

GALLERY



Magritte Ramme with World Record ele. Ivories,
1976/October, 2003

ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

At Sotheby's New York on November 17, a work by legendary photographer and Montauk denizen Peter Beard—along with pieces by more than 40 other preeminent American and African artists—will be auctioned off to benefit the Africa Foundation USA. Proceeds from the sale will go to support orphaned and vulnerable children across southern and eastern Africa.

It was Beard's wife, Nejma—who hails from Nairobi—who selected the piece being contributed to the auction, which features model Magritte Ramme lying nude on the floor of London's Natural History Museum between world-record-size elephant tusks.

"The guard walked away, Magritte ripped off her clothes, and PB took the picture," Nejma explains, calling her husband by his nickname. The work, a gelatin print incorporating watercolor and tempera paint, "also has the Kenyan flag painted on it," Nejma adds, "which is why I initially thought of it."

Nejma agreed to the foundation's donation request in part because the group, started as a direct response to the needs of African rural communities, is managed in partnership with the inhabitants of those communities. "That gives it authenticity," she says. "Also, it allows the donors a say in where the money goes. It's a small, effective organization, not some gigantic machine that eats half the money instead of getting it to the people it's meant to benefit."

Note: The donated work will be in good company at the auction, as works by Alex Katz, Donald Baechler, Alexander Calder, Caio Fonseca, Gary Komarin, Nabil Nahas, Hunt Slonem, and Andy Warhol will also be up for bidding. Contact Krista Krieger, 917-929-7400 or krista@africafoundation.org
—Frances Schultz