



John Banovich to Receive AFC's Simon Combes Conservation Award

Renowned American artist to receive the Artists for Conservation Foundation's top honor for art and environmental activism.

Vancouver, B.C. CANADA (August 31, 2009) — Internationally recognized artist John Banovich has been chosen to receive top honor of the Artists for Conservation Foundation - the Simon Combes Conservation Award. The AFC bestows this tribute on one of its 500 member artists in recognition of outstanding artistic achievement and contribution to the conservation cause.

Banovich will receive the award at a special dinner and awards gala on September 26th, 2009 at one of the world's finest wildlife and nature art museums - the Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum in New Jersey - near New York City. The event also marks the official opening of the AFC's second annual juried exhibition and wildlife conservation fundraiser, titled "The Art of Conservation - An International Exhibition of Nature in Art". The AFC will also make a small contribution to the Rhino Rescue Trust in support of its anti-poaching activities, and Simon Combes' memory.

John has worked with several different world-wide organizations with a successful history of bringing the non-hunting conservation community and the sportsmen conservationists together for united efforts to save wildlife for future generations. He has created the Banovich Wildscapes Foundation (BWF), to further his commitment to the wild places of the world. BWF promotes scientific research and conservation education; facilitates habitat protection of large conservation landscapes and restoration projects; develops creative and respectful partnerships to fund conservation programs; and creates opportunities to build long-term community economic well-being. The Foundation makes funding available for grassroot environmental projects, education programs and the often overlooked needs of small groups dedicated to performing the much needed work on the behalf of wildlife and the environment.

Upon receiving word of the award, John reflected: "It is with humble appreciation that I received this honor from AFC. The Simon Combes Conservation Artist Award is aptly named after one of my artistic and conservation heroes, a man that I fortunately was proud to call friend." Referring to two previous winners of the award - British artist David Shepherd and Canadian artist Robert Bateman - John added: "...And it is wonderful to receive an award that two more of my mentors have previously received."

The AFC created the award in 2005 in memory of Simon Combes, the world-renowned painter, author, instructor and dedicated conservationist, who lived in Kenya. Mr. Combes was Project Director of the Rhino Rescue Trust in Kenya, an organization founded in 1985 to protect endangered species from poaching and to help the communities surrounding Lake Nakura National Park affected by wildlife conflicts. He was killed by a charging Cape Buffalo while hiking near his home in Kenya on December 12th, 2004. Simon was a prominent member of our Group until his unexpected death. Simon mirrored the values and qualities our organization represents. Last year's Simon Combes Conservation Artist Award was presented to Robert Bateman by Simon's widow, Kathryn ("Kat") Combes.

Commenting on John's receipt of the award, Kat affirmed: "John's support of conservation efforts worldwide through his talent and his ability to communicate with different cultures is an inspiration to us all. Simon would be very pleased."

In 2009, Simon's two surviving children, Guy and Cindy will be present to make the award. The award to John also coincides with the release of a spectacular new book title "BEAST", several years in the making and featuring an in-depth study of the artist and his work.

Jeffrey Whiting, President and founder of the AFC notes, "This award is a reminder of what Combes' represented: superb artistic talent, a deep love of nature, an unbounded passion for living and giving back, and an unflinching commitment to the conservation cause and the environment as a whole. John is a most worthy recipient."

