



A picture shows a bed and graffiti inside street artist Banksy's newly opened Walled Off hotel.



The presidential suite of "The Walled Off Hotel".



An employee stands in the bar area of the "The Walled Off Hotel".



Gavin Grindon of the University of Essex, who co-curated with Banksy the museum inside "The Walled Off Hotel", stands by the reenactment of the signing of the year 1919 Balfour declaration in the in the West Bank city of Bethlehem.

Art as a refuge from France's terror attacks

Terrorist attacks in France over the past two years have provided grim inspiration for the country's artists-and for some directly affected by the carnage, creating is helping to heal. Cartoonist Catherine Meurisse narrowly avoided death because she was late for a meeting when jihadists attacked the Paris offices of Charlie Hebdo, the satirical magazine where she worked, on January 7, 2015. Twelve people were gunned down that day. Meurisse, now 37, battled depression after what turned out to be the first of three major jihadist attacks in France in little over a year and a half.

She has since published a work entitled "Lightness" about her recovery, seeking to help others deal with their experience of terror. She worked through her own experiences at the Villa Medicis in Rome, a prestigious art institution where she was struck by statues in the garden of Niobe, a Greek heroine whose children were slaughtered by the gods. "The art helped me meditate on the violence and myself," she told cultural magazine *Telerama*. "I had a sense of approaching death, the bodies of my friends, gently and without fear."

Tossed but not sunk

After the Islamic State attacks in Paris that left 130 people dead in November 2015, prize-winning Franco-Moroccan author Leila Slimani was among writers who poured her grief and anger out

onto the page as she railed against extremism. "It is in Paris that I had access to art, to music, to beauty," she wrote. "Your fountains of milk and honey are worth less than the Seine." On the streets, graffiti artists daubed the defiant motto of Paris, "Fluctuat nec mergitur" (She is tossed by the waves, but does not sink) on walls around the city. The same message was projected as far away as the Flatiron building in New York.

Graphic artist Jean Jullien, meanwhile, laid a sketch of the Eiffel Tower over the 60s-era circular peace symbol that quickly showed up at pro-France demonstrations in the capital and other cities. Across France, people turned to books after the attacks, and while 2015 saw a drop in numbers at cinemas and festivals, the figures bounced back last year. Sales of works by Victor Hugo and other classic authors surged, as did Hemingway's tribute to Paris, "A Moveable Feast"-the French title of which translates as "Paris is a Party".

Predictions and reflections

Even before the spate of attacks 2015 attacks and the Nice truck massacre that followed in July last year, French film-makers were beginning to explore the motives and repercussions of jihadist attacks. The release of "Made in France", a thriller about a wave of jihadist attacks on Paris, was delayed twice

after the bloodshed in the city and finally only came out via video on demand.

Franco-British production "Bastille Day", meanwhile-about a planned attack-chillingly came out just a day before the Nice assault on France's national holiday that left 86 people dead. It was immediately pulled from theatres. Thomas Bidegain's film "The Cowboys", released 10 days after the Paris attacks, also looked to homegrown extremism for its inspiration, following the story of an apparently normal French girl who suddenly disappears, leaving Arabic lesson books and jihadist propaganda behind.

"Events shone a cruel, monstrous light on some of our films," Bidegain said after the attack, but noting that in France, "cinema has its eyes open." The foretelling of terror has been accompanied by reflection. Marie-Castille Mention-Schaar began filming "Le Ciel attendra" (The sky will wait), about young women caught up in jihadist movements, just two days after the November 2015 Paris attacks, after debating whether she should put the project on hold. The director said she decided to push on because it was "even more important for me to try and understand" her characters' motivation. — AFP