



Artists Honored for their Talents & Conservation Efforts at Art Exhibition and Environmental Fundraiser

Leaders in Nature Art and Wildlife Conservation Converge From Around Globe for Official Opening of New World-Class Show and Benefit.

Vancouver, B.C., CANADA – October 8, 2008—

The last weekend in September marked the official opening of a new annual international juried exhibit – "The Art of Conservation - An International Exhibit of Nature in Art" – featuring the art of leading nature and wildlife artists from around the globe. The exhibition, hosted by the Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum near New York City, was created to celebrate artistic excellence in the depiction of nature, raise awareness of conservation issues, and directly support organizations dedicated to addressing them. Seven artists were singled out for special awards.

President of the Blauvelt Art Museum, James Bellis Sr., presented the Blauvelt purchase award to Dale Weiler for his marble sculpture of a Polar Bear, titled "Nowhere To Go".

Five AFC artists were presented with the very first set of AFC "Medals of Excellence". Each award recipient received a pewter medal, mounted in a custom velvet-backed wood frame displaying a silver plate bearing a description of the award and the name of the recipient. Accompanying each award was a certificate, with border specially designed by AFC artist Aleta Karstad.

The five award-winners, in alphabetical order were:

- **Eric Berg** for his life-sized sculpture titled "Japanese Giant Salamander";
- **Derek Bond** for his egg tempera painting titled "Little Snowy Plover";
- **Jay Johnson** for his oil painting titled "Sun Glows on the Land";
- **Alison Nicholls** for her watercolor titled "Sable Drinking";
- **Linda Rossin** for her acrylic painting "Silhouettes Along the Shore".

The final award to be presented was the Simon Combes Conservation Award – the AFC's top honor – given to an artist member who has shown extraordinary support for the conservation cause through his or her art. This year's recipient was world-renowned artist Robert Bateman of Salt Spring Island, BC, Canada. Mr. Bateman, accompanied by his wife, Birgit, was presented with a certificate and a special bronze sculpture trophy, designed by AFC artist Peter Gray of South Africa. Mr. Bateman addressed the audience with an inspirational speech about a societal role in conservation.

About the Art of Conservation Exhibition: The exhibition was produced by the Artists for Conservation Foundation (AFC) – the world's leading artist collective dedicated to the environment. The show is being hosted by the Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum– one of the world's premiere museums for nature and wildlife art – situated half an hour from New York City, in Oradell, NJ. A share of the revenues resulting from the sale of artwork in the show benefits the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) – one of the world's largest and most respected conservation organizations, based at the Bronx Zoo.

The show represents an important milestone for the AFC as it is being launched in the AFC's 10th anniversary year. The AFC's membership represents a by-invitation-only roster of nearly 500 artists from 27 countries, who focus primarily on nature and wildlife subjects.

The exhibition features 112 original artworks selected by an independent jury and includes 96 paintings and 16 sculptures. Most artworks are for sale, ranging in price from \$500 to \$59,000 US. A total of 89 artists are represented in the show, from 9 countries, including Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Iran, Japan, Kenya, Sweden,

UK and USA. Many of the exhibiting artists were present to meet collectors and media during a special invitation-only opening reception at the Blauvelt Museum on Sunday, September 28th.

The HBAM will host the opening leg until December 21st, 2008. Following this, approximately half of the artworks will be assembled for a tour through 2009. Accompanying the exhibition is a beautiful hardcover coffee-table book reproducing in color all the works selected for the exhibition.

About the Artists for Conservation Foundation: The Artists for Conservation Foundation (AFC) is a non-profit, international organization dedicated to the celebration and preservation of the natural world and is the world's leading artist collective, and dedicated to the environment. Based in Vancouver, Canada, the Foundation has a membership spanning five continents and twenty-seven countries.

The AFC's mission is to support wildlife and habitat conservation, biodiversity, sustainability and environmental education through art that celebrates our natural heritage. The AFC fulfills its mission through programs and exhibitions that raise funds for conservation. The AFC also operates a unique fellowship program supporting artistic field study and rendering of unique, threatened habitats, and rare or endangered species in remote parts of the world. For more information about the AFC's innovative initiatives, visit www.natureartists.com.

About the Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum: The Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum was established in 1957 by the Blauvelt Demarest Foundation, a legacy of the late Hiram Blauvelt, philanthropist, conservationist and collector.

Located in an 1893 cedar shingle and turret-style carriage house in Oradell, NJ, the Museum is one of only five museums in the United States dedicated solely to wildlife art. The Blauvelt's collection, while focusing on the works of contemporary artists, also includes works from deceased masters, and an Audubon folio.

The Blauvelt Museum is 45 minutes by car from downtown Manhattan, LaGuardia and Newark Liberty International Airports, and 90 minutes from John F. Kennedy International Airport.

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For further information:

- Artists for Conservation Foundation www.natureartists.com
- Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum www.blauveltartmuseum.org
- Wildlife Conservation Society www.wcs.org

More information and a variety of images are available for download and use by media, at the following url:

http://www.natureartists.com/art_show/media.asp

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