

# hinge

ARCHITECTURE  
INTERIOR DESIGN

SLEEPING IN . . .

Our Annual  
Hotels  
Compendium

Sterful...  
Belgian Museum

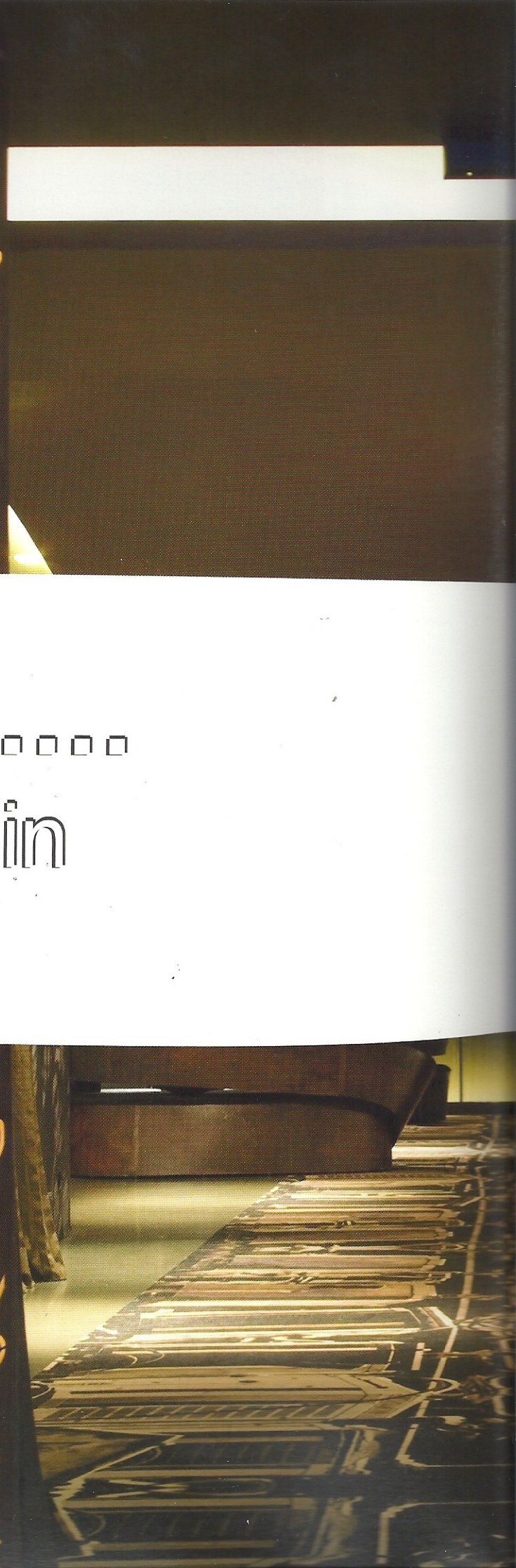
Pun Intended...  
Full-Bodied  
Hong Kong Retail Space



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# Sleeping In.... New Directions in Hotel Design

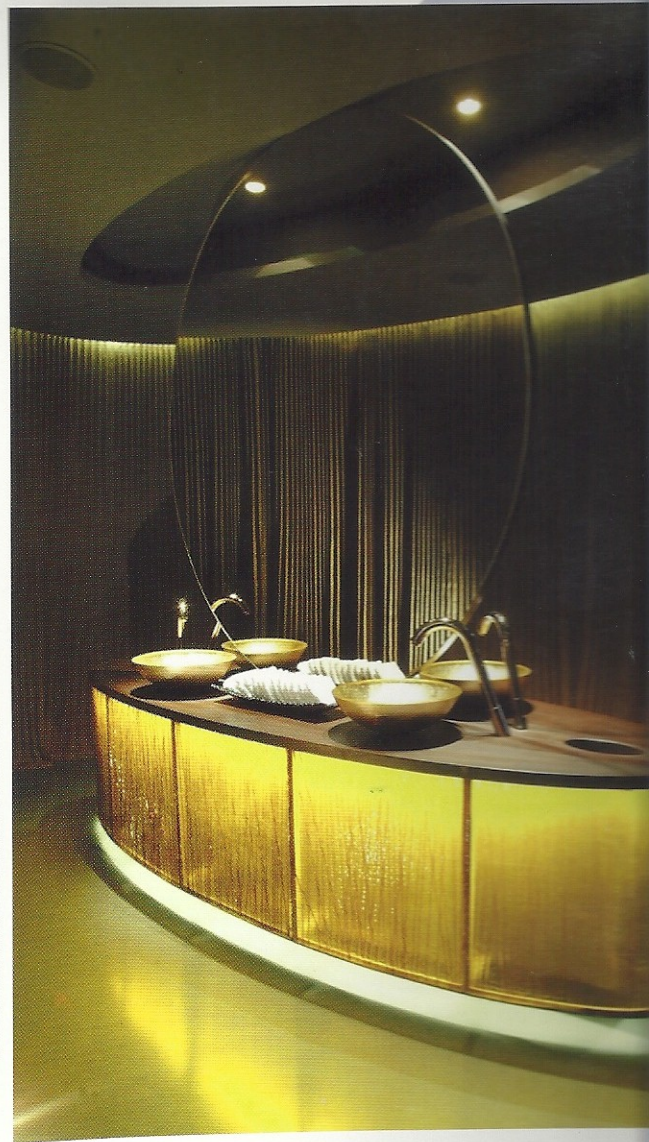
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# Oporto Theater Hotel

Atelier Nini Andrade Silva has issued another eye-catching, papparzzi magnet of a hotel design in this Portuguese UNESCO World Heritage city. Set within a former building, the renowned Teatro Baquet, the new hotel takes the theme of theatre and cinema as its start and end point, running all the way. Drama is the key word, and its unveiled in dark tones and warm lighting. As in real theatre, strategic lighting is crucial to the suspension of disbelief, and Andrade Silva makes sure that all the spaces are controlled, daylight is modified or refused, and a world of choreographed experience is presented. Colour tones hue to bronze, brown, some gold and red; spots of contrast occur as exceptions, always washed or spotted by light. Direct allusions to the world of theatre present themselves, such as the 'box office' ambience of the entry lobby and reception area, the poetry-laden main entrance doors angled in welcome, the explicit reproductions of movie stills, and fabric and carpet designs laced with visual quotations. The room corridors are lined with thick curtains, just like in cinemas or theatres, as if the 74 individual rooms are the stars of a show just starting. Those rooms are spacious and also dramatically lit, beds are canopied by large, curvaceous wood wrappers; open bathrooms sport coloured glass and mirrored surfaces that reproduce views in different directions, an allusion to actors' dressing rooms. Carpets throughout reproduce photos from old dramatic shows, and in the restaurant, a giant mural of a theatre audience wraps the walls.











The theme is clear and imaginative exploited. There is of course the question, as with any 'theme' hotel, long before it wears thin or overstates its welcome. Does such a singular subject matter limit its appeal or make visits? The design is well done and not kitchy, but the overt references at turn serve to remind everyone of what inspired each decision. Could a more indirect interpretation of theatrics have worked as well? We spend two hours in a theatre, maybe three. We emerge afterward into the lights and bustle of a city, perhaps to take a meal or drink and extend the intellectual, emotional charge of whatever spectacle we have just seen. A hotel is a slightly longer stay, and accommodates more varied moods, activities and intentions. We will tell if this show deserves an evening