

For Immediate Release

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## Brentano Opens New Studio Despite Difficult Economy

**Wheeling, IL (December 2009)**— When Brentano moved to their current corporate headquarters in February of 2008, President E-Kwan Chen and Vice President Iris Wang were looking forward to uniting the company in one building. Their previous location was comprised of three separate units which limited interaction between departments. In addition to bringing all the employees together, Wang and Chen felt that building a new studio for Brentano's design team would be a great way to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their company.

Because the studio was essentially built from scratch (the space was previously a warehouse) Wang and Chen were able to create a space that would have plenty of room for inspiration, imagination, and creativity, all according to their own plans without the constraints of preexisting conditions. Additionally, Wang demonstrated her environmental commitment when working with the architects, opting for many eco-friendly elements in both the design and in materials. Items such as a power exhaust fan to circulate air and dual level fluorescent lighting fixtures are examples of some of the technologies used to maximize energy efficiency. Many fixtures and materials were chosen for their environmentally-friendly attributes, such as the wood doors made from FSC certified wood and insulation that uses both post consumer recycled content as well as regional materials, which decreases the product's carbon footprint.

In addition to using energy saving technologies and recycled and certified materials, there are eco-friendly architectural design elements of the space. For example, many commercial buildings are not permitted to have opening windows. Wang made it a priority to be zoned appropriately so as to allow fresh air in place of summer air conditioning. The openable windows, along with the large skylight in the studio ceiling, allow for an abundance of natural light. The lights can also be switched to incandescent or fluorescent settings, allowing for close examination of colors. The space also has boards for pinning up inspirations, current projects, and potential future patterns.

Construction of the studio began in May of 2009, many months after it became clear the economic downturn was going to persist. When asked about her decision to continue with building the space, Wang says they decided to do so for three reasons: first, they had started the project and wanted to see it through, second, in anticipation of future growth, and third, because she believes that while she can't change external problems, she can do her best to influence the internal atmosphere. By continuing to build the studio, her goal is to demonstrate the importance of keeping focused, especially in difficult times.

Green features of the studio include:

- Outside air economizer and power exhaust fan.
- High-efficiency rooftop HVAC units.
- High-efficiency fluorescent lighting.
- Dual lighting fixtures and controls.
- Exterior wall insulation exceeds thermal requirements, 10% of the product is processed locally, reduces insulation construction waste by 50%, is a renewable-based foam insulation made from using castor oil instead of a petroleum-based product.
- Interior sound attenuation insulation is a certified noise reducer insulation, uses 20% post consumer recycled content, and 20% of materials are regional (within 500 miles of the project).
- Wood doors meet green air quality standards, are FSC certified wood, use low emitting materials, and 70% of every door uses recycled, regional, and rapidly renewable materials.
- US Green Building Council (USGBC)-recommended openable exterior windows use pre-consumer recycled materials and low-emitting glass.
- Ceiling tile manufacturer is a founding member of the USGBC, exceeds requirements for use of recycled content and low emitting materials.
- Porcelain floor tile contains 20% pre-consumer recycled material.



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Brentano's new design studio under construction.



The finished project is a creative and eco-friendly space for Brentano's design team.

### **About Brentano:**

Founded in 1990 by Design Director Iris Wang and her husband and President E-Kwan Chen, Brentano has grown from a modest beginning of eight patterns to an internationally represented textile house. Brentano's fabrics stem from Wang's philosophy of balancing beauty + performance. Their growing collection of eco-fabrics expands this ideology by demanding textiles to meet thoroughly researched standards of environmental consciousness while maintaining their beauty. Celebrating their 20th anniversary in 2010, Brentano continues to offer a variety of innovative and interesting textiles, including eco-friendly faux leather, high performance upholstery, fire-resistant, outdoor and Crypton and Nano-Tex fabrics. Please visit [www.brentanofabrics.com](http://www.brentanofabrics.com) for more information.

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