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BUSINESS

Artwork as a selling tool: Condos seek sales boost from paintings and sculptures



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Developers such as El-Ad National Properties have entered into agreements with local museums to display art at developments to help attract would-be buyers. Here, an aluminum I-beam sculpture called cXc XXII by Larry Mohr appears in front of ALINA Residences' sales center in Boca Raton. (ALINA Residences / Courtesy)

You can't miss a bright-red aluminum sculpture in front of a Boca Raton condo sales center. Three illuminated resin sculptures loom atop 35-foot poles in Coconut Grove. A short distance away, a bronze sculpture fronts a mansion listed for more than \$4 million.

These are among the many pieces of artwork being used to help inspire people to buy property in a region where luxury home sales are sluggish. They can be a helpful lure for art and cultural patrons who are considering moving into new communities, South Florida developers say.

Among the new initiatives are the commissioning of customized works for common areas of developments, programs for art aficionados and assistance for residents to maintain their artworks. Among some of the latest displays:

- In Hallandale Beach, developer Shabab Karmely, CEO of KAR Properties, builder of the 2000 Ocean beachfront tower, says he is working with New York art historian Megan Kincaid to organize exhibitions of modern and contemporary art for residents.
- In Boca Raton, the ALINA Residences Boca Raton condo project is borrowing sculptures from the Boca Raton Museum to help promote sales, Noam Ziv, executive director of [El-Ad National Properties](#). Currently in front of the sales center: a bright red, I-beam aluminum sculpture by the late minimalist Larry Mohr.
- In Miami, developer David Martin, co-founder of [Terra Group](#), bought large numbers of art pieces for his Park Grove project in Coconut Grove. He paid more than \$1 million for artist Jaume Plensa's The Poets in Bordeaux to display on the project's grounds. The work consists of three illuminated resin sculptures atop 35-foot poles. The art initiative seems to have helped pay dividends as the first phase of the development all but sold out.

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Carole Smith, of Compass Florida, is representing a \$4.25 million home in the Ponce/Davis neighborhood of Miami. In front of the residence, which is a block away from where Alex Rodriguez and Jennifer Lopez call home, is a bronze sculpture called Upswing by the late Australian artist Clement Meadmore.

Art adds value to properties up for sale, Smith said, “especially as some of these artists go on to great acclaim.”

Turning to art shows

Luxury single-family homes, which have been slow to sell this year in the tri-county area, also are becoming venues for art shows as an enticement to pique buyers’ interest.

For the third straight year, for example, the Broward, Palm Beaches and St. Lucie Realtors will be joining the annual Art Fort Lauderdale event next month.

There, art aficionados who may be in the market for a home take leisurely boat rides to peruse artworks on display in selected homes of the upscale Las Olas Isles, Harbor Beach and Rio Vista sections of Fort Lauderdale.

“I know that when art is placed in the right places of the home, it really enhances the look and the buyers remember the home more,” said Ron Lennen, immediate past president of the association and a broker at Compass Florida.

He said last year’s Art Fort Lauderdale was a success. “A lot of people loved being in the waterfront homes and looked at all of the art and that’s why we’re doing it.”

Evan Snow, co-founder of Art Fort Lauderdale, says the forthcoming event, which is scheduled to run between Jan. 22 and 26, delivers the kinds of buyer prospects homeowners and brokers are seeking.

“We’re driving traffic,” he said. “Somebody paying \$100 to go to an art fair is that much more likely to have the propensity to buy the art and the propensity to buy the home.”

He said his company is also working with the Four Seasons Private Residences Fort Lauderdale to place art for the project, which is starting construction across from Fort Lauderdale Beach.

And his company devised a project that allowed artists to occupy empty commercial spaces on Las Olas Boulevard at discounted rents while landlords searched for full-paying tenants.

Art is 'big plus'

Ziv said the idea is to appeal to a variety of buyers' personal interests.

"You never know," he said. "You try to hit all of their senses, if you will — the design, the ambiance, the culture. It's a multi-layered process. Art is always one of those layers. Some the art is definitely a big plus and a very good selling point, and I'm sure it's helping us at many levels."

Developed by El-Ad National Properties, the ALINA Residences Boca Raton project launched with a nine-story building featuring 121 residences; 12 are penthouses.

Many have dens and private terraces that overlook the Boca Raton Resort and Club golf course. The property will also offer seven villas opening to lanais and private gardens. Unit prices range from under \$1 million to over \$6 million.

"We have a lot of land so there is a lot of opportunities for open areas to transform into private gardens and outdoor amenities," he said.

'Better for the community'

[Irvin Lippman](#), executive director of the Boca Raton Museum, is working to lend a variety of his museum's pieces to development projects and other locations with public spaces.

“It becomes a marker ... and the more we can share the better for the museum and the better for the community,” he said. Besides the ALINA condo project, he is working to place art at the Boca Raton Innovation Campus, where IBM developed its personal computer in the 1980s.

For 2000 Ocean in Hallandale Beach, a 40-floor, 64-unit glass tower that is halfway built, developer Karmely and Kincaid, his curator, see an opportunity to introduce residents to new artists from around South Florida.

“We hope to encounter new artists from the Miami and the Fort Lauderdale areas,” Kincaid said.

Although the in-house program is in its nascent stage, Kincaid said she envisions offering advisory services to resident collectors including conservation and framing. She said more concrete initiatives will be in place this spring.

For David Martin, co-founder of Terra Goup in Miami, art is a way to connect with the upscale international clientele that has gravitated to Miami over the years.

His Park Grove project hosts curator discussions and rotates exhibits of personal collections. The project also offers climate-controlled art storage for collector residents who lack the space to hang all of their art in their condos.

An art club also helps collectors to buy and sell pieces, and also has established relationships with local galleries to show works at Park Grove.

“Art is a part of our life and Miami is really a place where we see a lot of major collectors from around the world who live here and have place here,” he said.

Link: <https://www.sun-sentinel.com/business/fl-bz-art-aids-luxury-home-sales-20191220-4wjdwzhsvhdvefl2faucbc54q-story.html>