

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

## NEW JERSEY GOLD COAST PROPERTIES

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### For Today's Buyers, Home Is Where the Art Is

PRACTICAL AMENITIES ARE ALWAYS CRUCIAL, BUT A LESS FUNCTIONAL TREND IN RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IS GAINING POPULARITY

By Joseph Dobrian

Luxury housing along the Gold Coast of New Jersey reflects residents' growing desire for the latest high-tech amenities, indoors and out. Some of the words that keep popping up, in descriptions of these amenities, include "smart," "automation," and "sustainability." But sometimes low-tech, less utilitarian amenities are important to a property's attractiveness. The homebuyer or prospective tenant might not specifically request these features, or even remark on them, but they're appreciated nonetheless. Art—particularly in public areas used for reading or for quiet socializing—can constitute an important component in any multi-family building.

#### URBAN AESTHETIC

Curated art collections are gaining popularity in commercial, residential and hotel properties—including luxury condo and rental buildings along the New Jersey Gold Coast. They have found their way into luxury rental buildings in New Jersey Gold Coast cities such as Jersey City and Harrison. In some cases they relate to the aesthetic of urban life along the Gold Coast, and to the natural beauty of the region.

The artworks often hang in public areas such as lounges and reading rooms, to transform those rooms into more comfortable, friendly places and to create a greater sense of 'home' in a common area. Pictures and small sculptures can create a sense of home

in the hallways.

What goes into a well-curated art collection for a luxury apartment building? The consensus among real estate professionals is that the conventional landscapes and still-lives, and statuary that's too abstract to offend—all of which used to be standard in apartment buildings and hotels—are passé for modern developments.

Contemporary art that promotes local artists seems to be gaining favor nowadays. It's important to let a building's residents feel that they're sharing a valuable secret, by having something a little unusual hanging in the common room.

#### RECREATION AREAS

Outdoor art, as part of a garden, plaza or recreation area is also becoming more popular. However, whether the art is indoors or outside it can be a fairly expensive amenity, for which reason working with a knowledgeable curator is a must in order to get it right.

An artist might be commissioned to produce a piece of work specifically designed for an outdoor space, or a chandelier for the lobby, or a series of decorative windows at street-level.

A developer should always have a set budget in mind, and work with a curator who can stay within it. A rotating collection, featuring for-sale pieces, is another option. If the neighborhood and the building's level of security will allow for it, one or two ex-

pensive pieces by a "name" artist can create a tremendous first impression, and set the right tone for the whole property.

Jersey City-based artist Stefania Panepinto created a personalized service to connect building owners with artists, and create décor with a one-of-a-kind look. "My work brings an interactive approach to bridging the gap between the development and art community," she says.

"A carefully curated, permanent art collection is an amenity that creates a distinctive energy or vibe and enhances the guest/tenant's experience by creating emotional connections throughout the space," she adds.

"An art collection aims to make an art experience immersive for guests and residents, while it also helps to convey a 'luxury lifestyle' brand. Art transforms a space and produces exciting new, memorable spaces within buildings."

Art installations should usually be customized to the lighting and furnishings of the space, creating a distinctive art experience for every area of the building. The type and amount of art will naturally depend on the size, scale, and overall feel of the building. Delivery and installation have to be carefully planned too.

#### SENSE OF COMMUNITY

A curated art collection for a rental or condo apartment building can range from a

single work, prominently displayed in a public area, to hundreds of smaller works distributed throughout the building and grounds to create a visual sense of community.

Art can bring energy and excitement to public areas—but it mustn't be too busy and varied, brokers say, or the effect will not be as welcoming. People tend to react to art on an emotional level, and industry experts point out that residential developers should always be mindful of what a work of art could evoke in the viewer.

The New Jersey Gold Coast generally—and Jersey City specifically, with its vibrant neighborhoods such as the Powerhouse Arts District—have become increasingly important centers for the arts on the Eastern seaboard, and curated collections are a great way for developers to use their buildings to support the artistic community.

Art in public buildings tends to increase traffic flow in a neighborhood, and has always been an important component in residential buildings that feature ground-floor retail.

BRAD ANDERSON



*Curated art can bring energy and excitement to a building's public areas.*