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15 *Attorneys for Plaintiff RBW Studio, LLC*

16 **IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
17 **FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

18 RBW STUDIO, LLC, a Delaware and New
19 York limited liability corporation,

20 Plaintiff,

21 vs.

22 CANOE HOSPITALITY, LLC, a California
23 limited liability corporation; THE STUDIO
24 COLLECTIVE, LLC, a California limited
25 liability corporation; and PROPER
26 HOSPITALITY, LLC, a California limited
27 liability corporation, owners and operators of
28 HOTEL JUNE WEST LA

Defendants.

Case No. 2:23-cv-03252

**COMPLAINT FOR PATENT
INFRINGEMENT**

JURY TRIAL DEMAND

1 **I.**

2 **NATURE OF THE ACTION**

3 1. This case involves the practice of deliberately copying or “knocking off”
4 high-quality, design-level lighting products protected by United States patents to
5 maximize profits for companies engaged in renovating luxury hotels.

6 2. The Complaint arises under the patent laws of the United States, Title 35
7 of the United States Code. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this action
8 under 35 U.S.C. § 271 et seq., 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1338(a).

9 3. The claims arise out of Defendants’ importing, making, using, offering
10 for sale, and/or selling light fixtures (“Accused Light Fixtures”) that infringe a
11 patented “sconce” light fixture created by Plaintiff RBW Studio, LLC (“RBW”), an
12 award-winning lighting design and manufacturing company based in Kingston, New
13 York.

14 **II.**

15 **THE PARTIES**

16 4. RBW is a Delaware and New York limited liability corporation with a
17 principal place of business at 575 Boices Ln, Kingston, New York 12401. RBW
18 creates, manufactures, markets and sells a range of unique light fixtures incorporating
19 novel designs that are protected by United States patents.

20 5. Defendant The Studio Collective, LLC (“Studio Collective”) is a design
21 agency with a principal place of business at 318 Lincoln Blvd., Venice California. On
22 information and belief, Studio Collective was a key player in the acquisition and
23 installation of knockoff lights that infringe RBW’s patented design and that were
24 installed in at least one location, at Hotel June in West Los Angeles, California, a
25 luxury hotel at 8639 Lincoln Blvd, Los Angeles, California 90045 which went
26 through a multi-million dollar renovation through the collaboration of Studio
27 Collective and the other Defendants named herein.

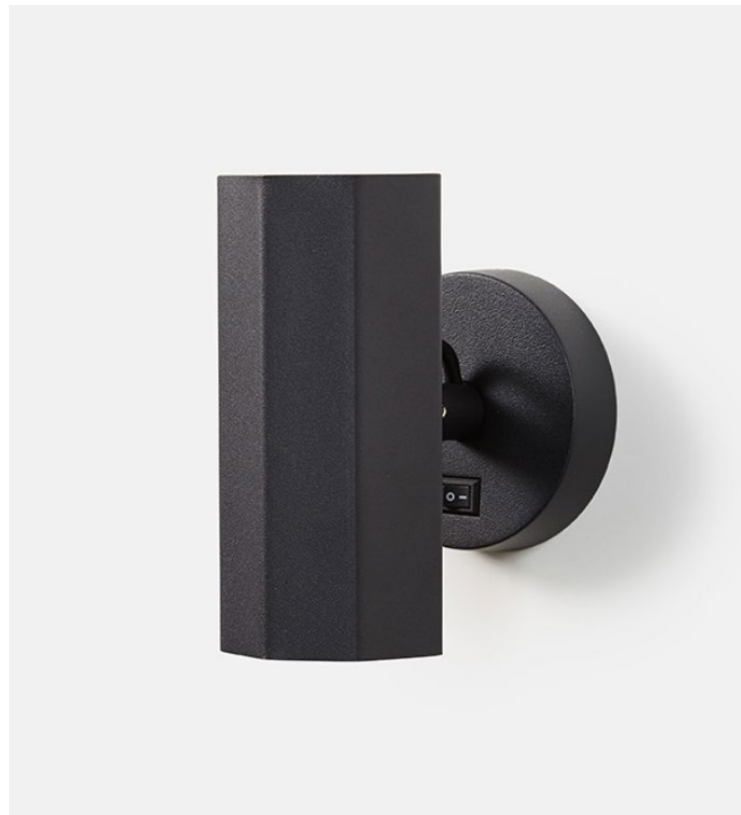
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IV.

