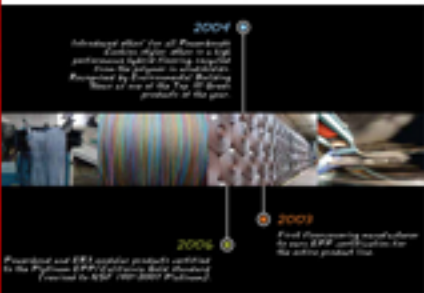


Jon Otis Launches Object Agency

By Peter Carey



When the business of design intersects with the concept of design as a cultural imperative, it is usually not an accident. To get the synergy to work properly and last longer than a single project, the studio practicing this approach typically eschews design specialization. Keeping the many disparate themes and elements connected and still relevant to each other traditionally requires an aesthetic more commonly found in Europe than in America. It's no mistake that for Jon Otis, this is comfortable territory in which to work. Trained early in his career at Sottsass Associati in Milan, Mr. Otis adopted the Italian model of a multidisciplinary practice that incorporates and addresses architecture, interiors, industrial and graphic design.

Currently a professor at Pratt Institute and formerly a co-founder of The Moderns, Mr. Otis first incorporated his diverse expertise into Object Inc. ten years ago. This past month, Mr. Otis launched a rebranded version of his company as Object Agency. The firm is a solutions-based creative company that weaves technology with branding, graphic and interior design as well as exhibition design. "Exhibition design is a hybrid of all the disciplines," said Mr. Otis, speaking about his most recent project, the design exhibit for the Tandus Flooring showroom at the Merchandise Mart in Chicago. In his four years working with Tandus, Mr. Otis has gradually stepped up his involvement with the company. Terry Mowers and Suzanne Tick, the design duo that shares the position of VP Chief Creative Officer at Tandus, gave a direction of creating a space that remains neutral and doesn't distract visitors. The goal was to allow people to focus on the exhibited product as a design object.

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