

Press Release - April 2009

A SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS SPLURGE

A new collection of hand made bedding features a blend of rich and casual fabrics, woven with natural fibers, and designed with elaborate detail, creating an all-over look of laid back luxury.

Kevin O'Brien Studio, known for their exquisite, handmade fabrics and home accessories including decorative pillows, rugs, lampshades, and folding screens, is set to open an exclusive boutique within ABC Carpet and Home in Manhattan, May 2009. For years, the company's popular pillow line has been carried at ABC, as well as other major retailers like Barney's and Bergdorf Goodman's. ABC is well known for their high-end sustainable products. KOBS has always been appreciated by the store's clientele, partly because of their cultural kaleidoscope of patterns, textures, and colors; and also because everything is made by hand, a method that is rarely used in today's mass-produced economy. "We are constantly in search of ways to incorporate more sustainable products into our line, and to use more socially-conscious manufacturing processes", said Lee Crane, a designer at the studio. Their current product line at ABC is primarily made with natural fibers (including silk, cotton, and linen), and the company embraces fair trade practices.

The company once created everything in their self-built factory in Philadelphia, but now has branched out into small fair trade workshops in Nepal, Vietnam, and India. This cultural diversity throughout the company helps create a collection of products with rich variety. The velvet used in their bedding is painted by hand in overlapping colors which creates a beautiful ombre effect. Even dyes used to color their velvet are mixed and applied by hand. The embroidered bedding, created by skilled artisans in Nepal, is hand-printed and intricately embellished with embroidery and delicate appliqué. KOBS has been working for 5 years with a group in Katmandu, employing 30 people there who share in the profits of their embroidered products, which are sold in over 100 different stores throughout North America. "Their work reminds us of a time when these skills were common . . . a time when fine things were not only made by artists," says O'Brien.

Kevin does all the original artwork himself, taking most of his inspiration from nature. For instance the velvet *Willow* bed started from a series of drawings and paintings that Kevin brought back from Japan. He converted the drawings to silk screens and began experimenting with color. The prints were sent to Nepal and Vietnam for embellishment. Every couple of weeks he returns to the Philadelphia studio from his home in Woodstock, New York with a new sheaf of drawings from which to develop new designs. There he and his team of six, who have been together for many years, create art that transcends the common to become classic, while still embracing the modern consumer's need for socially-conscious products. The studio's fashion background makes them very responsive to current design trends, but their love of history and iconic imagery keeps their work timeless.