

Adam Tihany's Interiors on the New Holland America Cruise Ship Are Bursting with Art

The *Nieuw Statendam* ship introduces an innovative way to think about designing off-land

By [Mairi Beautyman](#)

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The Son of Man, 2018 by Bernard Pras, an example of art curated by YSA Design and ArtLink for Holland America's new cruise ship *Nieuw Statendam*, with interior design by Adam Tihany.

Photo: Mairi Beautyman

A cruise ship is not traditionally a venue considered for collecting and appreciating art—but why not? From a purely functional standpoint, art aids wayfarers on these colossal sea giants, which can be up to seven-and-a-half football fields long and two-thirds the height of the Statue of Liberty. Then there's the captive audience; the average patron settles in for weeks at a time. An expert at all steps leading toward an art-to-ship marriage, ArtLink has curated top-to-bottom art packages for four ships, with another five under development. November marked the maiden voyage of ArtLink's most

recently completed project, and AD Pro hopped on board cruise giant Holland America's new Pinnacle Class *MS Nieuw Statendam*. The 99,500-gross ton ship is the sister ship to the *MS Koningsdam*, and both cavernous feats of engineering have been conceived by architect Bjorn Storbraaten, founding partner of Norwegian design firm YSA Design, and designer Adam Tihany, of [Tihany Design](#). As the principal of his namesake firm, Tihany is known for such hospitality projects on land as the Aleph Rome Hotel, the Four Seasons Hotel Dubai International Financial Centre, the Mandarin Oriental in Las Vegas, and The Breakers resort in Palm Beach, Florida.

"My Beautiful Disco," a print series by Luca Saini located near the embarkation area on Deck Two.

Photo: ArtLink

A tour of the ship's art collection begins in a dedicated space selling art, a new concept which began rolling out on all Holland America ships this past April. On the *Nieuw Statendam*, that means guests can, from a selection of some 90 artists from approximately 55 countries, take home a piece focusing on destinations visited by the ships. The continuously updated program includes artists in residency who work on board the ship and run hands-on workshops "so that guests have the opportunity to feel the process of making art," says ArtLink founder and CEO Tal Danai. On this particular voyage, the artist in residence is Italian photographer Alessio Trerotoli, who divulges he works "with different layers and multiple exposures to create a sort of abstract presentation of urban landscapes."

Peking Opera Media, a print by Xue Kiki, is on view near Deck Two's Ocean Bar.

Photo: ArtLink

Traipsing up and down the stairs for nearly an hour reveals that the *Nieuw Statendam*'s stair towers are actually vertical galleries bursting with dozens of limited edition photographs, paintings, installations, and sculptures. While not for sale, many of the pieces are meant to be touched or interacted with, such as a take on Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte's *The Son of Man*. In this new interpretation by Bernard Pras, an acrylic-enclosed installation looks like a jumble of color-sorted found objects—until you snap a picture through the viewing point and see the iconic man in the bowler hat.

Artists—apart from the the dedicated gallery, some 150 artists are represented in the ship's public areas—are for the most part young and/or emerging and discovered via exhibitions or trade shows, such as Art Basel, which keeps prices low as well as supports a cash-strapped, underrepresented industry, says Danai.

One exception is Peter Gentenaar: The Dutch artist found fame while the ship was under construction, and, in 2016, his dreamy twisted bamboo-reinforced paper sculptures graced Paris's Musée du Louvre. On the *Nieuw Statendam*, rising like a twisted dark cloud from decks two to three, Gentenaar's *Purple Swirl*—"playing on the idea of a wave in the ocean or a sound wave," says Danai—is fabricated from bamboo and paper, the latter hand-cast on-site from Belgian linen delivered to the ship frozen. Despite being a form of paper, this piece, like all art and furnishings on

board, is stamped with a high fireproof rating. “We try to integrate art starting from the conceptual stage, sometimes starting with the artist and working from there to find an area’s theme,” notes Trond Sigurdson, partner and senior architect at YSA Design.

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On deck three, an untitled photograph by Nikolaj Lund depicts the wide-eyed anxiety of Anders Larsen, a trumpeter for the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra in Denmark who was told by Lund to repeatedly throw his instrument into the air. “You can see the horror on his face,” Danai grins.

A stateroom with an ocean view on board the *Nieuw Statendam*.

Photo: Holland America

It’s no mistake that much of the art points to music as a muse: That principle complements the overall interior design concept, which Tihany sums up as “the architecture of music.” The ceiling cutout of the double-height Queen’s Lounge nightclub, used for musical performances and speaking events, “evokes the feeling that you’re inside a violin,” he says. Tihany himself conceived *Harp*, a 15,000-pound stainless steel sculpture that recalls the stringed instrument and wraps the three-deck-high central atrium. “When standing on deck one and looking up, I want you to hear the music of a harp,” he says.

What is also clear is, unlike a real harp, the sculptural harp is virtually indestructible. Durability, says Tihany, is a response to the Herculean effort that is maintenance on board a cruise ship. The *Nieuw Statendam*, he explains, has nearly 1,400 cabins, and when the ship gets to port at eight in the morning, some 2,660 people disembark. A new group of 2,660 is installed with its luggage in freshly cleaned rooms in just a four-hour turnaround. “If you don’t use the right materials and design for this type of wear and tear, in four weeks you have a ship that looks completely beat up,” he says.

Holland America’s new cruise ship, the *Nieuw Statendam*.

Photo: Holland America

Opportunities for cruise ship design were once slim, but that’s fast changing: While there are only about 300 cruise ships on the water today, another 100 are under construction in shipyards around the world. One way to look at that fact? That’s another 100 floating museums.

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