

Worldwide Nature Artists Group Honours First Recipient of Conservation Award

David Shepherd, renowned artist and conservationist is the first recipient of the Simon Combes Award for Conservation.

Ottawa, ON (April 20, 2006)— This spring, the Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum near New York City, will host a special exhibit showcasing the work of wildlife artist and adventurer Simon Combes, the man who inspired the Worldwide Nature Artists Group (WNAGTM) to create the award which bears his name.

Titled "Africa and Beyond: The Art and Adventures of Simon Combes", the exhibit will run until the fall of 2006 and will represent more than two decades of the artist's superb talent, love of nature, unbounded passion for living and sharing, and his extraordinary commitment to the conservation cause.

Simon 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 12th, 2004. He was a prominent member of the WNAG and Director of the Kenya chapter of the Rhino Rescue Trust, an organization founded in 1985 to protect endangered species from being poached and to help the communities surrounding Lake Nature National park affected by wildlife conflicts.

In recognition of Combes' conservation efforts and extraordinary talent, the WNAG created the Simon Combes Award, to honour annually an artist member who has shown exemplary dedication and commitment for the world's natural heritage. Peter Gray of South Africa created the award's trophy design, the result of a design competition among WNAG members.

The first recipient is acclaimed U.K. artist David Shepherd, who will be presented with the award on June 4th, 2006 at the Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum. Simon's family will attend the presentation. At the event, Jeffrey Whiting, President and Founder of the WNAG will also make a donation in the amount of US\$500 to the Rhino Rescue Trust, in support of its anti-poaching activities, in honour of Shepherd and the memory of Combes.

David Shepherd is known internationally as one of the world's leading nature artists and is founder of the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation, a leading UK charity supporting wildlife conservation. He is also an accomplished author and the subject of several television documentaries. A passionate conservationist, he admits to owing his success to the animals he paints. The Combes award is one of many prestigious awards bestowed on Shepherd for his unwavering exuberance and dedication to conservation causes.

"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. It is fitting that David Shepherd, who exemplifies these same qualities, should be this year's recipient," says Whiting. "Every year, when we make the presentation, we will remember Simon and his unyielding support of our fragile ecosystem."

Artwork from the retrospective exhibition can be seen on a special website created by the The Greenwich Workshop, publisher of fine art reproductions of Simon's work. Visit www.combesretrospective.com for more information.

About the Worldwide Nature Artists Group: The Worldwide Nature Artists Group (WNAG) is the world's foremost international organization of nature artists, dedicated to the celebration and preservation of our natural heritage. Membership is by invitation-only, and is limited to 500 artists worldwide. Founded in 1997 by Jeffrey Whiting, renowned Canadian artist, author and biologist, WNAG membership reads like a "Who's Who" of nature art, and includes the top names in the field, such as Robert Bateman, John Banovich, Gamini Ratnavira and David Shepherd. For more information about the WNAG's innovative initiatives, visit www.natureartists.com.

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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. Through the contributions of his private wildlife art and big game collections, he hoped to promote the cultural value of wildlife art and the need for the conservation of its subjects. The Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum is one of only five museums in the United States dedicated solely to wildlife art. The Museum is located at 705 Kinderkamack Road in Oradell, New Jersey. For more information, contact (201) 261-0012 or visit: www.blauveltmuseum.com.

Related Links:

- The Greenwich Workshop: www.greenwichworkshop.com
- Rhino Rescue Trust: www.rhinorescue.org

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