

# MAYBOURNE

CLARIDGE'S CONNAUGHT BERKELEY



## Business Boudoir

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# Drawing board

Interior architect André Fu has designed a bespoke suite at the Berkeley. Here, he explains to FIONA RUSSELL how art has enhanced the space



### What is the inspiration behind the new suite?

It's about defining the 'new Knightsbridge' as a kind of timeless elegance. The space has refined detailing and clean architectural proportions,

yet it is contemporary in spirit and embellished with lush fabrics and bespoke furnishings.

### What kind of artwork did you choose?

I collaborated with Hong Kong-based art consultant Alison Pickett to create a mixture of freestanding sculptures and wall-hung installations, introducing an additional 'layer' to the spatial experience.

### Name some of the main pieces.

There are gypse, stone and iron sculptures by Belgian Christian Cadelli; bronze installations by the UK's Barnaby Gorton; and stone sculpture by Hong Kong-born, Italy-based Cynthia Sah.

### Does sculpture give a space a different dimension compared with wall art?

The use of sculpture is always a key part in my designs. I enjoy the way it interacts with the environment in a three-dimensional sense. And wall-hung installations create intriguing shadows with the light.

### What do you take into consideration when hanging or positioning the art?

Art is not merely a means of decoration; it is not placed simply to enhance a wall visually. I am interested in the way that it interacts with its surroundings. For the new suite, the pieces are commissioned with a specific proportion or space in mind.

### Does each piece have to be in keeping with the overall feel of the suite's design?

The pieces are commissioned to 'interact' with the space, and there is a degree of having them as a 'continuity' of the suite; but it is equally important that the pieces provoke a strong sense of personality and uniqueness.

### You have designed art spaces in the past, such as the Perrotin gallery in Hong Kong. How does the design of the suite lend itself to displaying art?

Art spaces are always designed for the display of art, but their proportion and sense of geometry also has to provide a backdrop for the artist to work with. The underlying philosophy behind the commissioned art collection for the suite is not dissimilar.

### Are art pieces becoming more important in interior design? Do you often take on the role of curator?

Indeed, the use of art has become increasingly important in hospitality design. Interior architecture has expanded into the 'curation' of culture: it is not only about making a great space, but creating a lifestyle to indulge and inspire. ✕

The new bespoke suite at the Berkeley opens this summer. Please call +44 (0)20 7107 8841



SCULPTURE BY CHRISTIAN CADELLI (THIS PHOTO AND TOP) AND CYNTHIA SAH (LEFT AND ABOVE RIGHT)

