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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Coalesse® debuts ARZU STUDIO HOPE Masters Collection

Rugs designed by renowned architects and hand woven by Afghan women

San Francisco, CA – Coalesse, the leader in crossover furnishings, is proud to announce a partnership with ARZU STUDIO HOPE, a 501 (c)(3) not-for profit aimed to empower Afghan women. The launch of the to-the-trade Masters Collection, consists of ten rugs designed by six iconic architects (Frank Gehry, Michael Graves, Zaha Hadid, Margaret McCurry, Robert A.M. Stern, and Stanley Tigerman) and handmade by Afghan women with 100% sheep’s wool on steel looms. “We are incredibly grateful to this distinguished group of design minds for donating their time in support of ARZU’s mission while also unifying high design with traditional techniques,” says Connie Duckworth, who founded ARZU, Inc. in 2004 and serves pro bono as Chairman and CEO.

In an effort to stay true to traditional rug making techniques, natural materials such as madder root, walnut husks and pomegranates were also used in the hand-dyeing process. Depending on the weave type and intricacy of the pattern, the rugs range from 120 to 275 knots per square inch, with all following either Turkish or Persian knot patterns.

Frank Gehry’s jigsaw-like design, Puzz, was inspired by Gehry’s designs for a pop-up store. “Our process for developing the rug graphic was similar to how we approach architecture,” says Gehry. “We began by looking at our sculptural studies for a pop-up store that was composed of large curved puzzle pieces. The challenge was how to translate a three-dimensional object into a two-dimensional graphic. Through a series of back and forth investigations, we refined the two-dimensional graphics based upon the constraints of traditional rug making while still maintaining the dynamism of the three-dimensional objects.”



Puzz by Frank Gehry

Michael Graves’ Arabesque 1 and Arabesque 2 are a study in fluidity. “In all my rugs and tapestry designs, I have tried to make a composition that has no horizon line,” says Graves. “In other words, it has no up and no down; all sides are up and all sides are down, so that there is balance in the composition. I do this with the intention that when a person walks into the room and sees the rug from a number of viewpoints; they still feel the rug is oriented properly.”



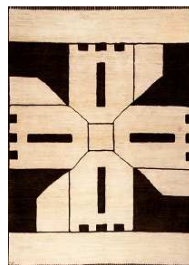
From left to right: Arabesque 1 and Arabesque 2 by Michael Graves



A seamless domestic environment, depicted in perspective as a series of cuts through time and space, has been woven into the ZH rugs designed by Zaha Hadid. “One of the things I feel confident in saying we can do is bring some excitement, and challenges, to people’s lives,” says Hadid. “We want them to be able to embrace the unexpected.”

From left to right: ZH in black and white and ZH in pink and black by Zaha Hadid

About her two rug designs, Simeon I and Simeon II, Margaret McCurry says, “magnifying the size of an abstractly conceived tribal symbol allows one to perceive the shapes alternately as simple geometric patterns with all their associational ancestry, or, on another architectural level, to imagine the images as remnants of an ancient desert dwelling or fortification. And then on a strictly sensual level the subtle strié of the wool strands attests not only to the hand-loomed quality of the rugs, but to the individuality of their woolly coated contributors.”



From left to right: Simeon I and Simeon II by Margaret McCurry



In many of Robert A.M. Stern’s product and architectural designs over the years, he has meditated on the volute forms of Ionic capitals, and the Volute rug draws from the same inspiration. “The volutes of an Ionic capital interweave with unfurling tendrils to create a climbing, spinning grapevine that is at once geometric and botanical, modern and Classical,” says Stern.

Volute by Robert A.M. Stern

Inspired by tribal patterning, Stanley Tigerman created two geometric designs, Abrahamic Tribal I and Abrahamic Tribal II, which evoke tribal customs of the 12th century. “Geometric patterning has a long and distinguished tradition,” says Tigerman. “That [these rugs] are woven by Afghan women is a natural part of that tradition.”



From left to right: Abrahamic Tribal I and Abrahamic Tribal II by Stanley Tigerman

For the Masters Collection, ARZU STUDIO HOPE formed a to-the-trade distribution partnership with Coalesse, the leader in crossover furnishings. For trade sales inquiries, contact Coalesse sales representatives: (866) 645-8952 or coalesse_concierge@coalesse.com. For consumer sales inquiries, contact ARZU STUDIO HOPE: (312) 321-8663 or designservices@arzustudiohope.org.

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About Coalesse

Coalesse is an award-winning brand of furnishings that expresses the new freedom of work. It is part of the rapidly growing category we call Crossover.

The crossovers are homes and offices, meeting rooms and social spaces, private retreats and public places — the fluid intersections of work and life where boundaries are collapsing and creativity is roaming.

We study the new work day, how people are collaborating, contemplating, and socializing at work. Then we ask some of the world's most talented designers to create artful solutions that combine comfort, function, and emotional satisfaction.

Architects and designers recommend Coalesse when clients want inspiring spaces to delight employees and impress visitors.

For our end-user customers, Coalesse helps graciously integrate work and the rest of life. Wherever you are inspired to work, however you get things done, Coalesse is designed to improve your day.

Coalesse - For the new work day.

About ARZU STUDIO HOPE

ARZU STUDIO HOPE is an innovative model of social entrepreneurship that empowers Afghan women by providing fair-labor, artisan- based employment and access to education and healthcare.

ARZU, which means “hope” in Dari, is an example of a “for-benefit” corporation model, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that uses private sector practices to create jobs in rural villages in Afghanistan and produces export quality products. Net proceeds from the sales of ARZU's flagship products, ARZU STUDIO HOPE rugs and Peace Cord® bracelets, directly benefit Afghans in the form of fair wages and social benefits, rather than accruing to investors or shareholders.

From a starting point of only 30 carpet weavers, ARZU has created over 700 private sector jobs and provided direct social benefits in Bamyan Province, Afghanistan. The ripple effect of ARZU's work today impacts the lives of tens of thousands of Afghans. Central to ARZU's approach is the Social Contract with weaver families. ARZU agrees to pay women the market rate for weaving plus up to a 50% quality incentive bonus. In exchange for the extra income, families must agree to send all children under the age of 15 to school full-time, to allow women in the household to attend ARZU literacy classes and to allow ARZU to assist pregnant women and newborns in obtaining pre- and post- natal care.

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