



Robert Bateman to be Recognized by Peers with Prestigious Conservation Award

Vancouver, B.C. CANADA (September 24, 2008)— Internationally acclaimed artist Robert Bateman has been chosen to receive the Artists for Conservation's (AFC) top honor, 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. This will be the second time that the trophy has been awarded.

Bateman will receive the award at a special dinner and awards gala on September 27th, 2008 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 first annual juried exhibition and wildlife conservation fundraiser, titled "The Art of Conservation – An International Exhibition of Nature in Art". The exhibition is scheduled to tour to various venues for a year following. As well, at the event, the AFC will make a small contribution to the Rhino Rescue Trust in support of its anti-poaching activities, and Simon Combes' memory.

A resident of Salt Spring Island, B.C., Bateman shares a passion for the natural world with like-minded artists. Known internationally as one of the world's leading artists who specialize in depicting nature and wildlife, his unwavering dedication to the preservation of the world's threatened and endangered species is evidenced through his artworks, books, and in his involvement and participation on numerous conservation boards and advisory committees. He is steadfast in his conviction that "small is beautiful" and understands that growing too fast means losing some of the values that we hold so dear.

Since his early childhood growing up in his birthplace of Toronto, Bateman has enjoyed a special bond with the earth and creatures that roam it. While he derives endless pleasure capturing flora and fauna on canvass, it is not without a struggle.

"Painting, for me, has never been a hobby," he confesses. "It is not relaxing – writers and athletes would say the same. Since I was twelve, I have always painted unless I am interrupted. It is a labor, but it is what I do... a labor of love, let us say."

"I am honored to have been chosen as the recipient of the Simon Combes Conservation Award. Artists for Conservation, through its varied programs and initiatives, is a leader in raising the public conscience to the beauty of our natural world and is a leader in galvanizing great artistic talent worldwide to support wildlife and habitat conservation. This award speaks to my strongest convictions and represents a flattering recognition by my peers, but it also keeps the memory of a dedicated individual alive," said Bateman, after being notified of the award.

The Simon Combes award was created by the AFC in February 2005 to honor the memory of signature member artist Simon Combes. Combes, world-renowned painter, author, instructor and dedicated conservationist, was tragically killed by a charging Cape Buffalo while hiking near his home in Kenya on December 12, 2004. At the time, Combes was the Director of the Kenya chapter of the Rhino Rescue Trust (www.rhinorescue.org), an organization founded in 1985 to protect endangered species from being poached and to help the communities surrounding Lake Nakuru National Park that are affected by wildlife conflicts.

Jeffrey Whiting, founder and president of the AFC notes, "This award will be a reminder of Combes' greatest qualities: his superb talent, love of nature, unbounded passion for living and sharing, and extraordinary commitment to the conservation cause and the environment as a whole. It is fitting that Robert Bateman, who exemplifies these same qualities, should be this year's recipient."

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 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.

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For further information:

- Artists for Conservation Foundation www.natureartists.com
- Art of Conservation Exhibition www.natureartists.com/art_show/

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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