Press Release  
08/09/10  

We Are Not Witches  
An exhibition for the witch children of Africa  
7-9th October 2010  
Private view 7th October, 6pm  
The Saatchi Gallery, Duke of York Square, King’s Road, London SW3 4SQ  

International artists help innocent children accused of Witchery by donating their works for silent auction  

We are not Witches is an exhibition and silent auction of artworks, which has been organised to raise money on behalf of Stepping Stones Nigeria. The exhibition will run for three days at the Saatchi Gallery.  

Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria has a population of over 3.5 million. Over 95% of the children on Akwa Ibom’s streets have been stigmatized as “witches”. These children are tortured and cast out of their villages, becoming vulnerable to rapists, traffickers and even ritualists, who use their body parts for their supposed supernatural powers. It is estimated that between four and six children are stigmatized as ‘witches’ every day, resulting in a constant increase in the number of those without food or shelter.  

We Are Not Witches will raise much-needed attention around this problem, as well as funds for Stepping Stones Nigeria, achieved through the silent auction. This extraordinary show will feature contributions donated by high-profile international artists, all keen to stop the plight of innocent children accused of witchery.  

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS  

THE SILENT AUCTION  
The auction will be silent. Bidders leave their details with the organizers, along with their maximum bid. The top bid is constantly updated, and winners will be contacted at the end of the auction. Lower or mirror bids are encouraged, in case higher bids do not go through. The reserve will be set at the cost price of producing a work where relevant. Otherwise the works will be offered without reserve in order to raise the most money possible.  

THE EVENT  
Art of Giving is an organisation set up to produce events which facilitate charitable giving through the arts. They have hired the Saatchi Gallery from the 7th-9th October.
Editor’s Notes

Stepping Stones Nigeria

Stepping Stones Nigeria was first conceived by Gary Foxcroft, after witnessing the plight of abandoned children living rough on the streets and the poor state of the region’s education system. Garry met a head teacher called Grace Udua, who generously offered to donate her family land as the site of a school for these disadvantaged children.

Upon return to England, Gary teamed up with Naomi Chapple, and the two set about raising the funds needed to help establish a model school. The first four rooms of the Stepping Stones Model School were finished in November 2006 and the school is currently providing an outstanding education to over 200 children.

Significant other achievements include: successfully lobbying the State Government to enact the Child Rights Act; producing the documentary “Saving Africa’s Witch Children”; constructing an additional school and housing units at the Child Rights and Rehabilitation Network (CRARN) centre; reporting the activities of human traffickers in the region to relevant authorities; training and resourcing government primary schools in the use of the fast track reading scheme, Jolly Phonics; influencing key organizations such as the United Nations to place a greater emphasis on the need to protect child ‘witches’ and rescuing and reuniting numerous children with their parents.

Working in partnership with local organizations, the charity delivers education, refuge, healthcare and hope for a brighter future. Through advocacy and research it campaigns at a local, national and international level to put a stop to the abuse of innocent children and to ensure greater respect for children’s human rights. The charity aims to establish an effective model to eradicate the stigmatization of children as ‘witches’ and ‘wizards’. This belief, and the subsequent abandonment of these children, significantly contributes to Akwa Ibom State having the highest rate of child trafficking in Africa. The charity is deeply committed to doing everything in its power to protect, save and transform the lives of more vulnerable and disadvantaged children in this complex region.

We Are Not Witches

The committee of We Are Not Witches, this exhibition and auction, with all proceeds going to Stepping Stones Nigeria, are as below:

Curator:
Toby Clarke                            Director of FAS (The Fine Art Society)

Committee:
Matthew Collings                        Artist/ Writer/ Broadcaster
Robert Devereux                             Chairman of Frieze/ Collector
Paul Goodwin                               Curator: Cross Cultural
Hadeel Ibrahim                           Director, The Mo Ibrahim Foundation
Tot Taylor                                   Director, Riflemaker Gallery
Nicolas Logsdail                             Lisson Gallery, founder/ director
Philly Adams                                Saatchi
Michael Graham-Stewart                      Collector/ Writer/ Dealer
Beth De Woody                                Collector/ Curator
Bjorn Aune                                    Collector
Patrick Burrows                            Collector/ Art Consultant
Graie Mander                                Art Consultant
Emily Dolan                                    Gallerist/ Colector
Philip Beatty                                      Gallerist/ Collector
Zak Ove                                             MD Goldman Sachs/ Collector
Keith Tyson                                   Art/ Filmmaker/ Curator
Julia Muggenburg                               Art/ Collector
Oscar Humphries                             Gallery/ Collector/ Editor of Apollo Magazine
Christina Arfwedson                          Editor, Conde Nast Traveller
Michael Fischer                              Collector/ author/ CEO Modern Capital LLP
Sophie MacPherson                  Managing Director, Sophie Macpherson Ltd.
Hector Proud                             Managing Director, Idea Generation PR
Anna Vinegrad                          Associate Director, Idea Generation PR

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Ends

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