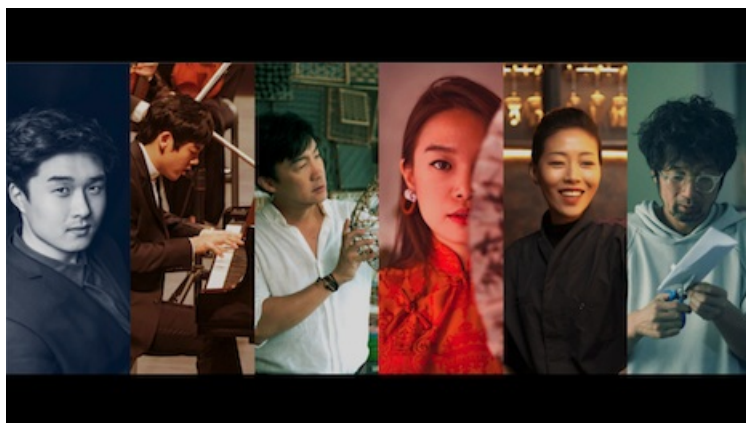


TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Shangri-La honors Asian heritage with creative ambassadors

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Shangri-La enlisted talents from the worlds of Asian art, food, music, fashion and design for a new series. Image credit: Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Hospitality brand Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts is celebrating its 50th anniversary with an inspirational series of short films.

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"From Asia with Heart" honors Shangri-La's heritage with the help of six creatives. The film series takes a heartfelt approach to showcase Asia's unique cultures while showcasing the brand's philosophy of hospitality.

"The Shangri-La brand is always very reflective of everything we love about Asia, so this new campaign is perfectly aligned with their messaging by highlighting these culture makers who want to share their artistry with Shangri-La guests," said Damon Banks, editor and managing partner at [LuxeGetaways](#), Washington, D.C.

Passion meets culture

Shangri-La, the flagship brand of Hong Kong-based Shangri-La International Hotel Management Limited, opened its first luxury hotel in Singapore in 1971.

Five decades later, Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts has nearly 100 properties across Asia Pacific, North America, the Middle East and Europe. The brand, however, has remained close to its roots in Asia, as exemplified in the new series.

For the anniversary campaign, Shangri-La worked with six "culture makers" with ties to the region: Filipino furniture designer Kenneth Cobonpue; Chinese author and illustrator Xiong Liang; Chinese chef DeAille Tam; Chinese-Malaysian artist "Red" Hong Yi; Chinese pianist Haochen Zhang and Chinese fashion designer Huishan Zhang.

Children's author and illustrator Xiong Liang for Shangri-La

A teaser for the project pays tribute to dedicated creatives everywhere, praising individuals for generously bringing beauty into the world with pride for their homes and traditions.

So far, Shangri-La has released the films featuring Mr. Cobonpue and Mr. Xiong.

In his short, which features his famous illustrations, Mr. Xiong discusses how his life changed following the birth of his daughter.

Speaking in his native language, he explains how they connected through imaginative stories. These experiences helped Mr. Xiong reconnect with his inner child and inspired his work in children's literature.

The film follows Mr. Xiong in his day-to-day life, including moments with his daughter and other children. His animated characters, which recall traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy, make occasional appearances for a whimsical touch.

"I hope my work exposes people to my culture, art and stories," Mr. Xiong says while visiting a gallery of his creations. "But most of all, I hope people of all ages find the child that lives inside them."

The second film, which follows Mr. Cobonpue, has a slightly different aesthetic. The furniture designer appears in sit-down interviews as well as in his workshop.

Mr. Cobonpue credits his mother with inspiring his passion from an early age, and he now considers his designs to be an extension of his imaginative childhood. He also encourages other designers and artists to work with craftspeople, several of whom are shown in the short, to preserve their traditions.



Filipino furniture designer Kenneth Cobonpue reflects on his cultural inspirations. Image credit: Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts

"I want to combine the beauty of all our traditional handmaking crafts and skills with modern production techniques," Mr. Cobonpue says. "Every work is an opportunity to share, preserve and showcase our culture, traditions, nature."

Capturing his philosophy, the film ends with the designer coming across one of his flower-inspired pieces in the rain forest.

As part of the campaign, Shangri-La is also hosting a social media contest through Jan. 21.

Travelers are encouraged to post a heartfelt story on Instagram, using the hashtag #withlove and tagging [@shangrilahotels](#). One grand prize winner will be selected from six finalists to win 65,000 Golden Circle Award Points, redeemable for a variety of Shangri-La stays and experiences.

Cultural experiences

As the luxury hospitality industry continues its unsteady recovery amid the COVID-19 pandemic, more brands are opting to highlight the meaningful experiences and deeper connections fostered through travel rather than elevated services and amenities.

This spring, hotel group Rosewood Hotels & Resorts introduced "PlaceMakers," a roster of tastemakers with backgrounds in art, style, food, family, sustainability and wellness.

Rosewood enlisted the help of these influential and authoritative community members as it positions itself as a "cultural concierge" offering unique, curated experiences so travelers can immerse themselves in local communities ([see story](#)).

In the fall, bespoke travel company Black Tomato is introducing educational travel experiences as it focuses on purpose-driven, family-friendly offerings.

Through "Field Trip," families can incorporate a la carte classes into their global itineraries. The educational and experiential programming is geared to young adults and spans multiple subjects that support positive social impacts

(see story).

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