BACKGROUND FACTS

11. RBW is an award-winning, independent design and manufacturing company headquartered in Kingston, New York. RBW is a brand for architects and designers looking for high quality light fixtures. The history and philosophy of RBW is available on the web at the URL <https://rbw.com/about-us>.

12. Among RBW’s innovations is the Brim™ sconce, a light fixture having a distinctive multi-panel shade, as shown in the images below from RBW’s website.¹



13. RBW protects its innovations with U.S. design patents.

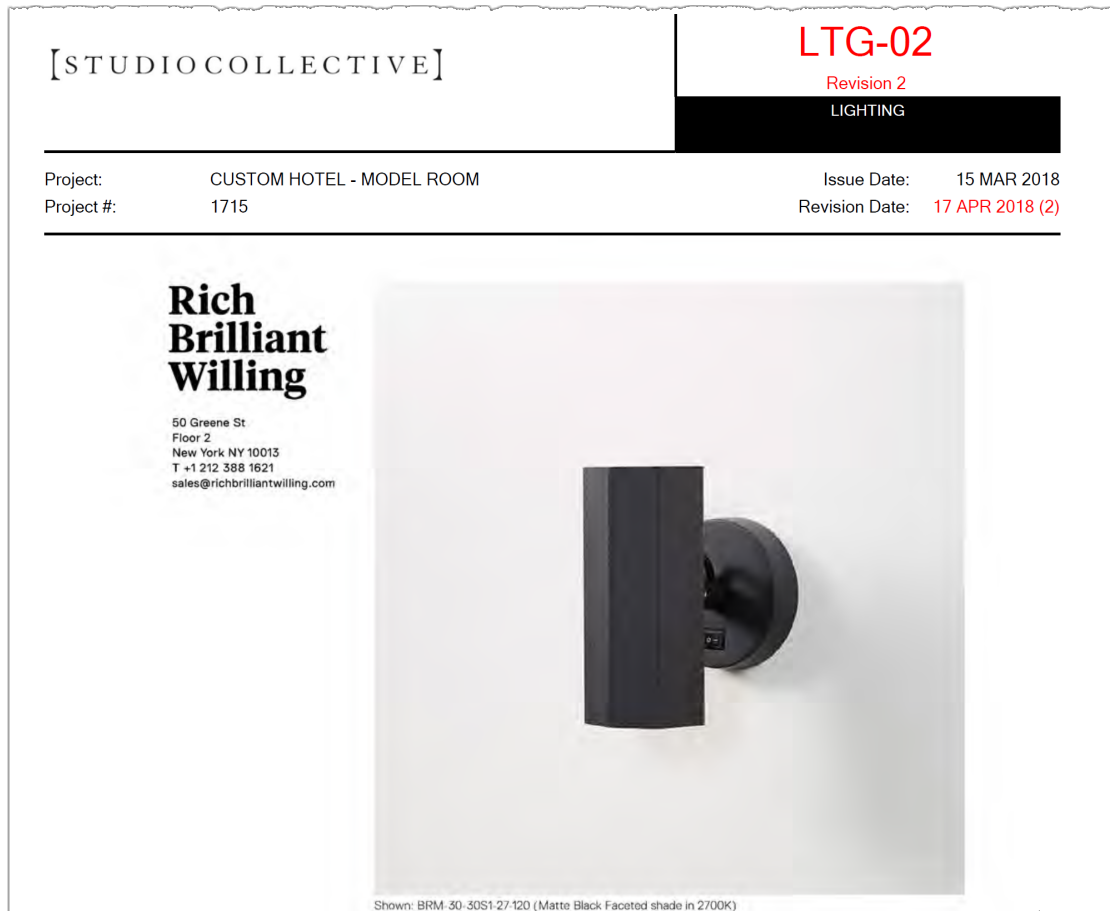
14. The Brim sconce is protected by RBW’s U.S. Patent No. D887,616 (“the ‘616 Patent”). The ‘616 patent was duly issued by the United States Patent and

¹ Downloaded from https://rbw.com/products/brim-switch/sw-pc20-s1-pc25-27-10_triac_120v.

