

BUSINESS OF HOME

by EDITOR AT LARGE

NEWS DIGEST

INSTAGRAM'S INDUSTRY IMPACT, 3-D BRANDS GET FUNDING, AND MORE

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In our weekly digest, find all of the news you might have missed. Read on for the announcements crossing the BOH news desk this week.

OPENINGS AND EVENTS



Andy Warhol by Robert LevinRobert Levin

Real estate firm Sebastian Capital is opening The Elizabeth Collective, a creative hub for art and design located in Elizabeth Taylor's former home in midtown Manhattan. For the first exhibit, Sebastian Capital partnered with Maison Gerard. "Captured: Andy Warhol in Rare Photographs," features a series of portraits of the artist by photographer **Robert Levin**, many of which will make their public debut during the exhibition, open from January 17 to 31.

BUSINESS TALK



A crafter at the Heath Ceramics
Make Good MarketLeslie Santarina

Heath Ceramics, a Sausalito, California–based handcrafted ceramic tableware and tile manufacturer, created an employee ownership plan (ESOP) that allows employees to purchase interest in the company. “If you’re going to sell part of your company, give it to your employees!” wrote co-owners **Robin Petravic** and **Cathy Bailey** in an [Instagram post](#). “At our holiday party we celebrated the 166 employees who just became employee owners ... We choose a definition of success that has everything to do with continuing to design beautiful products with integrity, while doing so in a way that is better for our community, society, and planet. Having the strong finances to maintain this focus without compromising is key, while never a goal unto itself.”

Speaking of Instagram, the platform continues to have a strong impact on the industry: “Interior design is a nearly \$10 billion business, and advertiser spending on Instagram is set to hit nearly \$7 billion, up from \$3.64 billion in 2017,” [Fast Company](#) reported. “Design companies also know they have a captive audience, and have concentrated on growing their follower counts as a play for direct advertising. West Elm has 1.8M followers, Ikea has 1.7M, Crate and Barrel 1.3M. They all know social media is another lever to pull when it comes to transforming browsers into buyers, and they’re doing what they can to ratchet up those conversion numbers.” Instagram is also changing the way designers work and get clients, the speed at which trends are consumed, the way people can plagiarize each others’ work, and even the way design students are being taught.

Bangalore-based e-design services brand Design Café secured \$28.5 million in funding, reported [Tech Story](#). The brand was founded in 2015 by **Shezaan Bhojani** and **Gita Ramanan**, and offers 3-D and VR renderings as well as advice on budgeting, room planning and furniture selection. It’s operational in Bangalore and plans to expand to six more locations by the end of next year. [Furniture Today](#) reported that another 3-D furniture

visualization platform, Boston-based Cyllindo, also completed a new funding round, though its total was not disclosed.

CUE THE APPLAUSE...

Wrapping up the year, the Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS (DIFFA) donated \$285,000 to 26 American organizations that assist people living with HIV/AIDS, and granted a total of \$1 million. “We are thrilled to present these grants to a diverse group of community and national non-profits that are on the front lines every day in the fight against HIV/AIDS,” said executive director **Dawn Roberson**. “The services and programs they offer are among the best and we know that by investing in their efforts we can together achieve an AIDS-free generation and ensure those living with HIV have a high-quality of life and care.”

PRODUCT LAUNCHES AND COLLABORATIONS

Bay Area–based landscape designer **Katharine Webster** has opened a new San Francisco showroom with indoor-outdoor furniture. “The products Webster stocks are destined for the outdoors, and she isn’t interested in being an interior designer,” reported [The San Francisco Chronicle](#). But her showroom, which has just a small back patio, makes an argument for using outdoor furniture inside, and finding ways to mimic nature in homes with little exterior space.

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