

IN-STORE

## Four Seasons calls attention to Russian art scene with series of pop-ups

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*Four Seasons Hotel Moscow Moskovsky Bar*

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts is strengthening its ties to culture with a series of art exhibitions.

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The chain's Moscow hotel will host a series of pop-up art exhibitions in its bar, showcasing the work of a different artist every month. The pop-ups will likely appeal both to locals who frequent the bar and pique the interest of tourists at the hotel, helping to broadcast Four Seasons' values to both crowds.

"This has been on the agenda ever since the hotel opened over a year ago in one form or another," said Ekaterina Bykova,

director of public relations and communications at Four Seasons Moscow. "Moscow in particular has a blooming art scene, with local artists really showcasing amazing quality of work, so this is something we've been interested in for quite some time.

"It is not a coincidence that the contemporary art galleries and exhibition spaces are so popular - take the recently-opened Garage or the more established Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Vinzavod or Artplay," she said. "For us as a hotel it is a privilege to be part of this, and have an opportunity to promote some of the artists through our pop-ups, and Moskovsky provides a very nice esthetic to match as well."

### Pop-up for art

In addition to business travelers, hotel bars are often populated with affluent locals, even if those consumers have no other attachment to either the property or the hotel. As such, it is an ideal venue for making impressions and transmitting brand values to a group that may have a disproportionate number of high-income frequent travelers.

Accordingly, the Moskovsky Bar at Four Seasons Hotel Moscow will, for two weeks of every month, host a pop-up exhibition of a local artist's work. The bar is particularly trendy, suggesting an even higher overlap between clientele and those interested in the art exhibitions.



### *Moskovsky Bar*

"Moskovsky Bar, ever since the opening, has gained a reputation for not being a conventional hotel bar," Ms. Bykova said. "From the edgy interiors to the concept of Russian twist to all of the international classic cocktails and interesting presentation, then the World's Best Bartenders series, it has always tried to extend the boundaries of what is expected of a bar.

"The atmosphere itself actually calls for an artistic expression and a certain vibe, and this pop-up exhibition line-up came very naturally," she said. "We intend to explore contemporary art through Russian and international artists and photographers."

The first three of the pop-ups will be curated in collaboration with MSK Eastside Gallery, a gallery that opened in the Russian capital in 2012.



### *Slava Filippov photo exhibition*

The first will run from Feb. 18 to March 3 and will feature photographs of Slava Filippov, whose portraits of actor Robert De Niro, Virgin Group founder Sir Richard Branson, actress/screenwriter Renata Litvinova and Brooklyn Nets owner Mikhail Prokhorov have appeared in Vogue, Tatler, GQ and others. His "Butterfly Effect" project from 2013 brought him acclaim and wider recognition.

Four Seasons' second exhibition will show the works of Alex Kuznetsov, an abstract painter whose art has also been shown in the Museum of Moscow.

The exhibitions will take place in a supper club format, meaning that it will include gastronomic components. For Mr. Filippov's showing, Juan Valderrama C., named the best bartender by the Diageo Columbia, will be serving drinks alongside the hotel's staff.

The cultural immersion on display will help sell consumers on the Four Seasons brand. The accessibility of information in the digital age makes it easy for consumers to research a city or country and avoid overtly touristy destinations or activities if they so choose, so initiatives such as this communicate a sense of shared values and authenticity.



*Moskovsky bar glasses*

Four Seasons' stated goal is to promote upcoming local talents and contribute to the Moscow arts scene. The initiative thus gives the brand cultural cachet among both locals and guests. Helping to promote a scene as a whole rather than offering guests a look at the local culture goes the extra mile, making the brand itself essential to the cultural movement, which will ring as particularly authentic to consumers.

"We do like to think that this is our input into the development of Moscow's art scene and the interest towards it, including bringing it further to an international level," Ms. Bykova said. "It is a way to focus on the cultural side of the destination and promote Moscow as really the epicenter of this big new art scene."

#### Art tourism

Four Seasons often designs city-specific promotions and opportunities for its artsy patrons.

Earlier this year Four Seasons Hotel Ritz Lisbon began bringing its guests closer to the local culture of the Portuguese capital with a new tour.

In addition to street art, The Four Seasons Hotel Ritz Lisbon Street Art Tour will show off tapestries, sculptures, paintings and more located both outside and within the hotel. Travelers expect hotels to provide them with tailored, unique experiences of the local culture, and the tour will provide that while also emphasizing the hotel's role in the country's art scene ([see story](#)).

Other hotels have also latched on to traveler's interest in arts, offering them exclusive experiences that home-sharing services cannot.

For example, Mandarin Oriental Prague is enticing the whole family with the promise of "A Fairy Tale Getaway."

The "Tale of the Puppeteer" package grants families with young children two marionette-filled nights in the heart of Prague. With family travel on the rise, a targeted but culture-heavy campaign with cross-generation appeal could be a popular choice for travel ([see story](#)).

"We think this is exactly the sort of thing our guests are missing now and can really be wowed by," Ms. Bykova said. "With Four Seasons you almost expect to always have the perfect location, service and product by default; this, on the other hand, is a completely new element that brings this surprise and sparks a genuine interest."

"We do hope to create a certain loyal crowd that will be following our pop-ups throughout the duration, which might be guests converted into art lovers, the combination of both or the gallery frequenters turned into Four Seasons guests," she said. "We will do our best to surprise them and provide diverse and high quality pieces every time."