

EDITORS' PICK

How Art Became A Secret Weapon In High-End Property Marketing

Amy Rose Dobson

Senior Contributor

Covering everything from luxury homes to housing trends around the world.

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You barely register it's there when you walk in. Yet it is part of the reason you end up making an offer on a luxury condo. It's part of the reason you relax when you cross the threshold to your building. It's the lure, it's the appeal—and it's the subliminal effect—of luxury art.

"When I first started staging, nobody in the high end was staging at all for some reason," says Cheryl Eisen, founder of [Interior Marketing Group](#), which stages many luxury and celebrity homes. "As we started doing it, I always started by putting art in the spaces. Now the highest end of real estate in New York City, which is the highest in the world, more or less, is being staged more and more. This is more of a growing thing." One of the first things Eisen does upon seeing a client's space is to photoshop in ideas of art that would both look good and highlight the home's features, such as its double-height ceilings or tall windows. Then her in-house art team, Art Loft, creates unique pieces for each of the spaces.

The trend started with the obvious—hanging pictures on the wall or creating places for freestanding sculptures in the corner. But as it became clear how powerful an impact art has on influencing the purchase of the property,

developers realized they could have even more success by weaving art into the tiny spaces that had previously been overlooked. The leather-and-silk custom-made headboards in Dubai's super-prime [Royal Atlantis Resort and Residences](#) are one example. Developers commissioned artist Helen Amy Murray and interior designer Sybille de Margerie to create interiors that weave artwork into the living spaces so that from every vantage point in a room there is artwork within view. Here's a close-up of the leather-and-silk piece indicative of what will be created for the units.

"Buyers of superprime property have travelled the world, have the finest luxury goods at their fingertips and expect the very best in design, architecture and lifestyle," says Maria Morris, partner at global real estate agency Knight Frank and spokesperson for Dubai's superprime Royal Atlantis Resort and Residences. "We understand the importance these buyers place on 'individuality' – just as with any other luxury purchase they are making, they want something that no one else has. As a result, superprime developers are constantly pushing themselves to create properties different to any residences previously offered on the market."

There's even a German word for all this—*Gesamtkunstwerk*, which means "total artwork" in the sense of creating a comprehensive art experience within a space. The [19 Dutch](#) building, pictured up top, pays homage to its namesake country with a front lobby desk made from custom Dutch Delft-style tiles by artist Colum McCartan with pictures of old 17th-century etchings and drawings of New Amsterdam. The rest of the building has other nods to Dutch heritage including custom Dutch-inspired elevator cabs, references to Vermeer and a 4.5-meter Magnus Gjoen-created piece for the leasing office that harkens the Arms of the Dutch Republic.

No part of a building is off-limits when it comes to displaying one-of-a-kind pieces of art. The Madison Square Portfolio commissioned several different pieces of custom graffiti art by Skott Marsi for its building's elevators—a place where residents will spend very little of their time, yet developers still found it worthwhile to take advantage of the blank wall.



Original elevator graffiti art by Skott Marsi

Artist Gérard Faivre creates "art homes," which come with an aesthetic designed to complement a precurated art collection that can be negotiated as part of the sale. Two examples of his work are coming up for auction later this month as part of a massive December sale by Concierge Auctions. This art-centric design helps set a high price bar for the transaction. Bidding for his three-bedroom, four-bathroom apartment at 74 Avenue Marceau in Paris

(pictured below) starts at [€5.85 million](#) (\$6.6 million) and another unit at Francois 1er at 4 Rue Lincoln starts at [€4.25 million](#) (\$4.9 million). The auction opens December 14 and closes December 19. Click on either link to be taken to the individual bidding page, or see [the entire sale here](#).



Parisian art home up for auction this week.

Developers have found another way to make art part of their branding, without making it a central part of their staging efforts. The Italian developers of [125 Greenwich](#), Bizzi & Partners, partnered with Hollywood-based art firm Creative Art Partners to cocurate a collection called "The Collection at 125 Greenwich Street," which allows residents to purchase artworks by major artists as part of their purchase of a home. Creative Art Partners drew from their nearly 3,000 artworks by artists such as Sterling Ruby, Oscar Murillo, Andy Warhol, Damien Hirst and Edward Ruscha for the special collection. (Note: 125 Greenwich also made news when they partnered with

superyacht designers, March & White, to design the interiors of the condos. Superyacht design influencing homes on land is becoming more of a trend so [here's an in-depth look](#) at how boats have started to inspire landlubber design).



