Manila, art by Yeye. Image – Supplied.

The use of art has to be tasteful and considered, said Ms Drummond, finding a balance between uniqueness and being true to place.

"By using art strategically, it gives you a familiarity and it feels exotic, but you know it's local and there's a story to it."

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– but I look at the detail, I like to see people have put thought into everything on that journey."

Discovering talent

I asked Ms Drummond about those stories of finding talent in unexpected places as I had heard of before, but little detail was out there.

She recounted vividly some of what she considered to be one of the most rewarding things she had ever done.

"I've employed kids off the street with nothing. I find it quite moving sometimes, especially in the Philippines where there is a lot of poverty. I employed a family, he was an artist, he painted, she did the weaving, and both were on the railway track. It was probably the most satisfying thing I've ever done, I'm just so proud to showcase their talent."

There are rare finds out there, Ms Drummond said, across a wide spectrum of ages and cultural backgrounds.

"I work with everyone from basket weavers to textile makers, painters, people in line working to fabric. Through my local teams, I get to know who the local artists are."

As Ms Drummond recalled the talent she had enlisted over the years, the passion and emotion were perfectly captured in her words:

"It's been enriching and inspiring, my gosh, some of the work they come up with, it's crazy!"

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A guest's journey through a resort does not solely rest on the shoulders of local artists, there is a balance, with internationally renowned artists work also intertwined into projects.

There is a delicate equilibrium between flair and finance, the business element of design we explore with Samantha Drummond in part three of *Ex Animo*.

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