

# Stay at hotel... and steal a Banksy

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA: A boutique hotel chain boosts off-season occupancy by encouraging guests to steal original artwork.

## Insight

The Olsen, The Cullen and The Blackman - five star, boutique luxury Art Series Hotels in Melbourne are inspired by and dedicated to three Australian contemporary artists, housing collections of their work by the namesake artists.



Targeting both leisure and corporate clients, Art Series Hotels was forecasting a drop in occupancy over Christmas. This was due, mostly, to the corporate sector not working in Melbourne over the holiday period.

The business goal for the campaign was to boost occupancy in the lead up to Christmas and into January (excluding the New Year high occupancy period). This translated to selling 1,000 beds between December to early January outside of exclusion periods.

This required a major focus on the leisure market, targeting an audience of sophisticated art-interested short-stay leisure travellers.

The small all-inclusive five figure marketing budget (A\$80,000), meant that Art Series Hotels' campaign needed to create its own scale AND motivate people to book in order to meet their bed target. Art Series Hotels needed to be clever with not just the message, but also its delivery.

## Strategy

Melbourne has hundreds of quality hotels, so the agency's idea required not just a rational hook, or emotional pull, but a trigger to get people to act right away.

Their idea emerged from three overlapping insights. Firstly, Melbourne has a history of art theft - the only place in the world where a Picasso has been stolen. Secondly, people staying in hotels like to steal mementos - whether it is shampoo or slippers. Finally, an adage from psychology states that 'bad men do what good men dream'.

These insights inspired Art Series Hotels to encourage guests to do the un-thinkable - undertake their very own art heist. The agency issued the challenge - 'STAY THE NIGHT. STEAL THE ART'.

To make the idea resonate they hung art from an artist synonymous with theft. Their A\$15,000 signed Banksy 'No Ball Games' was the same artwork stolen off a wall in London (with an angle grinder)!

Any guest cunning enough could steal the Banksy without prosecution. All they had to do was stay the night, find the art and get it out the door without being caught.

Art Series Hotels moved the art between the three hotels and promoted its whereabouts in social media to build buzz and intrigue. The agency supported this with highly targeted press, radio, SEM and online advertising.

## Execution

The campaign needed to live and breathe around the hotels. Art Series Hotels reminded guests staying via in-room cards and in-house TV. The art was moved around the three hotels with clues to its whereabouts distributed via social media. A GPS tracker installed on the back of the painting alerted the agency to any movements if/when the art was stolen.

Art Series Hotels launched with a widespread media call (PR) and reached out to key journalists via Twitter to fuel conversation.

The agency converted the Art Series' ongoing direct response advertising in press, SEM and online display re-marketing to focus on the campaign message. They also distributed intriguing flyers at art events in Sydney, including a Banksy exhibition at Outpost.

Art Series Hotels launched Facebook advertising to announce the challenge and amplified editorial they'd received through sponsored stories.



All media activity, external to Facebook, drove people to [stealbanksy.com.au](http://stealbanksy.com.au) which lived within the existing hotel domain. The page held campaign information, a direct booking engine with competitive campaign promo rate and most importantly it provided regularly updated campaign content and shareable assets.

With limited mainstream media, Art Series Hotels focused on amplifying all the talk they knew they could generate. They released clues to the art's whereabouts (#stealbanksy), CCTV footage of failed heists, and insider tips to influential social media commentators. They mirrored this information dispersal through the Art Series' own website/eDM assets and social media to ensure mass online conversation.

Once people were engaged, conversion was simple.

## Results

With no special events or extra reasons to visit Melbourne the results were phenomenal, or as Will Deague Art Series CEO said "By far most successful campaign we have ever done."

The @stealbanksy twitter handle was pivotal, enabling conversations with journalists, online publications, celebrities, museums and art thieves post launch.

#stealbanksy became the number 1 trending topic in Sydney/Melbourne.

The challenge generated worldwide attention (61 countries), including coverage on CNN, New York Post, LA Times, Huffington Post and locally including 4 continuous days coverage in Melbourne papers. TheAndyWarholMuseum(397,000 followers), Guy Kawasaki (450,000) and even Serena Williams (2.3 million) tweeted about it.

The Banksy was eventually stolen by two clever women posing as agency staff.

In summary, from a 5 figure marketing budget:

- A\$2.1m PR value
- 125,000 views of teaser web video
- 112% increase in Website visits
- 1,500 Rooms booked in 4 weeks (50% above target)
- 300% ROI
- Massive boost in staff moral (51% said "best campaign ever" - source Staff Survey)

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