

# BE THE CHANGE

CHRISTIE'S AUCTION HOUSE REMINDS US THAT A LITTLE BIT GOES A LONG WAY.



Maya Lin's "In the Land of Milk and Honey"



Yann Arthus-Bertrand's "Pink ebony on the Kaw Mountain, French Guiana (4°30' N - 52°00' W)"

On April 22, 1970, some 20 million people came together for the first ever Earth Day, widely recognized as the birth of the modern environmental movement. Now, 40 years later, there are likely to be upwards of one billion people involved, with events in nearly every country in the world. It seems almost incalculable. But at the end of the day — or the beginning of the day, as it were — it all comes down to one person, one dollar donated, one hour of time volunteered. It adds up, simple as that.

As if to prove the point, and to prove the great impact that can result, this Earth Day, Christie's Auction House will host its first Green Auction in New York City with proceeds to benefit four partnering environmental initiatives. "Environmental issues have become increasingly important to our clients and staff, so we began discussing ideas for a project about two years ago," explains Toby Usnik, the International Head of Communications for Christie's. "The Green Auction is really the first of its kind," he explains. While they have hosted fundraisers before or simply provided auctioneers, the Green Auction marks the first time that Christie's is acting as a catalyst "convening the environmental, cultural and philanthropic communities."

The event will have two components — a star-studded live auction within the hallowed Christie's halls on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, hosted by a dizzying list of green-minded celebs such as Cameron Diaz, Tobey Maguire and Leonardo DiCaprio, and the "day sale" as it's called, a month-long silent online auction hosted by CharityBuzz.com.

And while it's a big event, (raising big money,) it's all about the individuals who are making it happen. World famous athletes and actors are sharing their time and themselves with unique celebrity experiences. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., long a champion of the environment, is offering both an afternoon sail off of Cape Cod and a falconry Master Class at his home, known as "the greenest in America." Hugh Jackman will host a day on the set of his new Spielberg-produced blockbuster *Real Steel* while esteemed nature photographer Frans Lanting will lead a week-long trip to the Okavango Valley in Botswana. And, of course, there are goodies up for grabs: a custom "Peter Cree" Southwestern-themed Martin Guitar, a bespoke suit by Duncan Quinn and a couple

of Girard-Perregaux watches, to name a few of the covet-worthy items.

But perhaps most exciting are the works of art that will be up for auction. At press time, nearly 40 internationally renowned artists are donating works, and in several instances even making original pieces for the sale. Running the gamut from Yann Arthus-Bertrand's photograph "Pink Trumpet Tree on Kaw mountain, French Guiana (4°30'N, 52°00'W)" to Maya Lin's piece "In the Land of Milk and Honey," the works up for auction represent these artists' deep commitment to the environment, for it is no small matter to donate these valuable works. David LaChapelle, Peter Tunney, Keith Tyson, Olafur Eliasson, Subodh Gupta, Evelyn Lauder, Wolf Kahn — the collective creative power of these artists is almost incalculable, just as it is hoped the funds raised will be.

As for the beneficiaries, "We chose partners from the hundreds of environmental groups that were highly regarded by clients and colleagues," explains Usnik, and they were also further vetted by Charity Navigator. Christie's is forgoing all fees and commissions; funds from the Green Auction will go to Conservation International ("People Need to Thrive"), Oceana ("Protecting the World's Oceans"), Natural Resources Defense Council ("The Earth's Best Defense"), and a bit closer to home, the Central Park Conservancy. These four organizations reflect an incredible scope of reach, locally and internationally, regarding land, water, energy, conservation, sustainability and public health. It is truly inspiring to see an organization such as Christie's utilizing its unique ability to bring together so many spheres of influence: artists, celebrities, philanthropists, politicians, environmentalists, and most importantly, people to bid. "It's exhilarating," continues Usnik. "We are fortunate to have so many high-skill, high-will individuals committed to this cause."

On April 22<sup>nd</sup> we will see the power and impact of the individual, and those of us who might not make it to the event the night of can place our "Bid To Save The Earth" online. After all, if Owen Wilson is willing to give a paddle board lesson to a lucky bidder, do we really have an excuse to lamely ask *yeah, but what can I do about it?* Simply put, you can be the change. [ABidToSaveTheEarth.com](http://ABidToSaveTheEarth.com)  
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