1 Trademark Office on June 16, 2020 and assigned to RBW. A copy of the ‘616 patent
2 is attached as Exhibit A.

3 15. On or about June 20, 2018, RBW, under its predecessor trade name Rich
4 Brilliant Willing (“Willing”), provided samples of the Brim sconce to Defendants
5 Studio and Canoe for their consideration for use in Hotel June, in response to a
6 purchase order from Canoe, a copy of which is attached as Exhibit B.

7 16. On information and belief, Studio Collective was considering RBW’s
8 Brim sconce for use in the interior design of Hotel June and at one point considered
9 including or included the Brim sconce in a specification for the Hotel June renovation.
10 Exhibit C is a true and correct copy of a page from a Studio Collective design
11 specification book listing Manufacturer as “Rich Brilliant Willing” and the
12 PRODUCT ID as “Brim 4242.” An excerpt from the specification sheet is shown
13 below:



1 17. On November 13, 2018, RBW provided a quote to Defendant Canoe of
2 \$111,402.13 for 599 Brim sconces. A true and correct copy of the quote is attached as
3 Exhibit D.

4 18. Studio Collective claims on its website to “deliver luxurious designs that
5 have become synonymous with originality and craftsmanship.” In an interview with
6 an industry magazine published on April 15, 2021, Studio Collective’s principal
7 Christian Schulz stated that the company decided when it was working on a
8 significant renovation close to its offices, which on information and belief was Hotel
9 June, to create its own collection of furniture, including “unique sconces” that comply
10 with code but are “still cool looking.” He claimed, “we’ve designed so much custom
11 furniture over the last 10 years we’re constantly doing it for other people we thought
12 why not do it for ourselves and maybe reuse it on some of our projects and also offer
13 that out to people that might be interested in that kind of California aesthetic.”² In
14 fact, however, rather than create its own, original “cool looking” sconce to offer
15 customers, Studio Collective engaged in blatant copying of RBW’s patented design.

16 19. On information and belief, Defendant Studio Collective obtained a
17 sample of RBW’s Brim sconces. On information and belief, in order to engage in
18 cost-cutting for the benefit of the Defendants, Defendants Studio Collective and
19 Canoe created the Accused Light Fixtures and offered them for sale and/or sold them
20 to Proper as cheaper substitutes to the authentic RBW Brim sconces that had initially
21 been presented to Canoe and Studio Collective.

22 20. On information and belief, the Accused Light Fixtures were installed and
23 used, and now continue to be used in Hotel June’s guest rooms, under the direction of
24 Defendants Studio Collective, Canoe and Proper.

25 21. On information and belief, in 2021, Defendant Studio Collective
26 submitted its renovation work on Hotel June to an awards magazine, *Premier*
27 *Hospitality International Magazine*, and that work was named as one of the finalists

28 _____
² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIxNcjI4o_Y

1 for the Awards for Hospitality, Experience And Design (“AHEAD Awards”). Below
2 is an excerpt from the awards program show from the AHEAD awards featuring the
3 knockoff copy of the RBW sconce:



18 A representative of the magazine wrote to RBW on October 14, 2021, informing
19 RBW that Studio Collective had “highlighted [RBW] as being one of the major
20 contributors” to their design of guest rooms for the Hotel June renovation. In fact,
21 however, Defendants, on information and belief, collectively decided to use the less
22 expensive and deceptively-similar look-alike Accused Light Fixtures. They did not
23 use the actual RBW Brim sconces.

