



ATHINAEUM

Press Release – For Immediate Release

## ATHINAEUM: A New Era in Luxe, Hand-Made Accessories

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November, 2012

Handbag and accessories label Athinaeum is making its debut on the Australian fashion landscape with a vivid collection of one-off handbags, satchels, weekenders, backpacks, wallets, iPad and laptop cases designed by Athena Maroulis.

Athinaeum integrates age-old Mayan textiles with new age style and functionality, appealing to socially aware, culturally curious and fashion forward global citizens. The eclectic range features individually chosen vintage Mayan textiles from Guatemala that are stitched into unique handbags and accessories by local leather craftsmen.

Talking points of the range include neon geometric and Aztec brights juxtaposed with delicate hand embroidered, embellished and brocaded figures that tell the Mayan story.

The collection, titled *Genesis 20.13*, will launch in December 2012 to coincide with the new Mayan Calendar cycle, a time heralding enlightenment and awakening according to indigenous Guatemalans. The collection was photographed by Kate Reeves from *The Story of Us* and stars stunning Australian actor Gemma Pranita. Pranita's character is "a futuristic-indigenous, warrior-princess" who symbolises the modern tribal movement towards 'conscious' high fashion which the designer feels we're headed towards.

The ethos of the Athinaeum brand reflects the societal movement towards sustainable and ecologically conscious practices within the fashion industry.

"I want these bags to be treasured and not just another disposable item in the wardrobe," Miss Maroulis said.



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Each item is made individually from the traditional Mayan tops of indigenous Guatemalans called “huipiles” so no two are the same. In the current mass-manufactured marketplace, Athinaeum provides an oasis of one-off, individual accessories. Online product descriptions denote the origin and symbology of each piece so that the wearer can connect and share the story behind the piece of history she or he wears.

Many other aspects of the business aim to be ecologically and socially ‘conscious’. Athinaeum employs minimal waste practices and has collaborates with renown social enterprise organisation Mercado Global, who produce the canvas ‘multi-purpose’ dust covers which come with each bag. The results of this collaboration mean that indigenous Guatemalan women were able to gain employment to feed their families and grow the local economy.

In the future, the designer aspires to replicate this collaborative model of one-off, ‘slow-made’, sustainable accessories in other countries making use of local traditional textiles and skills. Miss Maroulis says she’d love to work with traditional Kenta fabric of Ghana, the detailed embroiders of Laos and sari brocadars in the north of India.

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