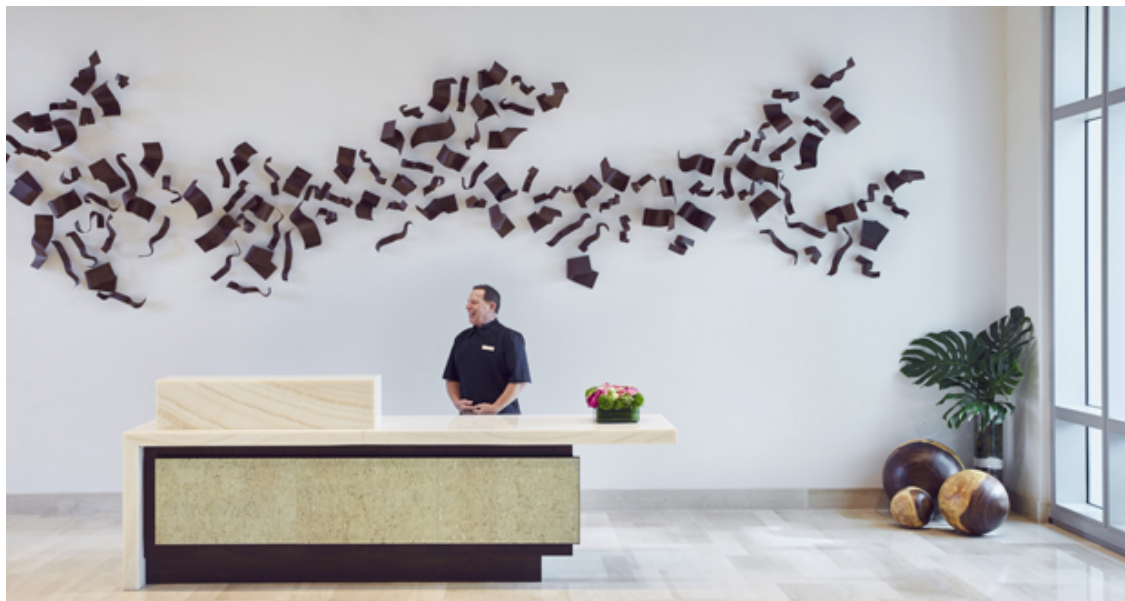


Using Art to Bridge Age Gaps Among Guests

By **Terry Eaton** - August 16, 2017



As the tension between millennials and baby boomers dominates the media, it's easy to believe that there are no similarities between the generations. However, there is a significant trend affecting the groups: both baby boomers and millennials have been bitten by the travel bug. According to the *2017 AARP Travel Trends Survey*, 99 percent of baby boomers will take at least one leisure trip this year, with an average of five or more trips expected throughout the year. Meanwhile, millennials are notorious for prioritizing travel –according to the *2016 Millennial Brief on Travel & Lodging* report from FutureCast, millennials currently spend more than \$200 billion annually on travel.

With that said, just because both groups are traveling doesn't mean that they look for the same thing in their experiences. Retired boomers are more likely to take longer trips, while millennials are more often "bleisure travelers" who extend business trips by tacking on vacation days. Additionally, boomers are more likely to travel domestically and as couples, while millennials aren't afraid to travel solo and want to engage in different cultures. As each age groups wanderlusts with different needs, hotels are challenged to reconcile these discrepancies to suit the tastes of multiple generations simultaneously. One beautifully simple method they can use to achieve this is through carefully and thoughtfully curated art programs.



(Above) Art at The Cosmopolitan Las Vegas; (Top photo) Art at Hilton West Palm Beach

Tastes in art have changed and evolved. Notably, travelers, especially millennials, now seek a more “authentic” experience that extends from their meals and activities to what they see in their guestroom. Art can emphasize a local narrative, often by working with local artists to integrate community themes.

While art can make a hotel feel more personalized, it can also be used to strengthen an established brand narrative. When older generations travel, they gravitate towards familiar hotels where they can rest assured of the quality of their stay. A well-curated art program can assist with this, as it elevates the overall atmosphere and sense of luxury on a property.

Another way art can make a property stand out to both millennials and baby boomers is through the creation of “Instagrammable” moments. This involves unique artworks that have a high-impact both in person and online—making them well suited for photo-taking. These special pieces can provide hotels a valuable online presence while also leading to a memorable in-person experience for all ages.

Millennials continue to seek out guest experiences that can be shared with their connected networks, while older generations favor a sense of comfort, familiarity, and even escape with their travel. Art has a universal appeal that that helps bridge this generational divide, complementing the space and elevating the experience—enticing guests, young and old, to return.

About the Author

Terry Eaton is the president of Eaton Fine Art, Inc.

Terry Eaton

<http://www.eatonfineart.com/>

As the president and chief curator of Eaton Fine Art (EFA), Terry Eaton has been collaborating on the art programs for international hotel brands for over 27 years, infusing creative soul into guestrooms and public spaces. EFA prides itself on delivering tailored, innovative and bespoke art programs that carry forward each property's unique narrative.