Part of the collection at 125 Greenwich

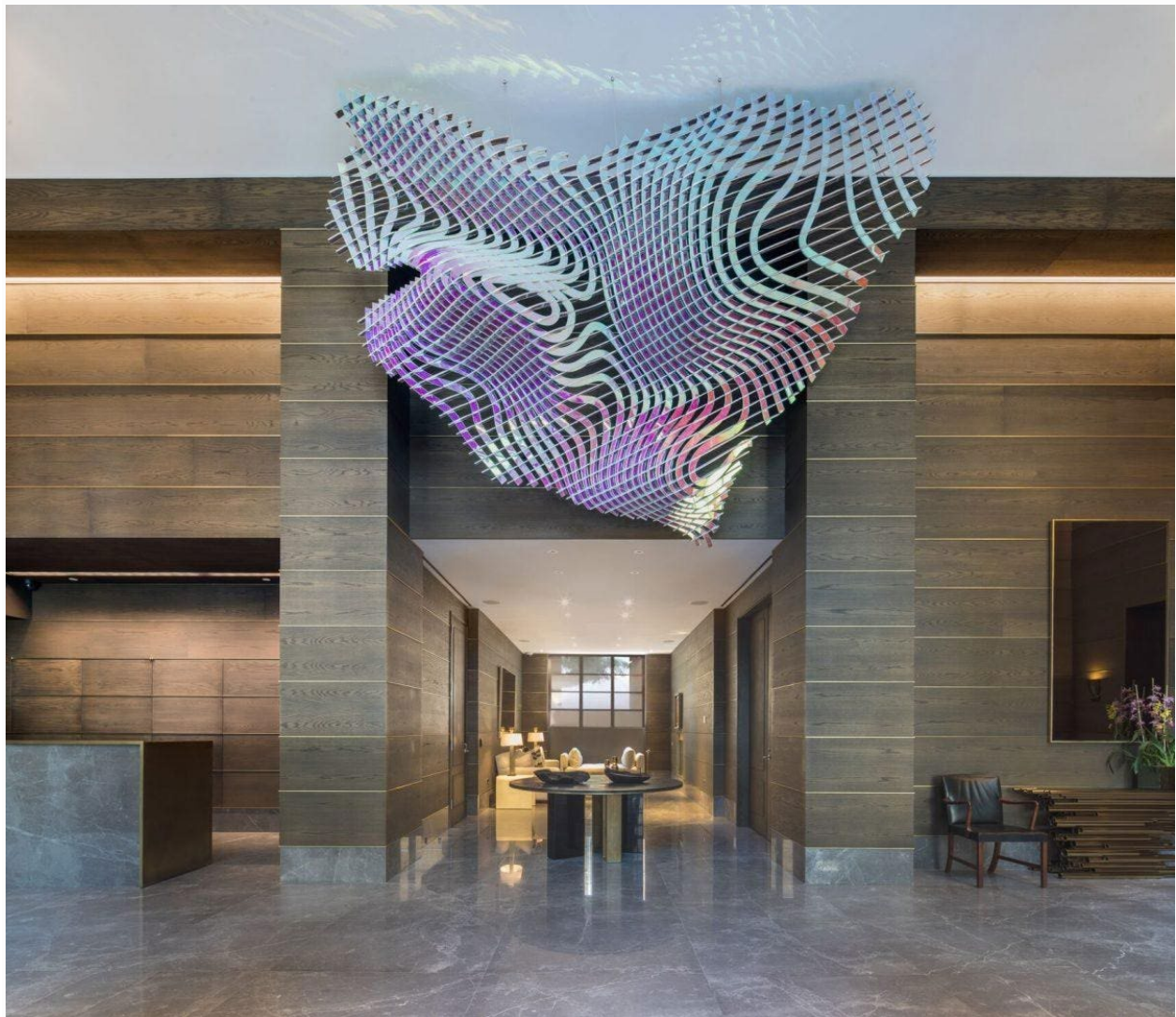
The goal is the same goal art has always had—to evoke an emotional response—but it has to meet the challenge of creating a mood or a feeling while not being so specific that it fails to resonate with large enough numbers of people who are potential buyers.



The Summit of Manhattan by Todd Stuart for Summit NYC

“We did a place in the Puck Building and one of the units hadn’t been selling,” says Eisen. “It had a giant Basquiat over the fireplace. I think one of the problems was that all you noticed was the Basquiat. Buyers want to relate to being able to display their art collection on the walls of these grand spaces. You have to be able to communicate that with oversized art, but on the other hand to distract them takes away from what you’re really selling, which is the architecture and the views.” She points out the example of the apartment

building that [used to belong to rap mogul Diddy](#), for which IMG did the staging. That canvas hanging in the double-height living room needed to be huge—much larger than ten feet tall—but not call attention to itself. The solution was to create a white-on-white design of overlapping block shapes to achieve texture and raised surfaces that draw the eye up to the ceiling at a subtle level of awareness.



Aileron by Alyson Shotz at 70 Vestry mimics a butterfly's wing and reflects the changing light over... [+]

One way developers have overcome this hurdle is to commission site-specific large pieces at the entrances or courtyards of the buildings that immediately

convey a sense of place, but keep everything around them neutral so a viewer can create their own meaning and context for the piece. [Summit NYC](#), near the United Nations, relied on sleek, chromelike interpretation of the infinity symbol to convey the ever-changing, global nature of the location, while [70 Vestry](#) near the Hudson River used a light-reflecting material to capture the shimmers coming off the water (both pictured above).

