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**ROYAL PORTAIT PAINTER HELPS AFRICAN CHILDREN CREATE ART FOR UK AUCTION**

An auction of art, created by children cared for by Kenyan children’s charity Nyumbani and assisted by acclaimed royal portrait painter Richard Stone, will go live for public bidding at [www.nyumbani.org.uk](http://www.nyumbani.org.uk) on the 11th February. The auctions will close at a fundraising gala being hosted by former Secretary of State for Education, Baroness Morris of Yardley, at the House of Commons on the 7th March.

Organised by Richard for the Kenyan charity Nyumbani, the collection is a result of a week-long art festival that took place in Kenya in November, with monies raised from the auction going towards the education of these children who have been left behind by the ‘lost generation’ of the country’s devastating HIV pandemic.

The festival, which was the brainchild of Richard himself and is the first if its kind for the charity, saw up to fifty of its children come together to create beautiful works of art created out of materials the children would normally consider worthless. Discarded coconut shells, old newspapers, cardboard boxes, rough cuts of fabric as well as paint and paper were just a few of the materials children worked with, with surrounding nature and African art books brought over by Richard from the UK, used as their sources of inspiration.

Richard Stone commented about the initiative: “Having supported the Nyumbani charity for many years, I was thrilled to be able to offer the children the opportunity to develop their creative skills and expand their education in such a way. It was wonderful to witness the genuine enthusiasm that went into creating these pieces and the happiness they found in unleashing their inner creativity. I was touched by the profound effect the project had on some of them, especially the older children who had a huge hunger to learn. Some of the pieces that came out of it are just wonderful.”

Nyumbani UK works to provide HIV and AIDS affected children in Kenya with the best nutritional, medical, educational and psychosocial care. It does this through three distinct projects: A slum outreach program called *Lea Toto* in Nairobi which helps 3,000 children, the *Nyumbani Home* that supports 100 children and finally the *Nyumbani Village* that provides care for 1,000. At the very centre of village life are the Hotcourses Primary School and the Lawson High School.

Sub-Saharan Africa is more heavily affected by HIV and AIDS than any other region of the world. An estimated 22.9 million people are living with HIV in the region – around two-thirds of the global total.\* In 2010 around 1.2 million people died from AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa and 1.9 million people became infected with HIV. Since the beginning of the epidemic, 14.8 million children have lost one or both parents to the diseases.\*\*

Chairman of Nyumbani UK Simon Phillips, said: “We’re thrilled that Richard has taken the time to commit to such a wonderful venture. It’s made even more special by the fact it’s allowing the children to help themselves, with cash raised through the auction of their art going straight back into funding their education and welfare. It will definitely make a tangible difference to their lives.”

Some of the children, who have shown the most promise, will be invited to attend an art workshop being run by Richard at his studio and to the fundraising gala event taking place at the Houses of Commons, where the auction will conclude.

The charity’s patrons include former England Rugby coach and Olympics Director of Sport Sir Clive Woodward, top UK chef Tom Aikens, Chief Executive of Huntsworth plc Lord Chadlington, Chief Investment Officer of Caxton’s Andrew Law and the National Theatre's Sir Nick Hytner.

The initiative is being sponsored by the David Ross Foundation.

**Notes to Editors:**

* For more information, including interview requests for Richard, as well as high resolution photographs, please contact Sarah Jones on 07775 582 497.
* More information on the charity can be found at [www.nyumbani.org.uk](http://www.nyumbani.org.uk)
* For more details on Richard, including his biography, visit [www.richardstoneuk.com](http://www.richardstoneuk.com).
* Photos of art and stories of the children behind them are available on request. All photography to be credited to William Stone.