

Parsons School of Design Announces New Partnership

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The New School's Parsons School of Design is proud to announce a new partnership with leading global handwoven rug brand OBEETEE. This innovative partnership is the first of its kind for both Parsons and OBEETEE and has been integrated into Year 1 of the school's newly launched MFA Textiles program in a formal curricular course called Textiles Industry Partnership. The collaboration affords students the opportunity to work with the OBEETEE team to explore new markets, develop colors and patterns, introduce sustainability techniques to the brand, and create and innovate new design concepts for the global luxury market.

OBEETEE is the world's leading manufacturer and supplier of handwoven rugs, and the first company in the market to be recognized with the Social Accountability System Certificate by DNV and the Social Accountability International of New York in 2004. As a foundational partner in the program OBEETEE provides Textiles MFA students with the opportunity to understand the rug industry's market and supply chain, as well as develop skills and product at the highest, most reputable and traceable levels. The MFA Textiles program will primarily serve as an innovation hub for OBEETEE, as students will research, reimagine and conceptualize what rugs can be in the 21st century. The students' research and innovation highlight The New School's values of social justice and sustainability, while considering the potential integration of technology in handcrafted rugs.

Throughout the sponsored course, which began in Spring 2019 and cumulates during the fall semester, students focus their research and practice on creating the most innovative and luxurious products within sustainable parameters. The partnership will include an exhibition at OBEETEE's New York showroom

during the September 2019 design market, allowing the students to share their design concepts with editors buyers and decorators in person for real-world feedback and learning.

Additional real-world learning opportunities for students also included a month long weaving immersion with OBEETEE artisans in their Indian workshops, where successful sustainability efforts have included the Women Weavers program along with expanded educational support for workers and their families.

Students conducted interviews and research, developed prototypes, learned about manufacturing processes, supply chain, design methodologies and discovered the underlying philosophy and values of the company. The students then shared their findings and rug experiments with the rest of their classmates back in NYC, and together the class developed a vision for OBEETEE that includes design concepts, materials, and systems innovation under the expert guidance of their faculty in the MFA Textiles studio at Parsons.

"We're so pleased to be partnering with The New School's Parsons School of Design on this groundbreaking program," said Rudra Chatterjee, chairman of OBEETEE. "For both our organizations, our commitment to thoughtfully crafted and sustainable design practices has made each of us the leaders in our markets. This is a true marriage of equals and we're both excited to be collaborating this way and be sharing our unique expertise and heritage with the next generation of global design leaders."

"Parsons is proud to collaborate with OBEETEE on this 'real-world' project that enabled our students to research, understand, innovate, and propose new design concepts and systems to the world's leader in hand-woven carpets," said BurakCakmak, Dean of Fashion at Parsons. "We are grateful to OBEETEE for the opportunity this provided our students to gain professional experience and valuable insights about the rug industry as it is today."

The MFA Textiles program at Parsons is centered around the intersectionality of craft, technology, and sustainability. Students engage with heritage and contemporary hand crafting of textiles, seeking to dissolve the boundaries between craft and technology in order to create a new paradigm for textiles in the 21st century.

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