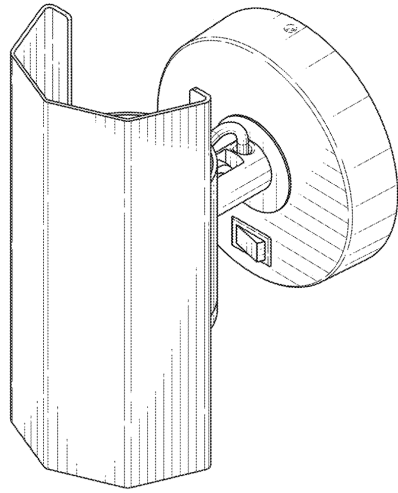
24 **V.**

25 **CLAIM FOR DIRECT PATENT INFRINGEMENT BY ALL DEFENDANTS**

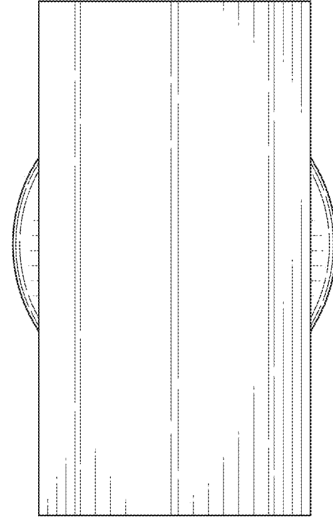
26 22. Paragraphs 1-21 are incorporated by reference as though alleged herein.
27 The Defendants infringe the ‘616 Patent because the Accused Light Fixtures are
28 substantially the same in overall appearance as the design claimed and shown in the

1 drawings of the '616 Patent. Representative drawings from the '616 Patent are
2 compared below to similar views of the Accused Light Fixtures:

3
4 **RBW's '616 Patent**



15 **FIG. 1**



16 **FIG. 2**

17 **Accused Light Fixtures**



1 23. On information and belief, instead of RBW’s Brim sconce, Defendants
2 Canoe and Studio Collective designed, specified, and sourced unauthorized knock-off
3 copies of RBW’s Brim sconce (the Accused Light Fixtures) for use in Hotel June.

4 24. On information and belief, Canoe and Studio Collective quoted Proper a
5 substantially reduced price for the Accused Light Fixtures compared to the price
6 quoted by RBW for the Brim sconce.

7 25. On information and belief, Defendant Canoe also imported the Accused
8 Light Fixtures after they had been designed by Canoe and Studio Collective.