[Galerie](#) is a Long Island City building that started with art as its main theme, even using the tagline "Home is where the art is" for its marketing materials. It has an onsite art gallery, Art Box, which showcases work by New York artists, and use work by well-known artists for all of their common spaces. Below is the courtyard sculpture "Brilliant Corners" by Allen Glatter.



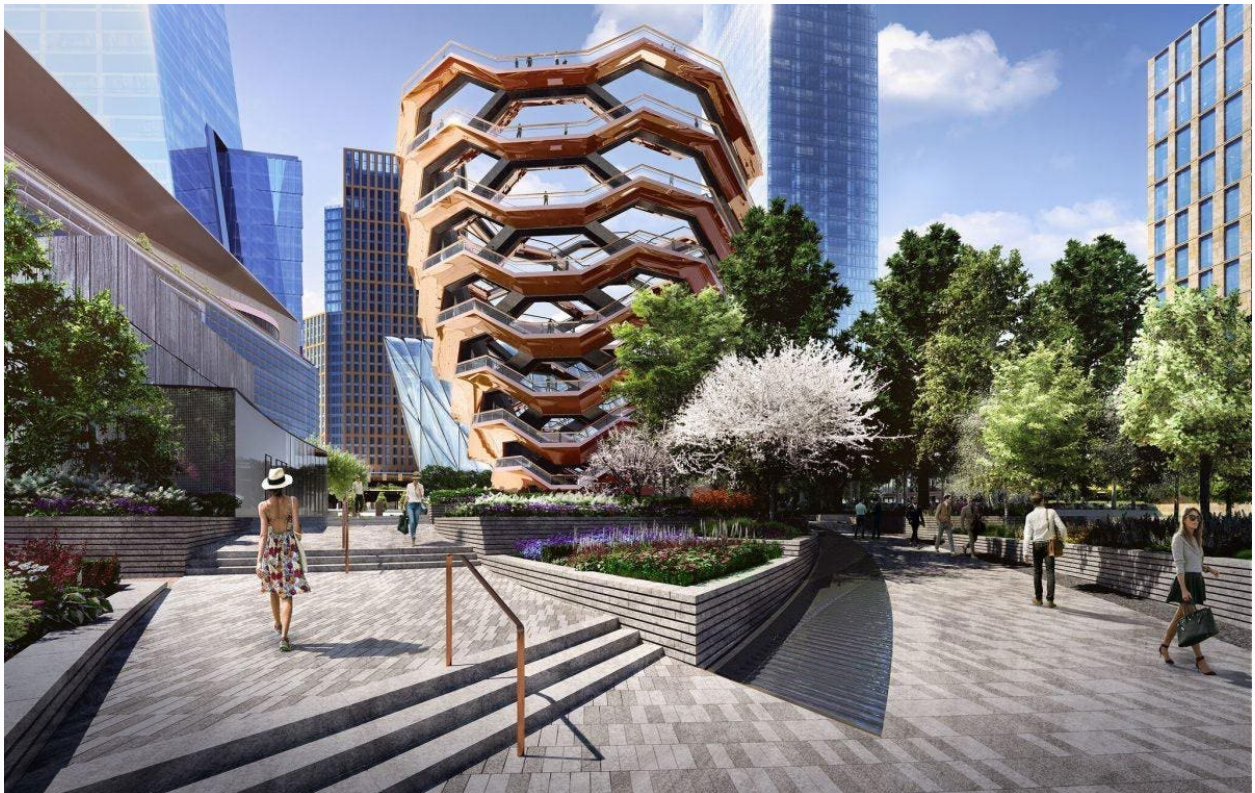
"Brilliant Corners" by Allen Glatter

[Eighty East Tenth](#) commissioned a piece for its courtyard from the artist John Clement. Called "Cherry," the sculpture is made from coiled steel pipe and finished with a Ferrari Red high-gloss auto paint, which aims to evoke a sense of centrifugal motion coming out of the ground.



"Cherry" by John Clement

The sculpture "New York's Staircase" by Thomas Heatherwick near [Fifteen Hudson Yards](#) will be the focal point of this rapidly developing neighborhood in Manhattan's West Side.



New York's Staircase by Thomas Heatherwick

The [XI](#) ("Eleventh") is a block-size development near the High Line, which will bring luxury residences, restaurants, innovative retail, an art space and a public promenade between 17th and 18th Streets and 10th and 11th Avenues. They commissioned artist Es Devlin to create three site-specific pieces for the project, including this pictured below.



One of three works by Es Devlin commissioned for the XI.

The [Ritz Carlton Residences in Miami](#) have taken things one step further and created a dedicated art studio in the building where residents can use the space to create their own artwork without having to bring everything up to their own condo.



Residents' Art Studio

Call it subliminal messaging. Call it subtle marketing. Whatever it is, it works. Eisen gives the example of when she first started working with New York superagent Fredrik Eklund, star of *Million Dollar Listing*. Upon first seeing the listing she suggested it be staged as cool bachelor pad in the style of a James Bond-type character. "Fredrik called me a week later," she says, "And said, 'You're never going to guess who won the bidding war. It was Daniel Craig.'"