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The "Unbroken" exhibit displayed photos taken by participants in the London-based, nonprofit PhotoVoice, an organization that offers photojournalism workshops for young people living on the streets, in refugee camps, and in the poorest corners of the world. Denise Bibro Fine Art provided the first commercial venue for the images. Shown here are Bhutanese children in a refugee camp in Nepal.

images were striking, but more compelling for the accompanying text describing the of the artists who created them—the children themselves.

The exhibit, which ran from June 10 through mid July and was titled, "Unbroken," photos taken by participants in the London-based, nonprofit PhotoVoice, an orgar offers photojournalism workshops for young people living on the streets, in refuge and in the poorest corners of the world. Denise Bibro Fine Art provided the first cc venue for the images.

"It was the first time we've been in a commercial gallery," says George Carrano, th representative for PhotoVoice. "Typically, we're relegated to church basements or similar types of venues. It was a tremendous opportunity to be in a real gallery, fo see us who wouldn't otherwise."

Wall space wasn't the only contribution made by gallery owner Bibro; she spent h week planning and coordinating the event. Her staff put in countless hours coordin advertising and catering, and the gallery put out hundreds of press releases and s invitations. An auction and exhibition of works by artists represented at the gallery funds to support PhotoVoice.

The Unbroken show is just one example of how art galleries are contributing to ch Whether it's breast cancer or affordable housing, the local Humane Society, a nat or an endeavor to save the whales, galleries are finding causes to back and are d part to make a difference. And, as they show time and again, it's possible to pair a a business model in a way that works for everyone. Despite the warm fuzzies gall get from their donated time and effort, there are downsides. Tax breaks are virtua nonexistent, and time spent on finding contributions for, say, a silent auction is tim from making sales that pay for salaries, insurance, and the telephone bill.

Bibro candidly shared the reservations she had when she was first approached wi request to host the PhotoVoice show. "I admit I had to sit down and think about it," "These shows are not financially viable to me. They may bring in people who supp gallery eventually, but these shows aren't about money." Bibro estimates that the space she donated would normally cost a minimum of \$8,000 a month to rent. In a time, her gallery spends or eats nearly \$30,000 for charitable purposes.

And that's not even taking into account the time that she and her staff spend on s projects. Past shows of works by repressed Tibetan artists and documentary work in prison took plenty of Bibro's time to coordinate on top of her regular workday ta

## FEATURES

### Help is on the Way

Galleries team up with charities to make a differ home and abroad.

by *Jenny Sherman*  
ABN Contributing Editor

It was, in most regards, a typical opening night. Fast hipsters and art patrons mingled in the boxy gallery t New York's chic Chelsea district. The cheese was cu wine was poured, and visitors shuffled about to view photographs clustered on the walls.

Once up close and personal with the art, however, th onlookers' garrulous mood shifted. The photos show kids in Ho Chi Minh City napping on benches and B children roaming the dirt roads of a refugee camp in l

was reluctant because I needed people to help," she admits. "But when I saw the photographs of children in Vietnam and Kabul and saw the freshness of their photos, I knew it was a good idea."

The effort paid off in terms of publicity; attendance at the exhibit was reportedly great, and the show was covered July 10 in The New York Times arts section. "It's worth something like this to have people who give of themselves; something will come back," Bibro says. "In some respects, we're here not only to sell work, but to inform and enlighten, and to entertain people."

Making her job easier was the willingness of more than 20 artists to donate art for the auction. Indeed, gallery owners often find that the artists they represent have soft spots for many causes.

Pastel artist Jeff Fioravanti, for example, has made it a habit to donate his prints and originals, depicting Civil War battlegrounds in their natural, present-day conditions, to various organizations and preservation groups. He has partnered with the Western Maryland Interpretive Association to support efforts to protect and preserve Antietam and Monocacy National Battlefields, and worked closely with the Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association, the North Shore Civil War Roundtable, and the National Museum of Civil War Medicine. Beginning this year, he will also donate a portion of his annual sales from his "Historical Landscape" series to the protection and preservation of historic national spaces.

Although he assiduously scans journals and trade magazines for ideas on partnerships he can pursue, many partnerships were formed through Gallery 30 of Gettysburg, PA, which has represented his work for just over two years. Last year, the gallery invited him to participate in "History Meets the Arts," an annual Gettysburg event that happens the third weekend in April.

The gallery also paired him up with the Land Conservancy of Adams County, a group that works to preserve natural, historical, agricultural, and recreational areas in Adams County, PA. "Last year they asked me to donate a print. I said sure; there was no hesitation," says Fioravanti, who trusted that the partnership would work because of the reference given by the gallery. "The gallery was the intermediary. Especially when you have that relationship, there's already that comfort level in existence...you can sit down and say, 'Tell me about these people.'"

