



MEDIA RELEASE

March 08

Real Estate giants, Bill McHarg and Philippe Batters, are all heart

‘We’ll do anything for a good cause,’ claim Bill McHarg and Philippe Batters, the dynamic duo of property. McHarg is used to auctioning commercial properties and Batters, top-end residential. But on 27 April they will share the hammer at the ***Bid 4 Freedom Art Exhibition and Auction*** at the Glen Eira City Council Gallery to raise money for the Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project.

When it comes to social issues such as climate change, unfair treatment of refugees, Work Choices, the Iraq war, the AWB scandal and ministerial responsibility, McHarg is a fearless campaigner. Who could forget his personally-funded, courageous campaign on climate change to oust John Howard in Bennelong?

At the other end of the spectrum, Batters, a rambunctious and self-confessed workaholic – works to 11pm every night – time poor for all other things, is heavily influenced on social issues by the women in his family: his wife - his life coach - and his daughter. ‘I’m a gold-plated Philistine,’ he laughs, ‘but I am sympathetic to issues on climate change and refugees, and I like to help.’

How can two people accustomed to selling bricks and mortar turn their expertise to selling art works by acclaimed artists such as the iconic Wolfgang Sievers, Juan Davila, Inge King, Stieg Persson, John Howley, Mike Parr, David Larwill, Joyce Evans and Vincent Fantauzzo, and more?

‘Property is a pragmatic purchase for day-to-day life,’ says McHarg, ‘in art you are buying inspiration, passion and the essence of its creator.’ For Batters, selling is selling. ‘There is no difference in selling property and art; both are commodities, coming from the same carnal desire to possess,’ he booms. But both agree that the outcome is important to the cause it supports.

The men have been great friends since 1973 when they met at a Sunday afternoon party in South Yarra. Neither competes with the other and over the years they have helped each other out. It was McHarg who urged and helped Batters to set up his own business.

Their easy friendship is evident in their double act at the ***Bid 4 Freedom Art Auction***. This will be their third auction to raise money for the Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project. Together they combine formidable talent, experience, expertise and humour to sell more than 80 art works.

The ***Bid for Freedom Art Auction*** is a mighty collaboration between a spectrum of Australian artists, the Brigidine nuns, Friends of Maribyrnong Detainees, and myriad volunteers. The new Labor Government's support for refugees has not yet been tested, and to date, the burden is still on charitable organisations like the Brigidines, a small group of nuns working from Albert Park, to provide everything from baby formula to accommodation, torture and trauma counseling, school books, legal advice and medical care.

It is big hearts like Batters' and McHarg's that make the world a better place, just like the cause they are helping.

Photo Opportunity:

Following a pre-auction meeting, they were jokingly asked if they would agree to a photo of Bill McHarg (the lighter), brandishing an auction hammer while sitting on Philippe Batter's knee in front of the Vincent Fantauzzo portrait (the one for sale at the auction). Both men roared with laughter and immediately agreed.

For more information contact Mary-Lou Howie on 0401 811 893

The Auction from **2.00 - 5.00pm Sunday April 27th**

To view the art works check the web-page: www.bid4freedom.org

BID FOR FREEDOM
ART EXHIBITION AND AUCTION
Preview exhibition 16 – 27 April 08
Auction 27 April
The Glen Eira City Council Gallery
Cnr Glen Eira and Hawthorn Roads, Caulfield, Vic. 3162
Melways Ref: 68 A2