

Bidders practice art of generosity at gala AIDS auction benefit.(Arts and Lifestyle)

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The AIDS auction committee went to work Saturday night, hosting more than 1,000 art lovers for the AIDS Action Committee's biannual "ARTcetera" gala at Boston Center for the Arts' Cyclorama.

More than 300 donated works of art and one lunch with Mayor Tom Menino went under the gavel at the black-tie benefit. That lunch with the mayor at the Parkman House went for \$950. The art went for thousands more.

"The event stretches our ability to do the compassionate work we are known for," AIDS Action Director Larry Kessler said, "and to extend it to the research world."

Kessler and other volunteers organized the AIDS Action Committee in 1983. It is New England's oldest and largest provider of AIDS services, education and advocacy with a staff of 100 and several thousand volunteers providing support services to more than 2,100 men, women and children.

"Our mission is prevention, prevention, prevention," Kessler said. "People are doing better today with the new drugs. So, we're now involved in intensive prevention efforts. We have a new center in the South End for people with high-risk behavior."

Since its inception in 1985, ARTcetera has raised more than \$2.3 million.

"The amount of people who never say no is staggering," art acquisitions administrator Bob Kuegel said. "Everyone helps us."

Gallery owner Bernard Toale chaired the ARTcetera committee.

Bidders at the black-tie gala included WHDH-TV (Ch. 7) reporter and anchor Janet Wu, attending with friends Sigal Klipstein and Rob Lewis.

"You know you're grown up," Wu said, "when you take down all the art posters on your wall and start buying original art. I made a vow to myself: "No more posters."

Fidelity Investments' Barbara Parshall and Sanya Obsvniac of Croatia toured the Cyclorama like museum visitors, closely inspecting paintings and photographs and evaluating their bids.

Authors Alexandra Marshall and Jim Carroll were among the art lovers lining up for a small buffet supper and finding seats for the auction.

Also in the audience were Maureen and Richard Balsbaugh, Sharyn Fireman and Murton Sudalter, Ronni, Ron and Niki Casty, Judy Habib, Tony Fusco and Jane and Joe Regan, dean of the Simmons College School of Social Work.

Cartier manager Chris Shepherd pulled the raffle ticket for the one work of art that was given away, a gold "Love Bracelet" donated to the event.

Artists with donated works sold in the live auction included Scott Prior, Maud Morgan, Michael Mazur and Michael Zigmund.

Local artists whose donations were in the silent auction included Christine Vaillancourt, Paul Shakespear and photojournalist Robert Birnbaum whose submission was a candid 20-by-16 color photo of socialite Marylyn Reisman.