Gallery 30 owner Lois Starkey is heavily involved in local nonprofit organizations as a founding member of the board for the Adams County Arts Council; as a member of the Rotary Club; and as a volunteer with the annual road rally. She donates approximately \$7,000 each year and roughly five hours a week to charitable causes.

Have her efforts provided people with the incentive to visit her gallery? "Absolutely," she says. "It's a win-win. That's how people find out about you, and that's how they support you. You really have to do that to make it work. I believe it's the only way to be successful."

Besides the added exposure for the gallery, Starkey says that participating in charitable causes acts as a catalyst in building relationships between artists like Fioravanti and fans. "Once the buyer makes a connection with the artist, you have a collector," she says. And having a common interest in a charity makes for an excellent icebreaker. Connecting artists and collectors is also very much on the mind of Jonathan Kodner, president and director of Kodner Gallery in St. Louis. On Oct. 7, he celebrated the opening of a new 6,000-square-foot gallery space with an exhibit and silent auction. Proceeds benefited Forest Park Forever, an organization established to maintain and prolong the life and longevity of St. Louis Forest Park, the



**Artist Elisha Jensen (seated in the wheelchair) is shown inside the Kodner Gallery in St. Louis during the "Palette of Life" exhibit to benefit the Brain Injury Association of Missouri. The exhibit featured the works of artists who have survived brain injuries.**

site of the 1904 World's Fair and the first modern Olympic Games.

"I remember my father taking me out to paddle boat in the [park's Grand] Basin," Kodner says. "Plus, we've had relationships with people in the parks and on the boards, both personal and business, so it was natural to bring in paintings that represent the park." His gallery boasts a collection by both living and deceased Missouri painters, many of whom have actually painted the park. Kodner thought it the perfect pretext for staging the grand-opening celebration and exhibition, "Art of the Park." One of the artists the gallery represents, Billyo O'Donnell, donated an original painting, "Twilight On the Grand Basin, Forest Park, St. Louis" (2004), which is being auctioned (silent) off through Nov. 1. All proceeds from the painting will go to Forest Park Forever, as well as 10 percent of any artworks sold during the month-long exhibition. (At presstime, bidding was at \$12,000, while sales of artworks were at \$30,000.)



Another Kodner Gallery event involved the auctioning off of "Twilight on the Grand Basin, Forest Park, St. Louis" (2004), shown here, by Billyo O'Donnell. Proceeds benefited Forest Park Forever, an organization established to maintain and prolong the life and longevity of St. Louis Forest Park, the site of the 1904 World's Fair and the first modern Olympic Games.

This event, plus other organizations the gallery has donated time and artwork to, such as the Missouri Botanical Gardens and the St. Louis Symphony, add up to a concerted effort to benefit the community. Kodner guesses that the gallery gives away close to \$100,000 to such organizations each year.

"I think it's very important that the charity is something that reflects on that specific community," he says. "When you do these events, check with your chamber of commerce and city planners—you don't want to compete with other endeavors that have the essence of what you are planning to do."

Giving back to the immediate community is a formula that has worked well for Melanie Smith, vice president and co-owner of Seaside Art Gallery, Nags Head, NC. For the past 11 years, her gallery has participated in the International Icarus Art Show to raise money for artwork to be placed in the museum at the Wright Brothers National Memorial and Visitor Center in nearby Kill Devil Hills, NC.

"I don't have a personal fascination with aviation," says Smith, "but because it was such a historical event for our area, I wanted to support it.

"We've discussed other, mainly local, events and situations I'm interested in," she continues, citing sea turtle nesting and red wolf conservation efforts. Her gallery has also backed local cancer charities and the area's Surf Riders Organization, giving away up to \$8,000 worth of artwork to auctions and fundraisers each year. "It's an area I love dearly and I want to give back and help the community in any way I can."

### Supplemental Education

Smith also has hosted gallery tours for numerous troops of Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and 4-H clubs. Does having packs of children roaming the gallery disrupt sales? "Yes, it does," she admits, "but they get a chance to learn and be exposed to the arts. It gives me a chance to help educate in a way the public school systems aren't able to do." Smith knows that the true cost of helping her community can't be measured. "I'm doing it because I want to help," she says. "Everything counts."

### SOURCES

- Denise Bibro Fine Art, 212-647-7030, [www.artnet.com/denisebibrofineart.html](http://www.artnet.com/denisebibrofineart.html)
- PhotoVoice, [www.photovoice.org](http://www.photovoice.org)
- Seaside Art Gallery, 252-441-5418, [www.seasideart.com](http://www.seasideart.com)
- Kodner Gallery, 800-993-4478; 314-993-4477; [www.kodnergallery.com](http://www.kodnergallery.com); [www.forestparkforever.org](http://www.forestparkforever.org)
- Jeff Fioravanti, 781-595-5961, [www.fioravanti-fineart.com](http://www.fioravanti-fineart.com)
- Lois Starkey, Gallery 30, 717-334-0335, [www.gallery30.com](http://www.gallery30.com)

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