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VERSACE LAUNCHES *ART UNITES* PROGRAM IN COLLABORATION WITH THE WHITNEY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO AID CHILDREN IN NEED IN THE US AND CHINA

New York, NY (June 22, 2009) – Italian luxury fashion house Versace, is pleased to announce that for the second straight year, it will sponsor the Whitney's Gala and Studio Party. Taking place Monday evening October 19th, the event will be co-chaired by Penelope Cruz, Liz Swig, and Donatella Versace.

Attended by more than 1,000 prominent members in the art, fashion, media, business and corporate communities, the Gala and Studio Party are known for their high-energy glamour and loyal following of major international collectors and artists, making it a highlight in the New York social calendar.

In addition to sponsoring the Gala, Donatella Versace collaborated with the Whitney's Education Department to create **Art Unites**, a global initiative aimed at providing needy children in the United States and China with the incomparable spirit, creativity, inspiration and solace that visual arts bestow.

The program, which officially launched on July 1st, will benefit *Starlight Children's Foundation*, an organization dedicated to brightening the lives of seriously ill children and their families in the US, and the *One Foundation* in China, an organization committed to the long-term recovery of the areas devastated by last year's earthquakes in the Sichuan province, funding and operating two Versace One Foundation children's centers with schooling, psychological therapy, and post trauma counseling for over 1200, through creative visual arts, an essential form of relief.

As part of the **Art Unites** program Versace has provided canvas and art supplies to 500 children from *Starlight* and 900 children from the *One Foundation* to create original drawings using the theme of "friendship". Each child's work of art will be fashioned into a one-of-a-kind Versace canvas tote bag which will be sold worldwide at Versace boutiques and the Gilt Groupe, a member's only ecommerce site this October. The bags are expected to retail for between \$200 and \$250, and 100% percent of the proceeds from the sale of the bags will be donated equally to *Starlight* and to *One Foundation*.

"I have been blessed with incredible success in my life," says Donatella. "And part of that success means being able to give back to people in need. As a mother, children's causes are especially close to my heart, and I am honored to be able to work with The Whitney on the creation of a program that inspires children through the arts. Both *Starlight* and the *One Foundation* provide critical support for children and their families, and I look forward to our ongoing partnership."

Kicking off the program, The Whitney's Education department hosted a day of art making at the museum on July 1st with children with chronic and life-threatening illnesses from the New York chapter of *Starlight*. Donatella Versace and Ellen Harvey, a leading contemporary artist, were on hand at the party to encourage and inspire the children in the creation of their designs for the tote bags.

Once all the drawings worldwide are complete, a panel of judges led by Donatella and Adam D. Weinberg, the Whitney's Alice Pratt Brown Director, will select one winning bag from each charity which will be featured in the Versace runway show this September.

Versace

Gianni Versace SpA is one of the leading international fashion design houses and a symbol of Italian luxury worldwide. It designs, manufactures, distributes and retails fashion and lifestyle products including Atelier, pret-a-porter, accessories, jewelry, watches, eyewear, fragrances, and home furnishings all bearing the distinctive Medusa logo.

The Whitney

The Whitney Museum of American Art is the home of the world's preeminent collection of American art. Founded in 1930 by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, the institution has remained committed to its mission of supporting living American artists. Through its Permanent Collection, traveling exhibitions, world-renowned Biennials and innovative educational programs, the Whitney facilitates exploration of the richness of American art and culture throughout the world.

Starlight Children's Foundation

When a child or teenager has a serious medical condition, everyone in the family is affected. For 25 years, Starlight Children's Foundation has been dedicated to helping seriously ill children and their families cope with their pain, fear, and isolation through entertainment, education and family activities. Starlight's programs have been proven to distract children from their pain, help them better understand and manage their illnesses, and connect families facing similar challenges so that no one feels alone. Through a network of chapters and offices, Starlight provides ongoing support to children, parents, and siblings in all U.S. states and Canadian provinces with an array of outpatient, hospital-based and Web offerings. Programs are also delivered internationally through affiliates in Australia, Japan and the United Kingdom. To learn more visit www.starlight.org.

One Foundation

The Red Cross Society of China Jet Li One Foundation is dedicated to relief efforts in the earthquake stricken province of Sichuan China and raising global awareness in the aftermath. Jet Li, Red Cross Ambassador and international action movie star, founded the One Foundation and has tirelessly dedicated himself to the rebuilding of Sichuan. The mission and motto of the One Foundation is: "1 person + 1 dollar + 1 month = 1 big family." Each individual can contribute, even if it means donating one dollar each month, to build on charitable strength and assist the most vulnerable of our global family. For more information on the One Foundation, please visit: www.one-foundation.com.

Gilt Groupe

Gilt Groupe offers online event-based sales of coveted fashion and designer brands at discounts of up to 70%. With more than 20 sales weekly, the site hosts over a million people in its rapidly growing membership who make it a daily habit to shop. Gilt Groupe was founded in November of 2007 by Alexis Maybank, an early employee of eBay, and Alexandra Wilkis Wilson, formerly of Bulgari and Louis Vuitton. Investors include leading venture capital firm Matrix Partners and Kevin Ryan, former CEO of DoubleClick who now serves as Gilt Groupe's Chairman. More information about Gilt Groupe membership can be obtained by emailing the company at membership@gilt.com or by visiting www.gilt.com.

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