



VLIFE

TRAVEL

Art in Residence



COLOR WASH
A SHOWER AT GALLERIA
VIK MILANO FEATURES
FERNANDO LOPEZ
LAGE'S BOLD WORKS.

Carrie Vik estimates that she has traveled to more than 1,000 hotels in her lifetime. And while lobbies are often sprawling spaces adorned with antiques and art, guest rooms are significantly more bland. “You don’t even remember the difference between one room and the other,” says Vik, co-owner of Vik Retreats. An alternative: the 89 site-specific installations located within Galleria Vik Milano.

At the just-opened property, a town house in Milan’s iconic glass-domed shopping arcade, Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Vik and her husband, Alexander, played both proprietor and curator—in one room guests sleep surrounded by cloud photographs by Julian Lennon; in another, gold leaf by Italian artist Elena Trailina adorns the walls and furniture. Downstairs, guests are greeted by Rodin’s *Thinker*, who sits contemplatively by the reception desk. “We wanted to push the envelope of design,” Vik says.

Galleria Vik Milano is just one example of the migration of fine art from the gallery to the guesthouse. “Hotels are using their public spaces like museums,” says Albert M. Herrera, head of Global Product Partnerships at travel concierge company Virtuoso, “featuring works of art in a more pronounced way.” Take the recently opened Fife Arms in the Scottish Highlands. Owned by Iwan and Manuela Wirth (of Hauser & Wirth), the Victorian Inn showcases a Picasso over the tea table, a Dutch Master in the dining room, a Man Ray portrait of Elsa Schiaparelli in the bar. On this side of the pond, the Louisville-based 21c Museum Hotels positions each of its establishments as a contemporary art museum you can sleep in—some 75,000 square feet of exhibition space is spread across their eight locations. A night at the museum is no longer a fantasy.

—ELISE TAYLOR