

Bus Riders – panel discussion on the relationship between interior design and art

For Bus Riders’ fifth get-together of the year, we had the pleasure to visit [Oscar Properties’](#) project [Norra Tornen](#) for a panel discussion on interior design, art and the relationship between them. [Karolina Bertorp](#) moderated the discussion between gallerist [Marina Schiptjenko](#), decorator [Pontus Djanaieff](#) and [Nina Almgren](#), head of marketing and brand development at Oscar Properties.

The discussion spread over several topics such as the tension between interior design and art, how we tend to prioritize design/furnitures compared to art and how art has become a factor in lifestyle concepts driven by magazines, top restaurants and hotels.

Karolina asked whether the panellists had experienced a tension between interior design and art. Is there a willingness by the interior designer to think of a wall as something that can be painted in a fond color, or installing a bookshelf at, rather than hanging art on? Do companies rather flaunt their company logos on large walls than put a piece of art on them? How does the interior designer think, is there a fear of losing control over what one has built up? Is there a fear of choosing the “wrong” type of art?

Pontus told us how art comes naturally for him when decorating, his father is an artist

and he grew up with art. For Pontus it is more about to own premises and to create his own profile and a feeling of what is his when working.

Nina brought up the issue of economic fear, and made the link to function. For many it may be a big step to go from an IKEA sofa to a much more expensive sofa, but one can still justify the purchase with the function, you will use the sofa, sit in, socialize in it, watch TV, invite friends over and have space for them etc. The motivation to buy significantly more expensive art may decrease when the function is less clear.

Even among companies with the financial means to invest in more expensive art, there may be a fear, businesses that previously took in expensive art to strengthen their brand now experience among younger competitors that focus is on more than just an entrance with a large classic artwork. Younger hip companies have pioneered a different mindset, where especially the mixture between "high and low" and a mix between the old and new have come forward.



Speaking of financial and economic issues related to investing in art, Pontus and Marina discussed how hotel stays have spoiled us and paved way for a certain type of lifestyle, how we tend to decorate accordingly to how we experienced our latest stay at boutique hotels around the world. This issue led to the question on what kind of signals art send. More and more people have had the ability to invest in art due to the long period of low rate and cheap money. In addition, more people have had the desire to distinguish themselves through a certain type of art in their homes. Marina problematized around this, how the “right” kind of art sends signals that the owner is a cultivated person with more interests than the consumption-driven, materialistic ones that sometimes symbolizes the contemporary.



Marina also pointed out that art at a certain level costs, and should be seen as a long term commitment. Marina spoke about studies

showing how 'everything' emanates from fine art, then spreads to other industries that point to the future, such as advertising, film and the fashion industry.

Recently, the interest for art has grown, and Pontus talked about the unimportance of whether the interest for art comes from wall posters from IKEA and then grows into something bigger, or something more exclusive. Pontus compared it to photography as an art form which has had a revival during recent years and also become more accessible. There is nothing wrong with starting cheap and develop one’s taste and style over the years.

Pontus’ experiences from designing for clients are that art is often high on the agenda initially in the decorating process, but it keeps getting pushed down on the list when decisions on lighting, tables and chairs and other priorities are taken.



Karolina finished the discussion with a question on how to best hang and install art. Should the art make a break from the rest of the interior of a home and live his own life, or



should it blend in as much as possible/be part of a “Gesamtkunstwerk”?

Pontus made the case that it depends on who lives there and who is experiencing the art on a daily basis. Marina pointed out that there is no need to stay to one style, on the contrary there are advantages with bringing in the contemporary in the history. Sometimes we need stories to tell, and it is possible to do so with art on our walls at home.

The evening was inspiring, the panelists were all strong characters with a great interest and sense of their professions and interest in art and interior design. After the discussion, we had the opportunity to visit a show flat by Oscar Properties, located next to the entrance of Norra Tornen, where we were impressed by the construction and planning, the functional bathroom and the hotel-like feeling. Maybe Pontus is right, we have spoiled ourselves at lovely boutique hotels where art is hung for everyone to enjoy, and we are ready to let it move into our homes.

