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THE ABC'S OF HANDMADE PRODUCTS

Retail company ABC Carpet & Home, and ABC News network are taking note of the rising popularity of hand-crafted products.

Since its debut in May 2009, Kevin O'Brien Studio's boutique at ABC Carpet & Home has become a favorite of the store's clientele and employees. Previously the company had only sold to the trade (including ABC). ABC Carpet & Home, who is well known for selling high-end sustainable and hand-crafted products, had been successfully retailing KOBS pillows for several years. The store's shoppers have always appreciated the beautiful detailing found in designer Kevin O'Brien's pillows. Since May, the number one seller for KOBS continues to be their collection of velvet accent pillows, available in a kaleidoscope of colors and sizes. They have sold hundreds of these at ABC in the past four months. The newest offering among their velvet pillows is an extra long 16x36" pillow size. Additional top sellers for KOBS are the white Willow devoré velvet duvet covers, and their one-of-a-kind collections of Japanese obi patchwork pillows & bed scarves.

KOBS is known for the exquisite craftsmanship used in creating their pillows and bedding. Their velvets are painted by hand, their linens are printed & intricately embroidered by hand, and even the dyes they use are hand-mixed. A desire for handmade products such as these appears to be on the rise in the current market. "A great hand-made object is what luxury really is. If luxury is meant to make you feel good, then the human touch must be present. More and more people are recognizing this, and more and more are making beautiful things," says O'Brien.

The consumers' desire for raw, natural materials and organic design motifs has become a way of life, rather than a passing fancy. For the upcoming Fall/Winter season, these elements are very apparent in the fashion & home furnishings industries. Wood, feathers, fur, faux woodgrain patterns, reptile prints, tree and branch motifs, even images of animals. . . all in rich and vibrant coloring. . . are popular for the upcoming seasons. Many of these elements can be found in the current KOBS product line. Their devoré velvet patterns include Woodgrain, Snakeskin, Twigs, and Pine Tree. . . all of which are painted in a variety of colors. A new addition to their line of printed linen pillows is a woodcut animal motif. Different animals (including a deer, a moose, and a camel) are printed in vibrant colors. Each one is a conversation piece.

In a recent article from ABC News network, Kim Cook of *The Associated Press* discusses the topic of handmade products making a rise among artisans and buyers alike. She states, "In an era when we expect and accept that mass-produced products will fill our homes, a niche exists for those who craft and want pieces made with a skilled, slow hand. . . Given our culture's renewed interest in all things homegrown, it's not surprising that these and other North American artisans are finding a foothold in the competitive home decor marketplace. They're using generations-old hand skills to create contemporary furniture and accessories." Following this trend, Kevin O'Brien Studio's lovely line of products not only has its foothold, but continues to rise amidst this talented group of artisans.