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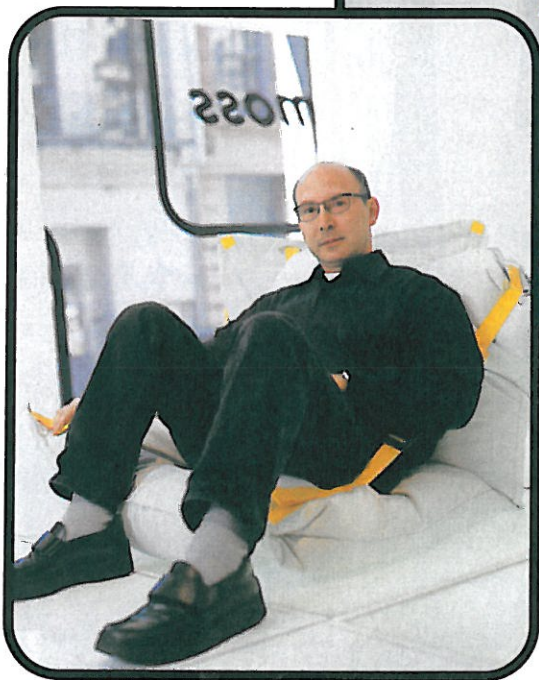
MOSS'S LANDING

When Murray Moss wanted to expand his SoHo store, annexing the upstairs space would have been the logical move—if it weren't for the neighbors. So he added four virtual floors

BY TESSA SOUTER

Moss, the industrial design store owned and curated by Murray Moss, is famous for the inventiveness of its displays. Everything is arranged in museumlike glass cases—from the \$8 green glycerine “daily soap” that separates into seven segments, each one embossed with a day of the week, to the 1954 Osvaldo Borsani-designed P40 lounge chair in red wool with fold-out ottoman and black rubber arms, which would set you back \$3,975. And each piece is accompanied by a card giving its country of origin, designer, and date. Moss takes this approach not only because he wants to show how much he values each object, but also because he doesn't want customers picking things up and putting them back in the wrong place. “If you only have a minute to look at stuff I want to make sure that you see what I want you to see,” he explains. Desiring to show more furniture (including the entire collection of the renowned Italian home furnishings manufacturer Kartell), he considered a larger store but wasn't quite ready to go through a move. In the meantime, the forward-looking Moss decided to expand the store via computer. “Even if the upstairs neighbors had moved out, this way allows me to give you much more information about a product,” he says. “It does not supplant the physical store, it enhances it.”

Designed by New York graphic artist Ron Ryan (who created the logo and all subsequent graphics for Moss), the interactive computer program adds four virtual floors. Visitors



Murray Moss (left), whose shop is a mecca for the design cognoscenti, lounges on the 1997 Airbag chair by Iikka Suppanen for Valvomo. Above: The computer terminal in the store shows the elevator, the only means by which customers can access the virtual floors “upstairs.”



who want to view kartell@moss can access it on a computer terminal in the store. Simply click on the image of an elevator which takes you—complete with Muzak—to the second floor. The elevator opens, you hear the murmur of voices at a busy gallery opening, and you see a collection of furniture. To find out more about, for example, the Battista table, designed by Antonio Citterio and Glen Oliver Löw, move the mouse to that picture. The table, which is on castors and has an extendable base, is shown wheeling around and opening and closing like an accordion (to a squeaky soundtrack). Click on an icon to get more information on price, colors, and sizes.

The newest tenant (on the penthouse floor) is vitra@moss, devoted to the Swiss furniture manufacturer Vitra, whose perfect miniatures of classic chairs are already sold in the store. This is the exclusive New York outlet for a range of full-size furniture—some of which has not previously been available here—by the likes of Frank Gehry (his cardboard collection), Philippe Starck, and Jasper Morrison. The third floor will be a gallery. The fourth, however, is still available. “And not only is the space virtual,” says Moss. “So is the rent!” ■