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## Media Advisory

### **DESIGNERS OFFER CORAL ALTERNATIVES THIS FEBRUARY** *Coral-inspired home décor pieces to be auctioned off to benefit coral conservation; Coral Reinterpreted jewelry collection launches in two weeks.*

NEW YORK, NY (February 10, 2009) Instead of opting for real coral in jewelry or home décor pieces this Valentine's Day, designers are offering coral alternatives that are perfect gifts for those that love the ocean. Metalsmith Michael Aram has evoked inspiration from the sea for his Coral Reef Collection, and four pieces from this elegant homeware accessories line have been donated to the SeaWeb campaign *Too Precious to Wear*. They are available for purchase on the online auction site [charitybuzz.com](http://charitybuzz.com). To bid on the pieces, please go to [www.charitybuzz.com](http://www.charitybuzz.com) and click on the Valentine's Day Auction link. Proceeds will benefit *Too Precious to Wear's* efforts to secure meaningful trade protection for precious corals. The auction closes February 12 at 1:15pmEST.

Corals supply shelter and food for 25 percent of all marine animals, and provide services such as fishing, tourism and coastal protection estimated to be worth US\$375 billion annually. Yet corals around the world are in decline. Recent scientific studies estimate that we have already lost 20 percent of the world's coral reefs, and could lose another 24 percent within our lifetimes. A study released last July found that one-third of all reef-building corals are threatened with extinction.

To help raise awareness of the threats corals face and the need for immediate action to protect these vulnerable marine animals, renowned designers Hannah Garrison of AZU, Frank Gehry, Kimberly McDonald, Melissa Joy Manning, Jennifer Meyer, Monique Péan, Paloma Picasso, Jean Schlumberger and Vena Cava's Sophie Buhai and Lisa Mayock have united with *Too Precious to Wear* to launch a one-of-a-kind jewelry collection titled Coral Reinterpreted. Each designer has created or donated a single piece of wearable art that evokes the feel of the ocean without harming living animals, such as corals. The pieces will be auctioned online at [charitybuzz.com](http://charitybuzz.com) to benefit increased protection of precious corals. Bids may be placed online at [www.charitybuzz.com](http://www.charitybuzz.com) from February 26 to April 30, 2009.

Red and pink coral (scientific name *Corallium*) has long been a popular gift. Often used in jewelry, red coral is also a traditional gift for 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversaries. The United States, as the world's largest documented importer of red and pink corals, has placed significant pressure on these threatened animals, importing more than 26 million pieces from 2001 to 2006. *Too Precious to Wear* is urging the U.S. and other countries to list red and pink corals under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) at the next Conference of Parties meeting in January 2010.

To increase awareness prior to the CITES CoP meeting, SeaWeb's *Too Precious to Wear* campaign is working with jewelry designers, fashion industry leaders and celebrities to highlight the need for stronger coral protection in the United States and internationally. One of the most tangible actions consumers and designers can do to protect corals is to simply avoid purchasing them. There are numerous alternatives to real coral available. If threats to corals such as over harvesting and consumer demand are reduced, these marine animals will have a better chance of surviving other challenges, such as climate change.

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For interviews with Coral Reinterpreted designers and high-resolution photos of each piece along with estimated retail values, please contact Lauren Cuneo (+1.917.543.2008 or [lcuneo@kruppgroup.com](mailto:lcuneo@kruppgroup.com)). For interviews with *Too Precious to Wear* spokespeople, high-resolution coral photos and b-roll, please contact Corinne Knutson (+1.808.497.3360 or [cknutson@seaweb.org](mailto:cknutson@seaweb.org)). To place a bid on a Coral Reinterpreted piece, please visit [www.charitybuzz.com](http://www.charitybuzz.com). Bidding is open from February 26 to April 30, 2009.

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*Too Precious to Wear* is a SeaWeb campaign to create a demand for coral conservation. *Too Precious to Wear* is made possible with support from The Tiffany & Co. Foundation, Kingfisher Foundation, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and The Ocean Foundation. [www.tooprecioustowear.org](http://www.tooprecioustowear.org)

SeaWeb, founded in 1996 to raise awareness of the growing threats to the ocean and its living resources, is a communications-based nonprofit organization that utilizes social marketing techniques to advance ocean conservation. By increasing public awareness, advancing science-based solutions and mobilizing decision-makers around ocean conservation, SeaWeb has brought together multiple, diverse and powerful voices for a healthy ocean. [www.seaweb.org](http://www.seaweb.org)

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