

PASSION FOR HOSPITALITY

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# HOTELS

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SOCIAL HOTEL AWARDS

REGIONAL REPORT: MIDDLE EAST

OMNI'S MIKE DEITEMEYER

## GREAT HOTEL RESTAURANTS





# IMAGE *and* EXPERIENCE

“ People are seeking the instantaneous impact of a design project. These instant moments are mostly governed by a very strong image and perhaps a very theatrical vision... So people might be striving for a look but not necessarily the experience. I think the balancing act between the two is increasingly challenging.

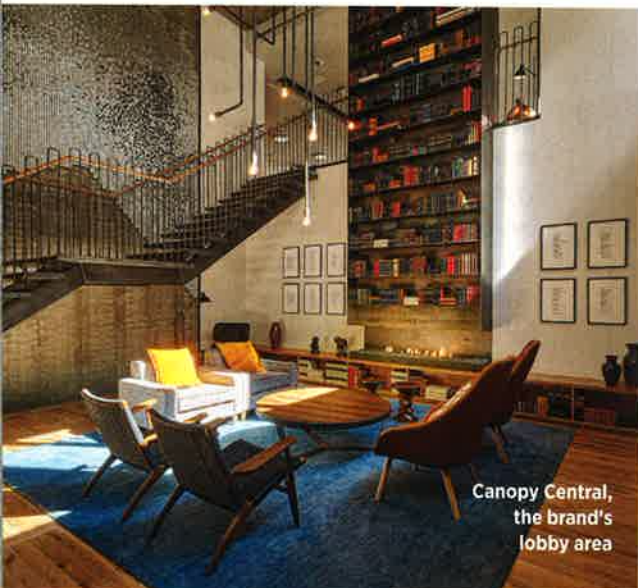
“The younger generation of designers – because information gets transmitted so easily – a lot of people only see design through images and not necessarily first-hand, and that has some kind of effect on the development of design. It’s very easy to design via Pinterest or Google, and

it’s easy to collage images together to create a scene, but it doesn’t go to the core experience.

Because design becomes an instantaneous tool, people forget that a lot of design takes years to realize. To be commissioned to work on a project, to complete it and be unveiled, is easily four to six years, and it takes a lot of endurance and persistence. The design needs to surpass the test of time.

**“I would encourage designers to travel and experience things more first-hand rather than relying on images.”**

– ANDRÉ FU, ARCHITECT AND DESIGNER WHOSE PROJECTS INCLUDE THE UPPER HOUSE IN HONG KONG AND YUYUAN RESTAURANT AT THE FOUR SEASONS HOTEL SEOUL (ABOVE)



Canopy Central, the brand's lobby area

## NORTHERN LIGHT

Hilton Worldwide debuted its lifestyle brand, Canopy by Hilton, in a hot tourist destination that the company says is an even hotter lifestyle destination: Reykjavik, Iceland. “We wanted to take the emphasis off building capital-intensive, high-design hotels and instead focused on creating

a comfortable stay with local touches and more included value,” the company says.

Touches at the Canopy by Hilton Reykjavik City Centre, which opened in July, include natural design materials in a gray and blue palette, reflecting the island’s dramatic landscape; guestroom music

boxes that play an Icelandic lullaby; complimentary bicycles; and more casual breakfast offerings – either in the lobby or delivered via bag to the room. Next up for the brand: Dallas, Washington, D.C., Portland, Oregon, and Bethesda, Maryland, all scheduled for 2017.