Rising star Yinka Ilori swings into LDF with a playground in a business hotel

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SIX AND THE CITY
Inside Stockholm’s luxury At Six hotel

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WORK
&
REST
&
PLAY
Brutalist beauty

Universal Design Studio softens one of Stockholm's brutalist buildings to create a contemporary luxury hotel

OnOffice was first introduced to the At Six hotel on the Stockholm Furniture Fair press trip in February; even in its construction stages, it was clear that this was a highly ambitious project. Petter Stordalen of Nordic Hotels & Resorts had enlisted London-based practice Universal Design Studio (UDS) to take up the challenge of creating this hotel in Stockholm’s brutalist Brunkebergsstorg Square. – the hotel’s location at number 6 gives it its name. The brief was to not only redefine the contemporary luxury hotel within such a muscular building but to house one of Europe’s most impressive contemporary hotel art collections.

“The building, a brutalist high-rise structure, was originally designed in the 1970s by Swedish architect Bojsen & Elvergren and with our design we tried to humanise the imposing architecture, while also making its unique qualities part of the project,” says UDS co-director Hannah Carter Owens. “We wanted to create a hotel experience that”
"The aim was to reinterpret the brutalist aesthetic of the building in a way that felt relevant, comfortable and contemporary."

At the heart of the hotel, UDS placed "the new white granite grand staircase that acts as circulation and stage, drawing people up to the restaurant and lounges". Sawn stone, blackened steel, fine timber and polished granite also give a sense of warmth and permanence to the space and are contrasted with the soft furnishings selected.

The architects opted for various 20th century furniture pieces, including re-editions of classic
Scandinavian pieces. The aesthetic contrast plays out across the public floors and into guest rooms. UDS created three newly built top floors and the ten-floor hotel now holds 343 guest rooms, a 100-cover restaurant, two bars, a wellness centre and a 200sq m event, meeting and flexible workspace. On top of this, At Six is home to Scandinavia’s first slow listening music lounge.

In guest rooms, custom furniture and bespoke lighting are juxtaposed with timber wall panels and marble credenzas that run the length of each room. UDS wanted “every room to feel like a suite so even the smallest standard rooms all have clear hallway, sleeping and living zones”.

The hotel is brought to life by the wonderful array of bespoke detail, international and local design that was brought to the space. Noteworthy highlights include custom lighting by Rubn in each room, handmade glass pieces in the public areas by local glassmaker Carina Seth Andersson, a Swedish leather handrail hand-wrapped by a local saddlemaker for the lobby’s grand staircase and the wine bar’s communal table, carved from a single Swedish elm trunk by local artist Lies-Marie Hoffman.

The hotel is also a backdrop for original artwork, curated by a former international museum director. “We worked closely with respected curator Sune Nordgren to create spaces that would allow the showcase of world-class contemporary art. Therefore, we needed to design a hotel that could accommodate both the spectacle of the art while not alienating the needs of the guests,” explains Carter Owers.

The hotel’s attention-grabbing signature piece Mar Whispering, a 2.5m high marble head by Catalan artist Jaume Plensa, surveys the hotel lobby, while the restaurant’s open kitchen is framed by a 6m long work by British artist Richard Long.

“There is a sense of romance about the place,” concludes Carter Owers. “Whether it’s the sweeping staircase, the art, the long views or the luxurious rooms through detail, material and furniture that subtly reference a point in time last century while feeling contemporary.”