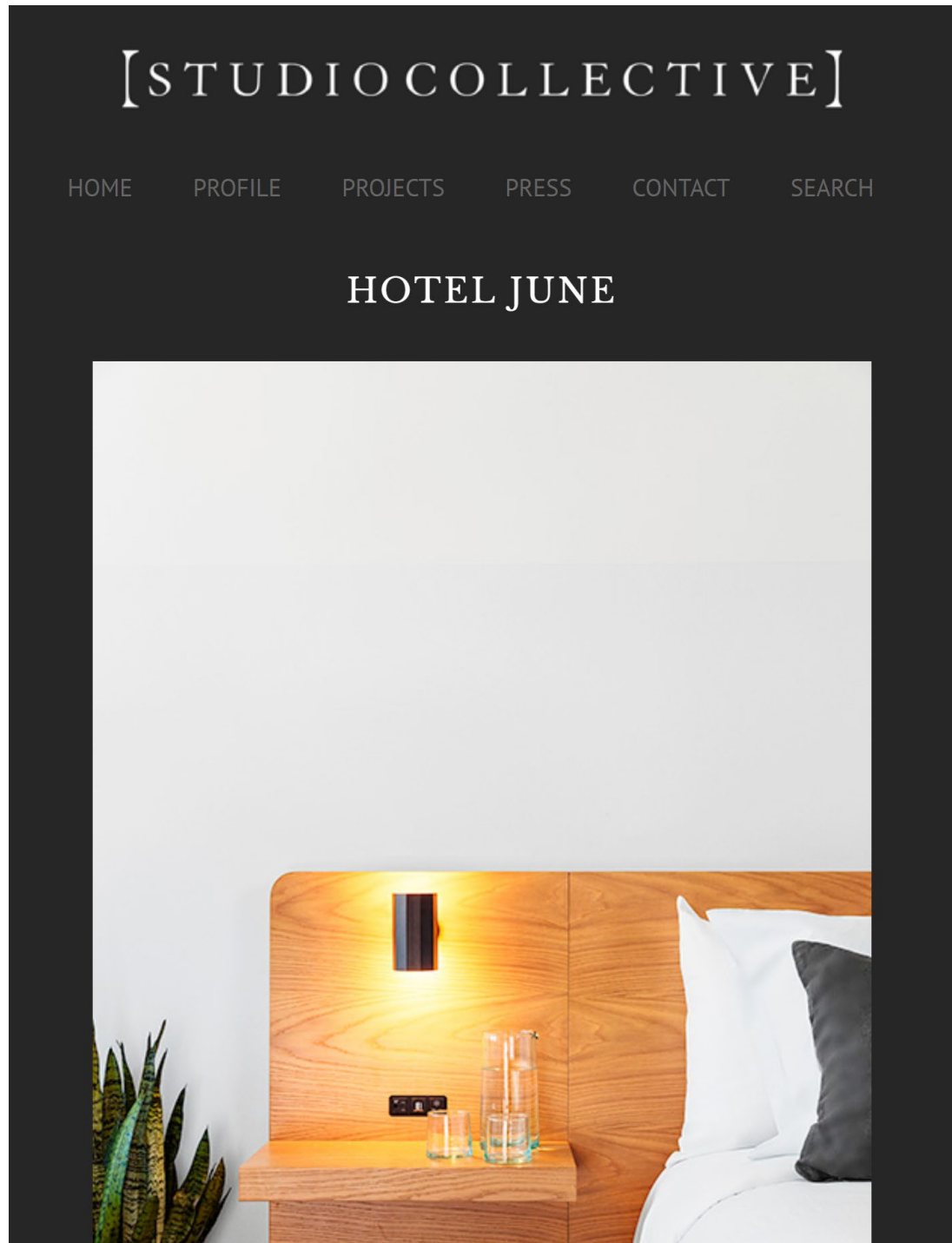
9 26. On information and belief, Defendant Proper purchased and installed the
10 Accused Light Fixtures in Hotel June’s guest rooms where it is still using them.

11 27. The Defendants Canoe and Studio Collective infringed RBW’s ‘616
12 Patent by importing, offering to sell, and selling Accused Light Fixtures that are
13 substantially the same in appearance as the design claimed in the ‘616 Patent, such
14 that an ordinary observer, giving such attention as a purchaser usually gives, would be
15 induced to purchase one supposing it to be the other.

16 28. Defendant Proper infringed, and continues to infringe, RBW’s ‘616
17 Patent by using in the guest rooms of Hotel June the Accused Light Fixtures that are a
18 colorable imitation of the design claimed in the ‘616 Patent. Defendant Proper
19 advertises its continuing use of the Accused Light Fixtures on its website and on
20 numerous third-party websites promoting the look of its guest rooms using the
21 knockoff lights supplied to it by Defendants Studio Collective and Canoe.

22 29. On January 26, 2022, in an effort to avoid litigation, RBW sent
23 Defendant Studio Collective a cease and desist letter identifying the infringement it
24 was aware of (at the Hotel June) and demanding information regarding the
25 manufacturer and other companies involved in the infringing conduct. Studio
26 Collective, though its counsel, rejected any merit in RBW’s claim and declined to
27 provide the information requested by RBW regarding the parties involved in the
28 infringing installations.

1 30. On information and belief, despite RBW’s cease and desist letter, Studio
2 Collective has continued to promote its work using Hotel June guest room images
3 displaying the Accused Light Fixtures. Below is a true and correct excerpt of Studio
4 Collective’s website:



1 7. A judgment declaring this case to be exceptional and awarding Plaintiff
2 its reasonable attorneys’ fees under 35 U.S.C. § 285; and

3 8. Awarding Plaintiff such other and further relief as this Court deems just
4 and proper.

5 Dated: April 27, 2023

By: /s/ Ben M. Davidson

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JURY TRIAL DEMAND

RBW requests a jury trial on all issues triable to a jury.

Dated: April 27, 2023

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