fashion flash!
project runway

The red-light district in Amsterdam is notorious. Less well known is an urban renewal program to mix the brothels. As part of that effort, the entrepreneurial duo of Otto Nan and Suzanne Oxenaar renovated and connected a curious trio of buildings: a seedy hotel from the 1970's, another from the '80's, and a 17th-century soap-making shop. The result is Hotel the Exchange.

Its fashion-minded decor grew out of Oxenaar's observations of the area. Watching the mix of tourists, commuters, and students from the Amsterdam Fashion Institute,

Manray's Eyes, a guest room at Hotel the Exchange, features the surrealist's photograph rendered in woven cotton and framed in embroidery hoops.

hospitality

firm: ina matt site: amsterdam
she thought, It's like a catwalk. Why don't we dress the rooms as if they were models?

So she and Nan turned to AmFi's latest crop of undergraduates and their adviser, an interior designer. Giving them guidance on their final show, Ina Matt principal Matthijs van Cruijsen easily transitioned into art director for 34 student-designed guest rooms. His firm's other principal, Ina Meijer, focused on the public spaces and worked alongside him on the remaining 27 guest rooms.

Ina Matt had only two and a half months to develop the concept, based on furnishings being the "clothes" the rooms are wearing. The eight students selected to participate executed schemes ranging...
from a deconstructed mattress to oversize jewelry rendered in electrical wire. Most of the student rooms also feature custom fabrics produced with the Audax Textile Museum Tilburg, and some are now sold at the hotel’s boutique, emphatically named Options!

For the restaurant, Stock, everyone involved in the hotel—from contractors to investors—was asked to sketch a bird sporting a hat, sunglasses, or another accessory. Ina Matt then turned the sketches into stencils to paint onto the walls. Van Cuijsten explains the idea as a play on a Dutch saying. Translation: “In fashion, we’re a strange flock.” — Meghan Edwards

Clockwise from top: Soetekouw’s Misunderstood Creatures room contains custom furniture in powder-coated tubular steel and murals in crayon. She installed Swedish 1970s sconces in the Mattress room, where she also hung steel springs on a wall. A photograph became a custom-printed cotton wall covering in student Denise de Geijter’s room, Living in a Cardboard Box.